

# Ontario Works Directives

## **6.1: Calculating Assistance**

### **Legislative Authority**

Sections 2 and 5 of the Act.

Sections 1(1), 7, 8, 40 - 48, 63 and 64 of Regulation 134/98.

### **Audit Requirements**

Adequate documentation is on file to support the level of assistance issued.

Shelter amount is paid based on actual expenses up to the maximum allowable amount.

There is no duplication in the issuance of assistance and calculations of income assistance are fair and consistent.

### **Application of Policy**

Income assistance is calculated on a monthly basis by determining the budgetary requirements of the benefit unit. The amount of income assistance provided will depend on living arrangements, family composition and income of the benefit unit. Where an applicant or recipient has earnings, the amount of income assistance is based on net earnings (i.e., gross earnings less mandatory deductions).

Income assistance includes an amount for basic needs and shelter (or board and lodging where applicable), and can include the Remote Communities Allowance, Advanced Age Allowance, Special Diet Allowance, Pregnancy/Breast-feeding Nutritional Allowance and Special Boarder Allowance.

Delivery agents are responsible for ensuring that there is no duplication in the issuance of assistance and that calculations of income assistance are fair and consistent.

If an applicant or recipient's budgetary requirements are less than their available income, he/she is ineligible for assistance.

## **Basic Needs**

The basic needs amount assists with the cost of food, clothing and other personal items ([see Directive 6.2: Basic Needs](#) for more information).

## **Shelter**

Shelter is defined as the dwelling place used as the principal residence. Shelter costs for recipients who rent or own their dwelling can include rent and mortgage payments, as well as other residence-related costs. The shelter amount provided is based on actual verified shelter costs up to the maximum levels set out in regulation ([see Directive 6.3: Shelter Costs](#) for more information).

## **Board and Lodging**

If a recipient receives shelter and meals from another person, a board and lodging rate is provided instead of an amount for basic needs and shelter (see [Directive 6.4: Board and Lodging](#) for more information).

## **Special Boarder Allowance**

The Special Boarder Allowance is a mandatory amount paid to benefit units in board and lodging situations (see [Directive 6.4: Board and Lodging](#) for more information).

## **Remote Communities Allowance**

The Remote Communities Allowance is a mandatory amount paid to recipients in communities north of the 50th parallel without year round road access ([see Directive 6.2: Basic Needs](#) and [Directive 6.4: Board and Lodging](#) for more information). Administrators have the discretion to provide an amount equivalent to the Remote Communities Allowance to recipients in communities south of the 50th parallel without year round road access ([see Directive 7.7: Other Benefits](#) for more information).

## **Advanced Age Allowance**

The Advanced Age Allowance is provided for each member of the benefit unit who is 65 years of age or older ([see Directive 6.2: Basic Needs](#) and [Directive 6.4: Board and Lodging](#) for more information).

## **Pregnancy/Breast-Feeding Nutritional Allowance**

If a member of the benefit unit is pregnant, she receives a pregnancy/breast-feeding nutritional allowance to cover the costs of additional food and nutritional supplements associated with pregnancy ([see Directive 6.5: Pregnancy/Breast-feeding Nutritional Allowance](#) for more information).

## **Special Diet Allowance**

A Special Diet Allowance is provided for each member of the benefit unit who requires a special diet as a result of an approved medical condition ([see Directive 6.6: Special Diet Allowance](#) for more information).

## **Participants in Institutional Settings**

Participants living in institutional settings may be eligible for financial assistance if they reside in one of the following institutions:

- a long-term care home ([see Directive 6.7: Persons in Long-Term Care Homes](#) for more information);
- an interval or transition home for victims of family violence ([see Directive 6.8: Persons in Interval and Transition Homes](#) for more information);
- a hospital ([see Directive 6.9: Hospitals](#) for more information);
- a residential program for the treatment of substance abuse ([see Directive 6.10: Persons in Residential Programs for Substance Abuse](#) for more information);
- an emergency hostel ([see Directive 2.7: Emergency Hostel Services](#) – First Nations Delivery Agents and [Directive 6.16: Emergency Hostels and Shelters – CMSMs and DSSABs](#) for more information); or
- a domiciliary-type hostel ([see Directive 6.11: Domiciliary-type Hostels](#) for more information).

A person who is incarcerated is not eligible for assistance while confined, but may be eligible upon his/her release ([see Directive 2.3: Emergency Assistance](#), [see Directive 2.7: Emergency Hostel Services](#) – First Nations Delivery Agents and [Directive 6.16: Emergency Hostels and Shelters – CMSMs and DSSABs](#) and [Directive 6.12: Persons Detained in Custody](#) for more information).

## **Shared Accommodation**

When a recipient is eligible for assistance while residing with another person, the amount of assistance for the recipient is determined based on the circumstances

of the living arrangement.

The characteristics of the living arrangement between the recipient and the other person in the household will need to be clearly identified and documented. The relationship between the recipient and the other person may be that of a renter, landlord, roomer, boarder, co-resident, caregiver or spouse ([see Directive 3.3: Co-Residency](#) for more information).

## **Dependent Children**

Dependent children are included in the benefit unit when determining budgetary requirements. However, in certain circumstances different policies and calculations will apply (e.g., shared custody) ([see Directive 3.9: Dependent Children](#) for more information).

## **Dependent Children With Dependent Child(ren)**

A sole support parent under the age of 18 who lives with his/her parent(s) can receive assistance (paid through a trustee) on behalf of his/her own child ([see Directive 3.6: Trusteeship](#) for more information). The amount of assistance will depend on the number of children the dependent child has, and may include a remote communities allowance, special diet allowance and pregnancy/breastfeeding nutritional allowance ([see Directive 6.2: Basic Needs](#), [Directive 6.5: Pregnancy/Breast-feeding Nutritional Allowance](#) and [Directive 6.6: Special Diet Allowance](#) for more information).

## **Living with Parents**

Where an applicant states they live with their parents, the determination of eligibility and the calculation of assistance are considered under the “living with parents” rule ([see Directive 3.4: Living with Parents](#) for more information).

## **Homeless Persons**

A homeless person is someone who does not ordinarily reside in a dwelling such as a house, apartment, mobile home or similar residential structure. A homeless person who is eligible for assistance will receive an amount for basic needs, but will not receive an amount for shelter until a dwelling is retained.

Persons who are staying with different friends or relatives until they can locate an address are not considered homeless. Such persons are considered roomers or boarders.

Persons who reside in trailers or tents on a seasonal basis or pending a more permanent address are not considered homeless. For example,

- for a person residing in a campground, the fee charged by the campground is considered the shelter cost; or
- a person living in a tent in a friend's backyard, with meals provided at cost, is considered a boarder.

### **First Month of Eligibility**

An Administrator determines the effective date of eligibility as appropriate for applicants. The eligibility date can be effective from a date before, on or after the date of the Administrator's eligibility decision.

If the Administrator determines that eligibility for financial assistance is effective prior to the date of the decision, the shelter amount for the first month of eligibility, is the lesser of:

- the amount the Administrator determines to be one full month's shelter cost (up to the allowable maximum); or
- the amount of actual shelter costs (up to the allowable maximum) that remain unpaid on the effective date of eligibility (e.g. shelter costs are pro-rated from the date of eligibility to the end of the month).

The basic needs amount is prorated from the date of eligibility to the end of the month.

### **Payment of Assistance**

Assistance shall not be paid for a period of more than one month at a time, unless the payment is for a retroactive budget calculation or made as a result of a decision of the Social Benefits Tribunal or the court. The total assistance payable is adjusted for income or overpayments.

If the amount payable to the participant is between \$.01 and \$2.49, the Administrator shall pay the minimum amount of \$2.50.

Assistance is paid directly to the recipient. An applicant or recipient may choose to have their assistance deposited directly in a bank account that belongs to him/her. Authorization must be obtained from an applicant or recipient who elects to have their assistance deposited directly in a bank account. In some instances, it may be determined that a trustee or direct payment to another individual is required for all or a portion of the assistance paid ([see Directive 3.6: Trusteeship](#) and [Directive 3.7: Pay Direct](#) for more information).

## Calculating Reduced Assistance

Financial assistance may be reduced, refused or cancelled due to non-compliance. When a single applicant or recipient is non-compliant, assistance is refused or cancelled. Financial assistance is reduced when a member of a benefit unit is non-compliant. Where financial assistance is reduced, the reduction in assistance is equal to the non-compliant person's portion of assistance for basic needs, shelter and benefits ([see Directive 6.13: Calculating Reduced Assistance](#) for more information).