

Ontario Works Directives

6.16: Emergency Hostels and Shelters – Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs)

Legislative Authority

Sections 2, 5, 7, 8, 16, and 19 of the Act.
Sections 40, 41, 42, 44(1), 45, 63 and 64 of Regulation 134/98.

Audit Requirements

Documentation is on file to support decisions made.

Application of Policy

“Emergency Hostels and Shelters” mean temporary accommodation provided to people experiencing homelessness. Typically, these are individuals in crisis seeking temporary supports pending resolution of the issues that gave rise to the emergency. It does not include residents of interval or transition homes for abused women or victims of family violence ([see Directive 3.2: Residential Arrangements](#) for more information).

Emergency hostels and shelters provided by a Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) or a District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) are considered temporary accommodation for the purposes of social assistance.

Persons staying at a CHPI-funded emergency hostel or shelter who are eligible for Ontario Works will receive financial assistance and employment assistance.

The amount of financial assistance provided to recipients in emergency hostels and shelters depends on the nature of their community accommodation:

- Those who are retaining permanent community accommodation for which they have continued cost receive an amount for basic needs and shelter or board and lodging, depending on their circumstance.
- Those who do not have or are not retaining community accommodation receive an amount for basic needs only.

Eligible recipients may also be provided applicable benefits including a Special

Diet Allowance, Pregnancy/Breast-feeding Nutritional Allowance, Remote Communities Allowance, Special Boarder Allowance, Advanced Age Allowance or Transition Child Benefit.

The living arrangements of applicants or recipients who are staying at an emergency shelter but maintaining community accommodation should be assessed in the same manner as any other applicant or recipient, i.e. based on their community accommodation (see [Directive 6.3: Shelter](#) and [Directive 6.4: Board and Lodging](#) for more information).

Where a recipient has already received financial assistance for basic needs and shelter upon entry to an emergency hostel, no new assistance will be issued for the same benefit month. Continued eligibility for shelter allowance in the following month will depend on the client's circumstances with respect to his or her community accommodation.

Recognizing that, in most circumstances, recipients will move to permanent accommodation at the beginning of a month, basic needs and shelter or board and lodging amounts can be issued for any month in which a recipient is maintaining or transitioning into a community residence.

If a recipient is serving a period of ineligibility due to non-compliance with Ontario Works, they can still stay at an emergency shelter. Once the period of ineligibility is over, a reapplication to Ontario Works should be made.

Finding stable, longer term housing may be the primary focus for recipients staying at emergency hostels/shelters. Recipients should be encouraged to take part in activities that will help them secure permanent accommodation, stabilize their living conditions, and make participation in employment assistance activities practicable.

Amount for Personal Needs

Under CHPI, Municipal Service Managers may elect to continue to issue an amount for personal needs to emergency shelter residents. Where an amount for personal needs is issued to a recipient, it will be considered income and will be deducted from the recipient's financial assistance.