



Checklist for the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Benefit

This Help Sheet is funded by 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 and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR).

See MSDPR 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

MSDPR Toll-Free Number

You can call MSDPR free from anywhere in BC at 1-866-866-0800. For any MSDPR-related benefit listed in this Help Sheet, you can call this number to talk to a Ministry worker.

Paperwork

- When you submit documents to the Ministry, be sure to get a date-stamped copy or keep the fax confirmation sheet along with the documents for your records.
- When you complete a monthly report on paper, make sure you keep a copy. Whether you do your monthly report online or on paper, keep a copy of the relevant reporting documents for your records.



MSDPR Programs

The following programs and benefits are available through MSDPR.

Benefits you are automatically eligible for when you have PWD

- Dental coverage, including denture services, of up to \$1,000 over a two-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 three years.
- MSDPR pays up to \$44.83 for an **optometrist’s exam** and \$48.90 for an **ophthamologist’s exam**, every two years.
- Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage.**
- Prescription drugs.**
- BC Bus Pass Program for PWD recipients:**
 - The BC Disability Bus Pass is in the form of a Compass card, which can be used on both TransLink and BC Transit systems throughout BC.
 - PWD recipients can choose to receive a subsidized bus pass OR a “transportation allowance” of \$52 per month. You have the option to switch back and forth between a monthly bus pass and the transportation allowance on a monthly basis. Contact the Ministry by the 5th of the previous month to start or stop the bus pass. Call 1-866-866-0800, email SDSIBUSPA@gov.bc.ca, or use [My Self Serve](#) to request a change.

NOTE: PWD recipients who receive a Comforts Allowance, Room and Board, or a PWD top-up payment can also access the bus pass or transportation allowance.

Benefits you may be eligible for when you have PWD

Health Benefits

There is a range of health benefits you may be eligible for once you receive PWD, if you meet the requirements. Contact MSDPR for information on the items below to find out how to apply.



- Diet supplements** ranging from \$10-\$50 per month for a few specific diagnoses only. MSDPR 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 MSDPR. **Also see Help Sheet 4: Monthly Nutritional Supplement.**

- Alternative Hearing Supplement:** \$100 per month for people with permanent profound hearing loss in both ears who cannot significantly benefit from the use of a hearing instrument. To apply ask a Ministry worker for an application.

- Disposable medical or surgical supplies**
For example, bandages and dressings for wound care, medicated shampoo for parasitic skin infections, and needles and syringes for medication.

- Extra chiropractic, massage therapy, physiotherapy, acupuncture, naturopathy and non-surgical podiatry visits**

- Medical equipment and devices, including mobility aids**
For example, hearing aids, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters, custom-made footwear, CPAP machines, orthotics, hospital beds, bathing and toileting aids, and non-conventional glucose meters.

- Medical transportation**
Funding for transportation to medical appointments. This must be approved in advance by MSDPR.

- Transportation Supplement** to and from residential alcohol and drug treatment facilities.

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



Employment Income

Annualized Earnings Exemption

The following earnings exemptions apply to households with PWD members:

- Single people may earn up to \$9,600 per calendar year, without deductions from benefits.
- Couples where one person is PWD can earn up to \$12,000 per calendar year, without deductions.
- Couples where both people are PWD can earn up to \$19,200 per calendar year, without deductions.

Please note that MSDPR expects you to report any income on your cheque stub or online, using My Self Serve. This information must be submitted to MSDPR by the 5th day of the following month.

Other MSDPR benefits

Moving costs and security deposits

Contact MSDPR for information.

Christmas Supplements

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

Crisis Supplements

For unexpected expenses or needs only for the calendar month in which the application is made. 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 Housing Registry (BC Housing) at 604-433-2218 or 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 ICBC at 604-661-2800 or 1-800-663-3051, if you are outside Metro Vancouver. You can also contact your local ICBC agent. You must be in receipt of the Provincial Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities. Website: www.icbc.com.

BC Ferry pass

Apply directly to British Columbia Ferry Services. You will need a Release of Information form from your MSDPR office. Phone 1-888-223-3779 for an application form, or go to the website at www.bcferries.com.

Federal Excise Gasoline Tax Refund

Phone the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-877-432-5472. The phone lines are open from 12 pm to 9 pm (BC time). The application form is available on the CRA website: www.cra.gc.ca/E/pbg/ef/xe8/.

Flight Discount

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

Provincial Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities

Phone the Ministry of Finance at 1-877 388-4440.

Website: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/individual.html. See “Persons with Disabilities” link.



Parking Permits for People with Disabilities

To apply for a permit, phone:

- Beacon Community Services (Sydney) 250-656-5537
- City of Kelowna 250-469-8757
- Cowichan Valley Independent Living Resource Centre 250-746-3930
- Kamloops People in Motion 250-376-7878
- Nanaimo Disability Resource Centre 250-758-5547
- Richmond Centre for Disability 604-232-2404
- Independent Living Vernon 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 Metro Vancouver, 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, on behalf of Easter Seals Canada. Phone 604-873-1865, or 1-800-818-4483 if you are outside Metro Vancouver. Blind or sight impaired individuals can present their CNIB Card.

Leisure

Camping is free in BC Provincial Parks

Obtain a Release of Information form from an MSDPR office to give to campsite operators. Full or partial funding is available for camping at certain recognized campsites.

Fishing License fee reduction

Look under Service BC Government Agents in the blue pages of your local phonebook. 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

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

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

1. Make sure you are eligible and apply for the Disability Tax Credit. We can help you with your application.
2. Have a valid Social Insurance Number.
3. Be up-to-date in filing your tax returns.
4. Be under the age of 60.

For more information on RDSPs, see our Help Sheet 14: The Registered Disability Savings Plan and the Disability Tax Credit.

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 DABC office.



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