
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RULE CHANGES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

February 25, 2009

New changes to social assistance rules will help recipients pursue educational and employment opportunities and improve their lives and the lives of their children.

EARNINGS EXEMPTION FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

Social assistance recipients who are full-time post-secondary students will soon be able to keep all their earnings from employment or a training program. Students will also be able to save these earnings to pay for post-secondary education without affecting their eligibility for social assistance.

The exemption will apply to income earned both during the school year and during the pre-study period – a maximum of 16 weeks prior to the start of their studies.

To benefit from these changes, Ontario Works recipients and non-disabled members of families on the Ontario Disability Program (ODSP) must be taking at least 60 per cent of a full course load, while persons with disabilities under ODSP must be taking at least 40 per cent of a full course load.

Under the new rule, it will be easier for post-secondary students to work and save money while pursuing educational opportunities.

UP-FRONT CHILD CARE BENEFIT

The Up-front Child Care Benefit is currently available to social assistance recipients who are required to pay in advance for child care costs when they begin or change jobs or work-related activities. Eligibility for this benefit will be extended to recipients who require it in order to maintain their current job or work-related activity. For example, if a recipient's child care needs change, they may be able to receive this benefit even if they have not changed jobs or work-related activities.

This benefit will also be available to recipients' children, if they have children of their own.

INTERNAL REVIEW

If a social assistance recipient wants to request an internal review regarding a decision made about their assistance, they will have 30 days from receiving the decision letter to request a review.

If the recipient misses the deadline, they can still ask for an internal review, but they will need to explain why they need more time.

EFFECTIVE DATES FOR RULE CHANGES

Rule Change	Start Date
Earnings exemption for post-secondary students in the Ontario Disability Support Program	April 1, 2009
Earnings exemption for post-secondary students in Ontario Works	May 1, 2009
Up-front Child Care Benefit	March 1, 2009
Internal Review Extension – 30 days	May 1, 2009