



Checklist for the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Benefit

This Help Sheet is funded by the Legal Services Society of BC, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: Homelessness Partnering Strategy and the Health Sciences Association of British Columbia.

These are some of the programs and benefits you **may be** eligible for if you receive the Persons With Disabilities (PWD) benefit from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

See **MSD Programs** on page 2 for benefits or supplements available through the Ministry. Benefits from other sources are listed under **Benefits Through Other Organizations**, on page 5.

Helpful tips

Apply for a Bus Pass

One of the first things you should do once you have been approved for PWD is to apply for the Annual Bus Pass. Phone the Bus Pass Program at 1-866-866-0800 and ask for an application form to be mailed to you. When you receive it, you can pay the \$45 fee at your local bank and the Bus Pass Program will mail you the pass.

Toll-Free Calling

To avoid long distance charges, you can call MSD free from anywhere in BC at 1-866-866-0800.

You can also call Service BC when you phone a government office in Victoria. They will connect you and you will not be charged long distance rates. Call Service BC at 604-660-2421 or 1-800-663-7867 and ask for the office you want. If you do not know the phone number you need, Service BC will also be able to help you with this. TTY calls from Vancouver: 604-775-0303. TTY calls from elsewhere in BC: 1-800-661-8773.



Advocacy Access is a program of BC Coalition of People with Disabilities

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MSD Programs

The following programs and benefits are available through MSD.

Benefits you are automatically eligible for when you have PWD

- Dental coverage, including denture services, of up to \$1,000 over a 2-year period.**
This \$1,000 limit can only be exceeded in exceptional circumstances such as in the emergency relief of pain. Dentists must get approval before they do any dental work.
- Glasses** - lenses and frames every 3 years
- The MSD pays up to \$44.83 for an **optometrist's exam** and \$48.90 for an **ophthalmologist's exam**, every 2 years.
- Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage**
- Prescription drugs**
- Annual bus pass**

Benefits you may be eligible for when you have PWD

Health Benefits

There are several health benefits you may be eligible for once you receive PWD, if you meet the requirements. Contact your local MSD office for information on the items below to find out how to apply.

- Diet allowances** ranging from \$10 - \$50 per month for specific diagnoses only.
MSD does not have a standard application form. You can ask your doctor to write a note listing your condition and the kind of special diet you need. This is a renewable benefit.
- Monthly Nutritional Supplement benefit (MNS)** of up to \$205 per month for people with nutritional needs because of a chronic health condition. This benefit is divided into a vitamin amount (\$40) and a nutritional amount (\$165). If you receive the vitamin amount, you can also receive the diet allowance. However, if you receive the nutritional amount, you are not eligible for the diet allowance. To obtain an MNS application, contact your MSD office.



- Disposable medical or surgical supplies**
For example, personal self-care items.
- Extra chiropractic, massage therapy, physiotherapy and podiatry visits.**
- Medical equipment and devices, including mobility aids**
For example, hearing aids, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, crutches, custom-made foot wear.
- Medical transportation**
Funding for transportation to medical appointments. This must be approved in advance by MSD.
- Transportation allowance** to and from residential alcohol and drug treatment facilities.

Also see **Help Sheet 7: Health Supplements for People with Disabilities.**

Employment Income

- Earnings exemption**
You may earn up to \$500 income per month without affecting your benefits. If your partner (married or common law) is also on PWD, the earnings exemption for both of you is \$750. You must report all income to MSD, but if your monthly income stays the same you do not have to report it after the first month. If your income changes (up or down), you must report it to MSD on your cheque stub by the 5th day of the following month.

Also see **Help Sheet 9: Employment Plans and People with Disabilities.**

Volunteer Programs

- Community Volunteer Supplement (CVS)**
You may receive up to \$100 income per month for volunteer work. Please note that there is a long waiting list for this program. Contact MSD for information.
- Training Initiative Supplement (TIS)**
You may receive \$50 per month for volunteer work. Please note that there is a long waiting list for this program. The TIS is limited to 12 out of 36 months. You cannot receive both the TIS and CVS. Contact your MSD office for information.

Also see **Help Sheet 10: Employment, Education and Training Supplements for People with Disabilities.**



Other MSD benefits

Special Transportation Subsidy

For people unable to use public transit, including handyDART. Contact MSD for information.

Moving costs and security deposits

Contact your MSD office for information.

Christmas Supplements

\$35 for a single person; \$70 for couples; \$70 for families, plus \$10 per child.

Crisis Supplements

Up to \$100 per person per year for clothing, \$20 per person per month for food, and emergency rent assistance. Funding may also be provided for a one-time emergency need.

Natal Allowance of \$45 per month

You will need to provide a doctor's letter.

Guide Animal Supplement of \$95 per month



Benefits Through Other Organizations

These programs and benefits are available through various organizations and agencies.

Housing

Accessible/Affordable Housing

Phone the BC Housing Management Commission (BC Housing) at 1-800-257-7756. Website: www.bchousing.org.

Additional Home Owner Grant for People with Disabilities

For home owners with disabilities. Contact your municipal property tax department.

Property Tax Deferment

Contact your municipal property tax department.

Transportation

For some of these programs you must have limited mobility

Autoplan Disability Discount (ICBC)

Phone 604-661-2100 or 1-800-663-3051 if you are outside the Lower Mainland. You can also contact your local ICBC agent. You must be in receipt of the Provincial Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Rebate. Website: www.icbc.com.

BC Ferry pass

Apply directly to the BC Ferry Corporation. You will need a Release of Information form from your MSD office. Phone 1-888-223-3779 for an application form or go to the website at www.bcferries.bc.ca.

Federal Excise Gasoline Tax Refund

Phone the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-877-432-5472. The phone lines are open from 12 p.m. to 9 p.m. (BC time). Website: www.servicecanada.gc.bc/en/goc/gasoline_tax_refund.shtml.

Flight Discount

Your attendant may accompany you free of charge; ask the airline for details.

Provincial Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Rebate

Phone the BC Consumer Taxation Branch at 1-877 388-4440
Website: www.gov.bc.ca/sbr.



Parking Permits for People with Disabilities

To apply for a permit phone:

- Beacon Community Services (Sydney) 250-656-5537
- City of Kelowna 250-763-6011
- Cowichan Valley Independent Living Resource Centre 250-746-3930
- Kamloops People in Motion 250-376-7878
- Nanaimo Independent Living Centre 250-758-5547
- Richmond Centre for Disability 604-232-2404
- Vernon Independent Living Resource Centre 1-877-288-1088
- Victoria Disability Resource Centre 250-595-0044
- Wescom Medi-Lend (Langford) 250-478-5373

For all other areas phone: Social Planning and Research Council of BC 604-718-7744.

HandyDART

Look for the HandyDART listing in your phone book.

HandyPass and Taxi Saver

In the Lower Mainland, contact your local TransLink office or go to www.translink.bc.ca. People in other areas should contact their local transit office.

Greyhound (and bus lines other than transit) and Via Rail

Attendants travel free with a Disability Travel Card from the Lions Society of BC.

Phone 604-873-1865, or 1-800-818-4483 if you are outside the Lower Mainland.

Blind or sight impaired individuals can present their CNIB Card.

Obtain the application form from your MSD office

Leisure

Camping is free in BC Provincial Parks

Obtain a Release of Information form from a MSD to give to campsite operators.

Full or partial funding is available for camping at certain recognized camps.

Fishing License fee reduction

Look under Service BC Government Agents in the blue pages of your local phone book. They will be able to provide you with the information you need and an application form.

Access to Recreation/Community Centres and Programs

Most municipalities provide some assistance for people with disabilities who want to access their recreational programs. Call your local recreation/community centre for information.



Other programs you may find helpful

Equipment and assistive devices

For information on equipment and assistive devices to assist you with daily living activities, contact the provincial government's Personal Supports Information Line at 1-888-818-1211, TTY 1-800-661-8773 or visit www.personalsupports.bc.ca. You can also contact the non-profit BC Personal Supports Network at 1-877-333-7554 or www.bcpsn.org.

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

This is a new initiative that is available to people with disabilities and their families. There are 3 steps you must follow to be eligible for the RDSP.

1. Make sure you are eligible and apply for the Disability Tax Credit.
2. Have a valid Social Insurance Number.
3. Be up-to-date in filing your tax returns.

You can find many free RDSP resources on our website at www.bccpd.bc.ca/rdsp.htm.

BC Hydro Energy Savings Kits

BC Hydro provides free energy saving kits for low income people and families. The kit includes items such as low-flow shower heads, weather stripping and compact fluorescent light bulbs. To qualify, you must have a BC Hydro account in your name. Call BC Hydro at 1-877-431-9463 or contact the BCCPD office.



**Prepared by Advocacy Access
a program of BC Coalition of People with Disabilities**

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