

AFFIDAVIT

I, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] in the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, MAKE OATH AND SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. I have personal knowledge of the matters included in this affidavit except where statements are made based on information and belief, in which case I verily believe them to be true.
2. I am 35 years old. I have one child, a three year old daughter. My daughter resides with me and I am her primary caregiver as a single mother. I am divorced from my husband.
3. I have received income assistance since the summer of 2013 with the exception of one period when I went off of assistance for limited term employment from the fall of 2014 to early 2015. I have difficulty surviving on the approximately \$925 per-month that I receive from income assistance and the \$520 I receive in children's benefits each month. My income assistance went down from approximately \$945 per month because I am repaying a security deposit paid by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (the "Ministry") when I moved into my current housing.
4. My rent is subsidized so I pay \$605 per month for a two bedroom unit before utilities. Including utilities, basic internet and my cell phone, I pay a minimum of \$760 per month in fixed monthly costs. In addition, I also have to cover the costs of groceries, public transit, coin operated laundry, the parent portion of my daughter's childcare, field trip fees, health care costs that are not covered by the Ministry, clothes for my constantly growing daughter, babysitting as needed and basic household necessities.

5. The cost of daily necessities causes me constant stress. I am not able to do many activities with my daughter, even low-cost community activities and events, because I cannot afford them.
6. I am also unable to regularly purchase fresh, nutritious food like produce and dairy even when I also rely on community resources such as the food bank, Quest or a one-time grocery assistance services. I often fast a few times a week to cut down on grocery costs, which is preferable to relying more on free food options because I have digestive sensitivities that are often exacerbated by eating the non-perishable foods available.
7. Before I gave birth to my daughter, I took out a line of credit for extraordinary expenses, just in case I needed an emergency fund. Because I cannot afford many expenses on income assistance, I have had to use the line of credit to cover basic monthly necessities and it is now almost maxed out.
8. I have searched for childcare for my daughter and most licensed childcare options are between \$1,300 and \$1,600 per month for full time care, Monday to Friday. In the past, I have put my daughter on more than 12 waiting lists with licensed childcare providers, but, other than her current care provider, she has not gotten into any of them. She has been on the waitlist for some of them for over two years.
9. I have to actively search for employment to stay eligible for income assistance, but there is a big gap between the jobs that I can realistically get and the amount that I need to earn to pay for childcare and other basic necessities. Even a full childcare subsidy for licensed care, which is \$550 per month at most for my daughter's age group, pays less than half of the cost of most licensed childcare in Vancouver.

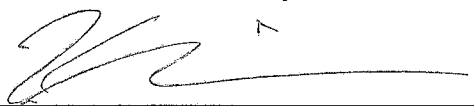
10. It is hard to even look for employment without childcare because I cannot drop off resumes or attend interviews on short notice.
11. In the past, I took a limited term job on very short notice. I confirmed the job on a Friday at approximately 5:30 p.m. and I was scheduled to start the following Monday morning. That left me only the weekend to obtain proper work attire and to find childcare during days and hours when most childcare providers are closed. As a result, I was forced to put my daughter into unlicensed, informal childcare arrangements. At one point, a patchwork of various neighbours and other single mothers were caring for my daughter on different days each week. That situation was very chaotic and hard on my daughter, and I barely made enough income to pay for even that form of childcare.
12. My daughter recently got into a space with a licensed childcare provider after being on their waitlist for over a year. It also happened to be the cheapest licensed childcare option I could find with a monthly fee of \$875 per month. I now receive a maximum childcare subsidy of \$550 per month, so my portion of my daughter's childcare is \$325 each month. I was only able to put my daughter in childcare because our childcare provider, which is located within a church, was willing to provide me with a loan to cover the initial cost while I search for work. When I find employment, I will be starting off with debt, but putting my daughter in childcare is the only way for me to get the time and space to find employment.
13. I am currently still actively looking for full time employment. Although I have secured some job interviews, many of the positions I qualify for expect a prospective employee to be available on some evenings and weekends. Because most childcare providers do not provide care during those periods, I cannot commit to being able to be available for work. I also cannot commit financially because after hours childcare is often more expensive than care during the standard work week.

14. When I did not have access to childcare, it also impacted my relationship with my daughter. The only time I had away from her was during her nap and after she went to sleep at night, and I often spent that time doing housework, searching for jobs, or cooking. There was a constant tension between us because we did not have any space and I could not always give her what she wanted or needed.

15. My daughter gets very stressed when she senses that I am experiencing stress, so my constant financial strain, and the pressure of being a primary caregiver with little support, impacts her wellbeing.

16. I consent to the use of this affidavit in any court proceedings.

AFFIRMED BEFORE ME at the City of
 Vancouver, in the Province of British
 Columbia, this 29th day of March, 2016.



A Commissioner for taking Affidavits
 within British Columbia

Kendra Milne
 555-409 Granville Street
 Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2



