

What is disability assistance?

Disability assistance is for people who – through disability – cannot work or have difficulty working full-time. The government helps these people through financial aid, training programs and education. If you have disabilities, you may qualify for persons with disabilities (PWD) benefits.

How do I know if I qualify Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefits?

To qualify:

- You must be at least 18 years old
- Your disability must be severe and be expected to last for two years, and
- It must directly or significantly restrict your ability to perform daily living activities.

Also, because of your disability, you need:

- Significant help from another person or
- Help from an assistive device (e.g. a wheelchair), or
- Help from an assistance animal.

How do I apply?

The application form for PWD Benefits has four sections. *Section One:* Use the online Self-Serve Assessment and Application: www.iaselfserve.gov.bc.ca. Give your personal information and describe your disabling condition and how it affects your life. *Section Two:* Must be completed by a doctor. *Section Three:* Must be completed by an assessor. An assessor can be a doctor, nurse, occupational therapist, social worker, psychologist, chiropractor or physical therapist.

Where can I get help to apply?

The application process can be very complex and time consuming. The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (BCCPD) helps people with disabilities to obtain BC disability benefits. They also help with the application process.

Get help and information

Contact the BCCPD's Advocacy Access Program
Call: 604-872-1278 (Vancouver) | Toll Free: 1-800-663-1278

What will I receive with the persons with disabilities (PWD) benefits?

- You will receive up to \$906 a month if you are a single person without dependants.
- You will not be expected to look for work.
- You will be able to keep up to \$800 a month in earned income
- You will be eligible for a range of health supplements.
- You will be eligible for an annual bus pass.

What if I am told that I don't qualify for PWD benefits?

You have the right to appeal if you are turned down for PWD benefits. You have 20 business days from the day you receive the letter telling you that your application has been rejected to give the Ministry your reconsideration request. You must get the reconsideration request form from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. Call: 1-866-866-0800. REMEMBER: Call as soon as you get your denial letter.

What if the MSDSI turns down my Request for Reconsideration?

If your Request for Reconsideration has been denied, you can ask for an Appeal Tribunal to hear your case. Before you ask for an Appeal Tribunal, you have to decide if it's the best solution.

It is important to understand what you can and cannot do at the Tribunal hearing:

- You can give the tribunal more information to support your case
- You can give testimony (tell your story) or ask witnesses to give testimony
- You cannot provide new information that does nothing to do with your PWD appeal

Things can move fast!

Remember, you must submit the form requesting an Appeal Tribunal within 7 business days upon receiving the results of your Reconsideration. Get the form: www.gov.bc.ca/eaat.

What if the Tribunal's decision is not in my favor?

If the tribunal supports the Ministry's decision to deny your benefits, this means you have lost. If this is the case, you may want to speak to an advocate. Visit PovNet: www.povnet.org

The following information in this fact sheet is from the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities Help Sheets numbers 2, 3, 5a and 5b. Visit www.BCCPD.bc.ca to access more information.

IMPORTANT: Help Sheets are also available in Chinese and Punjabi.