



Self-Employment: Is It For Me?

PSNO often gets requests for information about how a PSW can work directly for a client or the client's family. It is possible, and many PSWs do this, but it does require that PSWs set up their own business—become self-employed, in other words. It also requires that PSWs consider the ways in which being self-employed will affect them.

Is Self-Employment for You?

Being self-employed is often seen as easier than working for an agency. While it has some very real advantages, being self-employed takes a lot of discipline and work. We'll look at some of the major self-employment responsibilities here.

1. You are responsible for your work schedule

Being self-employed means that you're responsible to get work (e.g. to get clients) and to schedule your work. You'll need to be certain that you have enough work to meet your financial needs, as well as to make certain that your clients are informed if you must be away or make changes in your schedule. You'll also have to balance your work to ensure that you have enough time to fulfil the commitments you've made to your clients.

2. You are responsible to keep financial records, pay your taxes and other fees

When you are self-employed, you are responsible to submit your income tax instalments as well as pay for Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) premiums. You usually must make tax payments to the Canada Revenue Agency quarterly (every three months). You'll need to make Canada Pension Plan contributions, but these are usually made when you file your income tax.



You can deduct expenses you have that directly relate to earning your income. You'll also have to keep detailed financial records of your income as well as any expenses you claim against that income. See the Canada Revenue Agency's website for more information on what's required. Click [here](#) for more information. .

You may be required to prove that you either have WSIB coverage or have been deemed by WSIB to be exempt from coverage. For more information, please click [here](#):

3. You are responsible for your own liability insurance, supplemental health insurance, pension or other benefits

You may or may not choose to get insurance or contribute to an RRSP, but if you do, it will be your responsibility to find a plan and to make payments. Usually, your clients will not contribute to these plans—you'll have to pay for them out of the fees you charge your clients.

Bear in mind that liability insurance is something that can protect you in case you've made an honest mistake (or one of your clients thinks that you've made an error). Many insurance companies offer this type of insurance, but PSNO has made arrangements with MARSH Insurance to offer a policy tailored to the needs of PSWs. You can find more information about it [here](#).

This isn't to say that becoming self-employed is not a good idea. You will likely have more control over your time, and more flexibility in your schedule. These benefits may make self-employment a great choice for you.

If you Do Decide to Become Self-Employed

Getting Expert Advice

If you have made the decision to become self-employed, you want to be certain that you have all the information you need to make good choices about how you do this. It's not legally required, but it's often a good idea to speak with an accountant to discuss the type of self-employment that is best for you. There are many types, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

Some PSWs who work on their own become what is known as a *sole proprietor*. This type of business is still a business and you may have to register it with the provincial government.

If you are planning to start a business with another person (for example another PSW), it's a very good idea to talk with a lawyer about the things that are needed to make the arrangement a positive one.

Your Business Name

If you are working on your own as a sole proprietor and use only your own name as your business name, you may not have to register your name with the province.

For example, Rashida Suren, a PSW, decides to become self-employed, using her name as her business name. In this case, she is not required to register her name with the province. She may still want to, if she wishes to make certain that another person does not register it, however.

If you want to use a name other than your own for your business, you'll have to make certain that someone else in Ontario is not already using that name and that the name is one that you're legally allowed to use. You can do this online, at Service Ontario's ONe Source for Business site [here](#).

If no one else is using the name you've chosen, you will have to register it. You can do this at the website where you checked the name. Bear in mind that there is a cost for both the name search and the registration.

For example, Greetha Mukurjee, a PSW, wants to call her business "Best PSW Services." She checks the Service Ontario's ONe Source for Business website to see if she can use that name.

Getting Started

In addition to accounting and legal advice, there are many other sources of information you can use to help you make the best choices possible.



Fact Sheet

Speak with a friend or family member who is self-employed. Often, this person's experiences can give you a firsthand idea of what it's like to be self-employed.

Your local library will have resources on starting your own business. Ask the librarian if you're uncertain as to where to look for these resources.

The province of Ontario has a helpful website. You can find that information [here](#).