

BC BENEFITS

HOW TO APPLY FOR BC BENEFITS

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MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES
MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, TRAINING
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What are BC Benefits?

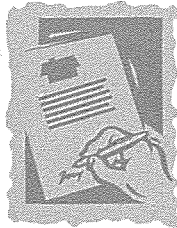
Under BC Benefits, the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) provide assistance and opportunity for people in need. If you are:

- out of work or earning very little
- awaiting other income
- unable to work, or
- working and in need of child care

you may be able to receive shelter, support, child care and other benefits. Your eligibility and monthly rate depends on your income and asset levels, and your family situation.

If you can work, you are required to look for a job or take training as a condition for receiving assistance. BC Benefits makes sure that our limited resources go to those people who need it most.

How to apply



Your MHR District offices are listed in the blue pages of your telephone book, under the provincial listing of Human Resources. Some regions have specialized offices that serve single parents, youth or employables, so phone any district office first to find out which office is the right one for you.

The Orientation Session

You must attend an orientation session as part of the application procedure. There are few exceptions to this requirement. The session will provide you with the details and expectations of applying for BC Benefits. If employable, you must enroll with an employment service.

Meeting with your Financial Assistance Worker

To arrange an appointment with a Financial Assistance Worker (FAW), fill out an *Appointment and Enquiry* form. The form asks for information such as your name, address, family situation and whether or not you are able and willing to work. You will be given an appointment date and time with a FAW.



During the appointment, your FAW will guide you through the application process to determine your eligibility. You will be asked about your assets and other income to which you may be entitled. This can include family maintenance, workers' compensation, employment insurance, and pensions.

You must make every effort to collect this type of income to be eligible for BC Benefits, as the ministry is considered the "payer of last resort." If you do receive other money, the ministry can "top-up" that income if it is less than the maximum rate you would receive under BC Benefits.

Your FAW must verify the information you provide. If you are eligible for assistance and employable, you qualify for either Youth Works (if you are age 19 to 24) or for Income Assistance (if you are age 25 to 59).

If you are unable to work for either a short or a long period of time, complete the Disability Benefits application. Once the information has been verified and you are eligible for BC Benefits, you are assigned to a regular worker.

If your situation changes

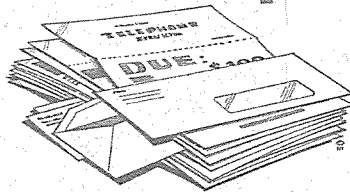
You must report any changes that affect the amount or type of assistance you receive. This could be a new address, a change in rent, income or assets, number of dependants, health or a new job.

Note that all income received by you and all dependent adults and children must be reported, whether it is exempt or not. Use the monthly Continued Assistance form (cheque stub) to report changes, and attach rent receipts, pay slips or other documents as needed.

Documents you will need

You must bring the following documents to your appointment:

- a valid **social insurance card** issued by the federal government. If you do not have one, go to an Employment Insurance office, and request a SIN receipt. The ministry will return the \$10.00 fee to you.
- for **adults: two pieces of identification**, one of which must be British Columbia identification card (BCID); driver's licence; passport; or original citizenship papers. For **dependent children: one piece of ID**. Accepted ID for either includes: birth certificate or Native Indian status card.
- a **CareCard**, if you have one.
- your most **recent rent or mortgage** payment receipt and your most **recent property tax notice**.
- confirmation of your **utility costs**.
- confirmation of **any monthly income**, including the Family Bonus, National Child Benefit, and family maintenance.
- an **employment insurance notice**, to verify whether or not you have income coming from this source.
- your **life insurance policy**, if you have one.
- documents to verify **assets** and their value.



Verifying the information

The Application and Consent Form is a snapshot of your income, assets, family situation and expenses. It is a legal document. You have an obligation to provide correct and accurate information. When you sign, you agree that all the information is correct. Ministry staff have the legal authority to confirm the information you have given.

Review the Application Form and cheque stubs before you sign them to ensure that all the information you have given is correct. A deliberately false statement on either form can lead to a period of disentanglement from BC Benefits.

Your right to reconsideration and appeal

Most, but not all, decisions made under the BC Benefits legislation can be reconsidered or appealed. If your application for benefits is denied, or you receive benefits that are later discontinued or reduced, your worker will explain why. If you believe the decision is wrong, contact the District Supervisor, or later, the BC Benefits Coordinator.

If still not satisfied, you have the right to appeal. Your worker can give you an appeal kit that contains all the materials needed to file an appeal.