

Education and Training Supplements for People with Disabilities[©]

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

UPDATED MARCH 2008

ADVOCACY ACCESS IS A PROGRAM OF BC COALITION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

There are a number of employment, education, and training supplements available through the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA). The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities has prepared this Help Sheet about these supplements to help you understand what you may be able to apply for.

The following supplements are available to people receiving the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefit:

- The Training Incentive Supplement provides \$50 per month to PWD recipients or their dependents that participate in an employment program. The Supplement is limited to 12 out of 36 months. There is a long waiting list to access this supplement.
- MEIA health supplements will continue if you leave PWD because you or your spouse become self-supporting through employment.

The following supplements are available to people receiving basic income assistance, as well as people on PWD and Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB):

- The Community Volunteer Program Supplement provides \$100 per month to income assistance recipients, or their dependants over 15 years of age, to offset the costs of clothing, transportation and other expenses related to volunteering. There is a long waiting list to access this supplement
- The Confirmed Job Supplement provides up to \$1,000, if a person has confirmed employment and requires the money to purchase tools, clothing, obtain transportation or pay for other employment-related items. This money will usually be provided only once and only if the Ministry believes it will mean the person no longer needs income assistance.
- Moving costs to anywhere in Canada may be covered, if a person has confirmed employment. Moving costs may also be covered for a move anywhere outside of BC, if it improves the person's living circumstances.

Earnings exemptions for people with disabilities

An earnings exemption is the amount of money that you can earn from working without your benefits being reduced. You have to be on benefits for 3 months in a row before you qualify for the earnings exemptions.

- The earnings exemption for people on PWD is \$500 per month. This means you are able to earn up to \$500 a month before the Ministry makes any deductions from your PWD cheque. If two people, both with PWD live together as a couple, the earnings exemption for both of them is \$750 a month (not \$500 per person).
- People on PPMB have an earnings exemption of \$500 per month. If two people live together as a couple, and one or more of them is on PPMB, the earnings exemption for both of them is \$500 a month (not \$500 per person).
- If you have a child with a disability whose care requires you to stay at home full-time, you are allowed an earnings exemption of \$500 per month. You should talk to an EAW about this.

You must report all income to MEIA, 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 MEIA on your cheque stub by the 5th day of the following month.

Other Exemptions

- Student loans, grants and bursaries may be exempt (not deducted from your benefits), if they do not include a living allowance. The exempt portion of the loan can be used to pay for tuition, books, reasonable transportation and day care costs, and compulsory fees, such as student union dues.

The Self-Employment Program

The Self-Employment Program provides assessment, training, mentoring and support to people receiving PWD or PPMB who are interested in pursuing self-employment. Talk to an Employment and Assistance Worker (EAW) about applying for the program.

If you are a participant in the Self-Employment Program, certain business income and assets will be exempt as long as they are part of your business plan. For example, business equipment and permitted operating expenses can be exempted as assets and income and will not affect your eligibility for benefits.

Also, you will be allowed an Asset Development Account. This means you can have up to \$5,000 in a special account to meet your future business expenses. This must also be part of your approved business plan.

Other Supplements

If you are interested in work training, you can ask an EAW to refer you to the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD). You may be eligible for some work-related supplements through EPPD.



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

204-456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3 • tel: 604.872.1278 • fax 604.875.9227
tty 604.875.8835 • toll free 1.800.663.1278 • advocacy@bccpd.bc.ca • www.bccpd.bc.ca

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