



Person with Disabilities (PWD)

Quick Reference Guide

Information on the
British Columbia's Disability Program
& Related Benefits

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Sources Community Resources Society
Advocacy Programs

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Sources Newton Resource Centre

Sources Community Resources Society has provided support, information and services to the people of our community for over 40 years, with more than 30 years of experience in the area of advocacy. For more information on our services please visit our website at <https://www.sourcesbc.ca/>.

Introduction

When individuals are first approved for “Person with Disabilities” status (PWD) they often ask how the program works and what benefits they are eligible for. The Person with Disabilities (PWD) Quick Reference Guide outlines basic information about the PWD program, its benefits and how to access them. It also includes references to other disability-related programs and benefits offered federally, provincially and municipally as well as applicable legislation and websites that should help with accessing these benefits.

The legislation is cited throughout this guide and can be found at: http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/loo99/loo99/263_2002
http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/265_2002

Additional information on income assistance can also be found on the Ministry’s “online resource” website which is located at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual>

If you have had your income assistance benefits denied, reduced or discontinued, Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits denied or are dealing with a tenancy issue, please be aware that in most cases there is a time limit to challenge the decision or eviction. For instance, when dealing with a denial for income assistance benefit, there is a 20 business-day time limit to appeal. If you require assistance, search for an advocate in your area through PovNet (<http://www.povnet.org>) or by contacting us through the Ask an Advocate website (<https://askanadvocate.ca/>). It is encouraged to act promptly due to the limited time you have with the matter you are dealing with.

Basic Information on “Person with Disabilities”

Who delivers the program: The Person with Disability (PWD) program is a provincial government program. The Ministry responsible for delivering the program is the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR or “the Ministry”). The Person with Disabilities (PWD) benefits program is a component of the income assistance program. All the benefits that are available through the regular income assistance program are also available to those with PWD status, but there are additional specific benefits available for people that are eligible for PWD.

Can I get Person with Disabilities benefits?

Under the Employment and Assistance for Person with Disabilities (EAPWD) Act, Person with Disabilities (PWD) benefits are for people who live in BC and are 18 years old or older. You can apply for PWD benefits six months before you turn 18. This will give the Ministry time to process your application so you can start getting benefits when you turn 18. In order to obtain these benefits you will have to show that:

- A doctor or nurse practitioner says your disability is severe and expected to last for at least two years, AND;
- A “prescribed professional” (such as a doctor, registered psychologist, physio-l or occupational therapist, social worker, nurse, nurse practitioner, or chiropractor) confirm you are “significantly restricted” and because of that restriction are unable to complete “daily living tasks” on your own.

You will also have to show that because of your disability, you need:

- Help from an assistive device (such as a wheelchair, including such things as a cane, walker, breathing or positioning devices etc.), significant help from another person, OR; help from an assistance animal (such as a guide dog).



TIP: *When you apply for PWD status, it is important to show the Ministry that you need help with your daily living activities – such as preparing your own meals, shopping, keeping your house reasonably clean, managing your money or medication – even if you are not getting that help now. It can be hard to go into detail about how serious your disability is, but try to describe your situation as completely and with as much detail as possible.*

Note: If the person has already been approved for another prescribed government program or benefit, the EAPWD Act permits the Ministry to designate someone as a Person with Disabilities (PWD) without going

through the standard application process. These other programs or benefits include:

- A person who is enrolled in Plan P (Palliative Care);
- Ministry of Children and Family Development's At Home Program;
- Community Living British Columbia (CLBC);
- A person who is considered to be disabled under CPP

People applying for PWD designation as a member of a prescribed class must still meet all other eligibility requirements (identification, financial, residency, etc.) to be found eligible for disability assistance.

In these instances only a two page application is required to be completed by the doctor, with copies of applications from other programs.

When PWD Eligibility Starts: The Ministry will notify you by letter when you are approved for PWD. That letter will have a date at the top, which is the date of approval. However, eligibility for PWD commences the month after the month of approval.

For example: If the date on the letter is August 25, this is the date you were approved but eligibility wouldn't start until September 1st.

Occasionally when approval for PWD benefits is late in the month, you may still receive an income assistance benefits cheque at your old rate; this is because the income assistance benefits cheque for the next month had already been issued by the Ministry prior to the approval. However, you should be eligible for an adjustment cheque that raises you to the proper PWD rate. If this seems to be the case for you, contact the Ministry and ask for the appropriate adjustment.

TIP: *if your approval happens late in the months, the Ministry may have already issued benefits for the next month at your old rate. Should this happen, contact the Ministry for an "adjustment cheque". This is where they will issue a "top up" cheque for the portion you didn't receive.*



How Long the Designation Lasts: PWD is not a permanent designation and the ministry has the authority to rescind an individual's designation in exceptional circumstances.

No Wrong Door: When you are on income assistance you are assigned to a specific office based on your postal code. However, the Ministry asserts they have a "no wrong door" policy. This means if you need to

access services or drop off information to the Ministry you can go to any income assistance office.

Be aware however that if the Ministry requires you to come into the office for an annual financial review or meeting you will be required to go to your specific office.

No Assigned Worker: The Ministry has moved to a call centre model, which means whenever you call the Ministry at 1-866-866-0800 your call goes into the central centre and not to your specific office. Moreover, the Ministry does not assign a worker to you, rather, services are provided on a first come - first available worker system.

The Ministry maintains however that if this is particularly problematic for you due to mental health issues or other reasons you can request to have a “designated” worker. However, if that particular worker becomes unavailable, this could cause an interruption of services.

Only In British Columbia: Unlike Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits (CPPD) that can be issued anywhere you live in Canada, Person with Disabilities (PWD) status and benefits **are not** transportable to another province or territory in Canada. It is a program delivered through the British Columbia government. If you move outside of BC to another province or territory you will have to apply for the income assistance disability program offered there and prove that you meet that program’s definition of disability.

Out of Province for More than 30-days: Your PWD benefits will not continue if you are outside of the province for more than 30-days. However, it can be reinstated upon return by completing the online income assistance application. Under special circumstances you may be authorized by the Ministry to be out of the province for more than 30-days, but only if it is in relation to a specific medical treatment not available in British Columbia or if you are attending a formal education program in another province. Pre-approval for your continued PWD must be received before leaving the province.



To read more about Residency in BC Eligibility go to the BCEA Policy & Procedure Manual (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/residency?keyword=30&keyword=days>)

Reporting and Record Keeping: The Ministry requires you to report any change of circumstance and any money you receive. We suggest making a habit of record keeping by using a notebook (or file folder) that has

been divided into months to keep a record of whenever you speak to an income assistance worker, attend a meeting with the Ministry or supply any documentation. With documentation that are supplied to the Ministry – **get a photocopy date-stamped** and secure it in the notebook. This ensures that you can prove to the Ministry that you submitted all required information.

About the Money

Means-Tested: Income assistance is not a pension and it is “means” tested. This means after your disability status has been approved you will still need to show the Ministry that you do not have other financial resources to cover your basic necessities.

Income & Assets

Earned and Unearned Income: The Ministry classifies all income a person receives while on income assistance as either “**earned**” or “**unearned**” income.

“Earned” Income: Money you receive from working, an income tax refund and income from the rental of rooms in your residence are classified as “earned income”. For an individual with PWD status, there is an exemption to earned income which is defined below.

Annual Earnings Exemption on Employment Income: The PWD program recognizes that people with disabilities may have some capacity to work. The individual must be on PWD for the first month, an initial qualifying period, before the individual is allowed to earn up to \$12,000 per year without their assistance being affected. For a couple where one has PWD status the earning exemption is \$14,400 and where both have PWD status it is \$24,000. (If both individuals have PWD status, their \$24,000 earning exemption can be earned by one member of the family alone or split between the two.)

To read more about Income Treatment and Exemptions go to the BCEA Policy & Procedure Manual (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/income-treatment-and-exemptions?keyword=Annual&keyword=Earnings&keyword=Exemption>)

Disability assistance recipients must complete a monthly report for any earned income and keep records of their amounts to know if their AEE has been reached.



TIP: *Earned income is declared on the monthly reporting stub and has to be submitted by the 5th day of the following month.*

Income In-excess: If someone earns over the AEE, their disability benefits will end for the calendar year but they will retain Medical Services Only coverage with MSDPR for some Schedule C health benefits. This is called “income in-excess”.

Medical Services Only (MSO) Due to Income In-Excess: If the person becomes ineligible as a result of employment income being over the income assistance rate, the person’s file will turn into a “Medical Services Only file” (MSO file) for as long as the person is eligible for Premium Assistance. This means the person will still have basic medical benefits which include doctor visits, prescription coverage and access to extended medical benefits such as dental and mobility devices.

If the person becomes ill or is impaired due to their disability to such a degree that he or she is unable to continue working, the person can return to income assistance. After going through the financial application process, he or she will receive their PWD status without having to apply for the disability program.

To see a complete list of eligible health supplement for MSO:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-services-only?keyword=medical&keyword=services&keyword=only>



TIP: For example, if you reach your AEE by the month of October, your disability payments will stop and file became MSO. However, be sure to continue to submit your Monthly Report form each month! This way, you may be able to receive disability assistance without having to reapply when you are eligible for your new earnings exemption limit in the new calendar year. Otherwise, you will need to reapply for assistance.

“Unearned” Income: All other income except what is classified as “earned” income is classified as “unearned” income. This includes money, annuities, stocks, bonds, shares, interest-bearing accounts or properties, pensions from the federal government, war disability pensions, military pensions and war veteran’s allowances, employment insurance, insurance benefits except insurance paid as compensation for a destroyed asset, private disability insurance, ICBC settlements, winnings from games of chance, GST*, Child Tax Credit*, BC Family Bonus*, etc. (*See Exempt Income.) To see a complete list of unearned income go to the BCEA PWD Regulation (http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/265_2002)

***Exempt Income:** Some types of income are always exempt - GST, child support and Child Tax Credit. Family Bonus is also exempt, although if the Ministry had advanced your family bonus through your income assistance cheque, that amount will be returned directly to the Ministry

from your first Government of Canada cheque (child tax credit, national family bonus and BC family bonuses). *EAPD Regs Schedule B1a*.
http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/265_2002#ScheduleB

Applying for Income from Another Source: The Ministry requires all individuals on income assistance to apply or pursue any income from any other source for which they may be eligible. For instance, once a person is approved for PWD, the Ministry will require the person to apply for Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) benefits. If the person refuses to apply the Ministry can deny PWD benefits for “failure to pursue other income”. This discontinuance of assistance would continue until the person pursues the income by applying.

Receiving Other Money: If you do become eligible for income from another source, such as CPPD benefits, private disability benefits or WCB, the money will be deducted from your income assistance. This is because it is classed as “unearned” income (unless there is a specific exemption for that source of money).

For example, if a family member would like to provide financial assistance to a PWD recipient by giving \$200 per month to help with groceries, it will not affect that person’s eligibility for assistance.

Recurring Gift, Inheritance, and Awards: People on PWD are able to receive multiple cash gifts with no effect on their eligibility for assistance. In addition, inheritance, education & training allowances, bursaries and scholarships are an exempt income and will not affect eligibility.

One time awards that are not specifically defined by the Ministry are considered exempt up to the Families Asset level (see pg. 11 for Asset Levels). Ongoing monthly financial awards are considered unearned income. Examples of these types of payments: eviction compensation, criminal injury or insurance settlement (except replacement of an asset).

ICBC Replacement of Vehicle - When ICBC pays an individual out for replacing a vehicle this money is exempt to replace the vehicle.



TIP: All income (including gifts) and any changes in circumstances must be declared on the stub every month.

Income Becomes Assets: Money received on the first month is considered “income”. If the amount received is over the income assistance rate a cheque will not be sent the following month. However,

money remaining after the change of the calendar month is considered as “asset”. If the amount you receive is over your asset level amount (see additional information about asset levels below) the Ministry will expect the money to last \$2,000 per 30 days.



TIP: *It is also important to know that you may be able to set up a trust fund (see pg.11 for Trust) to preserve the money, which can be used for disability related costs promotion of independence later on.*

Assets: Assets are defined as

- (a) Equity in any real or personal property that can be converted to cash,
- (b) A beneficial interest in real or personal property held in trust, or
- (c) Cash assets

Asset Limits and Exempt Assets: People on income assistance are allowed to have money and property however the Ministry sets limits and conditions on assets.

A single person with PWD status is allowed to have \$100,000 in cash or financial products that can be converted to cash and can own a home of any value, as long as the person lives in the home.

Other exempt assets include personal possessions, necessary household items, business tools and a person’s primary vehicle. Of special note, people with PWD status **have no limit put on the value of their vehicle;** unlike people on regular income assistance where the equitable value limit of the vehicle is \$10,000.

Limits on Assets and Earnings Exemption:

PWD Status	1 person	Family: 1 and Dependent/s	Family: Both Adults have PWD Status
Asset Limit	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Earnings Exemption	\$12,000	\$14,400	\$24,000
Discretionary Trust Limit	No Limit	No Limit	No Limit
Non-Discretionary Trust	\$200,000 Limit	\$200,000 Limit	\$200,000 Limit

**Dependents include spouse or spouse and child/ren or single parent with child/ren.*

Discretionary and Non-Discretionary Trusts

Trusts: A trust provides a person with PWD status to have money above the asset limit that can be used on disability related costs over the course his/her lifetime.

There are specific requirements for a trust to be recognized by the Ministry and further, there are limitations on the use of the money, briefly outlined on the next page.

A trust is a legal agreement, drawn up by a lawyer, that allows a beneficiary (person with PWD status) to have money or other assets “in trust” and a trustee who manages the assets on behalf of the beneficiary. A trust can also be set up for someone through a will but is not implemented until the will comes into effect.

There are two types of trusts:

1. **Discretionary Trust:** With a discretionary trust, the person with PWD status is the beneficiary and that person’s trustee decides how the money is used. There is no limit on the amount of money that can be held in this type of trust.
2. **Non-discretionary Trust:** With a non-discretionary trust, the beneficiary will have some decision-making ability on the use of the money. There is a lifetime maximum capital amount of \$200,000 that can be put into the trust.

All trusts must be reported if they involve a person who is an applicant for or recipient of assistance. The limit to the amount of money that can be exempt in a trust will still be \$200,000, but with the new cash asset limit, an individual on PWD could foreseeably have up to \$300,000 in combined assets.

Understanding trusts and how they work can be complicated but there are lots of resources available including:

- **Newton Resource Centre** “Disability Benefits and Trusts” FAQ <https://askanadvocate.ca/assistance-programs/disability/pwd/pwd-faq/>
- **Disability Alliance BC** <http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/>
- **PLAN BC** <http://plan.ca/>
- **The Ministry of Social Development** “Disability Assistance and Trusts” booklet <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/publicat/pdf/DisabilitiesTrusts.pdf>

Support & Shelter Information

The Ministry issues financial benefits in two portions:

The first portion is the **support portion**. This is the amount issued for the necessities of basic living including food, clothing, transportation and extras.

The second part of the income assistance cheque is the **shelter portion**, which covers rent or mortgage related costs including required insurance, utilities and basic residential single-line telephone. There is no change to the shelter amount based on the new PWD status.

PWD and Shelter Rates

Classification: PWD *	ANNUAL Earnings Exemption	Asset Level	Shelter **	Support	Total Benefits	PWD Vehicle Asset Limit
Single Person	\$12000	\$100,000	375	758.42	1,133.42	No Limit
Couple: One with PWD	\$14400	\$100,000	570	927.56	1,497.56	
Couple: One with PWD with One Child**	\$14400	\$100,000	660	1021.56	1,681.56	
Couple Both with PWD	\$24000	\$200,000	570	1351.06	1,873.06	
Couple: Both with PWD with Children**	\$24000	\$200,000	660	1445.06	2,057.06	
Single parent with children**	\$12000	\$100,000	570	899.08	1,469.08	
Shelter Rates for EMPLOYABLE, PPMB AND PWD	Shelter Rates: Single: \$375.00 2 Member Family: \$570.00; 3 Member Family: \$660; 4 Member Family – \$700; 5 Member Family: \$750; 6 member family: \$820.00 **Shelter amount increases with # of children Changes: Depends on shelter amount					

** Shelter amount increases with number of children



TIP: Be aware that the shelter amount is based on the actual shelter costs incurred by the person each month.

A single person is eligible for \$375 each month, if the person lives in low-income housing and only has shelter expenses of \$285 each month the Ministry will only issue \$285 - the actual cost shelter.

Room and Board: In a room and board situation, the recipient is eligible for the actual amount he or she is paying plus \$60 a month for each adult on income assistance or \$75 for PWD designated, \$40 for child. Additional to that, the PWD individual is receiving \$52 Transportation Supplement. To read more about Room and Board, Special Care Facility & Allowances Rate Table go to the BCEA Policy & Procedure Manual <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/bc-employment-and-assistance-rate-tables/room-and-board-special-care-facility-and-allowances-rate-table?keyword=room&keyword=and&keyword=board>

This policy does not apply on people living in a special care facility or with a parent or child of a person in the family unit.

The recipient living in a room and board situation with a parent or child of a person in the family unit is not eligible for shelter portion. This means they will receive only the support portion applicable to the family. To read more go to the BCEA Policy & Procedure Manual <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/support-and-shelter/support-shelter-and-special-care-facilities?keyword=room&keyword=and&keyword=board>

Other Benefits Available

There are other important benefits available to people with disability status. They are outlined briefly to ensure people with PWD know they can access these additional benefits.

Supplements

Pre-Natal Shelter Supplement: The Ministry can also issue an additional \$195 supplement per month upon confirmation of pregnancy to secure adequate housing and this amount will continue for the duration of the pregnancy.

An individual must meet the following requirements to be eligible:

- Be applying for or receiving income assistance, PPMB, or PWD benefits;
- Have written pregnancy confirmation from a doctor, nurse practitioner, or registered midwife;
- Be single and have no dependents (meaning no other children who live with you half the time or more); AND
- Prove in writing that you have shelter costs above \$375 (the current shelter rate for a single person), either where you live now or where you plan to move.

Crisis Supplement: A crisis supplement can be issued if the Ministry is satisfied that:

- *This is an unexpected expense or an item needed unexpectedly*
- *Without the item it may result in either danger to the physical health of any person in the family unit or removal of a child*
- *That there is no other resources available to meet the need.*

If the criteria are met, the following related to the specific need can be issued:

Food – The Ministry may only issue up to a maximum of \$20 per number of people in the family unit per month.

For example: 1 person: up to \$20 maximum in a calendar month;
3 people family unit: up to \$60 maximum in a month.

Shelter - The Ministry can only issue a shelter crisis supplement up to the maximum amount of the regular shelter entitlement.

For example: 2 people family unit: up to maximum shelter entitlement of \$570, even if their actual rent is \$600.

To verify the situation is a crisis, the person would be required to produce an eviction notice before the Ministry would consider it a crisis.

If the amount of crisis supplement will not be sufficient in resolving the crisis, the person will have to show the Ministry how he or she will come up with the remainder money to resolve the outstanding amount owing.

For example: If the eviction notice states the amount owing is \$600, the family of two with shelter entitlement of \$570 will have to show how they would come up with the additional \$30 before the Ministry would issue the crisis supplement.

Crisis Supplement for Clothing – The Ministry has the legislative authority to issue a crisis supplement for clothing up to a maximum of \$100 per person, and up to a maximum of \$400 annually regardless of the number of persons in a family past 4 people.

For example: If a 5 people family unit loses all their clothes in a fire in August, the maximum amount the Ministry can issue is \$400 for the family. As well, the Ministry would not be able to issue another clothing crisis supplement until next September.

Maximum Amount on Crisis Supplements - The Ministry has a maximum on the total dollar amount of crisis supplement a person can receive in a year, which is twice a person’s regular entitlement.

For example: If a single person’s regular entitlement is \$1133, the maximum amount of crisis supplement that can be issued cannot

What a Crisis Supplement Cannot Cover - Crisis supplements cannot be provided for items covered in Schedule C – Health Benefits.

EAPD Regs Schedule C

http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/265_2002#ScheduleC



A crisis supplement is intended to help in an emergency when all other resources have been exhausted. Crisis supplements are issued under the discretion of the Ministry and the maximum amount is not guaranteed to be given.

For example: A worker may only issue a \$10 crisis supplement for food when he or she could issue up to \$20 for the month.

Other Notables – A crisis supplement can only be provided for the month in which the supplement is requested, meaning it cannot be used to pay for something obtained last month or to reimburse for something a person has already purchased. A person may appeal the denial of a crisis supplement but cannot appeal for more than the maximum amounts previously outlined.

Security Deposits: The Ministry can issue a security deposit to help secure a residence but it has to be given out **before** the person has moved into the residence. To be eligible, an “Intent to Rent” form must be completed by the landlord and submitted to the Ministry in order for a security deposit to be issued. There is a maximum of 2 security deposits that the Ministry can issue. A third security deposit **may** be issued by special authority if a person is fleeing an abusive relationship; their rental residential accommodation is either: being sold, demolished, or condemned, and a notice to vacate has been given or the family unit is homeless/at risk of being homeless.

Repayment of Security Deposits - The month after receiving a security deposit, \$20 will be deducted from a person’s cheque. This will continue until the amount of the security deposit is paid off. If a second deposit is issued, the Ministry may deduct a greater amount, with the consent of the recipient, even if you already have more than \$20 per month

deducted to repay the Ministry for other things (such as repayable hardship assistance).

If you cannot afford to pay back more than \$20 per month, explain this to the Ministry. They should wait to deduct the other money that you owe until your security deposit is repaid.

Utility Security Deposit – may be provided if there are no resources for enabling connection or preventing disconnection of electricity or natural gas services. The Ministry will look for the minimum amount required by the utility provider. The recipient must agree to repay the amount paid.

Moving Supplement: The Ministry may provide a moving supplement if the person is moving to a place with substantially less rent (approximately \$100 less than the current shelter amount). They will also assist if the individual's place has been sold, is being demolished or is condemned and notice to vacate has been given, or if a person is facing an imminent threat to the physical safety of anyone in the family unit. An Individual is only eligible for this supplement if there are no other financial resources to cover the costs, receives the Ministry's approval before incurring costs, and chooses the least expensive mode of moving or transportation. The Ministry will ask you to get a minimum of **two moving estimates** from licensed moving companies.

The Ministry may also assist a person move anywhere in Canada if the person has confirmed employment in another province or if the move will improve the person's living circumstance. Unfortunately, the Ministry will usually not issue assistance with moving possessions beyond carry-on items unless the items are a necessity in relation to the individual's disability (i.e.: motorized mobility device).

Christmas Supplement: The cheque for December months will carry an additional amount for people on income assistance, including those with PWD status. The amounts are \$35 for singles, \$70 for couples, and an additional \$10 per child.

Co-op Supplement: The Ministry can assist with a share purchase with a maximum loan of the lessor of 50% of the price or \$850. The individual must choose either monthly or delayed repayment and sign the associated form.

School Start-up Supplement - is to assist with extra costs associated with schooling for a person under 19 years of age. It is included in a family's July payment for the August benefit month to help cover expenses for a

person under 19 years of age who is entering or returning to school in September. Child aged 5 to 11 - \$100 per calendar year. Child aged 12 and over - \$175 per calendar year.

Camp Fees: The Ministry may issue funds to support a child to go to a recognized camp. Information must be provided to the Ministry worker.

Guide Dog Allowance: The Ministry can issue an addition \$95 per month for the care of a guide dog.

Burial Supplement: The Ministry has the ability to provide for the necessary costs of the transportation and burial or cremation of a deceased person's body if the deceased person's family or estate has no resources available to meet those costs.

Transportation Benefits

Beginning January 1, 2018, people receiving disability assistance, with the Person with Disabilities (PWD) designation, get an extra \$52 each month for a new transportation supplement.

If someone already has an annual BC Bus Pass and they want to keep it, they can. They don't have to contact the ministry. Beginning with the January 2018 payment they no longer have \$52 deducted from their support payment.



Transportation Supplement (TS): A \$52 per month Transportation Supplement is provided to each individual with a PWD designation to cover the cost of the bus pass issued through the BC Bus Pass Program, **OR** to assist generally with their transportation costs. A recipient can choose to receive the TS in cash or in the form of an in-kind monthly bus pass from MSDPR. If they elect an in-kind bus pass, no \$45 admin fee is required. This election can be made monthly, and a person can switch back and forth between an in-kind bus pass and the extra \$52 per month payment by giving notice to the Ministry by the 5th day of each month for a change to take effect on the first day of the following month.

For example: Notify by November 5th for a change effective

For recipients who choose to keep a bus pass from the Ministry on an on-going basis, they can keep it indefinitely and no longer need to re-apply for a bus pass each year.



The BC Bus Pass is a Compass Card. It is valid for travel anywhere within the TransLink and BC Transit service areas. However, it cannot be used on HandyDart. **Contact the Ministry about the BC Bus Pass program:** Phone: 1-866-866-0800, email: SDSIBUSPA@gov.bc.ca , in person: a local MSDPR office.

Also eligible for a \$52 annual bus pass are: individuals who are more than 60 years of age and are receiving income assistance, federal spouse's allowance, federal guaranteed income; or are 65 years of age and meets all the requirements of the federal guaranteed income except for the 10 year residency. The administration fee is not reduced if you apply partway through the year and is non-refundable.

To read more for Bus Pass Program go to <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/passenger-travel/buses-taxis-limos/bus-pass>

Transportation for Hearings: The Ministry may assist with the costs of transportation for an individual attending a hearing in relation to a child protection issue or assigning maintenance rights. The Ministry can also assist with child-care costs, living costs and fees associated with attending the maintenance hearing.

Employment & PWD

Community Volunteer Supplement (CVS): The Community Volunteer Supplement (CVS) program is being phased out. On November 1, 2011, the Ministry indicated that it would only continue payments or allow applications to continue if one:

- Had already started getting the community volunteer supplement as of October 31, 2011, OR
- Had been on the waitlist for CVS as of August 8, 2011 and submitted an application for it between August 8-October 31, 2011.

It provides up to \$100 for each calendar month for clothing, transportation or other expenses that are needed by the eligible person.

Training Initiative Supplement (TIS): is a \$50 per month for participating in a training program for 6 months (an additional 6 months may be granted if the Ministry deems the individual would benefit from additional participation. The individual would not be eligible for this benefit if he/she already received the volunteer or incentive supplement. Talk to a Ministry worker prior to starting for more information and approval.

Employment Programs: Career planning, skills assessment, pre-employment services, job training and placement, provision of necessary

employment supports, disability management assistance, follow-up workplace support and employment crisis services. The programs may also provide transportation assistance (eg. bus tickets), employment supports (eg. work boots), and help provide access to a work experience placement. Contact the Ministry or an employment centre in your area if you are interested in these services. These programs are voluntary, as people with PWD status have no obligations to search for employment or participate in work related programs.

Confirmed Job Supplement (CJS): If transportation, clothing, tools or other employment-related items are required to start employment, the Ministry can provide a supplement of up to \$1,000, as employment will enable you and your family to come off of income assistance. To be eligible: someone counted as part of your family unit gets a confirmed job that will enable your family to not require income assistance, hardship assistance, or PWD assistance; the person with the job needs a specific job-related item to start work; your family unit has no other funds available to purchase the item(s). If these criteria are met, talk to the Ministry about accessing this supplement.

Medical Coverage

Basic Medical

Health Supplements: The Ministry is able to provide specific health services, items and equipment for people with PWD status.

All income assistance recipients, including people with PWD status or benefits are eligible for basic medical coverage, which includes doctor visits, medical supplies, eye examinations, hospital stays, emergency ambulance services and prescription coverage. However, for PWD recipients, there are additional enhanced medical benefits that are also available.

Medical Benefits when Traveling: When travelling, MSP coverage is available through BC's health care system. In other provinces, the costs are billed through their medical coverage programs and collected directly between their systems. When traveling outside of Canada, be aware that coverage through MSP is based upon pre-determined rates and may not cover all or any of the costs; responsibility would then fall on the person who has received the treatment. Consequently, it is recommended that additional medical coverage be purchased.

Medical Coverage when Moving to Another Province:

When moving to another province, MSP coverage will continue for the remainder of the month plus an additional two months. Do note that prescription coverage ends the day you leave the province. Application for medical coverage should be done immediately upon arrival to your new province. Also, be aware that PWD is only recognized in BC; if you move to another province you will have to apply for disability under the disability program offered in that province.

Medical Coverage:

When leaving PWD for employment income and CPP Income, you will continue to receive medical benefits for as long as you qualify for Premium Assistance (*for individuals **under 65***) or Guaranteed Income Supplement (*for individuals **over 65***). If you cease to qualify for medical services only, you are still eligible for general health supplements for up to one year. The Ministry has a useful chart outlining the eligibility criteria for MSO at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-services-only>

Premium Assistance

Premium Assistance provides subsidies ranging from 20-100% based on an individual's net income (or a couple's combined net income) for the preceding tax year, less deductions for age, family size and disability. The resulting amount is referred to as "adjusted net income".

For regular premium assistance to continue, MSP requires income tax returns to be filed each year, even though the federal government may not require it.



TIP *If a person's return has not been filed and processed by the time MSP checks a particular year's income, the person may get a warning letter or a letter advising that premium assistance has been taken away.*

Premium Assistance Income Verification: To **verify eligibility**, each person who applies for premium assistance authorizes the Canada Revenue Agency to release income information to the Ministry of Health Services and/or Health Insurance BC from the person's tax returns. Verification takes place each year and, where appropriate, MSP adjusts the monthly premium of beneficiaries upward or downward based on the information received.

For more information go to <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents/premiums>

The following are the current Premium Assistance Subsidy Rates for Eligibility (effective January 1, 2018).

- There are no premiums for children under the age of 19.
- MSP premium rates will be determined by the number of adults on an MSP account (the MSP account holder and, if applicable, a spouse.)

Adjusted Net Income	One Adult	Two Adults in a family
\$0 - \$26,000	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$26,001 - \$28,000	\$11.50	\$23.00
\$28,001 - \$30,000	\$17.50	\$35.00
\$30,001 - \$34,000	\$23.00	\$46.00
\$34,001 - \$38,000	\$28.00	\$56.00
\$38,001 - \$42,000	\$32.50	\$65.00
Over \$42,000	\$37.50	\$75.00

General Health Supplements

Prescription Coverage: All people on income assistance receive prescription coverage when prescribed by a physician, surgeon, dentist, midwife, nurse practitioner, optometrist or podiatrist.



However, this does not mean all prescriptions will be covered.

Prescriptions that are usually covered are “generic” brands.

PharmaCare: If you require medication that is not covered, your doctor can request “special authority” for approval of certain medications. If approved, it provides 100% coverage of eligible prescription costs for B.C. residents receiving medical benefits and income assistance through the Ministry. The Ministry sends eligibility information to PharmaCare on their clients’ behalf, and you will not need to apply to PharmaCare separately. For more information, visit the BC government website at

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare-for-bc-residents/who-we-cover#plan-c>

If you move out of the province, it is important to note that prescription coverage ends the day you leave the province.

Enhanced Medical

Disposable Medical or Reusable Supplies: There are restrictions on disposable or reusable medical supplies. The items must be prescribed by a medical practitioner; used in a medical procedure or treatment; are necessary to avoid an imminent/substantial danger to health; there are no resources available to the family to cover the cost of the supplies.

Chiropractic, Physiotherapy, Massage Therapy and Podiatrist Services:



An additional 10 visits may be authorized by the Ministry if there is a medically confirmed acute need for treatments and there are no resources to meet the need. No more than 10 visits are available for these services combined.

Extension of visits may be granted by the Ministry and are

limited to a maximum of 12 visits per year. Recipients are required to pay an additional amount above the MSP fee schedule which is a set amount of \$23 per visit. To read more go to

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/extended-medical-therapies?keyword=Chiropractic,&keyword=Physiotherapy,&keyword=Massage&keyword=Therapy&keyword=and&keyword=Podiatrist&keyword=Services>

Medical Transportation: The Ministry can provide additional funding for transportation to go to a doctor, specialist or hospital for treatments/testing if it is not solely for regular visits.

Plan G: Specific to people living with mental illness, Plan G ensures psychiatric medication at no charge for individuals of any age that are registered with a mental health service centre who demonstrate a clinical and financial need. To access this benefit, contact your local Mental Health Service Centre or talk to your doctor.

Eye Exam: A person is able to get an eye examination by an optometrist for up to \$44.83 or an ophthalmologist for up to \$48.90 once every two years through Pacific Blue Cross. Additional costs above these rates will be the responsibility of the recipient. Routine eye examinations for children and seniors are also covered by Medical Services Plan (MSP).

Glasses: The Ministry provides a pair of basic single vision or bifocal lenses and glasses for adults with new prescription every 3 years; for children with new prescription every year; or if there is a confirmed change in the refractive status of either eye. To read more go to EAPD Regs Part 5 Section 62.2 Schedule C 2.2



http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/265_2002#ScheduleC

Medical Equipment

The Ministry is able to provide people with walkers, canes and crutches if their doctor has prescribed the item; and/or an occupational/physical therapist has done an assessment and confirmed the need for the item; and the Ministry has pre-approved the item. There will need to be no other resources to meet the need for such an item and the requested item should be the least expensive option.

For **wheelchairs/scooters**, confirmation that the device is required for the next 5 years is needed. The maximum amount for scooters is \$3500.

Bariatric scooters: Up to \$4,500 can be issued for a bariatric scooter when you weigh more than what a conventional scooter can hold AND if the item is medically essential for you to achieve or maintain basic mobility (five-year replacement).

Positioning and Transfer Devices: Positioning devices such as chairs and beds can be obtained if specific requirements are met - to facilitate toileting and transfers. Health supplements that fall within this section are standing frames, grab bar, bath lift, bath seat, floor-to-ceiling pole and transfer aids. Others include hospital bed, pressure relief mattress and positioning items on a bed (if medically essential to achieve or maintain your positioning).

Transfer Aids -Floor or ceiling devices: A device that stands on the floor or is attached to the ceiling and is medically essential to facilitate the transfer of a person in the bedroom or a bathroom. The cost of the ceiling lift does not exceed \$4,200 (five-year replacement).

Breathing Devices

- Apnea monitors - if medically essential to monitor your breathing (five-year replacement);
- Nebulizers - if necessary to avoid an imminent and substantial danger to your health (five-year replacement period and one-year period for accessories and supplies);
- Tracheostomy humidifier - if medically essential to moisturize air in order to allow you to breathe (five-year replacement);
- Tracheostomy supplies - if necessary to avoid an imminent and substantial danger to your health (two-year supply policy);
- Others include: suction unit and accessories; a Percussor if necessary for cleaning respiratory airways; an Inhaler and inhaler accessory devices (“spacers” or valved holding chambers) if medically essential to deliver medication.

These devices may also have cost restrictions. Both positioning and breathing devices require pre-authorization through the Ministry and confirmation that there are no other available resources for the requested item.

Orthotics and Bracing: Custom made orthotics footwear are covered up to a maximum of \$1,650 for PWD recipients. In addition, custom-made inserts are covered up to a maximum of \$450.

Other bracing devices may be supplied if the item requested will prevent surgery; be used for post-surgical care; assist in physical healing from surgery, injury or disease; or to improve physical functioning that has been impaired by a neuro-musculo-skeletal condition. The Ministry must also pre-approve the requested items and be satisfied there are no other resources to meet the need.

- Foot abduction orthoses - no waiting period for replacement;
- Toe orthoses - if medically essential to achieve or maintain basic functionality (one-year replacement);
- Underliners for orthoses - if medically essential for you to use an orthosis (for example, sleeves and specialized socks for braces)

Hearing Aids: A PWD recipient can be provided with hearing aids if prescribed by an audiologist. The audiologist must have performed an assessment that confirms the need for the hearing aid. The person also must have the pre-authorization from the Ministry and prove no resources available to obtain the required item.

Non-conventional glucose meters: If it is medically essential to test your blood glucose levels (five-year replacement) For example, a talking glucose meter for those with visual impairment.

Dental Coverage for PWD: PWD status allows for up to \$1,000 of dental coverage every two years. Not all procedures are covered, individuals must cover any additional cost incurred. Under certain circumstances coverage may include crown or bridge work. Additional information on allowable fees and services can be obtained from the Ministry



TIP: *It is beneficial to ask your dentist for a quote prior to having any service or treatment done so you know how much your cost will be.*

Dentures: Can be provided if they have never had dentures previously or have had their previous dentures for at least 5 years. The amount for dentures is \$1,000 every two years.

Diet and Nutritional Supplements

In order to obtain a diet supplement, the physician must confirm the condition and type of diet required (as specified in the list), as well as prescribe the allowance for up to 12 months. This can be done by letter or written out on a prescription pad. The Ministry may have a specific form diet supplement requests, so check with a Ministry worker to confirm how a diet supplement is currently being obtained.

The available diet supports include:

Diabetic Diet Supplement: The Ministry pays an additional \$35 per month to an individual where the physician has confirmed the condition.

Restricted Sodium: An additional \$10 is provided when a physician confirms the need for reduced salt intake.

Kidney Dialysis: An additional \$30 each month for a person who requires kidney dialysis if the person is not eligible under the kidney dialysis service provided by the Ministry of Health.

Gluten Free Diet: An additional \$40 diet allowance each month for which a person requires a gluten-free diet.

Dysphagia Diet*: An additional \$40 each month for a person who has dysphagia.

Cystic Fibrosis: An additional \$50 each month for a person who has cystic fibrosis.

High Protein Diet Supplement*: An additional \$40 each month if a person has any of the following conditions:

- Cancer that requires nutritional support during radiation, chemotherapy, surgical therapy or ongoing medical treatment
- Chronic inflammatory bowel disease
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- HIV positive diagnosis, Aids
- Chronic bacterial infection
- Tuberculosis
- Hyperthyroidism
- Osteoporosis
- Hepatitis b and Hepatitis c.

***People requiring dysphagia or high protein diet are also eligible to receive an additional \$30 towards the purchase of a blender.**



TIP: A person having two or more separate conditions for which a diet supplement can be provided only the higher diet allowance amount will be paid.

Monthly Nutritional Supplement: An additional supplement that is available only to those with PWD status when it is confirmed by a physician that the person has a **severe medical condition** that will result in a **chronic progressive deterioration of health or wasting**, and that the supplements requested (nutritional supplementation, vitamins and minerals) **will prevent an imminent danger to life**.

This supplement will provide an additional \$165 per month when there is **a confirmed need for additional caloric supplementation** and **two** of the following symptoms: malnutrition, underweight status, significant weight loss, significant muscle mass loss, significant neurological degeneration, significant deterioration of a vital organ, or moderate to severe immune suppression. It can also provide an additional \$40 for vitamins and minerals.

Natal Supplement: When you inform the Ministry with physician confirmation of a pregnancy, a \$45 natal allowance is provided by the Ministry each month and continues until the child is 7 months of age.

Infant Formula Supplement: If there is a medical reason that hinders an infant from nursing (i.e.: mother has infectious disease, infant unable to feed due to cleft pallet), the Ministry may provide infant formula. Speak to a worker if you need access to this supplement.

Short-term Nutritional Supplement: The Ministry can also supply nutritional supplementation such as Ensure or Boost for up to 3 months when a physician verifies an acute short-term need for additional caloric supplementation in addition to regular dietary intake. The doctor must also verify that the nutritional supplementation is to prevent critical weight loss while recovering from surgery, severe injury, serious disease or the side effects of a treatment.

Other Disability Services & Benefits

Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits

Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) provides financial assistance to CPP contributors who are unable to work because of a disability. To apply you must be under the age of 65, meet the definition of having a condition that is severe and prolonged, worked and contributed for a specific amount of time, and have made sufficient contributions to qualify. If you would like more information on this complicated topic, go online to Service

Canada's website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-disability-benefit.html>

If you have been denied benefits the appeal process can be quite lengthy (years). Search for advocacy service at www.povnet.ca.

Tax Credits and Savings Benefits

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP): The federal government has introduced a new Registered Saving Disability Plan for people with disabilities that allow a person to save up to \$200,000 in a registered savings account. The contributions are not tax deductible and can be made until the end of the year the beneficiary turns 59. You can have anyone contribute to the RDSP as long as you give written authorization. You must also be eligible for the Disability Tax Credit.

Earnings accumulate tax-free until you take money out of your RDSP. Contributions that are withdrawn are not to be included as income for the beneficiary when paid out of a RDSP. However, the Canada disability savings grant (CDSG), Canada disability savings bond (CDSB) and investment income earned in the plan will be included in the beneficiary's income for tax purposes when paid out of the RDSP.



TIP: *Be aware, you must keep your contributions in the RDSP for 10 years if you have received a grant or bond through the two programs outlined below. If you take money out of the Registered Disability Savings Plan early, you will have to pay back all the money you received through the grant and bond.*

Canada Disability Savings Grant (CDSG): Through CDSG, the government deposits money into your RDSP to help you save. The government provides matching grants of up to 300%, depending on the amount contributed and the annual income of the family with the Registered Disability Savings Plan. The maximum grant amount is \$3,500 each year, with a limit of \$70,000 over your lifetime. Grants are paid into the RDSP until the end of the year you turn 49 years of age.

For example, Mary has a beneficiary's family income of \$37,000. She made two contributions to her RDSP in 2010, one in March for \$500 and the other in August for \$400. The government matches the first \$500 at 300%, so she receives \$1500 ($\$500 \times 300\%$). The second contribution is matched at 200%, so she receives \$800 ($\$400 \times 200\%$). The total amount of matching grants in Mary's RDSP for 2010 is \$2,300 ($\$1500 + \800).

Canada Disability Savings Bond (CDSB): If qualify, you could receive up to \$1,000 annually, with a limit of \$20,000 over your lifetime. Contributions do not need to be made to the RDSP in order to receive the bond.

Disability Tax Credit (DTC): This is a tax credit that reduces the amount of taxes a person with a disability may have to pay. Benefits include a yearly tax credit on your tax return (current and future years), additional credits for you or a family member (i.e. the Caregiver credit) and possibly a retroactive claim for every year your condition existed (for up to 10 years which may result in a lump sum refund).

Eligibility for Disability Tax Credit: To be eligible, you must have a physical or mental condition which affects one or more of your basic activities of daily living. The condition must have lasted, or is expected to last, for at least one year (continuously). There is no age restriction for applying. You will need to have your doctor (or optometrist, audiologist, occupational therapist, psychologist or speech language pathologist) to complete a Disability Tax Credit Certificate (Form T2201), signed it, and return it to the Canada Revenue Agency.

Disability Tax Credit - <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/sgmnts/dsblts/dtc/menu-eng.html> (Can also be picked up at your local Canada Revenue Agency)

Other Benefits to Access with Disability Tax Credit: Getting the Disability Tax Credit is also the recognized means to prove disability for many other programs or access other tax credits including for you if you are disabled or have a disabled family member including:

- Medical Expenses (including Attendant Care)
- Caregiver Amount Credit
- Child Disability Benefit (CDB)
- Infirm Dependent
- Child Care Expenses (Disability Supplement)
- Disability Supports Deductions
- Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB) (Disability Supplement)
- Child Fitness Tax Credit (Disability Supplement)
- Home Buyers Tax Credit

To find out more about allowable medical expenses, deductions and tax credits, and how you can use them if you support people with disabilities, contact Canada Revenue Agency at 1 (800) 959-8281, TTY: 1 (800) 665-0354.

Child Disability Benefit (CDB): If you have a child under the age of 18 with a severe and prolonged impairment in mental/physical functions and qualify for the Disability Tax Credit, your child may be eligible for the Child Disability Benefit. The CDB amount is calculated according to base income, which is determined by the number of children for whom the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) is received.

CDB is a supplement to the CCTB and Children's Special Allowances payments. To apply, families must obtain a signed Disability Tax Credit Certificate (form T2201) and the Canada Child Tax Benefit application (form RC66) for the child.

Child Tax Benefit - <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/forms/rc66-canada-child-benefits-application.html>

The form can also be picked up at your local Service Canada Office.

Sales Tax Exemptions: Many goods and services used by people with disabilities are **exempt from the goods and services tax/harmonized sales taxes (GST/HST)**, including wheelchairs, walkers, hearing aids, patient lifters, as well as health and personal care services.

Some programs are also tax exempt; for example, "Meals on Wheels", recreational programs and camps. For a complete list call GST/HST Information 1(800) 959-5525, TTY: 1 (800) 665-0354.

Other Transportation Benefits

HandyDART: HandyDART is a door-to-door shared-ride service for people with physical and cognitive disabilities and has vehicles equipped to move people with mobility devices. The handyDART will pick up the individual at their home and drop them off at their destination.



Eligibility: You are able to use handyDART if you have a physical or cognitive disability and you are unable to use public transit without assistance. Pets are only allowed if they are a service animal.

Size of Mobility Devices: HandyDART lifts are able to accommodate mobility devices that fit within the following measurements: Width: 94 cm (37 in.); Length: 122 cm (48 in.); Weight on the lift: 250kg (550 lbs.) when the device is occupied and includes the handyDART driver.

Accessing HandyDART Service: Complete the application form found online <http://www.translink.ca/en/Rider-Guide/Accessible-Transit/HandyDART.aspx> or through contacting the Access Transit office at (604) 953-3680.

Types of Trips: There are 2 types of service through handyDART
Subscription trips - Regular trips that are taken daily or weekly.
Casual trips - One-time trips.

Trip reservations can be made up to seven days in advance, and can be made until 4 p.m. the day before the trip. Early booking is recommended for trips made during peak hours. Forty-eight hours' notice is generally required and priority is given to those needing transportation for work, medical, or post-secondary educational purposes. To book or to cancel a trip on handyDART, call (604) 575-6600.



TIP: Please note that the PWD bus pass is NOT accepted on HandyDART.

Fares: The fare for all HandyDART trips is a 1-Zone adult fare. You can pay with cash, Adult FareSaver or an Adult Monthly Pass.

Cash/Compass Ticket, single 1-zone	\$2.85
Adult FareSaver tickets, book of 10	\$22.00
Adult Monthly Pass, 1-zone	\$93.00

Adult fares apply for all HandyDART travel. Concession tickets, the Provincial BC Bus Pass and the CNIB pass are not valid on HandyDART. If you have a HandyCard, attendants – someone you need to assist you to be able to travel, can travel with you without charge.

Where to Buy: Monthly passes and Compass Tickets can be purchased by phone, mail or in person through the HandyDART/MVT office.

- By phone: Call (778) 452-2889 between 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays (credit card only)
- By mail or in person: MVT Cloverdale, 17535 55 B Ave, Surrey, BC
- Make cheques and/or money orders payable to "MVT Canadian Bus Inc."



TIP: Please bring exact change, or a cheque or money order payable to "MVT Canadian Bus Inc."

HandyCard: If you live within the TransLink service area and have a permanent physical, sensory or cognitive disability and require assistance to use conventional public transit, HandyCard allows travel at Concession fare prices on the bus, SkyTrain, SeaBus and West Coast

Express. If you need someone to assist you when traveling, your attendant can travel free of charge.

HandyCard customers use an orange Concession Compass Card, which can be loaded with Concession Monthly Passes, DayPasses or Stored Value, which is like loading money onto your card, so you don't have to carry FareSavers or cash.



TIP: HandyCard is for travel on conventional transit and can't be used on HandyDART. If your trip includes HandyDART, you'll pay regular adult fare rates.

TaxiSavers: This program is a supplementary service for HandyDART customers that subsidizes 50% of the cost of taxi and is available to individuals holding a HandyCard with permanent disabilities. You can purchase a \$50 pack of Taxi Saver coupons at the cost of \$25. Coupons do not expire. Coupons come in values of \$1, \$2 and \$5. Coupons are not transferable to another person and cannot be used on any other transit system; however you can send them in for a refund at any time. It is important to note that the taxi driver will not provide change and a coupon cannot be provided as tip so you will need to carry exact change for payments.

For example, if your cab fare is \$7.50, you can give \$7.00 in coupons but will have to give the driver the \$0.50 in change and any tip amount you want to add.

For more information, contact Access Transit Customer Care at (604) 953-3680.

Greyhound: This long-distance travel system provides accessibility for people with mobility devices or service animals that are able to travel without the help of an assistant. Greyhound provides assistance with boarding and de-boarding buses, luggage, transfers, stowage and retrieval of mobility devices.

A minimum of 48 hours will need to be provided prior to travel to enable them to accommodate you. Contact the Disabilities Travel Assistance Line at 1(800) 752-4841 with information on your needs, (ex. Require a bus with a lift). If wheelchair lift buses are not available or requested, alternative boarding assistance will be provided to the best of their ability.

For individuals who require a personal care attendant (PCA), Greyhound offers the care assistant a reduced fare rate of 50%. The assistant must

be at least 12 years of age, have picture ID, and be able to provide the necessary assistance to the rider. Greyhound will require you to notify them at least 24 hours prior to departure. Eligibility for the reduced fare is based on the assistance required for the person with restricted mobility and is not based on a specific disability. The reduced fare cannot be combined with any other Greyhound offer.



For more information, check out <https://www.greyhound.com/help-and-info/travel-info/customers-with-disabilities/> or call the Disabilities Travel Assistance Line at 1(800) 752-4841.

VIA Rail: Passengers who need assistance with attending to their personal needs (ex. eating, medical care, personal hygiene) during their trip must travel with a companion capable of providing such assistance. The companion travels free in the same class of service. Where necessary, the companion is expected to assist VIA personnel in boarding and disembarking the passenger and in helping the passenger move about while on board. To be eligible, provide a signed Medical Certificate from a licensed medical doctor or licensed mental health professional (psychiatrist or psychologist). The Medical Certificate must state that the passenger cannot travel alone without a Support Person and be dated and signed one year or less prior to the date of travel - unless it indicates that the functional limitation is permanent. The special needs traveler must present, **for each trip**, a valid card from a **recognized association or institution for person with disabilities** (see Disability Travel Card™ on the next page).

Aim to book your travel **48 hours or more** in advance and specify the special services you will require to the agent when booking. It is recommended that visually-impaired clients find out what services are available to them by contacting a sales agent by telephone at 1 (888) 842-7245 or from a ticket counter in your area. If you are hearing- or speech-impaired, you can contact VIA Rail teletypewriter (TTY) at 1(800) 268-9503 (toll-free). For more information, visit <http://www.viarail.ca/en/travel-info/special-needs/accessibility>.

Disability Travel Card: The Disability Travel Card provides identification to a person with a permanent disability which allows an accompanying adult attendant to travel at no cost. It is approved by Easter Seals Canada and its members and/or affiliates on the lines of Motor Coach Companies that participate in the reduced fare plan and VIA Rail. To apply: <http://easterseals.ab.ca/site/OurPrograms/DisabilityTravelCards.aspx>

Submit your application by mail or by phone.

- By mail: British Columbia Lions Society for Children with Disabilities, 3981 Oak St. Vancouver, BC V6H 4H5
- By phone: (604) 873-1865

Access for Flights: Most airlines for flights within Canada accommodate people with disabilities who require a personal attendant or additional seating due to their disability (includes obesity). In general, airlines will not charge for the additional seat required for a person requiring assistance with meals, medication, or using the toilet. The individual will be charged for the fare available at the time of booking plus other fees, taxes and surcharges collected on behalf of airport authorities, or the federal government.

Gas Tax Refund: Allows individuals who are certified by a medical practitioner as having a “permanent mobility impairment that renders the use of public transportation hazardous” to access a tax refund on their gas purchases. The gas purchased must be for personal use and not for resale. It does not include diesel, fuel to heat your home, or propane.

The rate of refund is \$0.015 per liter or \$0.0015 per kilometer. Refunds can be claimed for up to 2 years after the purchase date of the gasoline. You are not required to submit your gas purchase receipts with your claim; however, you must keep them as proof of purchase of your claim for six years.

Apply online at: http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/gasoline_tax_refund.shtml.

Provincial Gas Tax Refund: If you have PWD status* or other qualifying disabilities**; are at least 16 years of age; is the registered owner/lessee of a vehicle or can provide verification from the registered owner of the vehicle confirming joint, you are eligible to



receive the provincial gas tax refund that can be used towards gas, diesel or propane. Each eligible person may claim a refund of up to \$500 annually. Refund Rates are based on the tax paid at the time and place of purchase and not the total purchase price for fuel.

*OR you would receive assistance but do not qualify since you are 65+

**Qualifying disabilities include: loss of limb; permanent dependence on a wheelchair; complete and permanent loss of function of the lower limbs; have a permanent impairment of movement as certified by a doctor; have a permanent mental disability as certified by a doctor to the extent that it would be hazardous to use public transportation; have permanent sight impairment as certified by a doctor to the extent that you are not

eligible to hold a driver's license under the *Motor Vehicle Act*; receive a 100% veteran disability pension through active service in any war while in Her Majesty's forces.

To Register for Fuel Tax Refund Program:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/sales-taxes/motor-fuel-carbon-tax/fuel-tax-refund/register>

- Send your registration application by fax, email, mail or drop it off to your nearest Service BC Centre location.
- By fax: (250) 356-2195
- By email: REVREGCL@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca
- By mail: Ministry of Finance, PO Box 9435 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9V3

To Apply for Provincial Gas Tax Refund:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/sales-taxes/motor-fuel-carbon-tax/fuel-tax-refund/apply-for-refund>

- Mail your refund application to: Ministry of Finance, Refunds Section, PO Box 9628 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC V8W 9N6, or drop it off at any Service BC Centre.
- For more information: Online: www.gov.bc.ca/fueltaxrefund
- Toll free in Canada: 1 (877) 388-4440

Autoplan Disability Discount: To receive a 25% discount on your Basic insurance you must first register for the Provincial Gas Tax Refund. Once your application has been approved, take your registration number, owner's certificate of insurance and vehicle license documents to your Autoplan broker to qualify for the discount. You may also qualify for backdated discounts. To apply for retroactive discounts, take your first letter from the Ministry of Finance that shows when you first became eligible for the fuel tax refund to your Autoplan broker.

BC Ferries Fare Reduction for Disabled Persons & Escorts:

If you are a B.C. resident and have a permanent disability, reduced fares are available. This discount applies only to passenger fares and not vehicle fare, but will extend to the attendant travelling with the individual if such help is required. To receive the fare reduction, you must hold a BC Ferries Disabled Status Identification (DSI) card and present it to the ticket agent at the time of purchase. To apply for a DSI card, you must prove your disability is permanent and severe. This means normal daily functioning is impaired and you are restricted from carrying out personal care activities such as preparing, serving or eating meals; dressing, grooming, washing or bathing; be mobile without

assistance; manage personal affairs without assistance. It takes 2-3 weeks to process DSI applications.

To apply: http://www.bcferries.com/files/PDFs/bcf_disabled_status_application_form.pdf

For additional information: http://www.bcferries.com/travel_planning/disabilities.html

Overheight Vehicles: Passengers requiring the use of an "overheight" vehicle equipped with a mechanical wheelchair lift or ramp may travel at the posted "underheight" vehicle (or car) tariff with or without a DSI card. Please inform the ticket agent of your vehicle's special status.

Special Parking on the Ferry: If you have mobility restrictions, be sure to ask the ticket agent upon arrival for a windshield card that will notify the crew that you need parking near the elevator. Keeping your hazard lights on during loading also notifies the crew the need for parking near the elevator. This service does not ensure boarding in overload situations. You may have to wait for the next boarding if you have not arrived at the ferry terminal with sufficient time to board (at least 20 minutes is recommended).



TIP: Be aware shorter routes do not have elevators so you will have to remain in your vehicle if you are unable to climb the stairs.

You can also call **Customer Information and Reservations:** 1 (888) 223-3779, TTY Contact Numbers: 1 (800) 972-6509.

Disability Parking Permit: Individuals with permanent or temporary mobility impairments are eligible for the disability parking permit. Such individuals include those who cannot walk more than 100 meters, need extra wide parking spaces in order to get in/out of their vehicle, or are legally blind.



Parking permits for individuals with permanent disabilities are valid for 3 years and renewable. Parking permits for individuals with temporary disability are not renewable (must reapply) and is dated for a period of up to 1 year based upon the time your doctor indicates. There is also a \$23 processing fee to be submitted with the application, and a section that your doctor must complete.

More information: <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/parking-permit>

Leisure Benefits

Campsite Fees: Free camping in a road accessible BC provincial park with PWD status. No charge for a second non-recreational vehicle.

To access: Obtain a current calendar year **Release of Information form** from the Ministry. Upon arrival at the campground, show the campground operator the **original** approved form **and** a second piece of identification.



TIP: *This benefit does not apply to group camping, group picnicking, backcountry or marine fees. Also, PWD recipients receiving assistance from other provincial or federal programs such as CPP Disability, WCB Disability, etc. are not eligible.*

For more information: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/fees/disability.html>

Leisure Access Pass: Access to local recreation centres in your area. Surrey's Leisure Access Program provides an opportunity for residents or refugees with Government-sponsored status with financial needs to participate in their activities at a low cost or free. Your household net income will have to be less than the number allowed for your family size

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family Net Income	\$20,386	\$24,811	\$30,895	\$38,544	\$43,890	\$48,675	\$52,460

Most application can be found on-line or at the local recreation centre. You will have to provide verification of income, proof of address, and ID.

For more information: <http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/1773.aspx>

Fishing License: Annual fishing permits are available to disabled persons for \$1.12. The permit can only be used in freshwater.



To obtain your license, visit a local Income Assistance office and ask for a Release of Personal Information Form for fishing license. You will also need to fill out the fishing license application at:

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/licences/docs/disabled_angling_app.pdf

Once your application has been approved, the freshwater fishing license can be bought from one of the many fishing license vendors throughout BC or at a Service BC office. Licenses can be renewed online if you have a credit card. Don't lose your License number as you will need this to renew it.

Housing Related Benefits & Services

Homeowners Disability Grant: In addition to the basic grant eligible for those with PWD status, you can also receive an additional grant that reduces your property tax by **\$275**, for a total of **up to \$845**.

 **TIP:** You must apply for the home owner grant and the low income grant supplement separately. The low income grant supplement application and required documents must be submitted to the Ministry by December 31 of the current tax year.

For more information: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/reduce/home-owner-grant/person-with-disabilities>

BC Property Tax Deferral Program: Allows home owners to defer the payment of their annual municipal property taxes. To qualify, you must either be at least 55 years of age, a surviving spouse, or a person with disabilities as defined in the Regulations to the Land Tax Deferral Act; be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident under the Immigration Act (Canada); have lived in British Columbia for at least one year prior to applying; and have a minimum equity of 25% in your home based on assessed values as determined by BC Assessment.

There are other terms and conditions that are outlined on the BC provincial government's Property Tax Deferral website: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/defer-taxes>

Residential Tenancy Dispute Fee - Application to Waive Filing Fee: If you have been issued an eviction notice by your landlord, you can dispute the eviction through the Residential Tenancy Branch. The fee for filing a dispute resolution is \$100. However, these fees can be waived for people of low income. The form to request for fees to be waived can be found online or be picked up at the Residential Tenancy Branch.

For more information call: (604) 660-1020 or visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/residential-tenancies/apply-online/fees-and-fee-waivers>

BC Housing for People with Disabilities: specific housing and programs for Person with Disabilities. These programs include some types of subsidy or rent assistance, independent living, senior housing and subsidized housing units. Call: (604) 433-1711, Toll free: 1 (866) 465-6873

For more information: <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/housing-with-support>

Independent Living BC (ILBC): Serves seniors and people with disabilities who require some support but do not require 24-hour institutional care, bridging the gap between home care and residential care. Services include accommodation, meal services, housekeeping, laundry, recreational opportunities, and personal care services such as assistance with grooming, mobility and medications.

Individuals **cannot apply directly to an assisted living program.** To access the program, you must be assessed and referred by your local health authority. If you are currently not a client, contact **Fraser Health** at General inquiries (604) 587-4600 or toll free 1 (877) 935-5669. You should expect to pay 70% of your income after-taxes once you receive approval for this program.

For more information: <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/housing-with-support/independent-living-bc-program>

The Seniors' Supportive Housing Program: Provides specially modified rental homes in selected subsidized housing developments to low-income individuals who are 55 years old or older and people with disabilities. They are for individuals who are not eligible for assisted living but can live independently with some assistance; meaning they are able to manage their own lifestyle, can react appropriately in an emergency situation, and not demonstrate behaviour(s) that place themselves or other tenants within the building at risk. Support services include 24-hour response, light housekeeping, meals, social and recreational activities.

Expect a wait time after applying, but remember to keep your application active by contacting BC Housing once every 6 months to inform them of your continued interest in finding a unit. Approval will be determined by the housing operators and Health Services staff in buildings directly-managed by Fraser Health.

For more information, contact (604) 433-2218 or toll free 1 (800) 257-7756.

Additional Resources

Advocacy:

Sources Newton Resource Centre: (604) 596-2311

Disability Alliance BC: (604) 872-1278

PovNet: (604) 876-8638 or www.povnet.org

Help Lines:

24-Hour Crisis Line: (604) 951-8855 | Toll Free 1-877-820-7444

Seniors Abuse & Info Line: (604) 437-1940 | Toll Free 1-866-437-1940

VictimLink BC – 1-800-563-0808

Problem Gambling Help Line – 1-888-795-6111

Family Resources:

After Hours Child & Family Services Office: 1-800-663-9122

Youth Against Violence Line – 1-800-680-4264

Women's Resources:

Atira Women's Resource Society: (604) 428-9202

Battered Women's Support Services: (604) 687-1867 | 1-855-687-1868

Elizabeth Fry Society: (604) 520-1166 | 1-888-879-9593

Health:

Alcohol & Drug Info & Referral: (604) 660-9382 | 1-800-663-1441

HealthLink BC: 8-1-1

Legal Resources:

Access Pro Bono: 1-877-762-6664 www.accessprobono.ca

Legal Aid BC: (604) 408-2172 | Toll Free: 1-866-577-2525

Aboriginal Legal Aid: <http://aboriginal.legalaid.bc.ca/>

John Howard Society: (604) 872-5471 Ext. 222

Justice Access Centre: (604) 660-2084 | Toll Free 1-800-663-7867

Immigration Resources:

Immigrant Services Society of BC: (604) 684-7498

MOSAIC Surrey Newcomers' Centre: (604) 254-9626

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society: (604) 597-0205

Shelters:

BC211: 2-1-1 | <http://shelters.bc211.ca/bc211shelters>

Mental Health Centres

Provides support to adult (19+) residents experiencing mental illness, and substance issues. Contact the Mental Health Centre in your area. Phone: 211 for the local number

City	Address	Phone
Abbotsford	Abbotsford Mental Health Centre	(604) 870-7800
Agassiz	Agassiz Mental Health Services	(604) 793-7160
Burnaby	Burnaby Mental Health Centre	(604) 453-1900
Chilliwack	Chilliwack Mental Health Services	(604) 702-4860
Delta	Delta Mental Health Centre – N	(604) 592-3700
Delta	Delta Mental Health Centre – S	(604) 948-7010
Hope	Hope Mental Health Centre	(604) 860-7733
Langley	Langley Mental Health Centre	(604) 514-7940
Maple Ridge	Maple Ridge MHC Centre	(604) 476-7165
Mission	Mission Mental Health Centre	(604) 814-5600
New Westminster	New Westminster Mental Health	(604) 777-6800
Port Moody	SHARE Family and Comm Services	(604) 540-9161
Surrey	Surrey Mental Health & Addictions	(604) 953-4900
Tri-Cities (Coquitlam, Port Moody, Port Coq-)	Tri-Cities Mental Health Centre	(604) 777-8400
White Rock	White Rock/South Surrey	(604) 541-6844

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