



## Regular welfare rates

| Category                                 | Support allowance | Shelter allowance** | Total welfare payment |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Employable single person under 65        | \$185.00          | \$325.00            | \$510.00              |
| Employable couple under 65 (no children) | \$307.22          | \$520.00            | \$827.22              |
| Employable single parent and 1 child     | \$325.58*         | \$520.00            | \$845.58              |
| Employable couple under 65 and 1 child   | \$401.06*         | \$555.00            | \$956.06              |
| Single person 65 years old or over       | \$461.42          | \$325.00            | \$786.42              |
| Couple (both 65 years old or over)       | \$809.06          | \$520.00            | \$1,329.06            |

\* The support allowance does not increase the more children you have. The BC Family Bonus or Canada Child Tax Benefits are not included in the support allowances shown here.

\*\* Shelter rates go up by \$35.00 per month for each additional person in your family (beyond 2 people). If your family has more than 7 members, shelter rates go up by \$20.00 per month for each person beyond the seventh member.

**Welfare** (also known as income assistance or BC employment assistance) is divided into two categories: support and shelter. The support allowance is for food, clothing, transportation, laundry, and everything else except shelter. The shelter allowance is for rent, mortgage, taxes, utilities, and your telephone line.

As of April 1, 2002, the basic support rates were decreased for —

- single employable parents (with a child 3 years of age or older)
- single employable people between the ages of 55 and 64, and
- employable couples between the ages of 55 and 64.

As of July 1, 2002, the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) has cut shelter rates (which are based on the number of people in a family) for families of three or more. Shelter rates for single people, people with disabilities, and two-person families have not changed. The chart at the top of this page shows the

welfare rates for support and shelter as of July 1, 2002.

## Disability rates

For information on welfare rates for people with a disability, see [Fact Sheet #5: Welfare and Disability Benefits](#).

## Crisis grants

If you have an unexpected expense that you cannot pay while you are on welfare, you have the right to apply for a **crisis grant** (also called a crisis benefit).

Some of the things that might be covered by a crisis grant include replacing things lost in a fire, keeping your hydro on, or making sure you and your children have enough food and clothes. You have to show that there will be an "imminent danger" to you or one of your dependants or that your child may be apprehended if you do not get the crisis grant. You do not have to pay back a crisis grant.

As of April 1, 2002, there is a limit to how many crisis grants you and your family can get in a year.

- Crisis grants for food are set at a maximum of \$20 per calendar month for each family member.
- Crisis grants for clothing are set at a maximum of \$100 per year for each person in the family OR \$400 per family, whichever is less.
- Crisis grants for shelter are limited to the actual shelter costs up to the maximum shelter rate for the family for one month only.

The total in crisis grants that will be provided in any 12-month period is the equivalent of two months of welfare payments for the family at the time of the request. For example, a single employable person has a 12-month limit of \$1,020 (\$510 x 2).

If you are given six or more crisis grants in 12 months, your welfare money will be **administered** (managed for you). If this happens, the ministry may pay your rent or utilities directly out of the welfare money it would have sent to you.

The ministry says that you cannot appeal the dollar amount of what you can receive in a crisis grant. You can, however, appeal a decision to deny you a crisis grant. If you have used up all of your crisis grants for a 12-month period and still need money urgently, find a community group or advocate to help you. Visit <http://www.povnet.org> and click on "Find an Advocate" in the left-hand column for a map of advocates in BC or contact your local library to find a community group that can help you.

## Security deposits

If you cannot afford the security deposit for a place you want to rent, the ministry may give you money for this. You will have to pay the deposit back.

Ministry regulations used to say that you could repay your security deposit when your tenancy ended. As of April 1, 2002, however, the ministry has begun to collect back security deposits by deducting a minimum of \$20 per month from welfare cheques. It will do this starting with the second cheque you get

after you receive the security deposit. The deductions will continue until the amount is repaid.

If you already have more than \$20 per month taken off your welfare cheques to repay the ministry for other things (such as hardship benefits), this other deduction will still continue. If you cannot afford to pay back more than \$20 each month, explain this to ministry staff. If you do this, the other money that you owe to the ministry will not be paid off until your security deposit is repaid.

As of April 1, 2002, you will only be allowed to owe the ministry two security deposits at any given time. You will not be given a third deposit until at least one of the outstanding amounts has been repaid. If you have separated from an abusive spouse or have been forced to move because your rental accommodation has been condemned, sold, or scheduled for demolition, you may be able to get a third deposit. Only security deposits issued after April 1, 2002 will count toward the allowable limit.

Note: If you are on welfare and you do not get your security deposit back from your landlord, call the Tenants' Rights Action Coalition (TRAC) at 1-800-665-1185 or <http://www.tenants.bc.ca/>.

## Other allowances

Many of the allowances that the ministry used to give out have been cancelled or reduced as of April 1, 2002.

- There are no longer transportation, clothing, or transition-to-work allowances to help you go back to work. (If you are in an employment program, ask staff there for help with these things.)
- MHR will no longer give anyone on welfare Homemaker Services. (If you need a homemaker, you will have to apply to the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Children and Family Development.)
- The Seniors Supplement will be phased out over two to three years. It will be reduced by the same amount that Old Age Security (OAS) or Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments will increase each year.

---

*This information comes from reliable sources. However, more information is coming out regularly. Please watch the LSS website (<http://www.lss.bc.ca>) or the PovNet website (<http://povnet.org>) for up-to-date information and new fact sheets.*



Legal  
Services  
Society

British Columbia  
<http://www.lss.bc.ca>



<http://www.povnet.org>