

OPAL Community Land Trust
P.O. Box 1133, Eastsound, WA 98245 360-376-3191
Homeowner Application Process

I. ELIGIBILITY

If you are eligible to purchase an OPAL CLT home (see eligibility requirements), or have a realistic plan for becoming eligible¹, you're ready to complete the criteria listed below in order to qualify.

II. PRE-QUALIFICATION

1. **Complete an Application and submit to OPAL CLT.** In order to begin the process of applying for an OPAL CLT home, you first need to fill out an application and submit it along with \$20 for your credit check. When you submit your application, call OPAL's Housing Services Coordinator to set up an appointment. OPAL's application is now online linked from the applications page of OPAL's website. If you prefer to submit by paper, please contact our office.
2. **Preliminary Interview with Housing Services Coordinator:** Meet with OPAL's Housing Services Coordinator to learn more about OPAL and opportunities for housing. This meeting will introduce you to OPAL CLT's mission, describe the basic legal structure of homeownership under the community land trust model, review your financial status and credit report, describe the qualification and application process and answer any questions you may have.
3. **Orientation Video or online web clips:** Watch an orientation video provided by OPAL on a DVD, or watch online. There are two videos: Homes and Hands, available at www.cltnetwork.org, and an interview with one of OPAL's founders, Michael Sky, at www.opalclt.org/overview.

Orientation sessions introduce you to more of the nuts and bolts of living in an OPAL Community. Each homeowner's use is defined by the ground lease agreement, and each community is guided by "Conditions, Covenants and Restrictions" (CC&Rs) that articulate the process for neighborhood decision making and caring for common lands. Both of these documents are discussed in more detail, and the nature of living in community is explored.

4. **Review a copy of the CC&R's for the appropriate neighborhood:** Each OPAL CLT neighborhood is unique. The different neighborhoods have defined themselves in part through their CC&Rs. It is important to understand these CC&R's if you are considering purchasing an OPAL CLT home.

¹ If you currently do not qualify because of debt or some other issue, you may submit with your application a plan for reducing your debt or resolving the issue. The Housing Manager will review your plan, and, if it appears feasible, will incorporate your plan into your Commitment Agreement with OPAL CLT. As long as you meet the goals established in your commitment agreement, you will remain on the waiting list.

5. **Meet with an OPAL Resident(s):** OPAL CLT residents welcome the opportunity to talk with you about their experience of living in an OPAL Community. We require you to meet with at least one resident in their home to discuss homeownership and the nature of living in community. If you know a resident you may initiate this meeting. Otherwise the Housing Services Coordinator or Housing Manager will arrange for you to meet with someone.
6. **Join OPAL CLT:** If you are interested in securing a place on the waiting list, it is time to pay your application fee, drop off a copy of your last year's tax return, and join OPAL CLT. A separate list of application fees is available. Once you qualify, you must maintain your membership to keep your position on the waiting list.
7. **Meet with a Member of the Residents Committee:** One of the final steps in the qualification process is meeting with a member of the Residents Committee. OPAL CLT has a committee made up of board members and residents of each OPAL CLT community. The purpose of the meeting is to give you an opportunity to gain a different perspective on what it is like to live in an OPAL CLT community and answer any questions you might have.
8. **Attend Two Homeowners' Group or OPAL Meetings:** The homeowners of OPAL neighborhoods meet periodically. Ask the Housing Manager for a contact person in the various neighborhoods to confirm the meeting time and place. To qualify for a home you must attend a minimum of two meetings.

III. COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

If you qualify to apply for an OPAL CLT home, the next step to homeownership is to complete a Commitment Agreement with OPAL CLT. The Commitment Agreement defines the actions you agree to take in order to remain on the waiting list, and the actions that OPAL CLT agrees to take in order to provide you with a home to purchase. If you fail to meet the commitments defined, you will lose your place on the waiting list.

IV. MORTGAGE APPLICATION

If you meet all the conditions of your Commitment Agreement and have signed a purchase agreement, you will (with the help of OPAL's Housing Manager) submit a mortgage application to a local lender or USDA Rural Development. They will request more detailed information such as employment verification and a more thorough credit report, and they will make the final determination about your financial qualification. If they determine that you are ineligible, your commitment fee paid to OPAL CLT will be refunded.

