

Ontario Disability Support Program - Income Support Directives

9.2 - Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit

Summary of Policy

The Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) can be issued in situations where:

a recipient is establishing a new principal residence or will be remaining in his or her current residence; and

the Director is satisfied that the recipient will need financial assistance to establish the new principal residence or to remain in the current residence; and

- the recipient meets one of the prescribed criteria.

The maximum amount is \$1500 for a benefit unit with one or more dependent children and \$799 in all other cases. The maximum amounts are not to be exceeded within a 24 month period unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Recipients who are only in receipt of the extended health benefits are not eligible for the CSUMB.

Legislative Authority

[Sections 44\(1\) 4 and 44\(1.1\) of the ODSP Regulation](#)

Summary of Directive

This directive outlines the criteria for payment of CSUMB as well as the amounts which may be paid for this benefit.

Intent of Policy

To provide CSUMB to eligible recipients who need financial assistance to establish a new principal residence or to remain in their existing residence.

Application of Policy

CSUMB can be issued in situations where:

- a recipient is establishing a new principal residence or will be remaining in his or her current residence; and
- the Director is satisfied that the recipient will need financial assistance to establish the new principal residence or to remain in the current residence; and
- the recipient meets one of the following criteria:
 - the recipient is being discharged from an institution that provided for his or her basic needs and shelter;
 - the Director is satisfied that it would be harmful to the health or welfare of the recipient to remain in the current place of residence;
 - the recipient has been evicted from his current residence;
 - the recipient has received notice of termination of his/her tenancy or a final demand for payment under a mortgage and the Director is satisfied that if a payment is made, the recipient will not be evicted from his/her current place of residence;
 - a utility (e.g., water, hydro) or heat for the current residence has been discontinued and the Director is satisfied that if a payment is made the utility or energy will be resumed;
 - the recipient has received notice that a utility or heat for the current residence will be discontinued and has satisfied the Director that if a payment is made the utility or energy will not be discontinued.

Examples of Allowable CSUMB Situations

For the purposes of issuing CSUMB, a start up event can generally be defined as a permanent move to a new principal residence. However, there is no single definition of what constitutes a start-up event. Accordingly, each case must be reviewed on its own merit in light of the policy intent.

CSUMB can be issued to assist with moves to new residences and start up events if the recipient is:
being discharged from an institution to independent supportive living or a group home (Note: see Appendix A for a detailed list of institutions);

- moving to more affordable accommodations (e.g. moving from private market to subsidized housing);
- moving from parental/family home to reside in a group home;

- being evicted.

The need for the move must be clearly identified and documented.

CSUMB can be issued to facilitate a move due to health or welfare if the recipient is moving because of:

- family violence (spousal or child abuse);
- the incapacity or death of care-giving family member(s);
- the current dwelling place posing a risk to physical/mental/emotional health, i.e.:
 - overcrowding of premises
 - harassment
 - infestation
 - poor building conditions
 - uninhabitable premises
- an employment/training opportunity.

CSUMB can be issued to assist recipients to remain in their current residence in the following situations:

- To prevent an eviction, CSUMB may be issued to a recipient who has received an eviction notice or is faced with the threat of an eviction due to rental arrears.
- To prevent a foreclosure on a home if a recipient has received a final demand for payment under a mortgage agreement.
- To prevent a utility or heat disconnection, if a recipient has received a notice to disconnect due to utility or energy arrears.
- To pay for utility or energy reconnection costs where the utility or energy was disconnected due to arrears.

If CSUMB has been issued due to an eviction, accommodation arrears, utility arrears or disconnection, staff should discuss the option of pay direct or trusteeship with the recipient (See Directives [10.1 Pay Direct](#) and [10.2 Trusteeship](#))

CSUMB to assist recipients to remain in current residence in health and welfare situations:

Where there is a threat to the health or welfare of a recipient or a member of the benefit unit in a non-start up situation, CSUMB may be issued providing there is eligibility within the preceding 24 month period.

For example:

- replacing a bug infested bed or couch;
- replacing a (necessary) broken down appliance such as a fridge or a stove;
- the cost of smoke alarms and batteries (for home owners who are at the maximum shelter allowance);
- purchasing a large supply of wood or oil for heat upfront in the beginning of winter where there is no room in the shelter allowance for these costs to be added.

Allowable costs

Examples of some costs of establishing a new residence in the community include:

- household furnishings;
- moving van or transportation costs;
- first month's rent deposit (where the need has been clearly identified)
- last month's rent deposit
- telephone, fuel and hydro deposits;
- storage costs for up to three months;
- person with a disability requires assistance to move (e.g. packing boxes, relocating special disability equipment);
- clothing (e.g. in the event of a fire);
- any other related costs approved by the Director.

ODSP staff are to ensure that there is no duplication of payment for start up items by checking documentation of any previous CSUMB payments. However, CSUMB may be issued where the need to replace an item that was purchased through a previous CSUMB payment has been clearly identified. For example, someone whose mattress is no longer usable may require a new one for the new residence.

Payment of CSUMB

CSUMB does not need to be paid in one lump sum. Full or partial payment may be provided prior to a recipient's date of departure from his/her current residence. Full or partial payment may also be issued in situations where CSUMB is

provided to enable a recipient to stay in his/her current home. A recipient can receive more than one CSUMB payment in the same 24 month period as long as the total amount of the CSUMB (under both OW and ODSP) does not exceed the maximum amount to which the recipient is entitled.

The maximum CSUMB is \$1500 for a recipient with one or more dependent children and \$799 in all other cases in a 24 month period.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Director may approve additional payments, each up to the maximum amount of \$1500 for a recipient with one or more dependent children and \$799 in all other cases in each exceptional circumstance.

The following are considered exceptional circumstances:

- the necessity to relocate as a result of a catastrophic event in which the person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant loss (e.g. flood, fire)
- the necessity to relocate as a result of domestic violence
- the necessity to relocate as a result of a disability, e.g.:
 - the opportunity for the recipient to obtain supportive housing with facilities designed to meet his or her disability related needs
 - where a recipient is moving to a home that better meets his/her disability related needs
 - where a recipient's medical condition has deteriorated and a move is required to accommodate the condition
- other circumstances where the Director is satisfied that the need for the funds has been clearly identified and if not approved, would be harmful to the health and welfare of the recipient or a member of the benefit unit.

To qualify for an additional CSUMB in exceptional circumstances, the recipient must still meet the other CSUMB criteria.

Documentation of Costs

One cost estimate is required to support payment of moving expenses and/or furniture.

A copy of a lease or letter from the landlord is required to support payment for last month's rent.

Verification from gas, utility and/or phone company is required to support payments for fuel and hydro deposits or phone connections. If the recipient cannot obtain written verification, ODSP staff may obtain verbal verification over the phone and document the relevant information.

Receipts of actual costs must follow within a reasonable time frame.

A notice of termination from a landlord, verification of accommodation arrears or a final demand for payment from a mortgagee is required to support payment to maintain a current place of residence.

Verification of disconnection and arrears of utility or energy costs are required to support payment to enable a recipient to stay in his/her current home

Recovery of CSUMB

Where an ODSP recipient received CSUMB and is later determined to be ineligible for income support during the period they received the CSUMB, the amount issued will be included in the overpayment calculation.

Similarly, when an ODSP recipient is later determined to be eligible for another source of income during the period they received CSUMB, and an assignment is completed, the amount of CSUMB issued during that period will be included in the reimbursement calculation.

In addition, if CSUMB was approved and paid to a recipient in a month that a recipient was ineligible for income support due to high earnings and where the recipient would be eligible the following month, the amount of CSUMB issued should not be included in the overpayment calculation.

If a recipient receives CSUMB to assist with a move but does not move as expected, the recipient is required to return the CSUMB cheque to the ODSP office for the full amount of CSUMB provided. Where the recipient does not return the CSUMB, an overpayment is to be established.

If a recipient does not submit receipts for the amount issued within a reasonable time frame, an overpayment is to be established.

Case Scenario I

- June 20, 2008 A recipient with one dependent child requests CSUMB in the amount of \$1500 to assist with rental arrears to avoid an eviction.
- June 24, 2008 **CSUMB request is granted.**
Rationale: If the rent arrears are paid, the recipient will maintain her current place of residence
Note: CSUMB has been issued due to rental arrears therefore, staff to discuss the option of pay direct or trusteeship with the recipient.
- Dec 18, 2009 The recipient wants to move to an apartment with a better view and requests CSUMB to assist with last month's rent.
- Dec 22, 2009 **CSUMB request is denied.**
Rationale: The recipient received the maximum amount within the preceding 24 months and the reason for the move is not consistent with the reasons for granting additional payments under exceptional circumstances.

Case Scenario II

- Jan. 12, 2009 A single recipient moves from overcrowded rooming house to share an apartment with a friend. The recipient applies for CSUMB of \$400 to purchase basics for apartment (**e.g.** bed, kitchen utensils, and dresser).
- Jan. 16, 2009 **CSUMB request is granted.**
Rationale: The recipient is relocating due to overcrowded conditions.
- July 19, 2009 There is a fire at the apartment and the recipient moves to a different rooming house. The recipient's personal items were destroyed in the fire and he had no insurance.
- Aug. 4, 2009 The recipient applies for CSUMB of \$399 to purchase personal items.

- Aug. 7, 2009 **CSUMB request is granted.**
Rationale: CSUMB is granted to replace items lost in the fire. This CSUMB in combination with the first CSUMB granted 7 months earlier totals the maximum allowable of \$799 within a 24 month period. Both CSUMBs were granted for allowable start up events.
- Nov. 2, 2009 The recipient decides to leave the rooming house to move into another rooming house. There are no exceptional circumstances prompting the move. The recipient applies for \$400 to cover moving expenses and additional personal items.
- Nov. 6, 2009 **CSUMB request is denied.**
Rationale: The reasons for relocation from one rooming house to another are not consistent with the reasons for granting additional CSUMBs under exceptional circumstances.

Hyperlinks Associated with this Policy Directive

Related Directives:

[2.1 Dependent Adult](#)

[2.2 Dependent Children](#)

[8.1 Budgetary Requirements for Recipients in Institutions](#)

[8.2 Budgetary Requirements for Recipients, Dependants Temporarily in a Hospital, Psychiatric Facility or Substance Abuse Recovery Home](#)

[8.3 Special Items for Residents in Chronic Care](#)

[8.4 Travel and Transportation for Recipients in Charitable Institutions](#)

[10.1 Pay Direct](#)

[10.2 Trusteeship](#)

Bulletin

2004-09 ODSP Policy and Regulation Changes Effective December 2004

Appendix A

Residential Facilities

The following facilities are considered “institutions” and residents may be eligible for CSUMB upon discharge:

- a facility that is designated as an institution by section 1 of Regulation 744 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 made under the **Mental Hospitals Act**;
- a psychiatric facility under the **Mental Health Act** that was formerly designated as an institution by section 1 of Regulation 744 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 made under the **Mental Hospitals Act** and that became a division or other part of another facility as a result of the implementation of a plan for the restructuring of hospital services;
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in the City of Toronto;
- Homewood Health Centre in the City of Guelph;
- a facility designated under the **Developmental Services Act**;
- a home for special care established, licensed or approved under the **Homes for Special Care Act**;
- a home under the **Homes for the Aged and Rest Homes Act**;
- a charitable institution under the **Charitable Institutions Act**;
- a nursing home licensed under the **Nursing Homes Act**;
- a group home for persons with a developmental disability under the **Developmental Services Act**;
- a place designated under the regulations under the **Health Insurance Act** as a hospital or a health facility for the provision of insured services to chronically ill patients and that is a hospital for chronically ill patients, a chronic care hospital or a chronic unit attached to a general or convalescent hospital;
- a community resource center established under section 15 of the **Ministry of Correctional Services Act** for parolees or persons on probation under that Act;
- a residential facility providing treatment, care or rehabilitation programs under the **Child and Family Services Act**;
- a provincial residential school for persons whose vision or hearing is impaired;

In addition to the facilities/institutions listed above, other residences can be included. For example, interval or transition homes for abused women, domiciliary hostels or rest/retirement homes, emergency hostels or non-profit

residences in which the applicant /recipient has been residing for the purpose of rehabilitation, treatment, custodial care or safety and protection.