

Ontario Works Directives

7.7: Other Benefits

Legislative Authority

Sections 2, 5 and 10 of the Act.
Section 59 of Regulation 134/98

Audit Requirements

Adequate documentation is on file to support decisions and level of benefit issued.

Benefits are only offered as mandatory or discretionary and only for the allowable period of time.

Random file reviews are completed to ensure that all requirements are met.

Application of Policy

Ontario Works benefits are either mandatory or discretionary.

Mandatory benefits are listed in Regulation and are provided to eligible recipients and their dependents.

Discretionary benefits are provided on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Administrator. The Administrator determines the amount to be provided for discretionary benefits. Discretionary benefits may be listed in Regulation or authorized by the Director as special services, items or payments where the Administrator has made a determination of need based on verifiable documentation and where failure to provide the service would result in a detriment to the health of the recipient or a member of the benefit unit.

Mandatory Benefits

Guide Dog Benefit

Each member of the benefit unit who, due to a disability, has a specially trained dog certified for use as a guide, hearing or service dog by an accredited training facility is eligible for an amount of \$78 per month to assist with the costs for the routine care of the dog.

To be eligible for the benefit, verification that the dog has been trained and certified by an accredited training facility for use as a guide, hearing or service dog is required. Verification can be in the form of a certificate from the training facility or a registration card from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

An “accredited training facility” is:

- For guide dogs, a facility that is listed in the **Blind Persons’ Rights Act**, Regulation 58, a facility that meets the minimum standards established by Assistance Dogs International and that is a member of Assistance Dogs International or a facility that meets the minimum standards of the International Guide Dog Federation and that is a member of the International Guide Dog Federation.
- For hearing and service dogs, a facility that meets the minimum standards established by Assistance Dogs International and that is a member of Assistance Dogs International.

Discretionary Benefits

Travel and Transportation for Non-Health Related Purposes

Travel and transportation for non-health related purposes is a discretionary benefit, and may be provided when the Administrator considers travel and transportation reasonable and appropriate.

Examples:

1. Transportation for a recipient to return to their home outside of Ontario. Repatriation to another province or country is provided at the discretion of the Administrator, for example, when the move is in the recipient’s best interest (e.g., cases of domestic violence or where basic needs and shelter can be provided by persons in the recipient’s home province or country).
2. Transportation of a recipient to another municipality/First Nation, if the relocation is in their best interest (e.g., the recipient has obtained employment).
3. Transportation of a recipient going to court to obtain support from their spouse.
4. Transportation costs for hospital visits or funeral attendance of next of kin.

Special Services, Items and Payments

Administrators have the discretion to provide special services, items and payments where authorized by the Director.

The following special services, items or payments are currently approved by the Director:

- chiropractic services
- remote communities allowance for communities south of the 50th parallel without year round road access
- wheelchair and mobility devices (e.g., lifts) batteries, replacement batteries and necessary repairs
- provision, replacement and repairs of hearing aids including batteries for the portion not covered by the Assistive Devices Program
- certification of a learning disorder by a qualified medical doctor or psychologist
- costs of completing medical forms not covered by OHIP, as required to verify eligibility for assistance, benefits or other required purposes
- replacement or repair of essential household furniture and appliances
- replacement or purchase of smoke alarms and batteries for recipients who own their homes and are not in receipt of the maximum shelter allowance
- replacement of household items and personal effects in emergency situations (e.g., fire, flood, storms)
- electric beds to avoid bedsores for persons confined to a bed
- air conditioners for severe asthmatics
- electric breast pumps
- layettes and baby supplies
- blood tests required for **Applications for Support** where the cost cannot be paid by some other means (e.g., Legal Aid)
- cost of preparing a will where the cost cannot be paid by some other means (e.g., Legal Aid)
- initial deposits required by landlords or others for rent, hydro and heating where necessary
- payments for continuation of hydro or heating service, or to prevent eviction
- payments for low-cost energy and water conservation measures
- cost of an alerting system (e.g., light-flasher, bed-shaker or other appropriate alerting mechanism) if the recipient or a member of the benefit unit is deaf or hearing impaired

In addition to the approved list, the Director has authorized the provision of special services, items or payments for:

- Health-related purposes (excluding the cost of prescription drugs) where the Administrator has made a determination of need based on verifiable documentation, and failure to provide would result in a detriment to the health of the recipient or a member of the benefit unit. The provision of health-

- related special services, items and payments are based on actual cost.
- Non-health-related purposes on a case-by-case basis up to a maximum of \$250. If a special service, item or payment costs more than \$250 approval from the Director is required.