



SOURCES
COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRES

Persons with Disabilities



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



“social
wellness
for our community”

AskAnAdvocate.ca

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The information in this booklet is current as of January 2021.

Disclaimer

The *Persons with Disabilities Quick Reference Guide* is produced by the Ask an Advocate Program under Sources Community Resources Society. It should be used as a general guide as it is not intended to provide legal advice. While we attempt to ensure accuracy of the information presented, we are not responsible or liable for any errors or omissions. As each individual's case is different, anyone using this guide should also check the original cited sources, the applicable legislation and policy. You may also want to consult an advocate or lawyer in situations involving time sensitive requirements, loss of benefits and appeals.

The following legislation is cited throughout this guide:

[Employment and Assistance Act](#)

[Employment and Assistance Regulation](#)

[Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act](#)

[Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulation](#)

Additional information can also be found on the Ministry website under:

[BC Employment & Assistance Policy & Procedure Manual](#)

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To request additional copies or to contact us with further questions, visit

<https://askanadvocate.ca> or email askanadvocate@sourcesbc.ca.

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About Us

Sources Community Resources Society

Sources Community Resources Society is a community-based non-profit organization. We have been providing help, encouragement and hope for individuals and families in White Rock, Surrey, Delta, Langley, Prince George and beyond for 40 years.

Every year, we touch the lives of close to 40,000 individuals and families. To serve them, our team of dedicated staff and volunteers offer a variety of social wellness programs and services through 60+ programs at 20 locations.

Our goal is to create more vibrant and resilient communities by offering support to children, youth, families, persons with disabilities, seniors and others who are coping with isolation, addiction, poverty, disability and conflict. We also support our communities through leadership, education and volunteerism.

Ask an Advocate Program

Ask an Advocate is one of the Sources Community Resources Society's programs. It provides advocacy support online to organizations serving Metro Vancouver's homeless and at risk of homelessness population.

The Ask an Advocate website focuses on assisting individuals who have barriers to accessing basic needs such as income, disability benefits, medical benefits, pensions, tenancy and housing. The program aims to provide useful information as well as to empower individuals to self-advocate. Through webinars, videos, answers to commonly asked questions, Quick Reference Guides, training resources and links to other services, we strive to ensure clear information is readily available in an array of simple to understand formats.

To learn more, visit www.sourcesbc.ca and <https://askanadvocate.ca>.

To watch our webinars on Persons with Disabilities Eligibility and Application, visit our YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLY5QE_Py-Ek&list=PL-pqBZwGVam-0BIHtOtvJeccgx22rUWBs.

Introduction

The *Persons with Disabilities Quick Reference Guide* provides a brief overview of the Employment and Assistance Legislation. It is not all inclusive but covers a variety of topics that are frequently brought to the attention of our advocates. It is designed for applicants, recipients, service providers, advocates and anyone interested in learning more. To gain a better understanding of the rules that are applied in each situation, it is recommended that the legislation be reviewed.

The guide will outline basic information about the Persons with Disabilities program, its benefits, and how to access them. It will also include references to different related resources, other benefits that may be offered provincially, as well as applicable legislation and websites that should help with accessing these benefits.

Basic Information on Persons with Disabilities

Persons with Disabilities (PWD) is the provincial disability program in British Columbia that is delivered by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. PWD is a component of the income assistance program and all the benefits that are available through the regular Income Assistance program are also available to those with PWD status. In addition, there are also specific benefits available for people that are eligible for PWD.

These benefits are not transferable to another province or territory. If you move outside of BC to another province or territory, you will have to apply for the disability program offered in the other province and prove that you meet that program's eligibility requirements.

Note: *The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is simply referred to as the Ministry in this booklet.*

According to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, you have the following **rights** when applying or receiving BC Employment and Assistance benefits:

- To apply for assistance when you believe you are in need.
- To have the information and assistance you need to apply.
- To have your eligibility be determined on the basis of verified evidence.
- To be informed of the documents and information needed to determine eligibility and the deadline for their submissions.
- To be given a reasonable timeframe to provide information and documents to the Ministry.
- To receive all assistance and services to which you are entitled, depending on availability.
- To access programs that will help you to find work, depending on availability.
- To be informed of your responsibilities to apply for and receive other sources of assistance.
- To be informed about the processes and decisions affecting you.
- To be explained the implications of providing consents including from third parties.
- To receive courteous, respectful, efficient, and fair service.
- To be treated without discrimination based on race, gender, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or other protected grounds.
- To have service quality complaints addressed in an appropriate and timely manner.
- To be aware of what personal information is collected about you, why it is being collected and to correct this information if it is wrong.
- To be given a government official's contact who can provide more information.
- To have information provided to the Ministry be treated in a confidential manner and in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPPA) Act.
- To be able to address concerns regarding disclosure of personal information to the Privacy, Compliance and Training Branch (PCT) Corporate Information and Records Management Office if you believe your personal information is not collected, used, or disclosed appropriately.
- To not have information provided to the Ministry be divulged more than needed when contacting outside agencies.
- When applying over the phone, the Ministry must review the application and obtain verbal consent before collecting information from third parties.
- To be advised and have the right to request reconsideration and appeal decisions to deny, discontinue or reduce assistance.

- To have the right to access information on the BC Employment and Assistance case.
- To have the right to request a document be returned or be given a photocopy of the document (e.g. birth certificate, passport, etc.).

Conversely, you have the following **responsibilities** to ensure you meet the Ministry's expectations for receiving assistance:

- To conduct a work search before your eligibility interview dates, unless you are exempt from doing a work search (e.g. health restricts ability to work).
- To pursue any other income to which you may be entitled to (e.g. employment insurance, workers' compensation, union or lodge benefits, pensions, veterans' benefits).
- To actively seek work if you are employable and, if required by the Ministry, take part in employment and/or training programs. You must be available for any job you are able to do.
- To have, or if not promptly apply for, a Social Insurance Number and to provide proper identification for yourself and all family members.
- To ensure all information provided is true and complete. The Ministry will verify your information on application forms and monthly cheque stubs. A deliberately false statement on either forms can lead to disqualification or prosecution.
- To inform the Ministry of any change in your circumstances that may alter the amount or type of assistance to which you are eligible for.
- To take personal responsibility for becoming self-supporting as quickly as possible.
- To provide all the information and documents necessary to determine eligibility.

Note: *The Ministry may reduce a PWD recipient's cheque by \$25 per month for failure to provide information and document or declare them ineligible.*

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/apply-for-assistance/rights-responsibilities

Note: To protect yourself, you may want to

- Date all letters from the Ministry the day you receive them.
- Always ask for a name of the worker you are speaking to.
- Always get a copy "date-stamped" of what you have submitted to the Ministry.

Eligibility

To qualify for PWD, the following must be demonstrated:

- You must meet financial criteria (income and assets),
- You must meet other eligibility criteria (identification and citizenship, etc.), and
- You must meet the PWD definition of “disability”.

For more information on financial and other eligibility criteria, please contact the Ministry at 1-866-866-0800, visit askanadvocate.ca or refer to our Income Assistance Quick Reference Guide.

PWD Definition

The PWD definition of “disability” requires you to meet all of the following criteria:

- Have a severe mental and/or physical impairment(s),
- Be 18 years old (you can start the application process when you are 17 ½),
- Have a doctor confirm the impairments will likely continue for at least two years,
- Demonstrate you are directly and significantly restricted in your ability to perform daily living activities either continuously or periodically for extended periods of time (e.g. personal care, taking medication, budgeting banking, housekeeping, etc.),
- Demonstrate you require significant help or supervision from another person, assistive device, or assistive animal in managing your daily living activities.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/pwd-designation-and-application/designation-application

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.

Eligibility Start Date

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 starts the month after the month of approval. For example, if the date on the letter is August 25th, this is the date you were approved but eligibility would not start until September 1st.

Occasionally when approval for PWD benefits is late in the month, you may still receive an income assistance 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 also known as a “top up” cheque.

Note: PWD is not a permanent designation and might be rescinded by the Ministry in exceptional circumstances.

Application

If you already receive Income Assistance, call the Ministry to ask for the PWD application. If you are not already on Ministry assistance, the first step to apply for PWD is to complete the online My Self-Serve application for assistance through www.myselfserve.gov.bc.ca. If you are unable to complete the online application, you may apply in person at a Ministry office or Service BC office if you live in a smaller community; or by calling the Ministry at 1-866-866-0800.

Streamlined Application

For a family unit who received assistance at least once in the last 6 months, may not have to go through the 2 stage application process. They may be approved for a streamlined application at the Ministry's discretion and will simply need to submit a Monthly Report. If the family unit is approved for the streamlined application, they will not have to wait the one month waiting period for earnings exemptions.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/application-and-intake/bcea-streamlined-application-re-turning-within-six-months>

Once you have been approved to apply for PWD, you may request the PWD application booklet from the Ministry. The PWD booklet is a 24 page application which has the following 3 sections:

- Section 1: Applicant Information (filled by the applicant).
- Section 2: Medical Report (filled by a medical or nurse practitioner).
- Section 3: Assessor Report (filled by a medical or nurse practitioner, or another prescribed professional).

Note: A prescribed professional can be one of the following:

- Medical or nurse practitioner
- Registered psychologist
- Registered nurse or psychiatric nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Physical therapist
- Social worker
- Chiropractor

Upon completion, the application is sent to the Health Assistance Branch in Victoria for assessing eligibility. After submitting the application, in our experience, it takes on average around 2 to 4 months to determine approval or denial.

Prescribed Class PWD Application

If an applicant has already been approved for another prescribed government program or benefit, the Ministry may designate someone PWD status without going through the standard application process. These other programs or benefits include:

- BC Pharmacare Plan P (Palliative Care);
- Ministry of Children and Family Development's At Home Program;
- Community Living British Columbia (CLBC);
- Canada Pension Plan Disability.

The prescribed class application is a 2 page form where you simply have to provide the Ministry with consent to verify whether you are receiving benefits from one of the prescribed government programs listed above.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/pwd-designation-and-application/designation-application>

People applying for PWD designation as a member of a prescribed class must still meet all other eligibility requirements (identification, financial, residency, etc.). The Ministry will verify that you are receiving benefits from that prescribed government program before assessing eligibility.

Note: *If you have official documents showing that you are receiving prescribed government program benefits, it may expedite your PWD application. You may want to provide copies of the documents with your prescribed class application.*

Advocate

If you need assistance with the application process be sure to reach out to an advocate in your area for further assistance. To find an advocate in your area please visit: www.povnet.org/find-an-advocate

Case Administration

The Ministry has moved to a call centre model, which means that whenever you call the Ministry, your call goes into the call centre and not to a 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 that if this is particularly problematic for you due to mental health issues or other reasons, you can request to have a “designated” worker. If that particular worker becomes unavailable, this could cause an interruption of services. When you are on Income Assistance, you are assigned to a specific office based on your postal code. However, to access services or drop off information to the Ministry, you can go to any Income Assistance office.

Note: *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.*

Duty to Accommodate

Under the British Columbia’s Human Rights Code, the Ministry must accommodate a client and not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender or age.

Sources: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/case-administration/individual-case-management>

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) to keep a record of whenever you communicate with an Income Assistance worker, attend a meeting with the Ministry, or supply any documentation. When supplying documents to the Ministry, get the document photocopied, date-stamped and secure it in the notebook. This ensures that you can prove to the Ministry that you submitted all required information.

Home Visits

A Ministry worker may be able to do a home visit to:

- Help clients access programs and services,
- Help clients apply for assistance if they are ill or homebound,
- Deliver assistance cheques when required or if the client is unable to attend an office.

Clients requiring home visits must be given prior notification of the visit and when possible, the Ministry worker will make a specific appointment.

Sources: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/case-administration/individual-case-management>

Interpretation Services

The Ministry may be able to provide interpretation services to applicants or recipients who are unable to communicate through written or spoken English. However, it is important to remember that requesting interpretation services may delay the applicant's or recipient's request.

Sources: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/case-administration/individual-case-management>

Out of Province for more than 30-days

Your PWD benefits will not continue if you are outside of BC for more than 30 consecutive days but can be reinstated upon your return by completing the online Income Assistance application. If you have pre-approval from the Ministry, you may be authorized to be out of the province for more than 30 days if:

- It is in relation to a specific medical treatment not available in BC;
- If you are attending a formal education program in another province; or
- To avoid undue hardship.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/residency>

Case Closure

If a family unit hasn't been issued assistance for six months, the Ministry's system will automatically close the file to accommodate those applying through the streamlined application process. If after six months, you need assistance again, you will need to re-apply for Income Assistance through My Self Serve.

Sources: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/case-administration/individual-case-management>

Income Treatment

The Ministry looks at any and all income you receive while on assistance and categorizes it as either “earned” or “unearned” income.

Earned income includes money or value received in exchange for work or the provision of a service, refunded Pension Plan Contributions, and money or value received for providing room and board or renting out your place of residence.

Unearned income includes, but is not limited to, pensions, winnings from games of chance, GST, Canada Child Benefit, BC Family Bonus, inheritance, etc.

Exempt Income

Some (but not all) types of unearned income are exempt from being taken off of the PWD cheque such as the GST and Child Tax Credit. All gifts, inheritances, education grants, bursaries and scholarships are considered exempt income for PWD recipients and they should not affect your eligibility. A complete list of income treatment and exemptions can be found in Section 1 Schedule B of the Employment and Assistance (EA) Regulation.

Note: *All income, whether earned or unearned (including gifts), and any changes in circumstances must be declared on the monthly stub.*

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/income-treatment-and-exemptions

Applying for Income from Another Source

When you are a PWD recipient, the Ministry will require you to apply for income from other available sources. For instance, if you could be eligible for Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD), the Ministry will require you to verify having pursued that source of income. Failing to seek other potential sources of income would result in the discontinuation of your PWD benefits.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/pursuing-income

Receiving Other Money

If you become eligible for income from another source, this money may be deducted from your assistance unless there is a specific exemption for that source of money. Examples of benefits that may affect your assistance are CPPD benefits, Employment Insurance (EI), or private disability benefits. A complete list can be found in Section 1 Schedule B of the EA Regulation.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/income-treatment-and-exemptions

Annual Earnings Exemption

The PWD program recognizes that people with disabilities may have some capacity to work. The annual earning exemption (AEE) is to allow for those with PWD status the ability to earn employment income and keep a portion of it. This is assessed annually, and based off a calendar year from January 1st to December 31st. That is, the AEE does not carry over to the next year and whether you use the AEE or not, on January 1st of the next year, your AEE will start over.

First time PWD applicants have a one month waiting period before being eligible for the AEE. This does not apply if PWD recipients received income assistance in the previous month or to those who have previously received disability assistance.

When you reach 75% of your AEE, you should receive a letter from the Ministry informing you of what will happen if you earn more than your AEE allows. Anything you earn over the AEE limit will be deducted dollar for dollar from your assistance cheque. If the amount is greater than the amount able to be deducted, your file will turn into a Medical Services Only file. This means that you will lose your financial assistance but your PWD designation will remain. You may however be able to continue your medical and transportation benefits.

Note: *You must still continue to submit your monthly report each month to determine re-eligibility in the following calendar year.*

Annual Earning Exemption Table

PWD Status	Annual Earning Exemption
Single Person	\$15,000
Couple: One with PWD Status	\$18,000
Couple: Both with PWD Status	\$30,000

Note: *A couple on Ministry assistance share their annual earning exemption between their family unit.*

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/income-treatment-and-exemptions

Monthly Reporting (also known as "Monthly Stub")

You are required to submit a Monthly Report, by the 5th day of the following month after the cheque is issued. This Monthly Report includes declaring any received income, maintenance, GST credit, Income Tax refunds, pensions or any other money received, and if there has been a change in living circumstance or family status.

Note: *The Ministry can cut assistance off or hold a cheque for failing to supply them with information they've requested.*

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/monthly-reporting-requirements>

Assets

The Ministry defines an asset as the following:

- Equity that can be converted to cash,
- A beneficial interest held in trust, or
- Cash.

Limits on Assets Table

PWD Status	Asset Limit	Discretionary Trust Limit	Non-Discretionary Trust Limit
Single Person	\$100,000	No Limit	\$200,000
Couple: One with PWD Status	\$100,000	No Limit	\$200,000
Couple: Both with PWD Status	\$200,000	No Limit	\$200,000

Other Asset Limits and Exemptions

Here are a few examples of assets that are exempt for determining eligibility for assistance:

Personal Possessions

As an income assistance applicant/recipient, you are allowed general household items. These items are exempt, meaning they are not recognized to have any value or be counted against your entitlement for assistance.

Home Owned by Recipient

Your place of residence (which you own) is exempt **BUT** only if you live in the home.

Vehicle

There is no limit on the value of a single vehicle used for day-to-day purposes.

Other exempt assets include Child Tax Benefit, GST, BC Tax Credit, prepaid funeral costs and much more.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/assets-and-exemptions>

Trust

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 of his or her lifetime. All trusts must be reported if they involve a person who is an applicant or recipient of assistance. There are specific requirements for a trust to be recognized by the Ministry.

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:** 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:** 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.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/trusts

Trusts can be complicated to understand but there are lots of resources available including:

- Ask An Advocate “Trust” FAQ: <https://askanadvocate.ca/assistance-programs/disability-assistance/person-with-disabilities-pwd/>
- Disability Alliance BC: www.disabilityalliancebc.org/
- PLAN BC: <http://plan.ca/>
- The Ministry's “Disability Assistance and Trusts” booklet: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/supports-services/disability_assistance_trusts.pdf

Persons With Disabilities Rates

Once you and your family unit are considered eligible for PWD, the amount you receive is predetermined by legislation. The cheque is divided into two parts: a support and shelter portion.

The **support portion** is the amount issued for the necessities of basic living including food, clothing, transportation, etc; and is based on your family status.

The **shelter portion** is the other amount that can be included in a PWD cheque. Unlike the support portion, only the amount needed, up to the maximum amount is issued. The shelter portion is intended for rent or mortgage payment amount, hydro, gas, residential single-line telephone, a house insurance premium, utility and property tax, etc.

Support and Shelter Rates:

Classification: PWD	Shelter	Support	Total
Single Person: Aged 18-64	\$375	\$808.42	\$1183.42
Couple: One with PWD	\$570	\$1027.56	\$1597.56
Couple: One with PWD with 1 Child	\$660*	\$1121.56	\$1781.56
Couple: Both with PWD	\$570	\$1503.06	\$2073.06
Couple: Both with PWD with 1 Child	\$660*	\$1597.06	\$2257.06
Single parent: with 1 Child	\$570*	\$949.08	\$1519.08

* Amount increases with the number of dependents

Shelter Amounts for Additional Members

Shelter Rates for Employable, PPMB and PWD	Number of members in your family					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	\$375	\$570	\$660	\$700	\$750	\$785

Room and Board

In a room and board situation, you may receive the lesser of the following:

- The maximum assistance rate set in legislation depending on your family unit size
- Your actual room and board cost, as well as a comfort allowance of:
 - \$60 per adult
 - \$40 per child
 - \$127 support per PWD designation

Special Care Facility User Charges and Comfort Allowance

The Ministry may be able to pay the user fees if you are in a special care facility depending on the type of facility. You may also be eligible for a comfort allowance of \$95 per month.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/support-and-shelter/support-shelter-and-special-care-facilities

To prove to the Ministry that you have shelter costs, you must provide documentations such as a tenancy agreement, rent receipt or a completed Shelter Information form by the Ministry.

Pre-natal Shelter Supplement

The pre-natal shelter supplement can be issued for a single pregnant person with no spouse and no dependent child. This supplement will provide an additional \$195 per month while you are pregnant to assist in finding or securing housing that will accommodate the new addition to your family prior to the child's birth. This supplement is issued for a maximum of eight months from when the pregnancy is confirmed.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/pre-natal-shelter-supplement>

General Supplements and Programs

If you meet specific criteria, the following additional supplements may be provided. However, most will require pre-approval from the Ministry. Some of the supplements available are:

Crisis Supplement

Different types of crisis supplements have different guidelines. The Ministry can issue up to the maximum amount of crisis supplement in accordance to what is set in legislation if you are on PWD and meet the eligibility criteria.

Regardless of the type of crisis supplement, the eligibility requirements are the same:

- It is an unexpected expense or the item is needed unexpectedly,
- The absence of this would result in danger to physical health or risk of child apprehension, and
- There is no other available resource to meet the need.

Crisis Supplement for Food

The Ministry may only issue up to a maximum of \$40 per person in the family unit per month.

Crisis Supplement for Shelter

The Ministry may only issue a crisis supplement for the actual shelter cost, restricted up to the maximum combined shelter and support rates, plus the amounts for the following that the family unit is eligible to receive:

- Shared Parenting Assistance
- Pre-Natal Shelter Supplement
- CIC Temp Absence Assistance
- Deceased Adjustment Supplement

If the crisis supplement were insufficient to resolve the crisis, you would have to show the Ministry how you can come up with the remainder of the money to resolve the outstanding amount owing before issuing 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. This means for a family unit with more than 4 people, \$400 is the maximum amount of clothing crisis supplement that can be issued. For example, a family of 5 people loses all their clothing in a fire in August, the maximum amount the Ministry can issue is \$400. The Ministry would not be able to issue another clothing crisis supplement until next August.

Special Notes:

- There is no annual maximum on the total amount of crisis supplements.
- Crisis supplements cannot be provided for items covered in Schedule C of the Employment and Assistance Regulations and Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulation – Health Benefits.

- Crisis supplements are issued as per the Ministry's discretion and the maximum amount is not guaranteed to be given (For example, a worker may only issue a \$10 crisis supplement when up to \$40 could have been issued for food in a calendar month).
- Crisis supplements can only be provided for the month in which they are requested.
- You may appeal the denial of not being eligible for a crisis supplement but cannot appeal for more than the maximum amount eligible.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/crisis-supplement

Security (Damage) Deposits

The legislation allows for clients of Ministry assistance access to security deposits to secure a residence as long as the residence is covered by the Residential Tenancy Act or owned by a cooperative association. The security deposit cannot be more than half a month's rent and there is no limit on the number of deposits that a recipient can receive from the Ministry.

Security deposits may be given out after you have already moved into the residence. As well, a "Shelter Information" form must be completed by the landlord in order for it to be issued.

Security deposits are repayable to the Ministry. After receiving one, the Ministry will usually deduct \$20 from your assistance cheque the month following, which will continue until the security deposit is paid off. If a second deposit is requested, that amount will be added on top of the previous amount owing but the deduction should still remain at \$20 per month.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/security-deposits>

Pet Damage Deposit

The Ministry may be able to issue a repayable pet security deposit. Similarly to the security deposit, the place of residence must be covered by the Residential Tenancy Act or owned by a cooperative association. As well as, the pet damage deposit cannot exceed more than half a month's rent. You must get the landlord's approval to have a pet at the residence to be considered for the pet damage deposit.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/pet-damage-deposits>

Co-op Share Purchase Supplement

The Ministry can assist with the purchase of Co-op shares up to \$850 or 50% of the amount whichever one is smaller. This amount is also repayable at \$20 per month.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/co-op-share-purchase-supplement

Christmas Supplement

On your assistance cheque for December (issued in November), you should receive an additional amount. The amount will differ for different categories or family units.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/christmas-supplement

Camp Fees Supplement

This supplement is available from the Ministry as a potential resource to assist your child to go to a recognized camp. However, it is limited each year by the fiscal budget and therefore, it is encouraged to submit all necessary information to the Ministry as early as possible. The amount given will be limited to the camp fee cost or a maximum of \$200 per child, whichever is the lesser amount.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/camp-fees-supplement

Transportation and Living Costs

The Ministry may assist with the costs of transportation and living for an individual that must attend a hearing in relation to a child protection issue. They may also assist with transportation, child-care costs, living costs, and fees associated with attending a hearing in relation to the assignment of maintenance rights.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/transportation-supplement

Moving Supplement

The Ministry may assist with moving cost under certain situations, some examples include:

- You have confirmed employment.
- You are moving to substantially less rent.
- Transportation is needed to a child protection hearing.
- You have been compelled to move from your current rental situation.
- You are facing an imminent threat to the physical safety of anyone in the family unit.
- Your place has been sold, is being demolished or is condemned and notice to vacate has been given.

If you move your belongings yourself and use your own vehicle, you may be eligible to receive the supplement to pay for your gas, ferry fare, etc. If you use a moving company, you have to submit the moving estimates to the Ministry for approval. The Ministry will consider truck rental costs but will not pay for the cost of hiring a friend to help with the move. The least expensive cost to supplement the move will be what is considered in these situations.

Storage fees may be considered for the moving supplement if you or your family unit's possessions must be placed into storage temporarily due to a move to/from a transition house, going into a treatment facility or having to vacate your residence for a short term treatment.

Note: If you move without getting pre-approval from the Ministry you may be reimbursed IF there were exceptional circumstances (i.e. fleeing abuse)

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/moving-transportation-and-living-costs>

Transportation Supplement or BC Bus Pass

PWD recipients can either have a monthly bus pass or a \$52 transportation supplement added to their monthly assistance. A person can switch back and forth between the monthly bus pass or the transportation supplement by notifying 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, you would need to notify the Ministry by November 5th for a change to take effect December 1st. For recipients who choose to keep a bus pass on an on-going basis, can keep it indefinitely and no longer need to re-apply for the bus pass each year.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/transportation-supplement

Guide Dog & Service Dog Supplement

The Ministry may issue an additional \$95 per month for the care of a guide dog if the animal is certified under the Guide Animal Act.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/guide-dog-and-service-dog-supplement

Funeral Costs

The Ministry may provide the necessary costs of the transportation and the 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.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/funeral-costs

Essential Utilities Supplement

The essential utilities supplement 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.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/utility-security-deposits>

Employment Supplements and Programs

Although recipients of PWD are not required to seek employment, the Ministry may provide resources and support to assist you in finding employment or independence if you choose to do so.

Voluntary Participation Plan

Although recipients of PWD have no employment obligations, the Ministry offers a voluntary participation plan designated to assist PWD recipients to find employment. If at any point of the voluntary participation plan, you become unable to continue, no sanctions will be applied to your assistance cheque.

Single Parent Employment Initiative

If you are a single parent and have been on assistance for at least 3 months, you may apply for the Single Parent Employment Initiative program. This program allows for single parents to be trained for up to 12 months and supported in securing employment.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance/employment-planning/spei>

Confirmed Job Supplement

If transportation, clothing, or other employment-related supplies are required to start employment, the Ministry may provide a supplement of up to \$1,000, if the employment will enable you and your family to come off of assistance.

To be eligible, someone in your family unit must get a confirmed job that will enable your family to not require assistance. The person with the job requires specific job-related item to start work and there are no other funds available to purchase the item(s). If these criteria are met, talk to the Ministry about accessing this supplement.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/confirmed-job-supplement

Health Supplements and Programs

The Ministry determines eligibility for health supplements depending on the status of the individual requesting the supplement. People with PWD have extended health benefits beyond what is available to those on regular Income Assistance. For more information on health benefits, visit Schedule C of the Employment and Assistance Regulation. Everyone on PWD assistance has the following basic health coverage:

Medical Services Plan (MSP) Coverage

MSP coverage is available to eligible Ministry recipients under Plan C, which is identical to the general public coverage which includes premium free assistance. This includes being able to see a doctor, get lab tests done, X-rays, and hospital care.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-services-plan-and-medical-coverage

Prescription Coverage

Pharmacare provides assistance with the cost of prescription drugs and some medical supplies under Plan C. However, name brand medications may not be covered by Pharmacare. If you have been prescribed medication that is not covered by Pharmacare, you may want to talk to your doctor about the Special Authority Request.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare-for-bc-residents

Plan G

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

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/pharmacare

Extended Medical Therapies

Extended medical coverage includes acupuncture, chiropractic, massage therapy, naturopathy, podiatry and physical therapy. An acute need must be confirmed by your medical specialist and there must be no other resources available to cover the cost of the therapies.

The Medical Service Plan covers up to combined 10 visits per calendar year for \$23 per visit. The Ministry may extend an additional maximum of 12 visits per year with the same coverage of \$23 per visit if the 10 visits are exhausted. However, a doctor or nurse practitioner must confirm an acute (severe and immediate) need and the applicant still has to show that there are no other resources to pay for these therapies.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/extended-medical-therapies

MSP Medical Benefits when Traveling

When travelling, MSP coverage is available through BC's health care system. 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 to cover the difference. Consequently, it is recommended that additional medical coverage be purchased.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-services-plan-and-medical-coverage

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. 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, therefore when you move to another province you will have to apply for disability under the disability program offered in that province.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents/managing-your-msp-account/leaving-bc-permanently

Dental & Orthodontic Coverage

Dental and Orthodontic coverage is available to those on PWD assistance. The coverage begins on January 1st of every odd numbered year. Not all procedures are covered and individuals must cover any additional cost incurred. Additional information on allowable fees and services can be obtained from the Ministry. Some of these dental benefits include:

- Basic Dental Services - \$1,000 for every two calendar years.
- Basic Dental Services for children - \$2,000 every two calendar years.
- Emergency Dental Services: for pain relief.
- Crown, bridgework, orthodontic and dental supplements.

Note: *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.*

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/dental-and-orthodontic-services

Diet Supplements

Diet supplements are there to assist you to meet the costs associated with unusually expensive diets as a result of a medical condition or need. The Ministry approval of a diet supplement is for the period the condition is expected to last up to a maximum of 12 months for acute (short-term) conditions and 24 months for chronic (ongoing, recurring, long-term) conditions. A person having separate conditions, only the higher diet allowance amount is usually paid.

Diet Supplements Rate Table

Condition	Maximum Amount
Restricted Sodium Diet	\$10 per month
Kidney Dialysis	\$30 per month
Diabetes	\$35 per month
Gluten-Free Diet or Dysphagia	\$40 per month
*High Protein Diet	\$40 per month
Ketogenic diet	\$40 per month
Phenylalanine diet	\$40 per month
Cystic Fibrosis	\$50 per month

*A high protein diet supplement may only be issued for the following conditions: cancer with ongoing therapy that requires nutritional support, chronic inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, HIV positive diagnosis, AIDS; chronic bacterial infection, tuberculosis, hyperthyroidism, osteoporosis, hepatitis B and C

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

To Obtain a Diet Supplement

You must provide written confirmation of the need for the diet supplement from a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or from a dietitian (registered with the College of Dietitians of BC); type of diet required (as specified in the list) and the allowance for up to 12 months. This can be done by letter or written out on a prescription pad.

Short-Term Nutritional Supplement

The Ministry can also supply nutritional supplementation (such as Ensure or Boost) for up to 3 months when a medical professional verifies an acute short-term need for additional caloric supplementation in addition to regular dietary intake. It also must be verified 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.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/nutritional-supplements

Monthly Nutritional Supplement

An additional supplement that is available only to those with PWD status when it is confirmed by a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or from a registered dietitian 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.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/diet-supplements

Natal Supplement

Once a pregnancy is confirmed by a medical practitioner, a nurse practitioner or a midwife, a \$45 per month natal allowance may be provided by the Ministry to assist with prenatal or postnatal expenses. If you are pregnant with more than one child, \$90 per month may be provided. This is to assist pregnant recipients or family units with children under the age of seven months. The eligibility period for the natal supplement ends six months following the child's birth.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/natal-supplement>

Formula for Infants

If there is a medical reason that an infant is unable to nurse (i.e.: mother has infectious disease, infant unable to feed due to cleft pallet) the Ministry may provide regular infant formula for a child during the first 12 months. Medical confirmation is required to confirm the infant's inability to feed.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/nutritional-supplements>

Medical Equipment, Devices and Benefits

The Ministry may provide people in need with medical equipment and various devices. There are limits set in legislation for the amount that can be given for these medical equipment and devices. You may have to cover any additional cost that may be required. The basic eligibility criteria are as follows:

- The item must be prescribed by your doctor
- No other resources are available to obtain the item
- The item must be the least expensive option
- Pre-approval from the Ministry is needed

All equipment and devices have a specific replacement guidelines and timelines which can all be found on: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/bc-laws/bc-employment-and-assistance-regulation#schc_s3

Wheelchairs and Scooters

There needs to be confirmation that the device is required for the next 5 years.

Note: A bariatric scooter may be available if 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.

Positioning and Transfer Devices

Positioning devices such as chairs and beds can be obtained if specific requirements are met (i.e. to facilitate toileting and transfers). Health supplements that fall within this section are standing frames, grab bars, bath lifts, bath seats, floor-to-ceiling poles 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).

Breathing Devices

Health supplements that fall into this category are positive airway pressure devices, apnea monitors, suction units, nebulizers, medical humidifiers, percussors and inhaler accessory devices. These devices may also have cost restrictions.

Non-conventional glucose meters

If it is medically essential to test your blood glucose levels. For example, a talking glucose meter for those with visual impairment.

Medical or Surgical Supplies

There are restrictions on disposable or reusable medical supplies. The items must be used in a medical procedure or treatment and may be provided when they are part of the care of the client for wound care, ongoing bowel care, catheterization, incontinence and more.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-supplies

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.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-transportation

Orthoses

There are a variety of different orthosis that may be provided. For example: custom-made orthotic footwear, off-the-shelf footwear, ankle braces, cranial helmets, walking boots, etc. 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.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-equipment-orthoses

Hearing Instruments

You may be eligible for hearing aids, cochlear implants, repairs, battery replacements and related items, if prescribed by an audiologist.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-equipment-hearing-instruments

Optical Services

Specific optical services, such as eye exams and glasses, may be provided to recipients of disability assistance.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/optical-services

Eye Exam

A person is able to get a routine eye examination for up to \$48.90 once every two years through Pacific Blue Cross. Routine eye examinations for children and seniors are also covered by Medical Services Plan (MSP).

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/optical-services

Glasses

The Ministry may provide 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.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/optical-services>

Medical Services Only

Medical Services Only (MSO) can be provided to former recipients of PWD to allow them to keep medical benefits and health supplements while transition from Ministry assistance to independence. MSO occurs either when a PWD recipient becomes ineligible for assistance due to income in excess or when he or she turns 65 years old.

Due to Income In-Excess

If you become ineligible for assistance due to income in excess, your file may turn into an MSO file for as long as you are eligible for MSP Supplementary Benefits. This means that you 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 you reach your AEE mid-year, keep filling out your monthly report in order to avoid having to re-assess eligibility in the new year. If you do not submit your monthly reports, you can return to disability assistance by reapplying online through the My Self Serve.

Turning 65

If you become ineligible for assistance due to being over the age of 65, your file may turn into a MSO file for as long as you are in receipt of a federal benefit. This means that you will still have basic medical benefits which include doctor visits, prescription coverage, and access to extended medical benefits such as dental and mobility devices.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/health-supplements-and-programs/medical-services-only

Other Disability Services and Benefits

Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) Benefits

CPPD is a federal benefit provided by Service Canada. It provides financial assistance to CPP contributors who are unable to work because of their disability. To apply you must be under the age of 65, have severe and prolonged disability, worked and made sufficient contributions to Canada Pension Plan.

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-disability-benefit.html

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, 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).

To be eligible for DTC, 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. You will need to have your doctor or prescribed professional complete a Disability Tax Credit Certificate (Form T2201), sign it, and return it to the Canada Revenue Agency.

For more information, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/disability-tax-credit.html>

Other Benefits to Access with Disability Tax Credit

Getting the DTC is also the recognized means to prove disability for many other programs or access other tax credits for you if you are disabled or have a disabled family member including:

- Medical Expenses (including Attendant Care)
- Caregiver Amount Credit
- Child Disability Benefit
- Child Care Expenses
- Disability Supports Deductions
- Canada Workers Benefit
- Home Buyers Tax Credit
- Federal Excise Gasoline Tax Refund

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/living-disability/tax-credit-disability.html

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

The federal government has a RDSP 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 before the beneficiary turns 60. You can have anyone contribute to the RDSP as long as you give written authorization. You must also be eligible for the DTC. All funds held or withdrawn from an RDSP are fully exempt from determining eligibility for PWD.

For more information, visit www.rdsp.com

Canada Disability Savings Grant (CDSG)

The CDSG allows someone to contribute a certain amount of money and allows the government to match it for up to 300% depending on your income. The maximum grant amount is \$3,500 per year up to a lifetime maximum of \$70,000. Contributions to the CDSG may continue until the age of 50.

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/savings/grants-bonds.html

Canada Disability Savings Bond (CDSB)

If you qualify for the CDSB, 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.

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/registered-disability-savings-plan-rdsp/canada-disability-savings-grant-canada-disability-savings-bond.html

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.

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/child-disability-benefit.html

Goods and Services Tax Exemption

If you have a disability, you may be eligible for a tax exemption for the goods and services that you use. Some of the goods and services that are exempt are medical devices, home-delivered meals and personal care services.

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/gst-hst-information.html

Other Transportation Benefits

HandyDART

If you have a disability and are unable to use conventional public transportation, you may be eligible for HandyDart. It is a shared ride service for those with physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities and operates everyday on a reservation based system.

For more information, visit <https://www.translink.ca/riders-guide/transit-accessibility/handy-dart>

HandyCard

If you have a permanent disability, and need to use conventional public transit, the HandyCard allows travel at Concession fare prices on the bus, SkyTrain, SeaBus and West Coast Express (not valid on HandyDART).

For more information, visit www.translink.ca/Rider-Guide/Accessible-Transit/HandyCard.aspx

Disability Travel Card

The Disability Travel Card allows people with disabilities to travel on Canadian coach operators or VIA Rail with an attendant at a reduced rate. The attendant must be able to assist you with eating, medication and toileting.

For more information, visit <https://www.translink.ca/riders-guide/transit-accessibility/accessing-public-transit>

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.

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

VIA Rail

When travelling on VIA Rail, staff may assist you in boarding and handling your luggage. If you have a disability and need to travel with a support person, you may do so as long as the support person is able to provide you the required assistance you need. You must provide a medical certificate from a medical professional in order to bring your support person.

For more information, visit <https://www.viarail.ca/en/travel-info/special-needs/accessibility>

Access for Flights

Most airlines within Canada accommodate people with disabilities who require a personal attendant or additional seating due to their disability. Connect with the airline you are travelling with to see how they may accommodate your travel needs.

Excise Gasoline Tax Refund

You may be refunded for the federal excise tax on the gasoline that you purchase if you have a disability and cannot use public transportation. A qualified medical practitioner must certify the impairment. The current refund amount is \$0.015 per litre (2019) and you must claim your refund within 2 years of purchase.

For more information, visit www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/excise-gasoline-tax-refund.html

Provincial Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities

If you have a qualifying disability, are at least 16 years old and are a registered owner of a vehicle or leasing a vehicle, you may apply for a refund for the provincial motor fuel tax used in the vehicle you own or are leasing. Eligible applicant may receive a refund of up to a maximum of \$500 per year.

For more information, visit www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/sales-taxes/motor-fuel-car-bon-tax/fuel-tax-refund

Autoplan Disability Discount

You may receive a 25% discount on the cost of Basic Autoplan if you are a persons with disabilities, owner or joint owner of a vehicle and are 16 years or older. To apply, you must first register for the Fuel Tax Refund Program and speak to your Autoplan broker.

For more information, visit www.icbc.com/brochures/Pages/disability-discount.aspx

BC Ferries Fare Reduction for Disabled Persons & Escorts

If you have a permanent disability, you may receive discounted fares for BC Ferries when you apply for the BC Ferries Disabled Status Identification Card. The ferries are also equipped with special parking spots designed for people with disabilities and these stalls may be requested when purchasing ferry tickets.

For more information, visit www.bcferrries.com/travel_planning/disabilities.html

Disability Parking Permit

If you have a disability that affects your mobility or you cannot walk for more than 100 meters without affecting your health, you may qualify for the disability parking permit. The permit allows you to park in parking spots designed with extra width space to get in and out of your vehicle.

For more information, visit www.sparc.bc.ca/parking-permits

Leisure Benefits

Campsite Fees

PWD recipients may be eligible to camp for free at a BC provincial park and with no extra charge for a second non-recreational vehicle. To be eligible you need to obtain a current calendar year Release of Information form from the Ministry to show the campground operator along with a piece of identification.

For more information, visit www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/fees/disability.html

Leisure Access Pass

Many major cities in British Columbia offer a free or discounted leisure pass to local recreational facilities. To be eligible, you must demonstrate that you are low income or currently on PWD. You may need to provide documents such as a bank statement, monthly stub or a Ministry cheque to prove your household income when applying for the leisure pass.

For more information, visit your local recreation centre or local advocacy office.

Fishing License

If you have a severe and permanent disability, you may be eligible for an annual Non-Tidal Angling Licence for a reduced annual fee of \$1.12. To apply, you must show proof of disability such as, but not inclusive to, your PWD designation, fuel tax refund approval or the parking permit for people with disabilities.

For more information, visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/fishing-hunting/fishing/recreational-freshwater-fishing-licence> or call the Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management at (250) 356-9295.

Housing Related Benefits and Services

Home Owner Grant for People with Disabilities

In addition to the basic home owner's grant, if you have a disability or live with a relative who has a disability and have a property valued at \$1,650,000 or less, you may be eligible for this grant. You must show you have paid at least \$100 in property taxes and meet other eligibility requirements. The amount that you may be approved for ranges between \$845 to \$1,045.

For more information, visit www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/home-owner-grant/person-with-disabilities

BC Property Tax Deferment Program

The BC property tax deferment program allows home owners to defer the payment of their annual municipal property taxes. To qualify:

- You must be either:
 - At least 55 years of age,
 - A surviving spouse, or
 - A person with disabilities.
- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident,
- Have lived in BC for at least one year prior to applying,
- Pay property taxes owing from previous years, penalties or interest,
- Have a minimum equity of 25% in your home.

For more information, visit www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/defer-taxes

Residential Tenancy Dispute - Application to Waive Filing Fee

The fee for filing a dispute resolution through the Residential Tenancy Branch is \$100. If you are low income and need to submit a dispute application, you may be eligible for a fee waiver. You will need to submit documents to show you are low income.

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

BC Housing for People with Disabilities

There are specific housing and programs for Persons with Disabilities such as subsidies, independent living, senior housing, and subsidized housing units.

- The BC Independent Living program is for individuals who require some support but not 24-hour institutional care, bridging the gap between home care and residential care.
- The Supportive Housing program provide units to those with mental health and/or substance abuse and provides on-going support and life-skills training.
- The Seniors' Supportive Housing provides housing and support to adults who are over 55 years of age and not eligible for assisted living.
- The Addiction Recovery program provides short term housing and support to those who are currently participating in a substance use recovery program.

For more information, visit www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/housing-with-support

Appeals

The Ministry, as a government body, recognizes a power imbalance with the people accessing and using the assistance program. To address this, an appeal process is available to recipients who disagree with a decision the Ministry has made.

Denial, Discontinuation or Reduction of Assistance or Supplement

Almost any time your assistance or supplement is denied, reduced or discontinued, it is open to appeal.

Circumstances that are Not Open to Appeal

Some circumstances are not appealable, including:

- Appeal supplements,
- Supplements related to Employment Plan in an employment-related program,
- Obligations to sign an Employment Plan or the conditions outlined in the plan,
- Confirmed job supplement,
- Repayable warrant supplement due to hardship,
- Repayable warrant transportation supplement.

Applicants and recipients should still be offered the opportunity to request a reconsideration and be provided with a **Request for Reconsideration Form**. Although Reconsideration and Appeals Section staff will determine eligibility for reconsideration.

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/decisions-reconsideration-and-appeal/appeal

Notification of Denial

Generally, the Ministry will notify you by letter about their decision. Another way for you to be advised of the discontinuation of your request is by phone or through your My Self-Serve. Sometimes, however, you may not become aware of the discontinuation of assistance until you do not receive a cheque.

Note: *It is strongly recommended that whenever you speak to a Ministry worker to record the date of the communication, the name of the worker, and the nature of the call. This may be helpful when there are discrepancies in the dates of when a person became aware of the denial, discontinuation, or reduction of assistance.*

Reconsideration

The first level of appeal is a reconsideration. The assistance worker or the supervisor usually makes the first decision to deny, reduce, or discontinue assistance. When you appeal their decision, it goes up to the regional level to a reconsideration adjudicator.

Note: *You have to ask the ministry for a "Request for Reconsideration" or "Appeal Package" for you to cite the reasons why you disagree with the decision.*

The appeal package includes a document with multiple sections outlining the reconsideration process. One of the sections identifies the reason for denial and the legislation used to support the Ministry's decision to deny your request. There also is a section for you to complete, to identify why you believe the Ministry has made the wrong decision or why the decision was "not reasonable". It may be helpful to list all of your attachments on this page to ensure it is recorded as evidence.

You may appeal the following ministry decisions:

- Refusal of income assistance, hardship assistance or a supplement.
- A decision that resulted in discontinuation or reduction of income assistance, hardship or a supplement.
- A decision on the amount of a supplement given.
- A decision regarding the condition of or non-compliance.

Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/decisions-reconsideration-and-appeal/reconsideration>

Adding New Information

At the Reconsideration level, you may attach additional information or documentations that you believe will support your case, including new information the Ministry may not have previously had when making their decision. If you can obtain additional letters of support from professionals who understand your situation, including doctors or specialists who can speak to your condition, or medical reports, you may want to attach it to your appeal package.

Time Limit to Appeal

If you decide you would like to appeal the denial, discontinuation or reduction of a benefit, you have 20 business days (not counting weekends or holidays) from the day after you received the denial decision. Once you have completed the Request for Reconsideration and attached all the information or additional evidence, return the package to the Ministry office.

Note: *Photocopy the reconsideration package submitted and get it date-stamped, as this will verify you have met your timeline.*

Extension to the Appeal Time Limit

You are allowed to ask for a 10-day extension to the 20-day time limit. However, you must ask for this extension within the 20-day time limit. For instance, if your doctor is away and you will not see him or her before the last day to appeal, it may be wise to wait until the last day of the time limit to ask for an extension.

To request an extension, write the extension request in Section 3 of the appeal package and submit it to the Ministry. From that point, you will have an additional 10 business days to gather your evidence and information. Again, upon submitting the package to the Ministry, ask for a copy date-stamped to prove you have met the deadline. The Ministry has 10 business days to review your appeal and render a decision. You should receive this written decision in the mail shortly afterwards.

Appeal Supplement

When disability assistance is discontinued or reduced, during the appeal process there is an appeal supplement that may be available until the matter is resolved. In other words, if you make an appeal for being cut off from disability assistance, you may receive an appeal supplement until the final appeal decision is made (tribunal decision).

The amount of appeal supplement is based on the previous month's entitlement. If you become successful with your appeal, the appeal supplement provided is then assumed as the regular entitlement you would have received if the denial, discontinuation, or reduction had not happened. However, if you lose your appeal, then the appeal supplements are repayable to the Ministry, as it is deemed that the Ministry was correct in not issuing benefits.

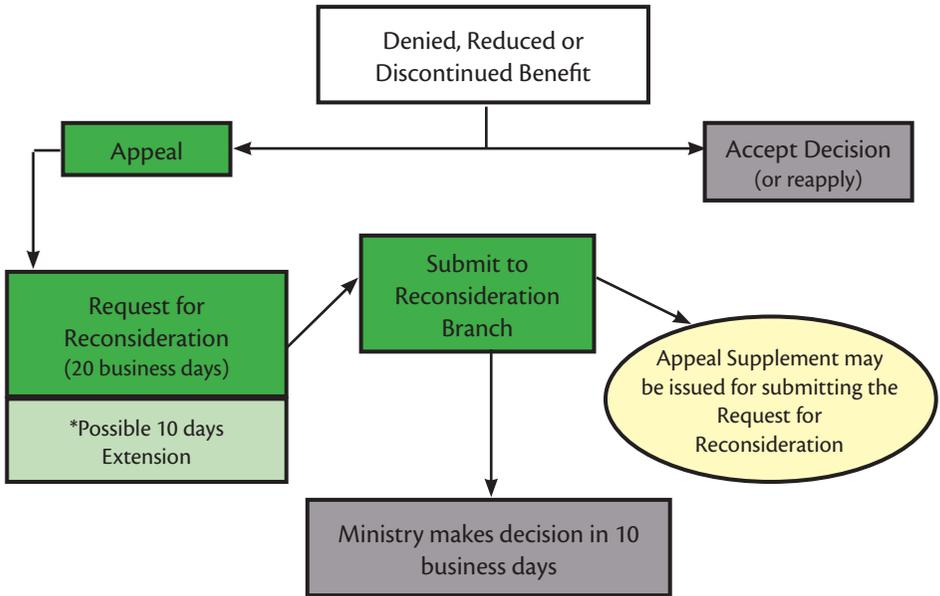
Conditions with No Appeal Supplement

There are some conditions where the appeal supplement will not be made available:

1. If you are applying for Income Assistance and have not yet been deemed to be eligible for benefits.
2. If you are appealing the denial of a status (e.g. PWD status), a medical supplement or hardship assistance.

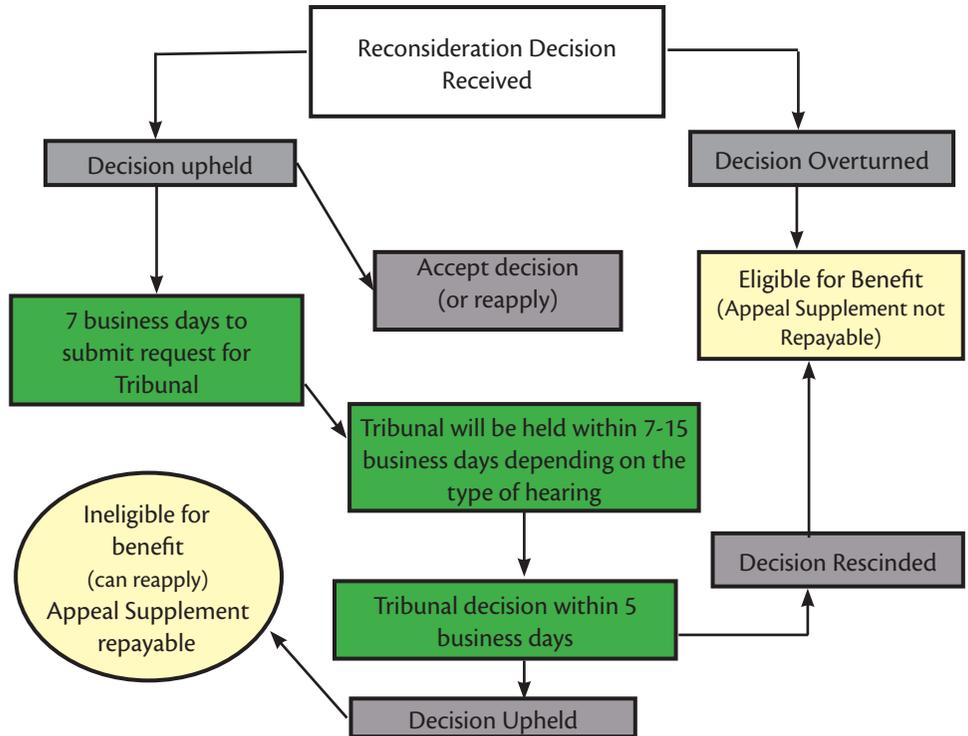
Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/decisions-reconsideration-and-appeal/reconsideration

Stage 1 Reconsideration



* If you're needing extra time to collect evidence for your reconsideration, it may be of benefit to you to ask for a 10-day extension. This must be done on or close to your last day of your reconsideration deadline.

Stage 2 Tribunal



Tribunal

If the original decision is upheld at the reconsideration level, you may choose to continue to the next level of appeal which is a tribunal. A tribunal can only uphold or rescind the Ministry's decision; they cannot make a new decision or grant an award. If the matter is regarding a financial amount, it is referred back to the Ministry to determine the financial amount.

7-Day Time Limit for Tribunal

If the Ministry upholds their decision, counting from the following day after receiving the written decision, you have 7 business days (not including weekends or holidays) to submit a request to proceed to a tribunal.

The request form should be attached to the written decision. If it is not attached to the decision, go to your Ministry office and request one or print the form online. To access this form you can visit: www.eaat.ca/appeal-parties/appeal-forms

Requesting a Tribunal

The request to proceed to a tribunal can be mailed in; however, it is better to first fax the request into the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal (EAAT) and send the original copy to them afterwards. You can also take the request into the Ministry office who can fax and mail it for you. Remember, if you choose this option, get a photocopy of your tribunal request and get it date-stamped. This will help verify you have submitted it within the given time limit.

When completing your tribunal request form, you will be asked whether you would like an **“in-person hearing”, “phone hearing”** or **“written hearing”**.

An in-person tribunal is an informal hearing. It usually takes place in a boardroom of a government office and only you, the panel members, and the Ministry (unless you have a representative or person of support with you) will be in the boardroom. The panel will be comprised of up to three people who are not Ministry employees and are independent of any influences from the Ministry. Instead, they are employed by the EAAT, which was set up specifically to hear disputes between the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the people using the program.

Written appeals have a different timeline and the outcome usually take a bit longer. Once you have submitted your request for a written hearing, you will receive a letter from the EAAT. This letter will give you the timeline to put forth your submission. Once you do so, it will then go to the Ministry and they will have time to submit their response. Finally, the tribunal hears the case.

Note: *In-person hearings are usually best because it allows you to better explain your situation than over the phone. Written hearings are better when the case is very technical in relation to the legislation.*

Preparing for a Tribunal

For an in-person or phone hearing, the tribunal will set a date to hear the appeal. It must be within 15 days of the board receiving the request and they are obligated to provide you at least 2 business days' notice of the tribunal date and time.

Going to a tribunal can be intimidating. Be sure you are on time because the tribunal will usually wait only 30 minutes after the set time to begin the hearing. If you fail to show within that time limit, the tribunal will proceed without you, and if this occurs, the decision will likely go against you.

You can prepare a written statement and give copies to the tribunal panel as to why you believe the Ministry was wrong in the decision they made about your case. This is beneficial, as the tribunal can refer to your arguments or what you had deem as important information for the tribunal to know after everyone has left and the tribunal is discussing the evidence and making a decision. You have 7 business days for your written submission, if you need an extension you must request it in writing in advance of your due date.

You are also allowed to bring a support person with you to the tribunal. However, this person is not allowed to provide evidence or answer questions. If you choose to also have a representative (lawyer or advocate) attend the tribunal with you, this person will be able to address the tribunal, present your case, argue the legislation and can also answer questions about the case.

During the Tribunal

Once a tribunal starts, everyone is asked to identify themselves and the tribunal members will give an introduction as to their roles and responsibilities. They will also say they have arranged the hearing for up to two hours, setting aside half the time for the appellant (you) and half the time for the Ministry.

After the introduction, you will be asked to tell the tribunal why you believe the Ministry was not reasonable in making their decision. The Ministry will then be asked to present why they made the decision that they did. Expect the tribunal members to ask questions during your tribunal. After that, both parties will be asked if they have anything else to add. You may want to take this opportunity to summarize your strongest evidence or argument. Once no one has anything further to add, the tribunal will adjourn to deliberate.

Witnesses

You (along with the Ministry) may bring in witnesses to testify on the matter before the tribunal. However, witnesses are only to be brought in to give their testimony and will be required to leave the hearing afterwards.

Right to a Fair Hearing

You have the right to a fair hearing. If you believe one of the panel members may be bias for some reason, you can ask for an adjournment to address that issue of bias. For instance, one of the panel members knows you from a personal interaction and you believe this could taint their decision in your case, you could ask for the panel member to be replaced. This is an aspect of procedural fairness to the tribunal.

Principles of Natural Justice

There are some general principles that must be observed by the Ministry and the tribunal panel. For instance, one principle of natural justice is that you have the right to prepare a proper defense. The Ministry should have provided you with all the evidence they used in making their decision at the reconsideration stage. If they cite evidence in your appeal package that you didn't receive, you have the right to ask for that documentation so that you may defend yourself.

If you get to a tribunal and the Ministry presents evidence that you haven't previously seen you can ask the tribunal for a recess, to review this evidence. Another option is to ask for an "adjournment" if you feel the information requires more time or you have information to dispute the evidence. Advise the tribunal of the situation and if your request is denied ask that your request be noted in the appeal record (summary of facts), as it could be grounds for a judicial review.

The Decision

The tribunal panel will have 5 business days to submit the decision. It could take up two to three weeks before you receive it. If you are successful, the tribunal should have checked off the "rescind" box and provide an explanation on the last page of the tribunal decision. If the matter pertains to money, it will be returned to the Ministry for an amount to be decided.

For instance, if you had requested for a scooter and the decision was denied but the tribunal decides in your favour to rescind the Ministry's decision. The tribunal cannot tell the Ministry how much to pay for the scooter, just that the individual was in fact eligible for the scooter. The decision goes back to the Ministry regarding the financial amount that will be paid out for the scooter.

If you are not successful, the last page will note the tribunal upheld the Ministry's decision and will give you an explanation as in why it did not succeed.

Judicial Review

If you are not satisfied with the decision rendered by the tribunal, you do have the option to go to a judicial review. This level of appeal is through the courts and can be complicated. However, there are now a few avenues of help in this area, and you can refer to povnet.org to look for some of these resources (like an advocate).

Source: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/decisions-reconsideration-and-appeal/appeal

Conclusion

We hope this *Persons with Disabilities Quick Reference Guide* is helpful in assisting you to better understand any questions you may have about PWD. Be sure to check out our other quick reference guides on our website at <https://askanadvocate.ca>

The Ask An Advocate website is a useful website with short webinars, how to videos, answers to commonly asked questions, easy-to-read fact sheets, and other resources. On our contact page, there is also an option to email an advocate with a question if the answer cannot be found on the site. Our website focuses on the topics:

- Income Assistance
- Disability
- Tenancy
- Other Income Supports (such as CPP, OAS and more)

If you have any questions, you may also contact us at askanadvocate@sourcesbc.ca.



Additional Resources

Advocacy

- Sources Newton Resource Centre: (604) 596-2311
- Disability Alliance BC: (604) 875-0188
- PovNet: (604) 876-8638 | 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: Toll Free: 1-800-563-0808
- Problem Gambling Help Line: Toll Free: 1-888-795-6111

Family Resources

- After Hours Child & Family Services Office: Toll Free: 1-800-663-9122
- Youth Against Violence Line: Toll Free: 1-800-680-4264

Women's Resources

- Atira Women's Resource Society: (604) 428-9202
- Battered Women's Support Services: (604) 687-1867 | Toll Free: 1-855-687-1868
- Elizabeth Fry Society: (604) 520-1166 | Toll Free: 1-888-879-9593

Health

- Alcohol & Drug Info & Referral: (604) 660-9382 | Toll Free: 1-800-663-1441
- HealthLink BC: 8-1-1

Legal Resources

- Access Pro Bono: Toll Free: 1-877-762-6664 | accessprobono.ca
- Legal Aid BC: (604) 408-2172 | Toll Free: 1-866-577-2525
- Aboriginal Legal Aid: 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

- BC 211: 2-1-1 | shelters.bc211.ca/bc211shelters

Mental Health Centres

Mental Health Centres provides support to adult (19+) residents experiencing mental illness, and substance issues. To be connected, contact the Mental Health Centre in your area or call 2-1-1 for the local number.

City	Address	Phone
Abbotsford	Abbotsford Mental Health Centre	(604) 870-7800
Agassiz	Agassiz Mental Health Services	(604) 793-7161
Burnaby	Burnaby Mental Health Centre	(604) 453-1900
Chilliwack	Chilliwack Mental Health Services	(604) 702-4860
Delta North	Delta Mental Health Centre	(604) 592-3700
Delta South	Delta Mental Health Centre	(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
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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