
FACTSHEET

February 1, 2010

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Government of British Columbia

Support for Low-income British Columbians

British Columbia is home to some of the most comprehensive supports for low-income individuals and their families in Canada. These supports include subsidized housing, child care subsidies, dental and optical care for children and a wide range of employment programs. B.C. has the lowest provincial income taxes for people earning the least money. A family of four in British Columbia earning \$30,000 a year pays about \$1,400 less provincial income tax than in 2001.

The British Columbia Child Care Subsidy provides a monthly payment to parents qualified for support based on income and family size. Free Medical Services Plan coverage is available for persons and families with low income levels. Provincial programs help cover all or part of the cost of prescription drugs (based on personal income levels).

BC Employment and Assistance Program

Budgeted at \$1.3 billion in 2009/10, the BC Employment and Assistance Program provides income assistance for those in need. B.C.'s income assistance rates are reviewed on an annual basis. Between 2001 and 2008, British Columbia's rates climbed by 14 per cent – to an average monthly payment of \$811.

B.C. families on income assistance are further supported by up to \$385 per child per month through the Canada Child Tax Benefit, the BC Family Bonus and the new Universal Child Care Benefit.

The provincial government helps low-income British Columbians get better-paying jobs by making available skills training programs like Return to Work Employability and Initiatives for Older Workers.

Rental Assistance Program

The Rental Assistance Program provides more than 7,800 low-income working B.C. families with direct cash to help pay rent and keep people in stable housing situations. The average payment is about \$348 per family per month.

Affordable Housing Assistance

In 2009-10 the Province's budget for social housing is approximately \$450 million – more than three times as much as in 2001.

CONTACTS

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WEB RESOURCES

Housing-related websites:

- B.C. Ministry of Housing and Social Development: www.gov.bc.ca/hsd/index.html
- Housing Matters BC – explains the provincial housing strategy, which includes the Homelessness Intervention Project: www.housingmattersbc.ca/
- BC Employment and Assistance – B. C. Ministry of Housing and Social Development: <http://www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/bcea.htm>

MEDIA COVERAGE

- *Housing minister puts homelessness issue under 1 roof*, CBC News, March 3, 2009 (www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2009/03/03/bc-homeless-one-ministry.html)
- *Team will pound the pavement to find the needy* – Nanaimo Daily News, December 15, 2009 <http://www2.canada.com/nanaimodailynews/news/story.html?id=7f801589-a8d6-4c42-bf9e-cef2bf5b780b>

- 30 -

For assistance or more information:

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