
NEWS YOU CAN USE

For Immediate Release
2015SDSI0076-002094
Dec. 22, 2015

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Gifts and assets changes now in effect

NEW WESTMINSTER – 'Tis the season of giving, and new policies on gifts and assets are bringing some extra cheer to people on disability assistance and their families this Christmas.

People like Shannon Bromley, who has big dreams-of travel, a new accessible vehicle, and a home of her own. And thanks to the new policies – the most generous in Canada – Shannon's dreams may soon be a reality.

Shannon is 22 years old, attends classes at Simon Fraser University, and loves volunteering with children in her community.

She currently lives with her parents Kathy and Rob, but would love to find her own place, where she could live more independently, and entertain friends and family.

"With the announced changes, and gifts from family and friends, Shannon will now be able to save money in her own bank account for things that will give her the independence and lifestyle she is interested in," says Kathy Bromley. "Like travelling, and furniture for her future home."

As of Dec. 1, 2015, family, friends, supporters and community groups can give regular gifts of cash to people receiving disability assistance, without affecting their assistance.

Previously, recipients of disability assistance could only receive a gift of cash once per year, within a much lower limit on their total assets.

"This will ensure Shannon has the ability to continue to enjoy her life, long after we are able to be there for her," says Bromley. "On behalf of our family, we thank government for recognizing our daughter for who she really is – a hard-working, important and contributing member of society."

Jane Dyson with Disability Alliance BC says, "Some of our clients are struggling to believe the new policy on gifts is true. It means some folks will enjoy a happier holiday season this year, and over the year many more will benefit from this new flexibility."

Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation Michelle Stilwell says, "I've been overwhelmed by the positive reaction to these major changes for people with disabilities. B.C. now has the most generous gifts and assets policies in Canada – meaning financial security, independence and peace of mind for people receiving disability assistance and their families."

Quick Facts:

- Significant changes that benefit people receiving disability assistance took effect on Dec.

1, 2015, including:

- Raising the asset limit from \$5,000 to \$100,000, and from \$10,000 to \$200,000 for families where two people with the PWD designation receive disability assistance.
- Allowing repeated gifts of cash within the asset limit with no impact on eligibility for assistance.
- More flexibility in spending money from trust funds.
- Almost 94,000 British Columbians are designated PWD and receive disability assistance from the provincial government. B.C. and Alberta now have by far the most-generous policies in Canada around gifts and assets for people receiving disability assistance.

Learn More:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/social-development-and-social-innovation>

Media Contact:

Sean Leslie
Senior Public Affairs Officer
Ministry of Social Development and Social
Innovation
250 356-1670 (office)
250 893-4403

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: www.gov.bc.ca/connect