

# Community Living in the Kootenays

Pamphlet # 2

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## Community Living in the Kootenays

Most services and programs aimed at adults with developmental disabilities are actually funded by two or three ministries. Some of the ministries provide services directly to people, while others contract with community-based organizations to deliver services or programs. As a result, people are referred to, and served by, a number of different service providers in their community.

### MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (SDES): BC BENEFITS

Under the BC Benefit Disability Program, The Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security (SDES) provides income support and other benefits to adults with disabilities.

Individuals can receive Disability Benefits as early as the age of 18. You are not automatically eligible to receive BC Benefits and will have to submit an application to substantiate any extra needs associated with your disability, as well as your income. It is important to apply for BC Benefits several months before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as it takes some time for the application to be completed and approximately six to eight weeks for your application to be reviewed. Once you have been approved for BC Benefits you will receive a monthly cheque or direct deposit into your account for shelter and support (this arrangement is different if you live in a residential setting where both your housing and food are provided).

Applications for BC Benefits are available through your local SDES Employment and Benefit Centre. A Family Assistance Worker (FAW) at the SDES office can answer questions regarding BC Benefits and can help you complete your application.

### WHAT DOES THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PAY FOR?

Based on your income, assets and needs, you may be eligible to receive:

1. A monthly support (day-to-day living expenses) and shelter (housing) allowance
2. Enhanced medical coverage including the Medical Services Plan and Pharmasave coverage, as well as other medical benefits such as glasses and dental care.
3. Additional benefits such as a bus pass, work clothes, training initiatives benefit, community volunteer benefit, home support services, vocational rehabilitation services.

Talk to a Financial Assistance Worker to determine which benefits you may be eligible for.

## MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: COMMUNITY LIVING

The Ministry for Children and Families continues to provide services for persons with developmental disabilities into the adult years through the regional Community Living Offices. However, the type of services and the delivery of services **change** when children reach the age of 19. Services such as respite, which exist both for the caregivers of children as well as the caregivers of adults, are operated under separate programs. As a result, service eligibility for a child is not automatically transferred to service eligibility for the adult.

The Ministry staff facilitate the development of Personal Service Plans (PSP) which serve to determine the current and future service needs of individuals. Once a plan is established, the staff will help to ensure that the necessary services are received.

The following adult services are funded by the Ministry for Children and Families:

- 1) **Residential Services** include residential programs, as well as respite and relief services and intensive adult care. (*See "Housing" pamphlet of this series for more information*)
- 2) **Training and Support Services** include self help skills, home support, supported employment, and professional support services.

**The BC Benefits Disability Program and the Community Living Services represent only a portion of the services and programs that the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security and the Ministry for Children and Families provide. The programs and services listed here are those that specifically apply to individuals with disabilities. Both ministries provide a wide range of other services not specifically aimed at persons who have disabilities; as do other ministries.**

### VARIATIONS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

The Ministry for Children and Families, and sometimes the Ministry of Health, deliver services in more than one way. Typically, as has already been described here, a ministry contracts with a service provider.

Another alternative that is sometimes available is "individualized funding". Individualized funding provides people with an opportunity to receive money directly to purchase the services they need. If an individual is not able to manage their own funding, a formal society is formed to manage the funds and hire staff on their behalf.

The main advantage to individualized funding is an increased amount of control over service delivery. However, it must be noted that with the increase in choice comes more responsibility and thus more work for the individual and/or the society members.

### OTHER MINISTRIES

While some of the most essential programs and services aimed at individuals with developmental disabilities are provided by the Ministry for Children and Families and the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security, a number of other ministries also provide services:

**Ministry of Health** funds the regional health authorities to provide specialized health service for people with developmental disabilities, including nursing, rehabilitation therapy, dental care and

nutrition. In some cases, individuals receiving home support service may qualify for the CISIL Program (for the home support funds to be administered through individualized funding)

**Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology** provides post-secondary training opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Ministry administers training programs as well as subsidies and grants related to post-secondary education. *(See "Education" pamphlet of this series)*

**BC Housing Management Commission** (BC Housing) is a government body designated to administer rent subsidy programs for seniors, people with disabilities and families. *(See "Housing" pamphlet of this series)*

Ask your social worker about services and accommodations provided by other ministries for individuals with disabilities. For example, the **Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks** provides BC Parks Access Cards and Fishing License Fee reductions while the **Ministry of Finance** provides a discounted bus pass, Home Owner Grants and the Tax Deferment Program.

**Although the majority of services aimed at individuals with developmental disabilities are provided through ministry funding, some municipalities also offer services, programs and accommodations. These may include training or housing initiatives or simply reductions in the cost of accessing recreation centres.**

## GETTING WHAT YOU NEED

Sometimes, no matter how well intentioned the ministry staff, you may be denied what you feel you need. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- ❖ If you are not satisfied with a response, ask to speak to a supervisor, find out how to file an appeal.
- ❖ Get the support of an advocate. Contact organizations that provide advocacy services.
- ❖ Don't be afraid to speak up for what you believe in. The squeaky wheel often gets the grease.
- ❖ Remember, you are your own or your family member's best advocate.
- ❖ Learn to advocate for yourself. Know your rights and be able to articulate your needs.
- ❖ Share your woes with others who may have been there before. There is a lot of wisdom and experience to be learned from others who have walked the path before you.
- ❖ Rally the support of others. The voice of several people is often much stronger than the voice of one. Small groups of determined individuals have been able to make great changes.
- ❖ Explore other avenues. If you have exhausted all your options of appeal, do you have any options elsewhere? For example, some service clubs will help cover the costs of aids and assistive technology. Are there any creative ways to raise funds for what you need?

## USEFUL RESOURCES

**Ministry for Children and Families Services for Community Living** are administered regionally.

There is one office in the East Kootenays and one office in the West Kootenays:

In the West Kootenays, the office is located in Castlegar (250-364-6465)

In the East Kootenays, the office is located in Creston (250-417-4151)

**Community Living for Adults Home Page:** [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/community\\_living.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/community_living.htm)

"Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities" (Brochure). Ministry for Children and Families,

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/com\\_living/services\\_adult.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/com_living/services_adult.htm)

"Children with Special Needs: Autism Spectrum Disorder Provincial Resource Directory", Ministry for Children and Families, [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/special\\_needs/autism\\_resource\\_dir.../autism\\_10.ht](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/special_needs/autism_resource_dir.../autism_10.ht)

**Advocate for Service Delivery:** The Advocate for Service delivery ensures that adults with developmental disabilities are well served by the Ministry for Children and Families, as well as other ministries. (604-775-1238)

**Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security (SDES):** Programs, applications and information are administered locally through the Employment and Benefits Centres in most communities:

Grand Forks	(250) 442-4360	Kimberley	(250) 427-4831
Trail	(250) 364-0704	Nelson/Kaslo	(250) 354-6488
Nakusp	(250) 265-3723	Castlegar	(250) 365-8544
Creston	(250) 428-3230	Cranbrook	(250) 426-1331
Invermere	(250) 342-4288	Fernie	(250) 423-5300
Sparwood	(250) 425-0213	Golden	(250) 344-7577

"Disability Benefits Program" (Brochure). SDES, <http://www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/PUBLICAT/DB.htm>

"BC Benefits: The Appeal Process" (Brochure). SDES

"Health Care and Dental Services" <http://www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/PUBLICAT/fasttrak/d.htm>

**PLAN: Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network:** Supports families to plan a secure future for relatives with disabilities; including facilitating a future "plan" and personal network, information and referral on estate planning, creating trusts, home ownership and guardianship; as well as advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities. (604-439-9566), <http://www.plan.ca>

**BC Association of Community Living (BCACL):** A federation of local associations serving individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Its main function is to lobby, educate and advocate with and for persons with disabilities and their families. (604-875-1119), <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/bcacl/welcome.html>

**BC Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (BCCPD):** A provincial cross-disability advocacy organization. Their mandate is to raise public and political awareness of issues relevant to persons with disabilities. (604-875-0188), <http://bccpd.bc.ca>

**Advocacy Access:** A program of BCCPD that provides individual and group advocacy, as well as information for people with disabilities. (604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278)

**Individualized Funding Project (IF):** A project of BCCPD focusing on issues related to individualized funding. A good source of information about individualized funding options. (604-875-0188), <http://bccpd.bc.ca/if/index.htm>

"Advocacy Without Burnout: A BC Benefits Advocacy Manual", (Pamphlet) BCCPD's Advocacy Program

**Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations:** The Ministry provides brochures and Web site information about the Tax Deferment Program (250-387-0599) & the Home Owners Grant (259-387-0555), <http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/rpt/Brochures/004.htm>

This pamphlet series was produced by the **Kootenay Society for Community Living Board of Governors**. KSCL offers networking, information, referral, advocacy and education for people with developmental disabilities and their families in the Kootenays. Tel: (250) 352-1600 / Fax: (250) 352-7748, (ksclbog@direct.ca) 4/2001