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This is your **PWD Kit**. We hope it will help you with your application for Persons With Disabilities (PWD) income assistance from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD).

The Kit Includes:

- Information About Applying for PWD
- Tips for Filling out the Application
- A Letter of Information for your Doctor
- Our Check-Sheet for People with Disabilities
- A Sample PWD Application Form

A Note From the Advocacy Centre

We suggest that you fill out the sample application form first. If you find the check-sheet helpful, you could start by going over that list. Then you can show your work to your doctor and/or assessor to help them understand the details of your life from YOUR perspective.

If you have any questions, or need more support, please contact us. We can go through the form with you before you visit your doctor, or review your completed form before you send it to MHSD. If someone is helping you with the application, you can bring him or her along when you see us.



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Applying for Provincial Persons With Disability (PWD) Status

Getting your Application

- You can only get the actual PWD application from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD).
- If you are already getting income assistance, go to your local MHSD office and ask for a PWD application form, or call MHSD and ask them to mail one to you.
- If you are not on income assistance, you have to go through a screening process first. Visit or call your local MHSD office. Tell them that you want to apply for income assistance and disability benefits. Call us if you run into problems with the screening process.

Section One of the PWD Application (for you to fill out)

- Our suggestion: Write a description of how your disability makes it difficult or impossible to complete daily living activities, using this kit. Show this to your doctor and assessor. After your doctor and assessor have filled out their parts, write what is most important to you in your section.
- Remember that this application is not about whether or not you can be employed. You need to focus on all the ways that your physical or mental impairments affect your ability to complete daily living activities.
- Make sure that you are clear about where you need or require assistance even if you are not actually getting assistance.
- Assistance can take many forms, and is not always physical assistance. For example, if you can physically do laundry, but need to be reminded or you won't do it, you should include this in your description.
- People with disabilities can get so used to coping that they may not be aware of the help they get or the ways they cope. For example, if you wash your dishes by yourself and take a lot of breaks, go very slowly, or just don't do as much as you should, you need to include this in your description.
- If you have good days and bad days, please say how often, and for how long, the bad days occur. If you need help sometimes, but not all the time, describe the help you need and how often you need it.
- You can include letters from professionals and friends with your part of the application.
- Sign your name and date Section 1 (see page 3 of the application). You must have your signature witnessed. Anyone over 18 years of age can witness, sign their name, and fill in their address in the spaces provided.

Section Two (for your doctor to fill out):

- You must have a BC doctor. It is a good idea to see a new doctor a few times so they can get to know you before you ask them to fill out your application.

- Make sure you know and agree with the diagnosis that your doctor writes on the application - this will be the basis of your whole application.
- Doctors are asked to comment on things like whether you can do housework, when of course it is not part of a medical evaluation to observe you doing housework. Make sure to tell them where you need assistance for daily living activities.
- Tell your doctor about all the daily living activities where you take twice as long as, or longer than a healthy person to perform. Include those activities where you have to rest for a long time afterwards.
- If you have to rest after or during an activity, the resting counts as part of the time it takes you to get the task done.
- If there are parts of the form that your doctor hesitates to answer, ask what type of professional your doctor thinks would be more appropriate to answer. If that professional can provide a written opinion, your doctor might be willing to confirm it.

Section Three (for your assessor or doctor to fill out):

- Your doctor can fill out the assessor part of the application form.
- Some doctors might not want to fill out the assessor part of the form, especially if they don't know you very well.
- Assessors can only be from occupations listed on the application form (See page 13 of the application). Social workers must be registered or employed by the government.
- If you have a mental impairment, you can ask a registered social worker, psychologist, or nurse to fill out this section. Welfare workers are not social workers and cannot fill out the assessor part of the application.
- If you have a physical impairment, a physiotherapist or occupational therapist can act as your assessor. Keep in mind that they may be uncomfortable providing a professional opinion on the basis of one visit.
- If you are on regular income assistance and haven't had coverage for professionals such as physiotherapists, you will probably have to ask your doctor to assess you.
- The Ministry uses the word "independent" on the assessor part of the form to mean "not disabled". If your assessor uses the word independent to mean something different, you should clarify that with him or her.
- If you try to do as much as you can on your own, or perhaps you live alone and have no choice, pay attention to the columns on pages 15, 17 and 18 that say, "takes significantly longer". Do your best to estimate how much longer. Include times when you must rest and recuperate.

When you have Completed the PWD Application

- Use the Applicant Checklist on page 23 to make sure that you have included everything.
- If you want to be notified when the Health Assistance Branch receives your application, fill out your name, number and address on the form provided underneath the Checklist.
- You can mail in your completed form using the envelope provided (no postage is required), or you can drop off your application to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development office.

Tips to Remember

- The most important information you need to let doctors and assessors know are your restrictions in completing daily living activities.
- Have all necessary information ready when you see your doctor. Try to stay focused. Your doctor is busy.
- Make lists easy for your doctor to read - use point form and type or print clearly.
- Get written statements from people who often help you, such as family and friends. You can show them to your doctor, or send the statements with the rest of your form to help strengthen your application.
- Use our check-sheet to guide what you tell your doctor. Our check-sheet helps make sure that you consider every aspect of your disability. Many of the sections might not apply to your situation but please look over each one so you don't miss anything.
- People get very used to coping with disabilities. But, if you tend to tell your doctor you are okay when you are not, or if you don't count the help you get from other people, the Ministry may not fully understand why you are applying.
- Remember, if you have good days and bad days, write down how often and how long bad days occur.
- You are the expert on your day-to-day life and you should let your doctor and the assessor know about those details.
- Be aware of your **WORST DAYS**, not just when you are feeling okay. Try to track and explain how many "worst days" you have.
- It can be emotionally draining to think negatively about your disability, so take your time with the application and use your support circle.
- If your PWD application is turned down, you have the right to appeal within 20 business days (weekends and public holidays don't count) from the day you received the letter from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. **Contact an advocate as early as possible if you have to appeal.**