
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2017SDPR0057-001597
Sept. 19, 2017

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

British Columbia improving supports for people on assistance

VICTORIA – Thousands of people and families on assistance will benefit from increased earnings exemptions announced in the September Budget Update.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2017, people on income assistance will be able to earn an additional \$200 a month without any impact on their payment. For those on disability assistance, the annual earnings exemption will increase by \$2,400 a year.

“Reducing poverty is not just about giving people money, it’s about creating opportunities,” said Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. “Higher earnings exemptions offer people a chance to increase their household income, remain connected to the workforce, and build the valuable work experience that can lead to a good-paying job. This is a change that will have a positive impact on thousands of people.”

For those on disability assistance the change will apply to the current year. If someone has already reached the current maximum, they will be reassessed under the new exemption amount.

At least 5,800 people on income assistance and 3,000 people on disability assistance will benefit from the increased earnings exemptions over the year.

"We are very pleased to see an increase to earnings exemptions come in with the rate increase," said Jane Dyson, executive director of Disability Alliance BC. "Work offers people dignity, independence and it connects them to their community. Increasing the earnings exemption is also a good step towards poverty reduction."

The increase to earnings exemptions follows a \$100 increase to income and disability assistance rates that also takes effect on Oct. 1, 2017.

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BACKGROUND

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Earnings exemptions amounts

Effective Oct. 1, 2017, earnings exemptions will increase:

- by \$2,400 annually for people on disability assistance
- by \$200 per month for people on income assistance.

New earnings exemptions amounts

For people on disability assistance:

- \$12,000 for a single person
- \$14,400 for a couple where one is a person with a disability
- \$24,000 for a couple where both are persons with disabilities

For people on income assistance:

- \$400 for a single person
- \$600 for a family with children
- \$700 a family with a child with a disability
- \$700 for a family unit with a person who has persistent multiple barriers to employment

Annual earnings exemptions retroactive to Jan. 1, 2017

- As the annual earnings exemption is for a calendar year, the increase will apply to the current year, back to Jan. 1, 2017.
- Anyone who has exceeded the current exemption for this year (\$9,600 for a single person) will be entitled to the higher limit.
- Staff at the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction will be contacting those individuals by the end of November to adjust their assistance payments accordingly.

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