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# PAYING PEERS IN COMMUNITY BASED WORK

AN OVERVIEW OF CONSIDERATIONS FOR EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

In partnership with the Paying Peers Working Group

Sincerest thanks to the late Larry Howett for his review of this document.

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## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEE: Annual Earning Exemptions

CBPR: Community Based Participatory Research

CPP: Canadian Pension Plan

EI: Employment Insurance

PPMB: People with Persistent Multiple Barriers

PWD: People with Disabilities

LINC: Long-term Inmates Now in the Community

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*BCCDC acknowledges that this work is completed on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.*

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REPORT IS AVAILABLE AT:

<http://towardtheheart.com/peer-engagement>

TWITTER: @CDCofBC

## INTRODUCTION

Community based participatory research (CBPR) has been described as a collaborative approach to research that involves community partners in the research process<sup>1</sup>, and “integrates education and social action to improve health and reduce health disparities”<sup>2</sup> while “involving community partners in the research process, and insuring that action is a part of the research process itself.” Involving community members with lived experience, or peers, can be seen as a “strengths-based approach” to building capacity among the individuals and communities studied<sup>3</sup>, framing CBPR as an approach that “focuses on relationships and social transformation rather than a specific set of research methods or techniques”<sup>2</sup>.

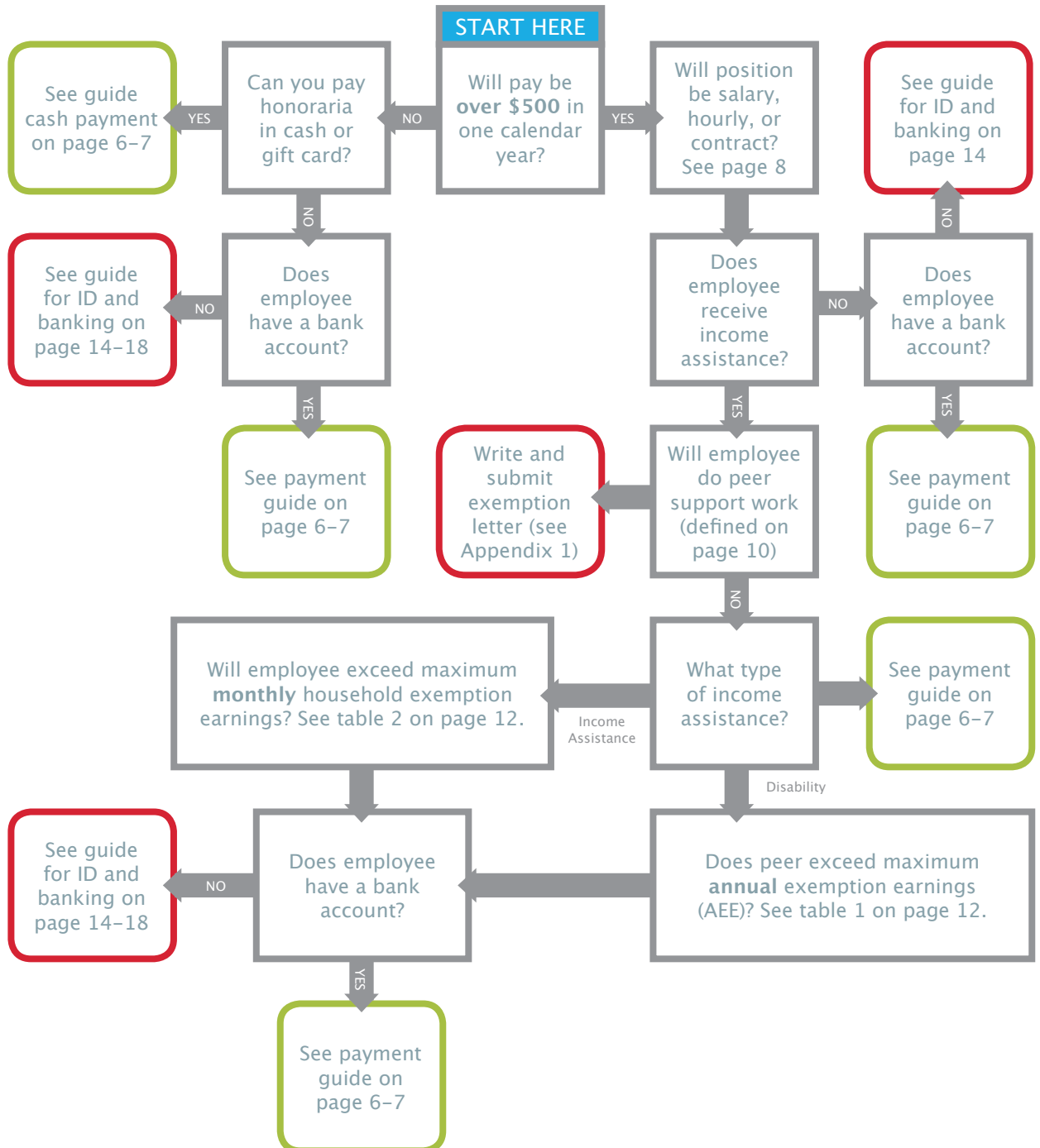
Recently, researchers have pointed out a key feature of CBPR is that it can provide employment opportunities for members of the community<sup>4</sup>. Peers are often recruited from the community under study, and are hired and trained as active members in either some or all facets of the CBPR project<sup>5</sup>. Under this approach to research, collaborative and equitable partnerships with peers can improve the effectiveness, relevance, and acceptability of projects by ensuring the questions, approaches, and mediums for dissemination are appropriate<sup>4,6,7</sup>. Employment in CBPR can improve self-esteem by validating knowledge and experience, and can boost morale, decrease isolation, and increase capacity<sup>7</sup>. For organizations, involving peers can change perceptions of an often marginalized and stigmatized group<sup>7</sup>.

Best practice in CBPR is compensating people for the work that they do rather than expecting them to volunteer their time. The Pacific Aids Network suggests that paying peers for the work they do “support[s] inclusion and the effective and equitable participation in research processes by easing financial constraints.” While paying peers is intended to support inclusion and participation of the target population in a respectful manner, some research has found peers are often not compensated adequately<sup>5</sup>. Community partners are often minimally compensated, while academic researchers are rewarded through publications, grants, and academic salaries<sup>8</sup>. Previous research has argued that academic researchers will always take on considerably more responsibility, and thus power, which may undermine the overarching goals of CBPR<sup>5</sup>. However, some researchers note that fair compensation can create “insider-outsider tensions” that can arise from power dynamics and misunderstandings that create resentment and frustration among people that we work with<sup>8,9</sup>.

Despite much of CBPR recognizing the importance of compensating peers for their time and expertise, no process or principles have been developed to ensure people are equitably and fairly compensated. As such, an examination of the many variables at play when hiring and paying peers is urgently needed. We navigated through the processes, financial bodies, and provincial policies that must be considered when hiring peers in British Columbia (BC), Canada, and sought wide input from researchers who worked in a participatory manner with peers. We also

sought and integrated knowledge from peers themselves to identify issues from employee perspectives. This document summarizes some of the complex but accessible online policies, although these are frequently and

regularly updated. The information gained through this paper will help address existing bureaucratic inefficiencies and may be used to streamline future CBPR partnerships.



# CONSIDERATIONS FOR PAY EQUITY

## GIFTING MONEY OR GIFT CARDS

Since December 1, 2015, BC's Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction considers one-off payments in cash or gift card for any purpose (i.e. research stipend, honorarium) as income. These "gifts" are either **non-recurring or recurring**. To determine if a gift is non-recurring, both the frequency and source of payment must be considered. Examples of a non-recurring gift are a one-time research stipend of \$50. A recurring gift would be receiving a \$50 research stipend on a monthly or quarterly basis. This is important for people who are receiving income or disability assistance, as non-recurring gifts are exempt, while recurring gifts are not exempt and are treated as unearned income. Please **see pages 9–13** for more information.

## CASH STIPEND OR HONORARIUM

Cash honorarium is typically provided for short-term research or engagement opportunities. However, individuals in Canada can receive up to \$500 cash per calendar year without claiming it as earnings (above \$500 employers are required to issue a T4A). Paying people in cash is timely for the recipient, but also may be paid in a lump sum or spread over a period of time. Employers and/or research managers should set expectations (**for more see pages 13–14**) for pay in advance and to pay out cash the day duties are performed.

*According to the "Nothing About Us Without Us" guidelines, payments in cash, rather than gift cards, is best practice<sup>10</sup>. As such, cash should be*

*offered first, while gift cards should be provided only where research ethics boards or other policies explicitly limit payment through gift cards<sup>11,12</sup>.*

Several challenges exist when paying people through cash honorarium. Cash stipends can be difficult to track; receipts for stipends must be signed by the recipient and retained by the employer. Often long lead-times for requesting cash advances may require staff to pay cash out-of-pocket and be reimbursed afterwards (not recommended). From an equity perspective, under the Employment Act the payment of a stipend does not create an employment relationship; therefore, people may not be eligible for benefits such as WorkSafe BC<sup>13</sup>.

## CHEQUE OR E-TRANSFER

For some people, many challenges lay in receiving a cheque or e-transfer. For instance, a person may not have a bank account set up and/or do not have identification. Some people may need assistance setting up a low-barrier bank account (**see pages 14–16**) or getting identification (**see pages 16–18**). In some instances, people may cash cheques at non-financial institutions such as "Money Mart". These institutions usually apply fees to cash cheques or interest rates to loans until cheques are received. If necessary, the fees associated with such transactions should be reimbursed or added to the cheque amount. However, some organizations may not be able to cover these fees due to organizational policy. One option is to engage and work with community services that can assist in cashing cheques, such as **Pigeon Park Savings** or **Long-term Inmates Now in the Community (LINC)**. LINC, for instance, is a non-profit society that provides assistance to recently

incarcerated and released individuals. More information on this service and others can be found on [page 14](#).

### BANK DRAFT OR MONEY ORDER

Bank drafts and money orders are short-term alternatives to cheque payments, particularly if there is a long delay in payment. Bank drafts can be purchased from a bank (i.e. Royal Bank of Canada), while a money order can be purchased through a post office or bank. This method of payment may be useful when needing to pay someone in a timely and secure manner as they can be purchased same-day and are guaranteed by the institution if they are lost or destroyed. However, they often come with a cost as they must be “purchased” from the bank or post office, costing anywhere from \$1.75 to \$7.00 per order/draft. While these are seen as more secure forms of payment, they are not automatic and will need to be mailed or given to the recipient in person, and then cashed by the recipient at the bank.

### RECEIVING PAID EMPLOYMENT EARNINGS

Paid positions for those who are marginalized reduces stigma by building an official employment history, which may help in building recognized experience for future employment or assist in applications for housing. Equitable employment earnings means paying wages comparable to other people in similar positions, increasing opportunities for advancement, encouraging ongoing and sustainable peer engagement, and promoting a sense of responsibility and agency through legitimate job title and duties similar to others in the workplace.

Paid positions also offer benefits through the Employment Act, such as WorkSafe BC, employment insurance (EI) and Canadian Pension Plan (CPP), which promotes financial and social inclusion.

**Note:** Any compensation over \$500 per calendar year are considered earnings which need to be declared as income. Developing a position and compensation plan will depend on several factors, including the administrative rules of your institution and funder. Some institutions, like the University of British Columbia, will have specific guidelines for contractors vs. employees. Funding sources may require very different policies in regard to hiring and categorizing peer employees. It is essential to research these policies ahead of time to develop clear expectations and avoid misunderstandings between all parties.

## JOB TITLE

In general, there are several categories of paid employment under which employees (including casual, part-time, and full-time) may receive income:

1. Contractor with set tasks/pay
2. Hourly staff with timesheets
3. Salary position

### 1. Contractor with set tasks/pay

A contractor position requires defined and set duties and fixed number of hours paid. This type of position requires setting up an official contract typically through a finance department, outlining these duties and pay. All parties then must sign the contract – a process that can take time. As a contractor, it becomes the responsibility of the individual to claim income and pay taxes – this must be discussed with individuals before setting up employees as contractors.

**Pros:** May pay as lump sum or as ongoing work; after contracts are set up payment can be issued in a timely and ongoing manner; benefits offered such as WorkSafe BC, CPP and EI; can pay contractors with electronic fund transfers (e-transfers).

**Cons:** A delay in receiving pay during initial set up period; delay in receiving payment from time worked to receipt, difficult to add additional hours; individuals' responsibility to claim income and tax; no employee benefits.

### 2. Hourly staff position

Some people may be set up as staff with fixed or fluid number of hours recorded on a timesheet for a particular period of time. These timesheets must be filled out, submitted, and signed typically one week before the pay period is over.

**Pros:** Flexible; may pay as lump sum; number of hours per week can vary; taxes are paid at the source. Provided participants have the ability to open a bank account, the flexibility of direct payment and fluid hours are attractive. Some employee benefits may be offered.

**Cons:** Often must set a minimum number of hours (e.g. employment policy must guarantee over 10 hours per week, even if peer does not work that much); delays in receiving pay; social insurance number may be required; possible conflicts with income assistance; must track and submit hours, and obtain signatures each pay period.

### 3. Salary position

Some institutions may be able to offer part- or full-time salary staff positions. These positions must be approved by human resources and typically require a minimum number of hours per week by the employee. They are typically long-term roles.

**Pros:** Titled position; full benefits available; taxes paid at the source; legitimize roles.

**Cons:** Social insurance number required; resume or CV often required; long process of getting position approved possible conflicts with income assistance; delay in receiving pay; restraints based on job description.



## INCOME EXEMPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING OR ELIGIBLE FOR DISABILITY OR INCOME ASSISTANCE

People who are socially and financially marginalized may be receiving income or disability assistance from the government. Paying these individuals may have serious impacts on their eligibility or enrollment in these programs as they generally come with earning limits.

Some employers may feel uncomfortable asking about income/disability assistance

and/or bank account/identification. However, it is vital to have a frank and full discussion regarding job title, government assistance programs (and possible earning exemption limits), taxes, payment process (time, amount, method, mode), and what will work best for them within the parameters of your organizational policies. Peer mentors (page 14) may help plan and mitigate this discussion. Also, this information can be included in job advertisements and training or orientation sessions beforehand, to introduce the concepts and expectations early on.

It is essential to verify the type of disability and/or income assistance that some individuals may be receiving to assess if they will exceed their earning exemption limits.

If the employee exceeds their earning exemption limits, several things may happen. First, they may unexpectedly receive a lesser amount on their monthly cheque, or get removed from the program altogether. Also, penalties may be issued if people's income is not claimed. Finally, they risk losing other benefits that people access through the income assistance system, such as health, eye and dental care, prescription drug costs, and transportation – all of which have significant costs associated (employers may need to provide additional supports or pay for the loss of these benefits)<sup>14</sup>.

Navigating earning exemption limit policies can be challenging. Peer mentors or others who have lived experience of these programs can assist people in this process.

Although there are earning limits for those in these government programs, it should not be

the reason to pay less or not at all. Employers should not assume all peers receive income/disability assistance, or that they cannot or do not want to work above their earning exemption limits. In all cases, employers should discuss with peers what will work best for them. Again, do not assume you know what is best for peers – peers decide what is best for themselves.

The rationale of earning exemptions is that it offers individuals the opportunity to gain skills and experience, take advantage of short-term work, better provide for themselves and their families, and transition to employment. There are two main categories of receiving income exemptions for people on income assistance or disability assistance:

1. **Peer support worker stipend exemptions**
2. **Employment earnings exemptions**

## 1. Peer Support Worker Stipends Exemptions

The Ministry of Health/Health Authority Therapeutic Volunteer Program and Other Volunteer Stipends policy<sup>15</sup> describes payments by a health authority or designated agency (approved by a health authority to provide services on its behalf). This policy defines a “client” as “a person with a mental health and/or substance abuse disorder” using the services of a health authority or designated agency. The language used in this policy is directly from legislation and does not reflect the language typically used by the Ministry of Health, health authorities or other community-based organizations.

This policy identifies payment for a variety of activities that are fully exempt for people on income assistance as well as people with the Person with Disability (PWD) designation. There are two activity types that are exempt: 4B - Therapeutic Volunteer Supplement, and 4C - Other Ministry of Health / Health Authority payments.

4B supplements can be paid to a client participating in the Therapeutic Volunteer Program. 4C payments can be paid to a client to cover the cost of:

- Fees participating in recreational activities;

- Participation as a presenter or participant in training and education, seminars and conferences, public lectures on mental health/addictions treatment and related topics;
- Providing formal or informal peer support, in accordance with the Ministry of Health Peer Support Manual (16);
- Travel, meals, and honoraria for clients who are invited to participate in discussions with health authorities, or who present information regarding the planning, delivery, or evaluation of mental health services.

There is evidence of several Health Authorities successfully applying for people to work under this exemption category.

Importantly, a letter of employment must be written for peers receiving disability or income assistance whose work falls under the criteria for peer support worker ([see template in Appendix 1](#)). This letter must be written and signed by the Ministry of Health, Health Authority, or designated agency and must then be given to the income assistance worker to show the money they received was in accordance with the Ministry of Health/Health Authority Therapeutic Volunteer Program and Other Volunteer Stipends policy.

It is vital that the agency ensure they fall under the criteria for the Peer Support Worker Stipend Exemptions and discuss the process with the person to be hired beforehand to ensure there are no risks to people’s eligibility in government assistance programs.

## 2. Monthly earning exemptions

Income from any and all sources (including gift cards) that exceeds a total of \$500 per calendar year is considered earnings for individuals on disability or income assistance. If the employee does not fall under the Ministry of Health/Health Authority Therapeutic Volunteer Program and Other Volunteer Stipends policy, all earnings must be reported to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. Earning exemptions allow eligible people on income assistance and disability assistance to earn income in addition to their financial assistance from the government<sup>17</sup>. However, if they make over a certain amount per month, they may risk losing their enrollment in these programs. Different earning exemptions apply to people with the person with disability (PWD) or person with persistent multiple barriers (PPMB) designation as well as people receiving income assistance. These exemption limits are outlined below but may be subject to change.

To be eligible for earning exemptions, people must have received either income assistance or disability assistance in the previous month, with the exception of people with the PWD designation who has no wait period.

For further and most up-to-date information, please visit:

<http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/pwd/aee>

and

[http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/2006/Earnings\\_Exemption.htm](http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/2006/Earnings_Exemption.htm)

### i. Disability annual earning exemptions

Table 1 (page 12) outlines the maximum annual earnings for people with the Person with Disability (PWD) designation. In January 2015, the ministry replaced monthly earnings exemptions with the Annual Earnings Exemption (AEE) for all ministry clients receiving disability assistance<sup>17</sup>. The AEE has been phased-in gradually. In 2013 and 2014, individuals most likely to benefit from an annual earnings exemption were notified they could register to participate in the first phase. The intent of the AEE is to better assist individuals whose ability to earn fluctuates during the year (i.e. due to medical conditions). The AEE applies to earnings received between January 1 and December 31 each year. The AEE allows individuals receiving disability assistance to keep up to the annual exemption amount (see Table 1) of earned income each calendar year.

Only persons with the PWD designation are eligible for AEE. Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) or parents of children with disabilities are not eligible for AEE without the PWD designation. The eligible AEE amounts in Table 1 are equivalent to 12 times the previous monthly maximum for the calendar year. Under the AEE, individuals receiving disability assistance are able to earn up to their AEE limit anytime during the calendar year, with no monthly maximums, without affecting their monthly disability benefits. If the AEE limit is reached, any additional earnings they receive will be deducted dollar for dollar from their disability assistance, and may put into question eligibility in the program.

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction has created an AEE tracking sheet, found here: <http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/forms/pdf/HR3598.pdf>

*Table 1: Annual eligible exemption amounts for persons with disability<sup>1</sup>*

FAMILY UNIT WITH ONE ADULT WHO HAS THE PWD DESIGNATION	\$12,000
FAMILY UNIT WITH TWO ADULT RECIPIENTS WHERE ONLY ONE RECIPIENT HAS THE PWD DESIGNATION	\$14,400
A FAMILY UNIT WHERE BOTH INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE PWD DESIGNATION	\$24,000

*Effective October 1, 2017*

*<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/income-treatment-and-exemptions>*

Note: Earning exemption amounts change often. For most recent policies, see the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction website.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/income-treatment-and-exemptions>

## ii. Income assistance monthly earning exemptions

Table 2 outlines the maximum monthly earnings for persons on income assistance. The current exemption rate for people on income assistance is \$400 maximum per month (single/no children). Those with children can earn up to \$600 monthly. Higher

monthly earnings exemptions are available to Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) (\$700 monthly per person with PPMB designation). If a single parent takes care of a child with a disability, they also may earn up to \$700 per month if the disability of the child prevents them from working outside the home more than 30 hours per week.

*Table 2: Monthly eligible earning exemption amounts for persons on income assistance or **Person with Persistent Multiple Barriers**<sup>1</sup>*

FOR A SINGLE PERSON RECEIVING INCOME ASSISTANCE	\$400/month
FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN	\$600/month
FOR FAMILIES WITH A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY	\$700/month
FOR A PERSON IN THE PERSONS WITH A PERSISTENT MULTIPLE BARRIER CATEGORY	\$700/month

*Effective October 1, 2017*

*<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance>*

### iii. Earnings exceeding maximum exemption amounts

Any monthly earnings above the maximum monthly or annual exemption limits reduce income assistance dollar-for-dollar. For instance, if a person earned \$250 one month, the income assistance received the following month would be reduced by \$50. It is important that the individual receiving assistance completes a Monthly Report (stub) when they earn income, even if the amount

does not exceed exemption limits or if the income amount has not changed from the last month. They must also report if they have any changes in circumstance. Reports must be submitted to the Ministry by the 5th of the month. So, for instance, if \$250 was earned on January 15th, this must be reported by February 5th, and \$50 would be deducted from assistance in March.

For more information, contact the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction information line at: 1-866-866-0800 or visit: <http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/pwd/aee/>

## OTHER EXPENSES AND COSTS

Where possible, employers should cover all costs associated with positions such as telephone fees, transportation, meals, and other travel costs. These associated costs should be paid up front, in cash, and directly to peers rather than being reimbursed at a later date.

people we work with. Given that each process of payment will be different, establishing a well-considered process before hiring and reviewing this process with peers early on, can prevent misunderstandings later on. These processes may need to be reviewed by members of your finance department to ensure expectations are reasonable and possible. Several questions to consider in this process include (but not limited to):

- How much will people be paid (and how does this compare with others on the project who are being paid)?
- How long is the position?
- Are taxes taken off each paycheque? What is the exact amount people can expect on each cheque?
- Are benefits offered?

## STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE PAY

### ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS EARLY ON

Being transparent about the hiring process is important in any community-based work<sup>18</sup>. Transparency shows respect and value to the

- Do people face any individual barriers? If so, what are some strategies to overcome them?
- How is time for travel paid?
- When and how will travel expenses be paid? Will people be expected to pay out-of-pocket? If yes, when will they be reimbursed and how? Will people need identification or credit cards to check in to flights and hotels?
- How often will people be paid (ie. Monthly (calendar or fiscal), 2 times per month, weekly, lump sum)?
- When will the first paycheque or cash stipend come?
- How will this compensation be delivered (i.e. e-transfer, mail)?
- Who do people contact if there are inconsistencies in pay or pay procedure? How will these be reconciled?
- How many hours are expected? If people work more or less time than agreed upon, how will this be reconciled?
- Will telephone costs be covered? When and how?

Other things to consider when hiring peers are the amount of supervision, contact, and/or mentorship they will receive from managers or other researchers on the team. Developing a team “memorandum of understanding” is one approach to developing clear expectations, roles, and responsibility of each person in the project<sup>5,19</sup>. These issues must be discussed in depth with peers during training or orientation. They may also be written into the job description and training manuals.

## MENTORS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Mentors or community workers can help navigate and translate processes, and support peers<sup>20</sup>; they have experiential knowledge about key factors such as setting up a bank account, signing employment contracts, or applying for identification. Mentors can work with peers going through the same experiences. Mentors can also be an alternate confidante if they feel uncomfortable bringing up issues with their employer.

## SETTING UP A BANK ACCOUNT

Access to basic banking services is an often overlooked component of equitable pay and employment in community-based work. Also, some people lack the requirements for opening accounts with conventional banks; some may turn to expensive payday lenders and cheque-cashing services (i.e. “Money Mart”). The key barriers to banking services for financially marginalized individuals is lack of identification or other documentation, information on opening and maintaining bank accounts, mailing address, charges/fees, holds on cheques, and location/transportation<sup>20</sup>.

LINC can provide assistance to individuals who have been recently incarcerated and released as they have an agreement with VanCity bank. A bank account can be set up through this program in as little as 20 minutes, and bank fees may be waived. VanCity will also accept a Federal Release card as adequate identification to open the account.

People can call LINC at: 604-820-1015 or find more information at: <http://lincsociety.bc.ca/>

Unfortunately, there are very few low-barrier banking options for individuals in British Columbia and elsewhere. Some institutions, such as Royal Bank of Canada Cash and Save, will keep identification on file for their customers. Credit Unions typically have low fees associated with opening bank accounts.

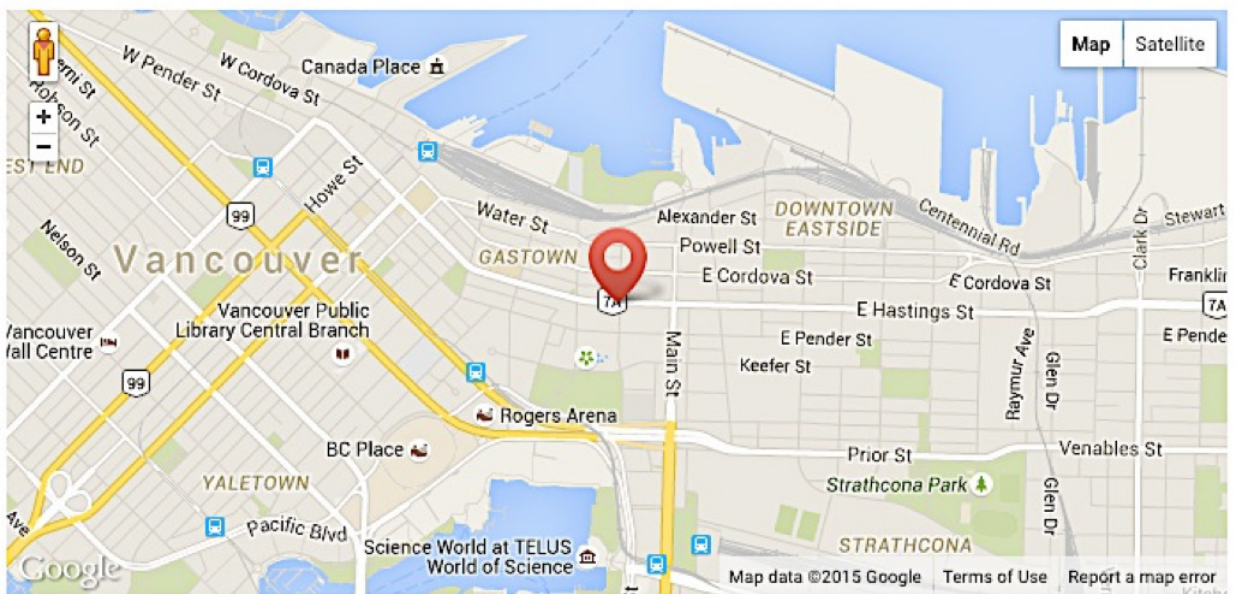
**Best Practice model to low-barrier banking: Pigeon Park Savings**

In partnership with VanCity Credit Union, Pigeon Park Savings was started by the Portland Hotel Society. Pigeon Park Savings is located in the downtown east side of Vancouver and is designed to meet the financial needs of financially marginalized clients. The Consumer Interest Alliance Inc report “Assessing access to banking services for very low income consumers” reviewed low barrier banking models across Canada and identified Pigeon Park Savings as a best practice model for low-barrier banking. This bank is considered “low barrier” because

of the service it provides. The membership fee is \$5 to join and then a monthly fee of \$5 for services with no additional charges for any transactions.

To get started, clients can bring in whatever ID they have with a picture on it (photocopies can work too) to Pigeon Park Savings. For people on income assistance or disability payments from the Ministry of Human Resources, and who have no picture identification, they will accept the Ministry’s Cheque-Cashing identification – a social service notarized photo required to access money deposited by BC Social Services. A social worker or the clerical staff at the Ministry should have the necessary form and instructions.

To our knowledge, this is the only low barrier banking option for peers in British Columbia at this time. Below is a map of the location of the Pigeon Park Savings in the downtown east side of Vancouver.



**An important note about Pigeon Park banking:**

Some people with lived experience of substance use who reviewed this document have voiced concern about accessing Pigeon Park banking because of its location in the downtown east side of Vancouver. It may be a stressful area, as people can encounter drug-related activity or run into past associates. As such, it is important to discuss a range of banking options.

**OBTAINING IDENTIFICATION**

For some people who are marginalized, frequent changes in address and lack of security of belongings can make it difficult to apply or retain documentation of identity<sup>20</sup>. There are three main barriers to obtaining ID:

- 1. Address
- 2. Verifying identification
- 3. Fees

**1. Address**

People without stable housing may be able to use the address of a harm reduction center, community based organization, or peer-based organization, such as the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) or Society of Living Illicit Drug Users (SOLID). This address may also be used to mail cheques. However, some people may not be comfortable accessing these organizations due to them being located in drug traffic areas; therefore, alternative agencies should be offered as an alternate mailing address.

weeks. A list of acceptable primary and secondary ID can be found in Table 3 below.

**2. Verifying Identification (ID)**

There are two main forms of photo identification available through the government of British Columbia: 1) BC Driver’s License; and 2) BC Identification Card. One primary and one secondary piece of ID are required to apply for these identification cards, which may be a barrier for some people. It may be required to apply and obtain supporting identification documentation before obtaining a photo ID card. This process sometimes takes 4-8

**3. Fees**

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction will pay the cost of getting an ID card or other documents, although this assistance is available only one time per person<sup>22</sup>. If this program has already been utilized, the fees associated should be paid by the project or organization peers are being hired for.

Engaging a peer mentor (see page 14) and/or support through a local community organization are highly recommended to facilitate both banking and documentation processes.



Table 3: Accepted forms of ID for applying for photo ID card <sup>21</sup>

**TYPES OF PRIMARY ID**

<p>BC DRIVER'S LICENSE</p>	<p>Must include your photo.</p> <p>Accepted up to three years after expiry date on licence.</p> <p>If you brought a student, work, visitor, temporary-resident or refugee permit (form IMM1442) on your last visit to our office, you must bring your most current immigration document along with your licence before we will issue you a photo card. If the IMM1442 has less than 6 months validity you will be issued a non-photo 'paper' licence.</p>
<p>BC SERVICES CARD</p>	<p>Accepted up to three years after expiry date on card.</p>
<p>BC IDENTIFICATION CARD</p>	<p>Accepted up to three years after expiry date on card.</p> <p>Older BCID cards without an expiry date are not accepted as primary ID.</p> <p>If you brought a student, work, visitor, temporary-resident or refugee permit (form IMM1442) on your last visit to our office, you must bring your most current immigration document along with your licence before we will issue you a photo card. If the IMM1442 has less than 6 months validity we will not issue you a photo BCID.</p>
<p>BIRTH CERTIFICATE</p>	<p>Most Canadian birth certificates are accepted as primary ID. This is also accepted as a foundation document.</p> <p>Documents that are <b>not accepted</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>baptismal certificates</li> <li>certificates of live birth</li> <li>commemorative birth certificates</li> <li>Quebec birth certificates issued before 1994</li> <li>Manitoba birth certificates issued by a "division registrar"</li> <li>Ontario Long Form Birth Certificates (also called Registration of birth certificate)</li> </ul>
<p>CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP CARD</p>	<p>The <b>commemorative sheet</b> that comes with a citizenship card is not accepted as primary ID.</p> <p>If your Canadian Citizenship Card has two different names listed, your legal full name that appears under the coat of arms will be the one used for your application.</p>
<p>PASSPORT OR CANADIAN IMMIGRATION RECORD</p>	<p>Not accepted if expired.</p> <p>Must show your full legal name. In the event of a discrepancy, we will use the name as presented on the Canadian birth certificate or Certificate of Canadian Citizenship.</p>

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## TYPES OF SECONDARY ID

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BANK CARD (YOUR NAME MUST BE IMPRINTED ON THE CARD AND MUST BE SIGNED)

CANADIAN FORCES ID

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CONDITIONAL RELEASE CARD

CREDIT CARD

EMPLOYEE ID CARD WITH PHOTO

FIREARMS ACQUISITION CERTIFICATE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS CANADA OR CONSULAR ID

HEALTH CARD ISSUED BY A CANADIAN PROVINCE OR TERRITORY

NATIVE STATUS CARD

PAROLE CERTIFICATE ID

SOCIAL INSURANCE CARD (NEWER CARDS WITHOUT A SIGNATURE STRIP ARE NOT ACCEPTED)

STUDENT CARD (SCHOOL ID)

VEHICLE REGISTRATION (MUST INCLUDE YOUR SIGNATURE)

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## APPENDIX 1 SAMPLE PEER SUPPORT WORKER LETTER<sup>1</sup>

**Peer Support Worker Payment Exemption Letter** – This letter should be completed by the Contract Supervisor and taken by Peer Support Workers to the local office of the Ministry of Housing and Social Development.

Date  
Ministry of Housing and Social Development  
Address  
Vancouver, BC Postal Code



SIN:  
RE: Peer Support Worker Payments

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the note sent out to all line staff from John Pitcairn, Community Relations and Service Quality Manager, Employment Initiatives Branch, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, stating that PEER SUPPORT income is entirely exempt and is therefore above and beyond the \$500 monthly earned income allowance, I am writing to advise you that the payments (name here) receives from Vancouver Mental Health Services, Vancouver Coastal Health, are in line with the criteria set forth in the “BC Employment and Assistance Manual”, with regards to “Fully Exempt Income”.

The income type that (name here) receives from us falls solely under the clause in the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance Manual:

*“Payments to a person with a mental disorder who provides formal or informal peer support, in accordance with the Ministry of Health Peer Support Manual.”*

If you require any further clarification or documentation in regards to this please do not hesitate to contact us at: \_\_\_\_\_(add phone number).

Best regards,

Your Name

Title of Program Supervisor

<sup>1</sup>Vancouver Coastal Health (2011, June). Handbook for contractors with lived experience of mental illness and their supervisors. (Internal document)