

# Social Assistance and You

Developed by the Community Advocates Network

c/o North End Community Health Centre  
2165 Gottingen Street Halifax, NS B3K 3B5

## Employability Assessment and Job Search Requirements

*This information will tell you what to expect and what will be expected of you when you apply for assistance. Everyone has to go through an employability assessment and may have to do job searches*

**In order to get Income Assistance** one of the first things a worker does is rate your ability to work by asking you a few questions. They will want to know if you are able to work or if you have a partner who is able to work. At intake, there are three categories of employability:

- (1) waiting for assessment (of ability to work)
- (2) temporarily excused (not employable at this time due to short term illness, disability, child care responsibilities)
- (3) not required (permanently disabled)

**If you or your partner are a (1)**, the worker will ask you questions from a longer form called a Nova Scotia Employability Assessment (NSEA). **An assessment is** someone asking you a bunch of questions in order to make decisions about you.

**Able to Work:** If the worker decides you and/or your partner is able to work, you may be asked to show that you looked for

work before you can get assistance. The worker will want to know where you looked for work, when you looked for work and how you went about it. Once the worker is satisfied that you looked for work you will be asked to sign a form called “Understanding of Participation Form”

**If you and/or your partner do not sign this form then you will not be allowed to get income assistance**

**Job Ready?** The whole idea is to see if you are ready for a job now or if you need some help before you will be ready for a job. The people asking you the questions will be trying to find out how you have looked for work. They might ask for:

- your resume and/or your partner’s resume
- a list of people you saw, talked to or gave a resume to before coming to ask for social assistance.
- an explanation of the different ways you have looked for work. They may want you to write these things down.



**Have you done any of these things?**

Made phone calls	√
Dropped resume off to different people	√
Answered ad in the newspaper	√
Answered ad on the Internet	
Dropped in on people who could offer me a job	√
Went to local job search program	

**The worker does not call anyone to see if you are telling the truth.** They will give you a code which tells you what activities you need to do to keep your social assistance

## Employability Participation (EP) Codes

<b>EP 1</b>	you need to go to the job assessment appointment
<b>EP 2</b>	You need to participate in a job plan and you are doing it.
<b>EP 3</b>	You can get your cheque without doing a job plan at this time. The worker will look at you again to see if you are ready to do your job plan.
<b>EP 4</b>	You can get social assistance without doing a job plan at this time. You will continue to get your social assistance without doing a job plan.
<b>EP 5</b>	You need to take part in a job plan and you are not doing it. You will <u>not</u> receive assistance.

### **Taking part in a job plan is tied into your receiving social assistance!**

**The job plan** will include the chance to get help and support. Income assistance will provide support using the smallest amount of money. Some of the things you might do in your job plan are:

- Take a course that makes you feel better on the inside
- Take courses to get your grade 12
- Help to put your resume on paper, writing a cover letter and learning different ways to look for a job
- Take part in a job training program
- Have use of a telephone, fax, computer, photocopier and stamps to send out your cover letter and resume

### **The move from assistance to work**

You have a job. Income Assistance will help in a number of different ways: keeping your pharmacare for up to 12 months after you start your job; getting up to \$400.00 per month to help with child care to support your job plan; getting up to \$150.00 per month to help with transportation; help with

work-related items such as work boots, uniforms, tools and supplies you might need to land that job. (See Special Needs sheet). **You need to keep you receipts.** You get paid for the money you spend.

**Once you start work** you will have to let your worker know. You will be able to keep 30% of your net pay before they start cutting your cheque. Your social assistance cheque will be cut down dollar for dollar after that 30%.

**If you have children** you will not lose your children's tax benefit. Some people know this as family allowance or maybe the baby bonus. If your job plan includes income from **your own business** you will get income assistance for up to 18 months as determined by a caseworker

**Community Advocates Network** Our membership is made up of First Voice people, who are directly affected by social assistance reform, as well as groups, organizations and agencies. Together with first voice people, active members include

AIDS COALITION OF NOVA SCOTIA  
ADSUM HOUSE  
ADSUM COURT  
ALICE HOUSING  
CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSN.—DARTMOUTH BRANCH  
CANADIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND  
COMMUNITY ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS  
CONNECTIONS CLUBHOUSE  
CORNERSTONE FAMILY CENTRE  
DALHOUSIE LEGAL AID SERVICE  
DARTMOUTH FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE  
DISABLED INDIVIDUALS ALLIANCE  
FEEDING OTHERS OF DARTMOUTH  
HALIFAX COALITION AGAINST POVERTY  
MENTAL HEALTH SOCIAL CLUB  
METRO NON PROFIT HOUSING  
METRO RESOURCE CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING  
NORTH END COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE  
NS ASSN OF SOCIAL WORKERS  
NS GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES UNION  
NS ASSN FOR COMMUNITY LIVING  
PEOPLE FIRST OF NOVA SCOTIA  
RESTORING DIGNITY  
SINGLE PARENTS CENTRE  
ST. GEORGE'S ROUND CHURCH  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL HAND IN HAND  
TEAMWORKS  
VEITH HOUSE

