

Social Assistance and You

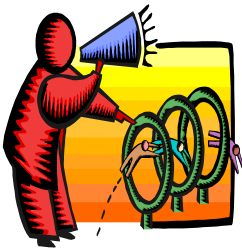
Developed by the Community Advocates Network
c/o North End Community Health Centre
2165 Gottingen Street Halifax, NS B3K 3B5

Getting Income Assistance

To get income assistance in Nova Scotia, you have to apply at your nearest Community Services office. You should get assistance if you meet some basic conditions, have basic documentation, sign forms, are in financial need, give personal, financial and employment information.

Application Process

These are the steps: 1) Call the office and give basic information, Your name will be put into the computer to check for prior contact. If you have had assistance in the last 12 months from the same office you will be assigned a caseworker. 2) A worker should contact you in one working day to see if you might be eligible. 3) If you might be eligible a home visit must be done within 3 days. You will be approved (or not). If approved, a cheque will be made out to you.



Advocacy Tip: If you are waiting and waiting for a call back about your eligibility you can: Call the worker's supervisor: Ask to pick up the cheque rather than have it mailed to you; Appeal the delay if it goes beyond three days.

To be eligible for income assistance you must be 19 years old, have a fixed address and go after other kinds of income. You will need these documents to apply for assistance: a SIN Card, a

N.S. Health Card, a lease, occupancy agreement or some proof of your address.

If you have children, you must have birth certificates for children, marriage, divorce papers, child support court orders.

If you are disabled, you must get a community services medical report filled out by your doctor.

You will have to sign these forms: an application form and a consent to release information form. You will have to give this personal information:

- your name and address,
- your birth date,
- the names and birth dates of other family members and others living with you, the last place you worked,
- medical information,
- reasons for needing assistance.

The Department will require this financial information:

- bank statement,
- stubs from other income such as Canada Pension, or Employment Insurance,
- your last pay stub,
- proof of social assistance from other places,
- child support payments,
- copy of last income tax return.

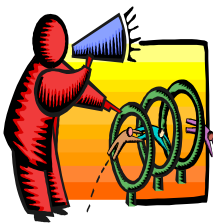
This information about your employment will also be needed:

- your reason for leaving last job;
- proof of job searches in last three days;
- your work history and education level.

The Basic Needs Budget

This information sheet will explain how an income assistance budget for basic needs is done.

A basic needs budget has two parts: a personal allowance for food, clothing and personal care items; and a shelter allowance for rent or mortgage, lights, heat, water and taxes.



Advocacy Tip: You have a right to know how your budget is added up. Ask your worker for a copy of your “client financial summary sheet”.

The personal allowance for one adult is \$190 per month. There is no personal allowance for children unless the family is not getting the Child Tax Credit/National Child Benefit (family allowance). Then the personal allowance for a child is \$133 per month.

The shelter rate for one person is \$285 per month. If you are disabled or running from an abusive partner, the shelter allowance for one person goes up to \$535. The rate for two people is \$550 per month and \$600 for three or more people. Remember, shelter allowances include rent, heat, lights, water and taxes. The maximum amounts are the most people can get, even if your actual bills are higher. If your bills are less, you will get the amount of your rent, heat, lights, water added together.

Social Assistance Offices

Community Services has regional and district offices across the province. You can find them at the community services web site <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/files/contact.asp#cumberland> or by looking in the blue pages of your phone book

Sample Basic Needs Budgets

Single Person (able-bodied)

Personal Allowance	\$200
Shelter	\$300 *
Total	\$500

Single Disabled Person

Personal Allowance	\$200
Shelter	\$535 *
Total	\$735

Single Parent with two children

Personal allowance	\$200
Shelter	\$620 *
Total	\$820

Basic Needs Rates:

Personal Allowance

Adult \$ 200

Child \$133 (only if not getting CTC/NCB)

Shelter Maximums

One Person \$300

One Person \$535
(disabled or abused)

Two People \$570

Three + \$620

*You will only get the maximum shelter allowance if your rent and utilities add up to at least these amounts or more

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

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