



BC Centre for Disease Control



A guide for paying peer research assistants

Challenges and Opportunities

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In partnership with the Paying Peers Working Group

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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

PRAs: Peer Research Assistants

PWD: People with Disabilities

LINC: Long-term Inmates Now in the Community

Disclaimer: Policies described in this document were active at the time of referencing. Policies are publicly accessible online and are frequently updated. Please use hyperlinks and/or references to review the most up-to-date policy and/or legislation.

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

and

http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/2006/Earnings_Exemption.htm

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Introduction

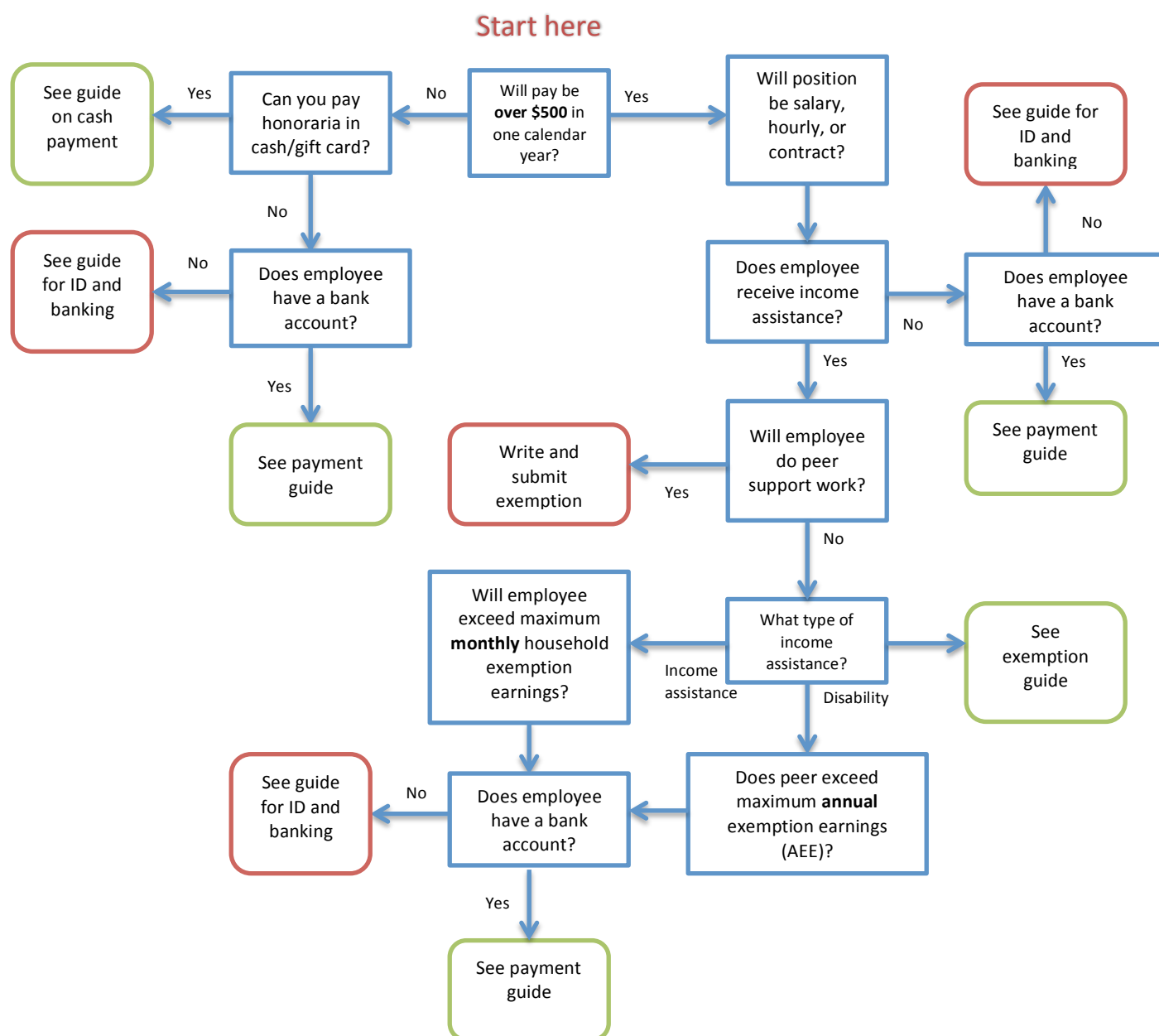
Community based participatory research (CBPR) has been described as a collaborative approach to research that involves community partners in the research process (1), and “integrates education and social action to improve health and reduce health disparities” (2) while “involving community partners in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

Recently, researchers have pointed out employment opportunities for members of the community as a key feature of CBPR (4). *Peer research assistants* (PRAs) 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 (5). 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 (4,6,7). For peers, employment in CBPR can improve self-esteem by validating knowledge and experience, and can boost morale, decrease isolation, and increase capacity (7). For organizations, involving peers can change perceptions of an often marginalized and stigmatized group (7).

Best practice in CBPR is compensating PRAs 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 PRAs is intended to support inclusion and participation of the target population in a respectful manner, some research has found PRAs are often not compensated adequately (5). Community partners are often minimally compensated, while academic researchers are rewarded through publications, grants, and academic salaries (8). 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 (5). 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 PRAs (8,9).

Despite much of CBPR recognizing the importance of compensating PRAs for their time and expertise, no process or principles have been developed to ensure PRAs are equitably and fairly compensated. As such, an examination of the many variables at play when hiring and paying PRAs is urgently needed. We have navigated through the processes, financial bodies, and provincial policies that must be considered when hiring PRAs in British Columbia (BC), Canada. 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 streamlined future CBPR partnerships.

Paying PRAs flowchart



Procedures for paying peers

Giving money or gift cards

Beginning December 1, 2015, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation considers one-off [payments in cash or gift card](#) for any purpose (i.e. research stipend, honorarium) as income. These “gifts” are considered either [non-recurring or recurring](#). To determine if a gift is non-recurring both the frequency and source 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 weekly, monthly or quarterly basis. This is important for PRAs 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 page 7-10 of this guide for more information.

Cash honorarium

Cash honorarium is typically paid for short-term research or engagement opportunities. There are several benefits to paying PRAs in cash. Sometimes PRAs can only be paid in cash because they do not have a bank account or identification (to cash cheques) (10). Paying PRAs in cash is timely for the recipient, but also may be paid in a lump sum or spread over a period of time. However, in Canada, individuals may receive [up to only \\$500](#) per calendar year without claiming it as taxable earnings (and having to issue a T4A). Employers and/or research managers should set expectations for pay in advance and to pay out cash the day duties are performed (see page 10).

According to the “[Nothing About Us Without Us](#)” guidelines, payments in cash, rather than gift cards, is best practice (10). 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 (11,12).

Several institutional challenges may exist in the process of paying PRAs through cash honorarium. Honoraria may not be tracked properly among the persons giving or receiving it. Receipts for honorarium given 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). Under the Employment Act, the payment of honoraria [does not create an employment relationship](#); therefore, PRAs may not be eligible for benefits such as WorkSafe BC (13).

Cheque or e-transfer

Institutional finance policies may not allow PRAs to be paid in cash. Given that many PRAs belong to a marginalized or transient population, the challenge in issuing a cheque or e-transfer to PRAs lies in having a bank account and/or identification. PRAs may need assistance setting up a low-barrier bank account (see page 11) or getting an ID card (see page 12-13). In some instances, cheques may need to be cashed at non-financial institutions such as Money Mart. The fees associated with such transactions

may be reimbursed or added to the cheque amount by the employer, although some organizations cannot cover these fees. Community programs may exist that can help subsidize these fees. For instance, [Long-term Inmates Now in the Community \(LINC\)](#), a non-profit society in BC, can provide assistance to recently incarcerated and released individuals. More information on this service can be found on page 11.

Bank draft or money order

Bank drafts and money orders are alternatives to paying peers by cheque or cash. In some instances a bank draft purchased from a bank (i.e. Royal Bank of Canada), or a money order purchased through the post office or a bank. These payments may be useful when needing to pay PRAs in a timely and secure manner as they can be purchased that day and guaranteed by the institution if they are lost, stolen or destroyed. However, bank drafts and money orders often come with a cost as they must be purchased from a bank or post office, costing anywhere from \$1.75 to \$7.00 per order/draft. While bank drafts and money orders are seen as more secure forms of payment, they are not automatically transferred and still need to be mailed or given to the recipient in person.

Receiving paid employment earnings

PRAs receiving paid employment earnings reduces stigma by paying wages comparable to other employees, increasing opportunities for advancement, encouraging ongoing and sustainable peer engagement, and giving a sense of responsibility and agency through job title and duties. Further, hiring peers as paid employees comes with benefits through the Employment and Workers Compensation Acts, such as [WorkSafe BC](#), [employment insurance \(EI\)](#) and [Canadian Pension Plan \(CPP\)](#), which they may otherwise not receive. Paid positions allow PRAs to build an official employment history, which may help in building experience for future employment or credit for housing applications.

As mentioned on page 6, PRAs receiving more than \$500 per calendar year must be issued a T4 and reported to the Canadian Revenue Agency. Developing a position and compensation plan will depend on several factors, including the administrative rules of institutions and funders. Some institutions, like the University of British Columbia, will have specific guidelines as to whether peers are hired as [contractors or employees](#). Funding agencies, such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, may hold different policies in regards to hiring and categorizing peer employees.

In general, there are several categories of paid employment under which employees 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.

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 pay during initial set up period; difficult to add additional hours.

2. Hourly staff position

PRAs may be set up as project staff with fixed or fluid number of hours of work per pay period, recorded on a timesheet. PRAs and managers must submit a timesheet every pay period with the number of hours worked indicated. These forms are submitted typically one week before the pay period is over.

Pros: Flexible; can pay as lump sum; number of hours per week can vary. Provided participants have the ability to open a bank account, the flexibility of direct payment and fluid hours are attractive benefits.

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; conflicts with income assistance; must track and submit hours; obtain signatures each pay period.

3. Salary position

Some institutions may be able to offer part- or full-time salary 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 that are maintained throughout the project.

Pros: Titled position; full benefits available; legitimacy.

Cons: Social insurance number required; long process of getting position approved; constraints based on job description; some institutions require criminal record check.

Peers on Income Assistance or Disability

PRAs may be receiving disability or income assistance – both which come with earning restrictions.

Some employers may feel uncomfortable asking about income or disability assistance and/or having bank account and identification, which may change the dynamic of the relationship and increase power imbalances. As such, it is crucial build a relationship early on between both parties that is based on trust in order to have a frank and full discussion regarding income assistance, income exemptions and earning maximums, and payment options. Some information can be included in training or orientation sessions beforehand, to introduce the concepts and so PRAs can anticipate the conversation early on. However, each employer should take the time to sit down one-on-one to have a more in-depth conversation about these topics.

→ It is essential to verify the type of disability and/or income assistance that peers are receiving to assess if they exceed their earning limits ←

Income exemptions for peers on disability or income assistance

Individuals receiving income assistance are entitled to an **earnings exemption**, which allows them to earn income without it affecting their disability assistance. In January, 2015 the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation replaced monthly earning exemptions with [Annual Earning Exemptions](#) for all ministry clients receiving **disability assistance**. The rationale of Annual Earning Exemptions is that it offers PRAs the opportunity to gain skills and experience, take advantage of short-term work, better provide for themselves and their families, and transition to employment.

People receiving **income assistance** remain on *monthly* earning exemption limits. If people on income assistance exceed their monthly earning exemption limits, they will receive less on their monthly income assistance cheque and also risk losing other benefits that they may access through the [income assistance system](#), such as health, eye and dental care, prescription drug costs, and transportation – all of which may have a significant impact for many persons receiving income assistance (14). In some cases, if the employee earns too much income above their earning exemption limits or earns more than their limit for more than a few months, the employee may lose their income assistance altogether. Therefore, it is paramount that the employer reviews the earning exemptions of the PRA and has a discussion of the implications of potential earnings.

Since many PRA jobs are non-permanent, if their earnings place their income assistance or disability benefits in jeopardy, they may decide not to take the position. If employment earnings exceed monthly earning exemptions, employers may need to provide additional supports for lost benefits, such as bus passes for public transportation or increased wages.

There are two main categories of receiving earning exemptions for people on income or disability assistance:

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

1. Peer Support Worker Stipends Exemptions

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. Where possible, it is recommended that PRAs be hired under the Peer Support Worker role. The Ministry of Health/Health Authority [Therapeutic Volunteer Program and Other Volunteer Stipends policy](#) describes payments by a health authority or designated agency (approved by a health authority to provide services on its behalf) to peer support workers which are exempt from PRAs earnings (15). 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.

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.

A letter of employment must be written for PRAs 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 given to the peer 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.

2. Employment earning exemptions

Income from any and all sources (including gifts and gift cards) that exceeds a total of \$500 per calendar year is considered as paid employment for peers 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 Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation and recorded on a T4. **Earning exemptions** allow eligible peers on income assistance and disability assistance to earn income in addition to their financial assistance from the government (17). However, if PRAs earn over a certain amount per month (for those on income assistance) or year (for those on disability), they may risk losing their benefits. As mentioned, different earning exemptions apply to people with the PWD or PPMB designation as well as people receiving income assistance. These exemption limits are outlined below but **may be subject to change**.

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

To be eligible for earning exemptions, PRAs 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.

Note: Exemptions can be based on annual or monthly earnings:

- i. For persons receiving **disability**, exemptions are based on *annual* earnings.
- ii. For persons receiving **income assistance** or persons with **persistent multiple barriers**, exemptions are based on *monthly* earnings.

i. Person with Disability: Annual Earning Exemptions (AEE)

Table 1 below 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 (17). The AEE was 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 for PWD in Table 1 are equivalent to 12 times the previous monthly maximum for the calendar year. A single person with the PWD designation can exempt up to \$9,600 earnings annually. A couple with one or two PWD designations can exempt up to \$12,000 and \$19,200 earnings, respectfully. 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 an AEE limit is reached, any additional earnings received will be deducted dollar for dollar from the disability assistance.

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation have created an earnings tracking sheet that employers and/or PRAs can fill out: <http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/forms/pdf/HR3598.pdf>

Table 1: Annual eligible exemption amounts for persons on disability

Single person with PWD designation	\$9,600
Couple, and one has the PWD designation	\$12,000
Couple, and both have the PWD designation	\$19,200
*amounts are equivalent to 12 times the monthly exemption limit for the calendar year	

ii. Income assistance and PPMB monthly earning exemptions

Table 2 below outlines the [maximum monthly earnings for persons on income assistance, people with persistent multiple barriers, or parents caring for a child with a severe disability](#). The current exemption rate for people on income assistance is \$200 maximum per month (single/no children). Higher monthly earnings exemptions are available to Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) (\$500 monthly per person with PPMB designation). If a single parent takes care of a child with a disability, they may earn up to \$300 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 PPMB

All family units, including individuals eligible for income assistance who are not listed below	\$200
A family unit where one individual is a PPMB (this includes single PPMB individuals)	\$500
A single parent caring for a child with a severe disability where the disability of the child precludes the parent from working outside the home for more than 30 hours per week.	\$500

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. Individuals 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 Social Innovation's 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 consider costs associated with positions such as telephone fees, transportation, meals, and other travel costs. These associated costs should be paid *directly* by the employer wherever possible to avoid income exemptions being applied to these expenses.

Strategies for overcoming barriers to equitable pay

Establishing expectations early on

Being transparent about the hiring process is important in CBPR (18). Transparency shows dignity and value to people who work in the project. Given that each process of paying PRAs will be different, establishing a well-considered process before hiring PRAs, and reviewing this process with PRAs, can prevent tensions and misunderstandings later on in the project. These processes may need to be reviewed by members of finance departments to ensure expectations are reasonable and possible. Several questions to consider in this process include:

- How much will PRAs be paid (and how does this compare with others on the project who are being paid)?
- How long is the PRA position?

- Are taxes taken off each pay cheque? How much can they expect on each cheque?
- Are benefits being offered?
- How is time for travel paid?
- How will travel expenses be paid? Will PRAs be expected to pay out-of-pocket? If yes, when will they be reimbursed and how?
- How often will PRAs be paid (ie. monthly, 2X per month, weekly, lump sum)?
- When will the first pay cheque or cash honoraria come?
- How will this compensation be delivered (i.e. e-transfer, mail)?
- Who do PRAs contact if there are inconsistencies in pay or pay procedure? How will these be reconciled?
- How many hours is expected? If PRAs work more or less time than agreed upon, how will this be reconciled?
- Will telephone costs be covered?

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 (5,19). **These issues must be discussed in depth with PRAs during training or orientation.** They may also be written into the job description and training manuals.

Peer mentors

Peer mentors or community workers can be utilized as “translators” or “buddies” (20) who have experiential knowledge about key factors such as setting up a bank account, signing employment contracts, or applying for identification can be matched with peers going through the same experiences. Mentors can give peers an alternate confidante if they feel uncomfortable bringing up issues with their employer, or need advice.

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, many peers lack the requirements for opening accounts with conventional banks; many turn to exploitative payday lenders and cheque-cashing services (i.e. Money Mart). The key barriers to banking services for low income individuals is lack of ID/documentation, information on opening and maintaining an account, address, charges/fees, holds on cheques, and location/transportation(20).

Credit Unions typically have low fees associated with opening bank accounts. There are very few low-barrier banking options for PRAs in British Columbia. Some institutions, such as Royal Bank of Canada Cash and Save, keeps identification on file for its clients.

LINC can provide assistance to recently incarcerated and released individuals as they have an agreement with Van City bank. A bank account with bank card can be set up through this program in as little as 20 minutes, and bank fees may be waived. The Collaborating Centre for Prison Health and

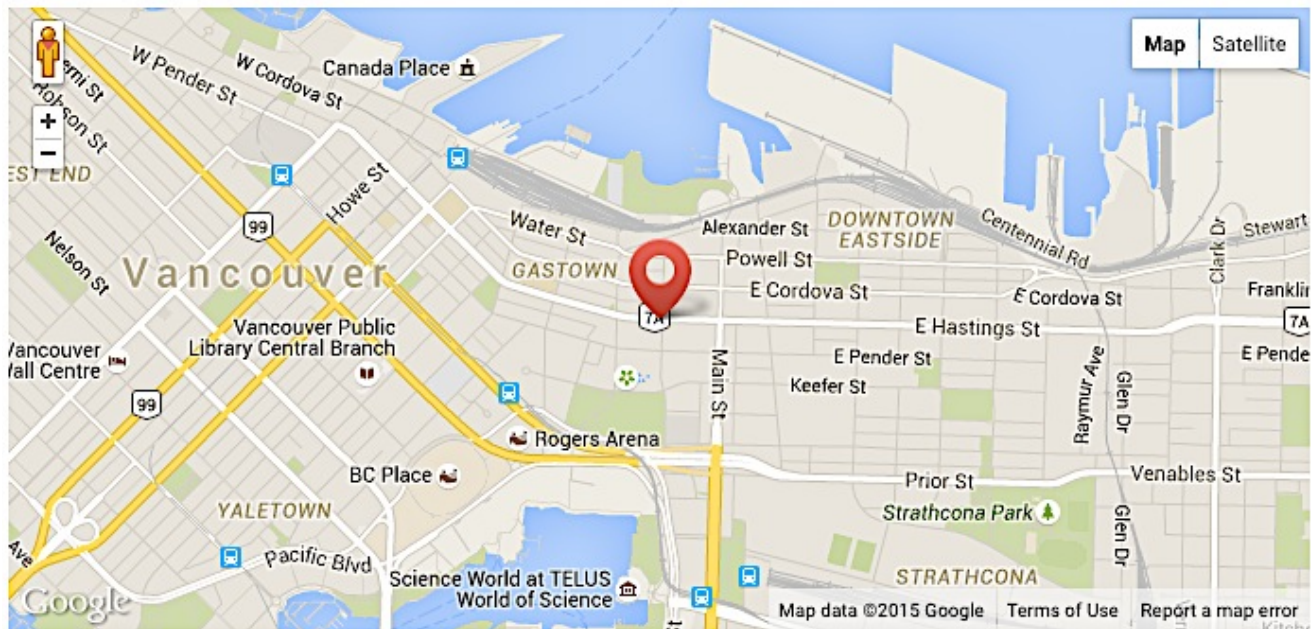
Education can refer incarcerated peers to this service. Van City will also accept a Federal Release card as adequate identification to open the account.

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 very low income, low literacy 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 ID - 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 instruction.

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:

Peers 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 peers can encounter drug-related activity or run into past associates, which ultimately may have a triggering effect. For these peers, it is important to discuss alternative banking options.

Obtaining identification

Lack of identification may lead to a refusal to open a bank account, and therefore is a barrier to paying PRAs. Frequent changes in address and lack of security of belongings can make it difficult to apply or retain documentation of identity (20). There are three main barriers to obtaining ID:

1. Address
2. Verifying identification
3. Fees

1. Address

Peers without stable housing may be able to use the address of a harm reduction center, community based organization, or peer-run organization, such as the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) or Society of Living Illicit Drug Users (SOLID), for a mailing address. This address may also be used to mail cheques to PRAs. However, for PRAs who may not be comfortable accessing these organizations due to them being located in high crime, high traffic areas, alternative agencies may need to be contacted and agree to being used for a mailing address.

2. Verifying Identification

There are two main types of photo identification available through the BC government: drivers license and BC Identification Card. A primary piece of ID and secondary piece of ID are required to apply for these identification cards. It may be required to apply and obtain supporting ID documentation before obtaining a photo ID card. This process may take 4-8 weeks. The primary and secondary forms of ID can be found in Table 3 below.

3. Fees

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (SDSI) will pay the cost of getting a BC Identification card or other documents, although this assistance is available one time (22). If these fees have already been utilized, the fees associated should be paid by the project or organization peers are being hired for.

A peer mentor (see page 10) 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 (21)

Types of Primary ID	
BC Drivers license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must include your photo. • Accepted up to three years after expiry date on licence. • 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.
BC Services card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted up to three years after expiry date on card.
BC Identification Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted up to three years after expiry date on card. • Older BCID cards without an expiry date are not accepted as primary ID. • 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.
Birth Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most Canadian birth certificates are accepted as primary ID. This is also accepted as a foundation document. • Documents that are not accepted include: • baptismal certificates • certificates of live birth • commemorative birth certificates • Quebec birth certificates issued <i>before</i> 1994 • Manitoba birth certificates issued by a "division registrar" • Ontario Long Form Birth Certificates (also called Registration of birth certificate)
Canadian Citizenship card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>commemorative sheet</i> that comes with a citizenship card is not accepted as primary ID. • 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.
Passport or Canadian immigration record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not accepted if expired. • 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.
Types of Secondary ID	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 letter¹



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,

Title of Program Supervisor

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