




Help for Caregivers:
Financial and Support Resources

BRITISH COLUMBIA GUIDE

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Who Cares for the Caregivers?

More than 8 million Canadians act as caregivers for family or friends. These caregivers quietly make up the backbone of health care for Canadians as they age.



But who cares for the caregivers?

Too often, these incredible people carry the burden of care with too few supports. CARP, a national non-profit organization and community of over 300,000 Canadians, is advocating for greater financial and emotional supports for caregivers.

While more support is needed, here is a guide to the current financial resources and support provided by governments across Canada.

How the Federal Government is Helping

The Federal Government offers two programs for caregivers. The first is a system of tax credits and the second is the Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefit.

The Caregiver Tax Credit (CTC)

The CTC is a non-refundable tax credit for caregivers who provide in-home support for a relative. The caregiver must live, or have lived with the dependent in his/her residence, at some time during the year.

Each of those dependents must have been age 18 or older and dependent on the caregiver due to physical or mental impairment. Parents and grandparents count if they were born in 1950 or earlier. Lastly, to qualify, the dependent must have earned an income (in 2015) of less than \$20,343. The caregiver amount is claimed on line 315.

The CTC is a non-refundable credit for up to a maximum of \$691 per year. It can reduce the amount of federal or provincial tax you owe, but cannot be a cash refund.

The caregiver amount cannot be claimed if the person you're caring for is your spouse or common-law partner, or child under the age of 18. (In these cases, you may be eligible for the Family Caregiver Tax Credit).

Answer a few questions, to find out if you can claim the caregiver amount.

You can also read more about the **Caregiver Tax Credit**.



CARP is advocating for a 'refundable' Caregiver Tax Credit, so families don't need to have taxable income to benefit.

Family Caregiver Tax Credit (FCTC)

The family caregiver amount, which is different than the caregiver amount, is an additional non-refundable tax credit that can be claimed if you are already eligible for certain other credits, namely:

- Spouse or common-law partner amount (**line 303**)
- Amount for an eligible dependant (**line 305**)
- Caregiver amount (**line 315**) or if your child under 18 meets the requirements (**line 367**)



The FCTC provides a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$314. To receive it, the dependent must have little or no income.

The caregiver must keep a doctor's note describing the dependent's impairment in case the CRA asks to see it.

You can also read more about the **Family Caregiver Tax Credit**.



CARP is advocating for a Caregiver Benefit Program across all provinces and territories where low-income caregivers are given a monthly payment.

Nearly 1/3 of caregivers aged 45 and older who had care-related expenses had annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 per year.

Employment Insurance: Compassionate Care Benefit

The Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefit offers 26 weeks of employment insurance payments for people who are away from their workplace to care for and support a family member who is gravely ill and who has a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.

The Federal Government recently expanded the coverage period from 6 weeks to 26 weeks. But these benefits wouldn't be available to a caregiver if the loved one is not expected to die within 26 weeks. It doesn't allow support for emergency care, for example, or care while a loved one undergoes dialysis or chemotherapy.

Read more about the [Compassionate Care Benefit](#) and how to apply.

Indirect Federal Tax Credits for Caregivers

The [Medical Expense Tax Credit \(METC\)](#) provides a non-refundable tax credit for a designated list of health-related services and goods in excess of a minimum amount. If an eligible expense qualifies for the METC, you can claim both the METC and the Home Accessibility Tax Credit for that expense.

The [Disability Tax Credit \(DTC\)](#) is a non-refundable tax credit that helps persons with disabilities or their support persons reduce the amount of income tax they may have to pay. Visit the DTC webpage to see a video and scenarios for the DTC.



CARP is advocating for the Compassionate Care Benefit to provide 52 weeks of benefits for caregivers of people with significant illnesses who are not imminently dying.

Being eligible for the DTC can open the door to other federal, provincial, or territorial programs such as the **registered disability savings plan**, the **working income tax benefit**, and the **child disability benefit**.

The **Infirm Dependant Tax Credit** provides a tax credit of up to \$1,005.00 for providing care to adults aged 18 and older.

The **Home Accessibility Tax Credit** provides a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$1,500.00 for eligible home renovation expenditures.

Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities (RRAP – Disabilities) offers financial assistance to First Nations and First Nation members to undertake accessibility work to modify dwellings occupied or intended for occupancy by persons with disabilities.

Caregiving Support Resources

The **Self-Care for Caregivers Guide** from the Public Health Agency of Canada provides you with information about taking care of yourself in a demanding time.

The **Live-in Caregiver Program** for employers and foreign caregivers allows professional caregivers to work in Canada at a reasonable cost. Caregivers are individuals who are qualified to work without supervision in a private household providing care for children, elderly persons or people who have disabilities.

Application information for the program is available on the Citizenship and Immigration website www.cic.gc.ca.



How the Government of British Columbia is Helping

The Government of British Columbia offers financial support and benefits for caregivers related to the home, medical supplies and equipment and medications, as well as other benefits for families with limited income.

Here's an overview of financial and other support in British Columbia. Click on these valuable links to learn more.

Financial Support and Benefits

The Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

assists eligible individuals 65 and over (and family members living with them) and persons with disabilities with the cost of certain permanent home renovations to improve accessibility or be more functional or mobile at home.

Read more about [eligibility and claiming the credit](#).

BC Palliative Care Benefits Program supports BC residents of any age who have reached the end stage of a life-threatening disease or illness and who wish to receive palliative care at home (defined as wherever the person is living). Eligible patients receive 100% coverage for medications used in palliative care through the PharmaCARE BC Palliative Care Drug Plan and medical supplies and equipment through the local health authority.

To learn more, call toll-free **1-800-663-7100** or click [BC Palliative Care Benefits Program](#).

No-Charge Psychiatric Medication Plan (Plan G) is available to individuals of any age who are registered with a mental health service centre and who demonstrate clinical and financial need. The plan provides coverage of certain psychiatric medications. Individual patient eligibility is determined by the patient's physician and the local mental health service centre. Registration is required.



To learn more, call toll-free: **1-800-663-7100** or click [Application Form](#).

Home and Community Care

The **At Home Program** assists parents with some of the extraordinary costs of caring for a child with severe disabilities at home through a range of health supports and services. For more information, call toll-free: **1-888-643-3232** or click [Application Form](#).

Respite Services exist in communities across B.C., such as: adult day programs, respite hotels, respite care in residential care facilities, "in home" services, and hospice palliative care.

For information about respite services provided by the BC regional health authorities, click: [Home and Community Care](#)

Assisted Living residences provide housing, hospitality services and personalized assistance services for adults who can live independently but require regular assistance with daily activities, usually because of age, illness or disabilities. For 2016, the minimum monthly rate for a single client receiving assisted living services is \$921.40 per month.

For more information, call toll-free **1-800-663-7867** or click [Assisted Living](#).

Read more about [BC Health Benefits](#) for families.



CARP calls upon the Provincial Governments to increase respite funding for caregivers and to permit that funding to be self-directed so that the caregiver can best assess the method of respite required.

Limited Protection Under Human Rights Legislation

The vast majority of existing provincial and federal human rights legislation includes protection against discrimination for employees on the basis of marital status and family status.

Marital status protects Canadians who are caring for a spouse from discrimination in the workplace. Unfortunately, the term family status has been interpreted narrowly and only provides protection for caregivers caring for an individual in a parent-child relationship. A large segment of care is excluded – caring for an aunt, a dear friend, a brother or sister for example.

As demographics change and it is apparent that caregiving is often provided outside of the traditional parent-child relationship, it is time for the definition of family status to change to incorporate all relationships of genuine care for another.



CARP is advocating for the human rights legislation to include 'care' as a protected ground of discrimination in the area of employment to ensure a large segment of caregivers aren't excluded from protections already offered.

DISCLAIMER: Financial information in this guide has not been reviewed by a tax expert, but is intended as a compilation of web-based information resources for caregivers.



“ *Provincial governments must implement programs to assist all caregivers, but particularly unpaid caregivers with the greatest financial need.* ”

– Wanda Morris, VP Advocacy, CARP

In 2007, only 14% of spousal caregivers, and 5% of caregivers to their parents report receiving any government financial assistance.

Our Mission

CARP is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to advocating for improved healthcare and financial security for Canadians as we age.

With over 300,000 members and nearly 50 chapters, CARP is active in the creation of policy and legislation that impacts older Canadians. Through its affiliation with Zoomer Media, it has access to multiple media platforms. ZoomerMedia’s advertisers provide a full slate of benefits to members, often covering the cost of membership. CARP is funded by its membership fees.

Contact Us

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**SIGN UP FOR CARP ACTION ONLINE TODAY.
IT'S USEFUL & FREE!**

You'll learn about CARP's **Caregiver Campaign** as well as future policy changes and resources to help caregivers.

CARP Partners with Benefits

DID YOU KNOW?

CARP works with partners to develop benefit programs to help members save money on valuable services! Click on these member benefits and discounts to learn more:

Caretrak Mobile Personal Emergency Response – GPS

is a light-weight, Canada-wide GPS. When you need help, press 'SOS' and connect to your care contact. Then text and email alerts with your GPS location will be sent to multiple contacts. Save 10% on monthly service, plus a FREE 2-year CARP membership!

Home Instead Senior Home Care provides care for Alzheimer patients and personal care services and companionship for seniors, from a few hours a week up to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Save 5% on services (max of 100 hrs), plus FREE in home consultation and no-cost home safety check.

Care Angel, a Virtual Intelligent Caregiving Assistant app helps caregivers regularly check-in on their loved ones to make sure they're safe and and keep other family and friends informed. Downloading the app and get Care Angel's VIP care service for FREE!

Age Comfort, Canada's leading mail-order retailer of Home Health Care Products offers members 10% on all products and FREE shipping on orders over \$50 in Canada.