



INCOME ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

Getting the Application for Income Assistance Started

The Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction's (MSDPR) application can be quite complex and consists of a number of steps and considers multiple things such as your income (if you have any), assets, past earnings, your household composition (who you are living with), and if you have any source of support other than assistance that you could pursue. The Ministry contends they are "the last avenue of support." Be prepared that this may be a lengthy process.

Step One – Applying

The first step to apply for Income Assistance will need to set up a MySS account if you do not already have one. You will need an email account to set up your MySS account: <https://www.myselfserve.gov.bc.ca/>. You can apply using your computer, tablet or mobile device. If you cannot complete application online, please contact to the Ministry at **1-866-866-0800** or go to your local office.

Before completing the MySS, have this information ready:

- Your SIN number
- Bank account balances
- Monthly rent amount
- Average monthly utilities amount
- Value of assets (i.e. car)

You will also be asked if:

- You are getting or waiting for Employment Insurance (EI) or Worker's Compensation benefits (WCB)
- You have any outstanding warrants
- A family member sponsored you into Canada

Tip: If you have a scanner, you can upload all documents online while completing your application form. Take note of your Assessment ID Number and your Application Number. Also print a copy or forward one to your email so you have it for your own records.

Step Two

A Ministry worker should **contact you within 5 business days** of receiving your application. If you are in immediate need (you have no money for food, shelter, or medication) the ministry should call you within 1 business day. If you do not hear from the Ministry within that timeframe, you should call them at their toll free number: **1-866-866-0800**.

When you speak with the worker, you will be asked to submit some documents which may include:

- Identification documents (ID)
- Verification of any income
- Confirmation of rent amount
- Vehicle registration
- Bank statements for last 60 days
- Confirmation of mailing address
- Most recent tax assessment

Tip: If you can, fax any documents the Ministry is asking for and take down the fax confirmation details. This ensures proof you submitted the documents in case they get lost.



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Step Three

If this is your first time applying, you must complete a 5 week work search requirement. If you have applied before and completed the work search before, you only have to do a 3 week search. The work search must be completed before you can receive benefits. The Ministry will accept a work search you may have done in the last 30 days.

Tip: You can be excused from this search if you have a medical condition which stops you from working but you need a doctor's note to prove this, saying what the condition is and for how long it will prevent you from working.

During this time period the Ministry will be verifying and checking various things including:

- Have you satisfied the 2 year independency test?* This is where you need to demonstrate that for 2 consecutive years since you turned 19, you were financially independent. This can be done by showing income tax assessments where you earned over \$7000 per year or worked more than 840 hours.
- Do you have an outstanding warrant anywhere in Canada?* If you do, you will not be eligible for assistance other than transportation to the area where the warrant exists.
- Do you own any property anywhere?* The Ministry can run a search for your name through land titles. You can own a home and still be eligible for assistance but you must live in the home. If you have your name on a property elsewhere it can result in not being eligible.

**Check with an advocate for more information, there may be exceptions or special considerations.*

Step Four

Once you have submitted the additional documents to the Ministry and done your eligibility interview, the Ministry will determine if you are eligible for assistance **within 5 business days**. If you do not hear back from them within this time frame, call them and ask about your application at **1-866-866-0800**.

Step Five

If you are told you are not eligible for benefits, ask the Ministry the reasons why. If you decide that the Ministry's decision is wrong, you have **20 business days** (from the date when you learnt of the denial) to challenge the decision and to submit a reconsideration request (appeal the decision).

For more information visit our website at www.AskAnAdvocate.ca