

Ontario Disability Support Program - Income Support Directives

Preamble

The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) was created to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities. The program provides income support including health and other benefits for people with disabilities in financial need. The program also provides employment supports to help people with disabilities prepare for, obtain or maintain a job. The intent of the program is to provide the supports necessary to enable individuals and families to live as independently as possible in the community and lead more productive, dignified lives.

The Ontario Disability Support Program Act 1997 and the regulations provide the legislative framework for realizing a separate system of income and employment supports for people with disabilities. The legislation states the purpose of the ODSP Act is to:

- provide income and employment supports to eligible persons with disabilities;
- recognize that government, communities, families and individuals share responsibility for providing such supports;
- effectively serve people with disabilities who need assistance; and
- be accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario.

Policy directives provide the interpretation and application of legislative and policy requirements of the program. The policy directives will guide provincial staff in the delivery of the Ontario Disability Support Program. New policy directives will be issued as regulations and policies change.

The purpose of the policy directives is to enable consistent decision-making across the province and to ensure accountability for those decisions. The policy directives provide staff with the guidance they need to make decisions regarding the client's entitlement to services, supports and benefits. The ODSP legislation and policies allow for discretion in many areas. In keeping with the spirit of the legislation, staff should use this discretion to ensure that clients receive all of the benefits to which they are entitled. In accordance with its purpose of providing income support to persons with disabilities; the ODSP Act, regulations and policies should be interpreted flexibly and broadly.

ODSP services will be provided based on the client's individual needs and circumstances. Consistent with the intent of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001, barriers to accessing ODSP must be removed or minimized so that all clients are able to benefit from the services available. Clients should be provided

with the accommodations required to address disability-related needs. Such accommodations may include: using alternative communication formats; allowing flexibility of timelines; and human supports, such as sign language interpreters. Staff will provide clients with clear and up-to-date information about ODSP, as well as other community services available, in order to assist people with disabilities to live, work and participate in their communities.