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# Ministry of Housing and Social Development

Overview of services and  
programs October 2009



Ministry of  
Housing and  
Social Development

# MHSD Overview

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## Ministry Purpose

MHSD provides Income Assistance, Disability Assistance and Employment Programs for British Columbians in need

## Ministry Vision

A province where British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential

# MHSD Overview

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## Legislative Authority

- Employment and Assistance Act and Regulations
- Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act and Regulations

# MHSD Service Delivery

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# MHSD Overview

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## Who are the Ministry's Clients?

- The ministry delivers a variety of assistance programs and services to approximately 125,000 cases
  - Two thirds have disabilities or serious employment barriers
  - For those clients that are capable of working, approximately half achieve independence within four months

# MHSD Service Delivery

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## Service Delivery Methods

- Telephone access
- Call distribution systems
- In person service
- Trusted third parties and third party administrators
- Mail and fax communication
- On-line services

# MHSD Overview

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## Services

- Temporary Assistance
- Disability Assistance
- Supplementary Assistance
- Employment Programs
- Employment & Assistance Appeal Tribunal

# MHSD Overview

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## Client categories

- Expected to Work (ETW)
- Expected to Work with Medical Condition (ETW-MC)
- Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB)
- Persons with Disabilities (PWD)
- Child in Home of a Relative (CIHR)
- Temporarily Excused (TE)
- Medical Services Only (MSO)

# MHSD – Application Process

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There are 2 stages to the Application Process:

**Stage 1** involves completing the following:

- Application Form
- Orientation
- Three-Week Work Search

# MHSD – Application Process

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## Orientation

- Applicants must complete an orientation to be considered for assistance
- Orientation informs applicant of the:
  - Responsibility to pursue employment and alternate resources
  - Eligibility requirements for assistance
  - Documents that are required for the Stage 2 application interview

# MHSD – Application Process

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## Exemptions from the three-week work search apply if the applicant:

- Cannot legally work in Canada
- Has reached 65 years of age
- Is applying for assistance as a Child in the Home of a Relative
- Is fleeing an abusive spouse or relative
- Has a physical or mental condition that precludes them from completing a search for employment
- Has an immediate need for food, shelter or urgent medical attention
- Is a single parent with a child under the age of 3
- Has completed a three week work search prior to approaching an office to apply for assistance

# MHSD – Application Process

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## Immediate Needs

- Assessment for Immediate Needs and other exemptions are integrated into the Stage 1 application process
- Immediate Needs Assessments must be conducted the same business day
- Determination of an immediate need permits an expedited application (same business day or next)
- Normal eligibility requirements continue to apply

# MHSD – Application Process

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## Stage 2 – Interview

### Ministry staff will:

- Review applicant’s current resume and work search
- Confirm applicant has attended an orientation
- Gather information about applicant’s situation
  - Establish number of persons in family unit
  - Establish identity of each member of family unit
- Assess eligibility of family unit for assistance
- Assess applicant for Employment Plan

# MHSD – Application Process

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## Stage 2: Eligibility Considerations

- 2 consecutive years of financial independence
- Citizenship requirements
- Income and assets
- Applicant must not be full-time student
- Third party checks with signed application

# MHSD – Application Process

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## Examples of rates:

- Single ETW = \$610/month
- Single PPMB = \$657.92/month
- Single PWD = \$906.42/month
  
- Assistance consists of support and shelter portions
- A single person is eligible for \$375/month shelter regardless of category
- Other supplements are available where eligible

# MHSD Policy

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## Topics of Interest

- Residency on and off reserve
- Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers
- Persons with Disabilities
- Supplementary Assistance
- Comforts Allowance
- Child in the Home of Relative
- Planning Towards Independence

# MHSD – Residency Policy

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## Residency on and off reserve

Persons residing on reserve are not eligible for assistance from MHSD, but may apply for INAC assistance

### **Exception:**

Non-status persons residing on commercial property on reserves are not eligible for INAC assistance and may apply for assistance through MHSD

# MHSD - PPMB

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## Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers

Must have received assistance for at least 12 of the past 15 months and:

- Have a medical condition that seriously impedes employment *and* multiple barriers to employment *and* demonstrate that all interventions to overcome barrier have been unsuccessful
- Or, have a medical condition that precludes employment
- The medical condition must have existed for at least one year and be likely to continue for at least two years

# MHSD - PWD

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## Persons With Disabilities

- Must be 18 years of age and have a severe medical condition (mental or physical)
- Medical condition likely to last at least two years
- Medical condition significantly and directly restricts the person's ability to perform daily living activities and due to the restrictions assistance is required
- Income and asset tested
- No employment obligations or criteria
- MHSD Health Assistance Branch adjudicates

## Persons With Disabilities

- INAC and MEIA have procedures in place to facilitate the transition of First Nations persons with the PWD designation moving on or off reserve
- With the individual's consent, MEIA and INAC can share application information
- Information sharing procedures also exist to facilitate use of PWD application information for CPP Disability applications

# MHSD - Supplementary Assistance

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In addition to basic support and shelter rates, numerous supplements are available for those who qualify:

- Most general supplements are discretionary and eligibility is determined by an Employment and Assistance Worker
- Authority levels vary for health supplements
- Access to health supplements is restricted according to client category with the full range of supplements potentially available to PWD clients
- Medical Services Only (MSO) clients are eligible only for health supplements

# MHSD – Supplementary Assistance

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## General Supplements

- Crisis supplement
- Security deposit
- Co-op shares
- Christmas supplement
- Clothing supplement
- Community Volunteer Supplement
- Confirmed Job Supplement
- Family Bonus Supplement
- Burial/cremation supplement
- Guide animal supplement
- Identification supplement
- Moving supplement
- School start-up supplement
- Special Transportation Subsidy

# MHSD – Supplementary Assistance

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## Health Supplements

- Monthly Nutritional Supplement
- Dental Supplements
- Diet Supplements
- Natal Supplement
- Medical Equipment
- Hearing Aids
- Orthotics and Bracing
- Medical Supplies
- Medical Transportation Supplement
- Optical Services
- Physiotherapy, Massage, Chiropractic and Podiatry
- Supplement for Alcohol and Drug Services

# MHSD – Comforts Allowance

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Comforts allowance in the amount of \$95 per calendar month is paid to individual recipients who are resident in any of the following:

- A special care facility
- Private hospital
- Extended care unit of a hospital
- An alcohol and drug treatment facility

# MHSD - Child in the Home of Relative

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## Child in the Home of Relative (CIHR)

### Criteria:

- The child resides in the relative's home
- The child's parent placed the child with a relative
- The child's parent does not reside with the relative
- An MCFD screening determines the home is an appropriate environment for the child
- Recipients may be eligible for additional health supplements
- Assistance amounts increase with the child's age
- Assistance is paid to the relative on behalf of the child

# MHSD – Planning Towards Independence

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## Employment Planning

- Employment Plan (EP) is required for all clients in the Expected To Work category
- The goal of an EP is to assist the individual towards employment, greater employability and independence
- Ministry staff review each EP regularly to ensure it is meeting the client's needs and the client is following the conditions set out in the plan

# MHSD – Planning Towards Independence

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## **The EP is used as a case management tool and is completed with the client**

It includes:

- Employment objectives for clients
- Identified interventions
- Expected outcomes
- Compliance requirements

It assists with:

- Caseload management
- Active engagement
- Accountability

## Eligibility and the EP

To establish and maintain eligibility, clients with employment obligations must:

- Agree to and sign an EP
- Comply with the conditions of the EP

Requirements apply to all adult members of a family

- If one member of a family does not comply with the EP conditions, the entire family unit is ineligible

## Ministry Programs

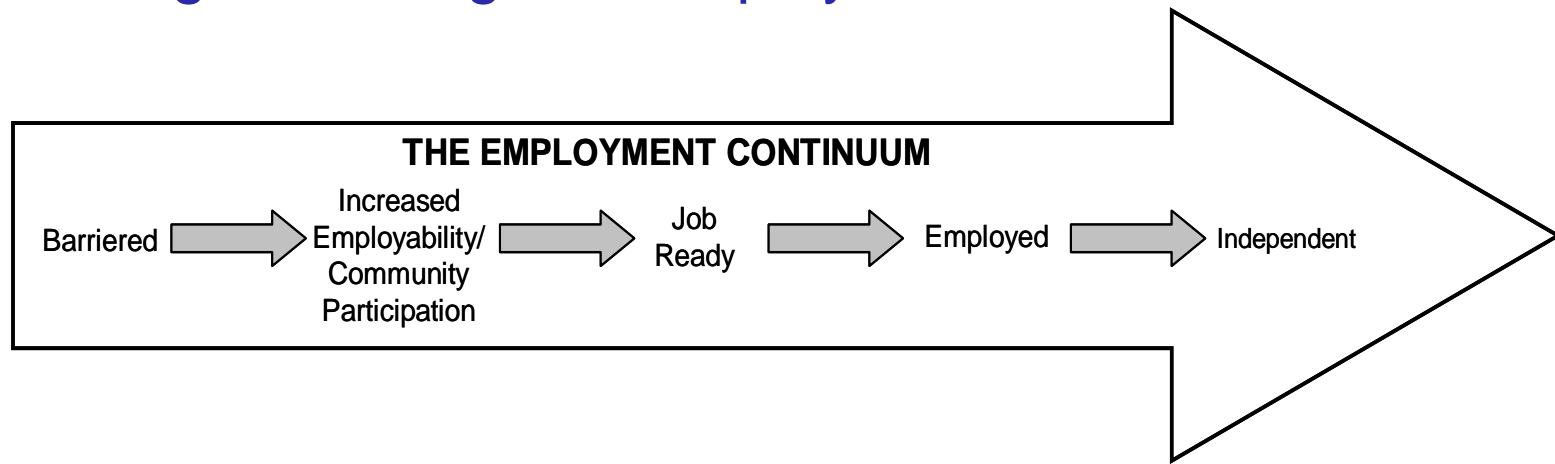
- The Ministry provides employment programs to assist clients in finding work directly or to increase their employability
- Programs are designed to meet the needs of a variety of individuals
- MHSD staff determine eligibility for programs and program staff determine suitability for the program
- BC Employment Programs (BCEP) are performance based

# MHSD – Planning Towards Independence

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## Employment Program – Objectives

1. Independence through sustainable employment
2. Progress along the ‘Employment Continuum’



3. Client-centered and individualized, flexible and responsive

## Ministry Programs

- British Columbia Employment Program (BCEP)
- Community Assistance Program (CAP)
- Bridging Employment Program (BEP)
- Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD)
- Employment Assistance Service (EAS: provided by Employment and Labour Market Services (ELMS))

## British Columbia Employment Programs (BCEP) Services

- Intake and assessment
- 30 day intensive employment services – direct labour market attachment
- First option for the majority of expected to work clients

# MHSD – Planning Towards Independence

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## **Community Assistance Program (CAP)**

- Provides life skill services and supports for ministry clients with multiple barriers
- Program is customized for individual needs

## **CAP Objectives**

- To improve quality of life
- Increase community/social involvement
- To provide flexible and responsive services

# MHSD – Planning Towards Independence

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## Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD)

*“To assist Persons with disabilities achieve economic and social potential to the fullest extent possible”*

Short Term Outcomes	Longer Term Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Enhanced life skills</li><li>✓ Increased job readiness</li><li>✓ Increased access to training</li><li>✓ Increased marketable job skills</li><li>✓ Increase self-reliance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Persons with disabilities understand abilities</li><li>✓ Have access to needed supports</li><li>✓ Participate effectively in employment activities</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen Community Participation</li><li>• pursue employment goals</li><li>• Reduce barriers to employment</li><li>• Obtain and retain voluntary and/or paid employment</li></ul>	

## Other programs

- High school completion
- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Employment and Labour Market Services

## Eligibility for Non-Ministry Programs:

- Individuals who participate in full-time unfunded programs may remain eligible for income assistance if **both** of the following conditions are met:
  - Prior approval from the Minister is received
  - Continued involvement is defined in their Employment Plan
- Individuals who participate in part-time unfunded programs may remain eligible for income assistance provided other eligibility requirements, including employment obligations, are met

# MHSD Overview

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## Administrative Fairness

- Individuals receive a clear explanation of any decision affecting them
- Evidence, information or documentation used to arrive at a decision is available to the individual affected
- There is an opportunity to respond and provide additional information
- Information is considered in a fair and unbiased manner
- Decisions are offered in writing
- Opportunities for review, reconsideration or appeal are communicated

# MHSD Overview

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## Right to Reconsideration

- Available whenever a decision results in the discontinuation, refusal or reduction of assistance
- A new and final decision is made by an individual not involved in the original decision making process
- An appeal supplement may be available to maintain assistance pending the decision
- Process is conducted in writing

# MHSD Overview

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## Right to Appeal

- The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal determines if a reconsideration is open to appeal
- Hearings may be conducted in person, by teleconference or in writing
- 3 members of the community consider the decision
- The tribunal has the authority only to rescind or confirm the ministry decision
- The tribunal decision is final and no further recourse or appeal exists

# MHSD Information

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## Online Resource

The Ministry policy manual is available through the Online Resource (OLR)

The MHSD Online Resource contains:

- Acts and Regulations
- Policy
- Definitions
- Rate Tables
- Resources for Clients



The OLR is available to the public and can be accessed from the MHSD website: [www.gov.bc.ca/hsd](http://www.gov.bc.ca/hsd)

## Recent updates from MHSD

A number of policy changes were recently implemented and include:

- Duty to Accommodate
- Offering written decisions
- Cheque withholding guidelines
- Designated worker guidelines

# MHSD Service Delivery

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