



Accessing benefits: The Regional Municipality of Durham

October 24, 2023



Our goals for today

- Share Prosper Canada's suite of access to benefit tools:
 - **Bridge to Benefits (NEW!)**
 - **Benefits Wayfinder**
 - **Disability Benefits Compass**
- Share ideas and answer any questions about the tools and discuss how they can be used to serve residents and families living with low income.
- Equip you with a toolkit to help promote this tool to other organizations within your region.

Prosper Canada: Who we are

Founded in 1986, Prosper Canada is a national charity dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for Canadians living in poverty through program and policy innovation.

We help service systems and organizations in all sectors to build proven financial empowerment approaches into their work in ways that:

- Are **sustainable,**
- Help them **achieve their goals,**
- Tangibly **increase the financial well-being of people living on low incomes**



Access to benefits: Suite of tools



[Benefits wayfinder](#)

[Disability benefits compass](#)

[Bridge to benefits](#)

The Benefits wayfinder

[Benefitswayfinder.org](https://benefitswayfinder.org)

An online tool that helps Canadians living on low and modest incomes find and track benefits they could get.

- Simple, intuitive navigation, virtual guide, plain language
- Information on benefits people may be eligible to receive
- Federal, provincial and territorial government information and benefits
- One stop resource with four ways to search for benefits
- Can be used by clients individually and by practitioners to support clients with benefits navigation

Primary sponsor



Supported by



The Disability Benefits Compass

<https://disability.benefitswayfinder.org>

An online tool that provides information about the **four key disability benefits** in your province or territory.

- Plain language and designed by people living with a disability and support staff.
- Within each step are tips, examples, frequently asked questions (FAQ), resources, challenges you may encounter and who to contact for help
- Find out what to expect after you apply and the next steps to take if your application is approved or denied

The project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program – Disability Component.

Canada

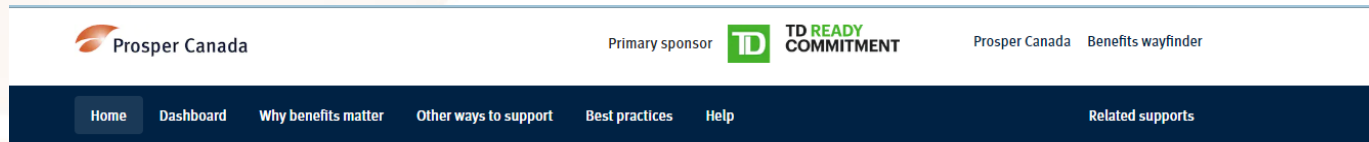
Description of the tool

- **One stop resource** for organizations to learn about the **four steps** to accessing benefits – **learning, applying, getting and maintaining**
- Information to assess **what kinds of access to benefits services fit best** with your capacity and community

The screenshot shows the Prosper Canada website interface. At the top left is the Prosper Canada logo. To the right, it says 'Primary sponsor' followed by the TD logo and 'TD READY COMMITMENT'. Further right, it says 'Prosper Canada Benefits wayfinder'. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with white text for 'Home', 'Dashboard', 'Why benefits matter', 'Other ways to support', 'Best practices', 'Help', and 'Related supports'. The main content area has the heading 'Bridge to benefits: Implementing benefits access in social service' with a red underline. Below the heading is a paragraph: 'If you are an organization looking to help people living on low incomes access the benefits they are eligible for, this tool can help you get started.' This is followed by another paragraph: 'Organizations play a vital role in providing community members with access to benefits. Tax clinics, homeless shelters, food banks, health centres and others can all do their part to provide these services.' A third paragraph states: 'Helping community members access the benefits they are eligible for can increase their income, improve their financial well-being and quality of life, and improve other life stabilization outcomes such as food security, housing security, and mental health.' At the bottom of the content area are two buttons: a blue button with white text 'Browse supports →' and a white button with a blue border and blue text 'How to use this tool →'.

[Bridge to benefits: Implementing benefits access in social service \(benefitswayfinder.org\)](https://benefitswayfinder.org)

Features of the tool



Bridge to benefits: Implementing benefits access in social service

If you are an organization looking to help people living on low incomes access the benefits they are eligible for, this tool can help you get started.

Organizations play a vital role in providing community members with access to benefits. Tax clinics, homeless shelters, food banks, health centres and others can all do their part to provide these services.

Helping community members access the benefits they are eligible for can increase their income, improve their financial well-being and quality of life, and improve other life stabilization outcomes such as food security, housing security, and mental health.

[Browse supports →](#)

[How to use this tool →](#)



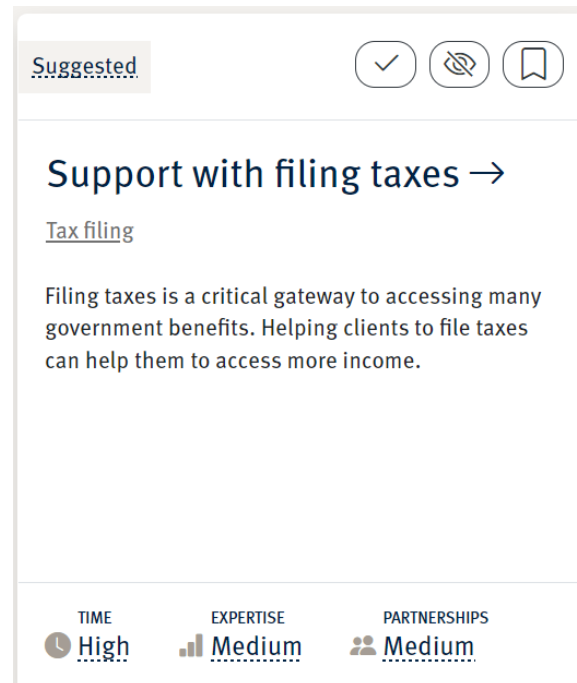
For information on individual benefits a person may be eligible for, you can also check out our [Benefits Wayfinder](#)



Features of the tool

Support Cards

- Contain content related to the four steps (i.e. Market and promote benefits, Explain how benefits interact)
- Some Support Cards labelled as **Suggested** – good to start with these
- Mark cards as **read, seen or pin**



The screenshot shows a user interface for a support card. At the top left, the word "Suggested" is displayed in a light grey box. To its right are three circular icons: a checkmark, a crossed-out circle, and a bookmark. Below this header, the main title of the card is "Support with filing taxes →". Underneath the title is the sub-heading "Tax filing". The main body of the card contains the text: "Filing taxes is a critical gateway to accessing many government benefits. Helping clients to file taxes can help them to access more income." At the bottom of the card, there are three performance metrics: "TIME High" (with a clock icon), "EXPERTISE Medium" (with a bar chart icon), and "PARTNERSHIPS Medium" (with a group of people icon).

Features of the tool

These four steps are featured on the **Dashboard**

The dashboard contains **Support Cards** that can be filtered

- Use **filters** to find supports you can best provide based on:

Type of support ▾

Time ▾

Expertise ▾

Partnerships ▾

- **Types of support:**

1. Benefits promotion
2. Benefits screening
3. Documentation access
4. Logistics
5. Advocacy

- **Time, expertise and partnerships** are rated as low, medium or high

The screenshot shows a dashboard interface. At the top, there is a 'Suggested' tab and three icons: a checkmark, a magnifying glass, and a bookmark. Below this, the main heading reads 'Find benefits that match their situation →'. Underneath is the title 'Benefits screening' and a paragraph: 'It can be hard to find out what benefits someone is eligible for since the information is spread across different websites and can be complex or confusing.' At the bottom of the card, there are three filter categories: 'TIME' with a clock icon and 'Medium' rating, 'EXPERTISE' with a bar chart icon and 'Medium' rating, and 'PARTNERSHIPS' with a group of people icon and 'Low' rating. An orange arrow points from the 'Partnerships' filter button in the text above to the 'PARTNERSHIPS' filter in the screenshot.

Support cards

Suggested   

Find benefits that match their situation →

Benefits screening

It can be hard to find out what benefits someone is eligible for since the information is spread across different websites and can be complex or confusing.

TIME  Medium EXPERTISE  Medium PARTNERSHIPS  Low

- Click on title to take you to page
- Contains info on:
 - Minimum requirements
 - Getting started
 - Other things to consider
 - Examples of work

Other content

- **Why benefits matter** – with persona - Jackie
- **Other ways to support** (moral, language, referrals etc.)
- **Best practices** (Systems, Staff, Principles)
- **Related supports** (Financial coaching, housing, employment etc.)
- **Help** – how to use this tool
- Links to Benefits Wayfinder throughout

How to share this tool

Help us spread the word!



Bridge to benefits – communications toolkit
[Bridge to Benefits - communications toolkit.docx](#)
[\(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Question and answer period



Questions for us?

Please add your questions to the chat or raise your hand to be unmuted.

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<https://www.prospercanada.org/News-Media/Newsletter/Newsletter-Signup.aspx>

[Prosper Canada Online Training](#)



If you have any corrections or suggestions for other information or feature you would like to see included on the **Bridge to Benefits tool**, please send a note to the email: jbolton@prospercanada.org