



nelson  
**CARES**  
society



The Advocacy Centre

250.352.5777  
fax: 250.352.5723

201-182 baker st  
nelson BC V1L 4H2

www.advocacycentre.org  
advocacycentre@nelsoncares.ca

## Application Guide

### Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB)

The Advocacy Centre has prepared this guide for people who wish to apply for Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers (PPMB) status with the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD).

This guide will look at some of the most important parts of the application process AND at how to increase your chances of having a successful application.

*Call us at 352-5777 if you have any questions.*

#### Qualifying for PPMB

The MHSD decides if you qualify for PPMB based on:

- the PPMB Employability Screen (Schedule E)
- information provided by a doctor in the PPMB Medical Report.

*See the appendix at the end of this guide for samples of both of these documents.*

To qualify for PPMB, you must meet the eligibility rules in the *Employment and Assistance (EA) Act* regulations. This section lists the most important parts of these rules. *See the appendix for the exact wording.*

To qualify for PPMB:

- you must have been receiving income assistance for 12 out of the previous 15 months
- a doctor must say that your medical condition stops you from looking for, accepting or continuing in employment
- a doctor must say that you have a medical condition that has lasted for at least 1 year, or has occurred frequently in the past year and is likely to continue or reoccur for at least 2 more years.

**Note:** Addictions of any kind do not count as an eligible medical condition under the PPMB rules.

#### Getting Started

##### PPMB Applications for People Who Are Receiving Income Assistance

To qualify for PPMB, you must have been receiving income assistance for 12 out of the 15 months before you apply.

If you have received assistance for 12 months or more, tell your Employment and Assistance Worker (EAW) that you want to make an appointment to apply for PPMB.

If you have not received income assistance for 12 months, ask your EAW when you can apply.

### PPMB Applications for People Who Are Not Receiving Income Assistance

If you are not on income assistance, you cannot qualify for PPMB because you have not received income assistance for 12 months. However, there are 2 exceptions to this rule:

- if you were on basic assistance, but have been cut off for 1 - 3 months, you may still meet the requirement of being on benefits for 12 out of 15 months
- if you have already have been granted PPMB, but had your file closed, you can be reassessed if you apply within 12 months of leaving PPMB.

In both of these cases, you must do a 3 week job search before your intake interview. There are some exceptions to this rule, for example, you do not have to wait 3 weeks for an appointment if you have an emergency need for shelter, food or a medical emergency or if you have a medical condition that makes it hard for you to look for work. Contact The Advocacy Centre for more information.

### **The PPMB Application Appointment**

The information about you in the Employability Screen AND Medical Report are used together to decide whether or not you qualify for PPMB.

It is important to know how the information in the 2 parts of the application affect each other.

#### Employability Screen

At your PPMB application appointment, your EAW will fill in the Employability Screen and give you a Medical Report to take to your doctor. To pass the Employability Screen, you must score 15 or more points.

#### Medical Report

You will qualify for PPMB because of the information provided by your doctor in the Medical Report. However, if you pass the Employability Screen, you may not have to prove that your disability is as severe as people who do not pass the screen.

- MHSD says if you score 15 or more on the Screen, you must have barriers that “seriously impede” your ability to search for, accept or continue employment. This is different from people who score less than 15.
- If you score less than 15, you must have a condition that “precludes” -completely stops - you from searching for, accepting or continuing employment.

If you have more than one doctor, take the Medical Report to the one who is most familiar with your medical condition and how it effects your ability to work. MHSD will pay your doctor to complete the Report. There is no charge to you.

## Completing The Application

### A. Personal Identification

In this section, provide your name and contact information. The “GA” file number (MHSD’s internal code) must also be included. The EAW may write this number on the Medical Report for you. If not, you can find the code on your income assistance cheque stub. You must provide your Personal Health (Care Card) Number.

Once you complete this section, you must sign it in front of a witness. A witness is anyone over the age of 18.

### B. Authority to Release Information

Sign this section. It gives the doctor permission to complete the Medical Report and give your medical information to MHSD.

### C. Medical Assessment

Your doctor will complete this section.

**Important:** The doctor completes the Medical Report based on their understanding of how your medical condition affects your life. You cannot tell the doctor how to complete the form. However, it can help if the doctor understands how their answers can affect the success of your application. You may want to take a letter to your doctor explaining PPMB and the Medical Report.

*See the appendix for a letter that you can take to your doctor or use as a guide to write your own letter.*

Here are more details about the Medical Assessment Section.

#### **1. Medical Condition**

a and b: The doctor is asked to list your primary and secondary medical conditions. He or she should include a complete list - the more information provided about your medical conditions the better.

c: The doctor is asked if your medical condition is “mild,” “moderate” or “severe.” You will benefit most if your doctor says that the condition is “severe,” particularly if you did not get the required number of points on the Employability Screen. At the very least your doctor should answer “moderate” as long as that is true about your condition.

d: The doctor is asked if you have had the medical condition for at least 1 year. The answer must be yes for you to qualify.

#### **2. Prognosis**

a: The doctor is asked if your medical condition is expected to continue for more than 2 years. The answer should be “yes” for you to qualify.

b: The doctor is asked if your medical condition is “episodic in nature” and if so how often the episodes happen and are likely to occur. Give your doctor as much information as possible about how often your condition has affected you in the past. This will help your doctor give an accurate picture of how often your disabling conditions may happen in the future.

c: The doctor is asked to describe how your medical condition makes it difficult for you to work. Again, the doctor should provide complete information here, including details of any treatment side effects that might affect your employability.

d: The doctor is asked to describe any steps that you can take to overcome or reduce restrictions to employment, such as a changing from physical labour to a desk job.

It is important that the doctor answer this question from a “real world” point of view - how a “real” employer would see you if you applied for a “real” job. The doctor should understand that someone is unemployable if no employer would hire them in the “real world.”

For example, if you have worked all your life as a labourer, you are probably not going to be able to do office work or be hired to do this kind of work. So, the doctor should understand that in the “real world” you are unemployable and put this on the form.

e: The doctor is asked to describe any workplace supports, such as flexible work hours, that might help you with a job. However, if you are unemployable in the “real world” you will not be in the workplace at all.

### **Submitting the PPMB Medical Report**

When the Medical Report is complete, the doctor should return it to you. Review it to make sure that the information is accurate and complete, then give the medical report to your EAW who stamps the report with the date they received it.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***What are some of the benefits of receiving PPMB?***

A single person with no dependents may receive up to \$657.92 per month. PPMB recipients are also eligible for Enhanced Medical Coverage.

### ***How long will the PPMB status last?***

You will be reviewed at least once every 2 years.

### ***Do I become ineligible for benefits if I receive PPMB for more than 2 years out of 5?***

No, the 2 out of 5 year rule does not apply to PPMB recipients.

### ***If I can work a little, can I still qualify for PPMB?***

Yes. If your doctor says that your medical condition stops you from working more than a few hours per week, it is still possible for you to qualify for PPMB because you are not able to support yourself through your job.

### ***Can I earn money by working or volunteering and still keep my full benefits?***

You can earn up to \$500 a month without it affecting benefits. However you must report all money that you earn to MHSD, even if it is under \$300.

### ***How long does it take for MHSD to process PPMB applications?***

It usually takes 1 - 2 weeks.

### **If You Are Denied PPMB**

If your PPMB application is denied, you can appeal the decision. You must file a Request for Reconsideration form with MHSD within 20 business days from the date that you receive your denial letter. *For information on how to appeal, call The Advocacy Centre at 352-5777.*

## Appendix

- PPMB Employability Screen
- Medical Report to be completed by your doctor
- Letter to your doctor
- PPMB Definitions