

# Ontario Works Policy Directives

## 2.3 Emergency Assistance

### Legislative Authority

Sections 2, 5, 8, 9 and 26(2) of the Act.

Sections 16(2), 22, 55, 56 and 59 of Regulation 134/98.

### Audit Requirements

Adequate documentation is on file to demonstrate the applicant meets the criteria for emergency assistance.

Emergency assistance is not provided more than once in a six month period, except in the case of:

- women entering an interval or transition home for abused women and
- in-land refugee claimants who are awaiting an appointment to determine eligibility for referral to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), up to a maximum of three months or six 16 day installments.

Emergency assistance is not issued for a period of more than sixteen days.

Emergency assistance may not be provided to tourists or visitors.

### Application of Policy

Emergency assistance enables the immediate provision of financial assistance to an applicant in a crisis or emergency situation. The provision of financial assistance in an emergency may include an amount for basic needs, shelter and benefits.

### Requests for Emergency Assistance

A request for emergency assistance may be made in the geographic area where the applicant normally resides or in another area if the Administrator is satisfied he or she cannot reasonably apply in the area in which they ordinarily live.

A request for emergency assistance may be made when an applicant initially contacts an Ontario Works office or at any point during the application process for income assistance.

When a request for emergency assistance is received, staff should obtain and document the available information to support the provision of emergency assistance. A full application for assistance is not required in order to issue emergency assistance.

## **Eligibility for Emergency Assistance**

Emergency assistance may be provided where:

- the applicant is not currently in receipt of social assistance;
- the applicant is not serving a period of ineligibility;
- the applicant has not received emergency assistance in the past six months; except in the case of:
  - women entering an interval or transition home for abused women and
  - in-land refugee claimants who are awaiting an appointment to determine eligibility for referral to the IRB, up to a maximum of three months or six 16 day installments.
- the Administrator is satisfied, based on available information regarding living conditions, finances, employment and other relevant circumstances, that:
  - the applicant has made reasonable efforts to access all other available resources;
  - the applicant does not have enough money or assets, and is unable to obtain credit to meet the basic needs and shelter needs of his or her benefit unit;
  - failure to provide the emergency assistance will result in danger to the physical health of a member of the benefit unit; or at least one dependent child being unable to continue to reside with his or her parent who requested the assistance.

Emergency assistance cannot be provided while in receipt of income assistance; however, if a person in receipt of social assistance is faced with an emergency situation where additional funds are necessary, funds may be available through mandatory and/or discretionary benefits ([see Directive 7.1: Summary of Benefits](#) for more information).

A person who receives emergency assistance does not have participation requirements, and cannot appeal decisions regarding the provision of emergency assistance or the amount of assistance issued.

Emergency assistance may be provided to an applicant in situations where information or documentation required to complete an application for assistance is outstanding, and an eligibility decision has not been made.

## **Issuing Emergency Assistance**

The Administrator determines the amount of emergency assistance payable, which may include an amount for basic needs and shelter, as well as an amount for benefits.

Emergency assistance may be provided for a period of not more than sixteen days; however, more than one payment may be issued within the sixteen day period.

Once emergency assistance has been issued for sixteen days, assistance will only continue to be provided after a full application for income assistance has been completed, including all required consents and a Participation Agreement. Arrangements should be made for the application to be completed at the earliest opportunity where it is likely that ongoing assistance will be required.

Emergency assistance may be provided more than once in a six month period to women entering an interval or transition home for abused women.

Emergency assistance may also be provided more than once in a six month period to in-land refugee claimants who are awaiting an appointment to determine eligibility for referral to the IRB, up to a maximum of three months or six 16 day installments. Appropriate documentation (i.e. an IRCC scheduling form) must be provided to verify that the applicant has made an in-land refugee claim and has an appointment scheduled.

Where emergency assistance is provided in the same month that a benefit unit is found to be eligible for income assistance, the amount of emergency assistance already issued should not be deducted from the amount of income assistance. However, income assistance for basic needs and shelter may be pro-rated based on the circumstances of the case.