



AN AUDIOLOGIST'S GUIDE TO THE DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

To help audiologists support patients applying
the Disability Tax Credit (DTC)



Created by Access RDSP

The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) offers significant benefits for people with disabilities who qualify. Audiologists can play a key role in supporting patients' application for the DTC.

WHY SHOULD PATIENTS APPLY?

- The DTC is available to individuals with any level of income, including patients receiving the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefit, patients who work full time and patients with no income.
- The DTC allows individuals to open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). Patients under the age of 50 may qualify for up to \$90,000 in government grants and bonds.
- In the 2018 tax year, the disability amount was \$8,235. An additional \$4,804 was available for eligible children younger than 18 years of age, for a total of \$13,039.
- The DTC credit may be transferred to a family member/spouse.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Patients are considered markedly restricted in hearing if, even with the use of appropriate devices such as hearing aids or cochlear implants,

- They are unable or take an inordinate amount of time to hear or understand someone familiar to them, even in a quiet setting.
- This is the case at least 90% of the time.
- The restriction is prolonged and must last, or be expected to last, at least 12 months.

Cumulative effects

If you have a client with restrictions in cognition (mental functions), vision, speaking, walking, dressing, feeding, or elimination, they may be better served by asking a physician or nurse practitioner (NP) to complete the form, as audiologists are not authorized to complete these sections. NPs and physicians can also assist clients who require 14 hours of life-sustaining therapy to apply.

GENERAL APPLICATION TIPS

- Eligibility for the DTC is not solely based on medical diagnoses, but on the effects conditions have on a patient's ability to perform basic daily activities.
- If a client uses an assistive device, indicate this on the description of effects.
- Do **not** include the patient's ability to work, housekeep, manage a bank account, drive or engage in recreational activities. These activities are not considered relevant to DTC eligibility.

SECTION-SPECIFIC TIPS

Effects of impairment

Include your patient's relevant diagnoses, while emphasizing the effects of the disabling condition(s) on their everyday life and daily functionality. Compare this functioning to an average person of the same age.

Consider answering the following questions when you complete the "Effects of Impairment" section:

- *What is this patient's diagnosis and how does the condition restrict them?*
- *How often does this effect occur? Explain how the patient is restricted at least 90% of the time.*
- *Does this patient require help with daily activities? Do they use any assistive devices?*
- *What is an example from the patient's life which demonstrates how they are impacted by this restriction in function? Do they take 2 or 3 times longer to do a task than the average person?*
- *Does this patient need any supervision?*
- *How have this patient's social abilities been impacted by their disability?*

For patients who are restricted in hearing, you may consider environmental conditions:

- *Are there barriers to visual forms of communication? e.g. dim lighting*
- *Does the patient need to position themselves strategically to engage in conversation?*
- *Do they require specific communication strategies that are not always available, even in familiar settings?*
- *Does the patient's normal environment fall outside of the definition of a "quiet setting"?*

Your patient may face daily challenges that require them to make frequent accommodations. These examples are relevant to the DTC Application.

Certification

In question two, you are required to indicate if the medical information you keep in your client files correlates with the restrictions you indicated on the application.

EFFECTS OF IMPAIRMENT | EXAMPLE TEXT

- Patient relies on lip-reading or sign language to understand verbal communication at least 90% of the time, despite the use of a hearing aid.
- Patient takes at least 3 times as long as the average person their age to understand a spoken conversation and frequently requires others to raise their voices or repeat words and sentences, despite the use of a hearing aid.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) frequently requests additional information regarding the applicant in a follow-up questionnaire specific to each patient.

This questionnaire asks to confirm information submitted in the original application. The CRA may ask you to provide examples from your patient's life, explaining how they require additional time to perform activities or are unable to complete certain activities. The CRA may ask you to verify that your patient experiences their restriction(s) at least 90% of the time and that the restrictions are severe. You may need to re-submit information you already provided.

Please use our guidelines in **General Application Tips** and **Section Specific Tips** to assist you in completing the questionnaire. Keep a copy of the original application and additional questionnaire on hand for future reference.

RESOURCES

Canada Revenue Agency Resources

- www.canada.ca: Guide RC4064 Disability-Related Information
- www.canada.ca: Tax credits and deductions for persons with disabilities
- A dedicated CRA line for health care providers is available to discuss the DTC program, application criteria and the Income Tax Act. Call 1-800-280-2639.

Access RDSP

We provide free supports and services for physicians and patients, including:

Disability Tax Credit Support:

- For one-on-one support with the DTC, email: rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org or call Toll-free: 1-800-663-1278

RDSP Support:

- Assistance to open an RDSP
- Specialized support and navigation for Indigenous peoples
- RDSP & Disability Planning Helpline
- RDSP & DTC Info sessions for individuals, organizations and professionals
- \$150 grant for low-income BC residents

For more on these services, call toll-free: 1-844-311-7526, email: info@rdsp.com or visit www.rdsp.com.

Access RDSP is a partnership between BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS), Disability Alliance BC (DABC) and Plan Institute.

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