

Advocacy Resources

Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre (TRAC)

Housing and Tenancy act support: 604-255-0546

Access Pro Bono
Provides legal advice and support for a variety of issues: 604-878-7400

BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre

Collects complaints about welfare access, helps file Ombudsperson complaints and provides additional advocacy resources: 604-687-3063

BC Representative for Children and Youth

Provides advocacy support to children, youth and families with the child and youth welfare system: 1-800-476-3933

MOSAIC

Supports immigrants and refugees including settlement cases: 604-254-9626

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Social and community services that help new immigrants and citizens with advocacy and support:

604-684-1628

The Kettle Society

Supports people experiencing mental health challenges: 604-251-2801

Advocacy Tips

Advocacy is a skill for solving problems and addressing issues - it takes practice.



- Have a pen and paper handy to record important information
- Ask for the name and contact information for the person helping you
- Ask for the date when you will be notified of the decision
- Keep track of your documents, and who you have talked to
- Ask for the policy or law that informed the decision

*Take time to think about what your main issue or concern is.

*Decide what you are trying to achieve and figure out the best outcome for your situation.

Administrative Fairness

Governments and organizations should:

- Explain things clearly and be consistent
- Listen to you and involve you in the process
- Assist you in a reasonable amount of time

- Make decisions based on policy or legislation
- Allow you to speak up for yourself without reprisal (fear)
- Treat you with respect

BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support

Provides assistance to older adults who are, or may be abused, and those whose rights have been violated

including housing and finances: 1-866-437-1940

Peoples' Advocacy Society

Helps people through the process of obtaining social assistance

such as disability benefits, employment assistance and old age pensions: 604-682-8727

First United Church

Supports available to members of the DTES including housing/tenancy and social assistance: 604-681-8365

Disability Alliance BC

Advocacy Access Program supports persons living with disabilities including situations involving disability benefits: 1-800-663-1278

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

Provides a variety of services to women and their children, including advocacy on legal issues, welfare issues, tenancy

issues, mental health and child custody: 604-681-8480

Vancouver-Mount Pleasant Advocacy Guide

Community Office:

1070-1641 Commercial Drive



Advocacy 101: **POWER**

Persistence Stay focused on your goal and understand that change sometimes takes time, you may need to follow up - don't hesitate to escalate your complaint.

Options Explore what your options are. What is the best method of communication for you: in person, by email, by phone. Ideally, make an appointment!

Wording Clear communication is the best tool for being heard. Speak and use body language in a way that demonstrates mutual respect. Choose your words with intention, on and off the page.

Empowerment You are the expert on your own life and situation, you are your own best advocate and have the right to be heard.

Resourcefulness Understand there is a process involved in the area you are trying to address. Arm yourself with information, ask questions, and don't be afraid to ask for help!

Pick your Ministry

Start Local



File a complaint



Take it to the next level



Ombudsperson

Ministry of Social Development + Social Innovation (MDSI)

Call 1 866 866-0800 or visit your local office to state that you want a decision reconsidered.

Fill out a "Request for Reconsideration" form and return it to your local office. This must be done within 20 days from the original decision you are disputing.

You have 7 days to appeal the decision through the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal. Fill out the Notice of Appeal Form (you received this with your reconsideration) and mail, fax or email it in.

The Ombudsperson independently investigates complaints of unfair treatment. If you think a provincial government ministry, local government, or other provincial public authority has treated you unfairly – they may be able to help: 1-800-567-3247

Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

Speak with or write a letter to the Social Worker who made the original decision. If unresolved, ask to speak to their supervisor.

Call 1-877-387-7027 to speak to a complaints specialist. You will be sent a letter outlining your complaint. It will either be resolved with a social worker or undergo an administrative review. You will get a letter explaining the outcome.

You can request an Administrative Review at any time during the process. If you want more advocacy support, contact the BC Representative for Children and Youth: 1-800-476-3933.

Ministry of Housing-BC Housing

Speak to your landlord or property manager then write a simple letter outlining your issue.

Call BC Housing general inquiries at 1-866-465-6873 to explain your concerns, ask to speak to a supervisor if necessary.

File a formal complaint by emailing complaints resolution at BC Housing: ComplaintResolution@bchousing.org

If you live in a building run by a non-profit society, you are covered by the Residential Tenancy Act. Speak with TRAC regarding your rights.

Our office is happy to help along the way!
We can assist with:
-Photocopying
-Printing online forms
-Faxing or emailing documents
-Providing contact information
-Assistance with letter writing
-Phoning or writing on your behalf
-Connecting you with advocates
-Providing referrals

Ministry of Health MSP + Pharmacare

Speak with your doctor to check that all necessary paperwork was filed.

Call 604-683-7151 to speak with a Health Insurance BC representative and state your concerns.

Start the appeals process:
a) Pharmacare: write a letter to Pharmacare Appeals.
b) MSP: write a letter to Health Insurance BC.

You will receive a response back by mail within 45 days.

Note - MSP only: If you are not satisfied, write a letter to the Ministry of Health.

Most Ministries follow a similar process!