These are some of the programs and benefits you may be eligible for if you receive the Persons With Disabilities (PWD) benefit from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI).

See MSDSI Programs on page 2 for benefits or supplements available through the Ministry. Benefits from other sources are listed under Benefits Through Other Organizations, on page 5.

Helpful tips
Apply for the Annual Bus Pass
One of the first things you should do once you have been approved for PWD is to apply for the Annual Bus Pass. Phone the Bus Pass Program at 1-866-866-0800 and ask for an application form to be mailed to you. You can also make an online service request for the Ministry to mail you the application by going to www.sd.gov.bc.ca/programs/bus-pass.html. When you receive it, you can pay the $45 fee at your local bank and the Bus Pass Program will mail you the pass.

MSDSI Toll-Free Number
You can call MSDSI free from anywhere in BC at 1-866-866-0800. For any MSDSI-related benefit listed in this Help Sheet, you can call this number to talk to a Ministry worker.
MSDSI Programs
The following programs and benefits are available through MSDSI.

Benefits you are automatically eligible for when you have PWD

❑ Dental coverage, including denture services, of up to $1,000 over a two-year period.
  This $1,000 limit can only be exceeded in exceptional circumstances, such as in the emergency relief of pain. Dentists must get approval before they do any dental work.

❑ Glasses – lenses and frames every three years

❑ MSDSI pays up to $44.83 for an optometrist’s exam and $48.90 for an ophthalmologist’s exam, every two years.

❑ Medical Services Plan (MSP) coverage

❑ Prescription drugs

❑ Annual bus pass
  In 2015, the Annual Bus Pass for people living in Metro Vancouver will be issued as a COMPASS Card. The COMPASS system is expected to be fully implemented sometime in the future. Annual Bus Pass holders who live outside of Metro Vancouver, but need to come to the city, will be issued day passes by TransLink upon request.

Benefits you may be eligible for when you have PWD

Health Benefits
There is a range of health benefits you may be eligible for once you receive PWD, if you meet the requirements. Contact MSDSI for information on the items below to find out how to apply.

❑ Diet supplements ranging from $10-$50 per month for a few specific diagnoses only. MSDSI does not have a standard application form. You can ask your doctor to write a note listing your condition and the kind of special diet you need. This is a renewable benefit.
Monthly Nutritional Supplement benefit (MNS) of up to $205 per month for people with nutritional needs because of a chronic health condition. This benefit is divided into a vitamin amount ($40) and a nutritional amount ($165). If you receive the vitamin amount, you can also receive the diet allowance. However, if you receive the nutritional amount, you are not eligible for the diet allowance. To obtain an MNS application, contact MSDSI. Also see Help Sheet 4: Monthly Nutritional Supplement.

Disposable medical or surgical supplies
For example, bandages and dressings for wound care, medicated shampoo for parasitic skin infections, and needles and syringes for medication.

Extra chiropractic, massage therapy, physiotherapy, acupuncture, naturopathy and non-surgical podiatry visits

Medical equipment and devices, including mobility aids
For example, hearing aids, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters, custom-made foot wear, CPAP machines, orthotics, hospital beds, bathing and toileting aids, and non-conventional glucose meters.

Medical transportation
Funding for transportation to medical appointments. This must be approved in advance by MSDSI.

Transportation allowance to and from residential alcohol and drug treatment facilities.

Also see Help Sheet 7: Health Supplements for People with Disabilities.

Employment Income
Annualized Earnings Exemption
The following earnings exemptions apply to households with PWD members:
• Single people may earn up to $9,600 per calendar year without deductions from benefits.
• Couples where one person is PWD can earn up to $12,000 per calendar year without deductions.
• Couples where both people are PWD can earn up to $19,200 per calendar year without deductions.
Please note that MSDSI expects you to report any income on your cheque stub or online using My Self Serve. This information must be submitted to MSDSI by the 5th day of the following month.

Also see Help Sheet 10: Employment, Education and Training for People with Disabilities.

Other MSDSI benefits

- Special Transportation Subsidy
  For people unable to use public transit, including handyDART. Contact MSDSI for an application.

- Moving costs and security deposits
  Contact MSDSI for information.

- Christmas Supplements
  $35 for a single person; $70 for couples; $70 for families, plus $10 per child.

- Crisis Supplements
  For unexpected expense or need only for calendar month in which the application is made. Up to $100 per person per year for clothing, $20 per person per month for food and emergency rent assistance. Funding may also be provided for a one-time emergency need.

- Natal Allowance of $45 per month
  You will need to provide a doctor’s letter.

- Guide Animal Supplement of $95 per month
Benefits Through Other Organizations
These programs and benefits are available through various organizations and agencies.

Housing
- **Accessible/Affordable Housing**
  Phone the Housing Registry (BC Housing) at 604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756. Website: www.bchousing.org.

- **Additional Home Owner Grant for People with Disabilities**
  For home owners with disabilities. Contact your municipal property tax department.

- **Property Tax Deferment**
  Contact your municipal property tax department.

Transportation
For some of these programs you must have limited mobility

- **Autoplan Disability Discount (ICBC)**
  Phone ICBC at 604-661-2800 or 1-800-663-3051 if you are outside Metro Vancouver. You can also contact your local ICBC agent. You must be in receipt of the Provincial Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities. Website: www.icbc.com.

- **BC Ferry pass**
  Apply directly to the BC Ferry Corporation. You will need a Release of Information form from your MSDSI office. Phone 1-888-223-3779 for an application form or go to the website at www.bcferries.bc.ca.

- **Federal Excise Gasoline Tax Refund**
  Phone the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-877-432-5472. The phone lines are open from 12 pm to 9 pm (BC time). The application form is available on the CRA website: www.cra.gc.ca/E/pbg/ef/xef8/.

- **Flight Discount**
  Your attendant may accompany you free of charge; ask the airline for details.

- **Provincial Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Refund for Persons with Disabilities**
  Phone the Ministry of Finance at 1-877 388-4440
  Website: www.sbr.gov.bc.ca. See Bulletin MFT004
❑ Parking Permits for People with Disabilities
   To apply for a permit, phone:
   • Beacon Community Services (Sydney) 250-656-5537
   • City of Kelowna 250-469-8757
   • Cowichan Valley Independent Living Resource Centre 250-746-3930
   • Kamloops People in Motion 250-376-7878
   • Nanaimo Disability Resource Centre 250-758-5547
   • Richmond Centre for Disability 604-232-2404
   • Independent Living Vernon 1-877-288-1088
   • Victoria Disability Resource Centre 250-595-0044
   • Wescom Medi-Lend (Langford) 250-478-5373
   For all other areas, phone: Social Planning and Research Council of BC 604-718-7744.

❑ HandyDART
   Look for the HandyDART listing in your phone book.

❑ HandyPass and Taxi Saver
   In the Metro Vancouver, contact your local TransLink office or go to www.translink.bc.ca. People in other areas should contact their local transit office.

❑ Greyhound (and bus lines other than transit) and Via Rail
   Attendants travel free with a Disability Travel Card from the Lions Society of BC, on behalf of Easter Seals Canada. Phone 604-873-1865, or 1-800-818-4483 if you are outside the Metro Vancouver. Blind or sight impaired individuals can present their CNIB Card.

Leisure
❑ Camping is free in BC Provincial Parks
   Obtain a Release of Information form from an MSDSI office to give to campsite operators. Full or partial funding is available for camping at certain recognized camps.

❑ Fishing License fee reduction
   Look under Service BC Government Agents in the blue pages of your local phone book. They will be able to provide you with the information you need and an application form.
Access to Recreation/Community Centres and Programs
Most municipalities provide some assistance for people with disabilities who want to access their recreational programs. Call your local recreation/community centre for information.

Other programs you may find helpful
Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)
This is a federal government initiative that is available to people with disabilities and their families. There are three steps you must follow to be eligible for the RDSP.
1. Make sure you are eligible and apply for the Disability Tax Credit.
2. Have a valid Social Insurance Number.
3. Be up-to-date in filing your tax returns.
4. Be under the age of 60
For more information on RDSPs, see our Help Sheet 14: The Registered Disability Savings Plan and the Disability Tax Credit.

BC Hydro Energy Savings Kits
BC Hydro provides free energy saving kits for low income people and families. The kit includes items such as low-flow shower heads, weather stripping and compact fluorescent light bulbs. To qualify, you must have a BC Hydro account in your name. Call BC Hydro at 1-877-431-9463 or contact the DABC office.