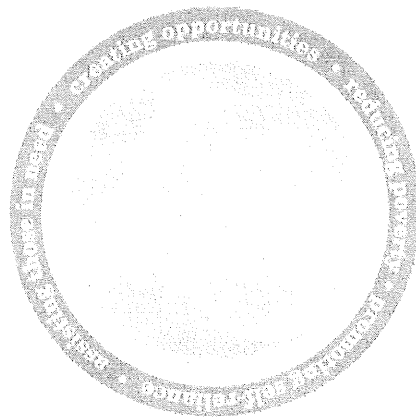


Income Assistance Amendments to Policy and Procedures Manual



Income Security Programs

Effective November 2010

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Productive Choices

Current Policy: The following is a list of approved Productive Choices:

- Employment that generates wages or a salary
- Traditional activities
- Education (postsecondary, adult literacy basic education (ALBE) or other training), career counselling
- Wellness programs such as medical treatment, counselling, or addictions treatment (drugs or alcohol)
- Parenting a child, either their own or a foster child, from birth to three years of age or parenting two children under the age of six
- Caring for a disabled adult dependent(s) or a dependent requiring homecare services
- Volunteering (unpaid community work)
- Participating in a 'Plan of Care' developed by the Department of Health and Social Services

The Officer must speak to his/her Regional Supervisor and get approval from the Director for all Productive Choices not shown on the list above.

IA Regulation: s. 13.1(6)(a-e)

Regulation change required: No

Reason for change:

- Determining a Productive Choice(s) will be a part of the service management process
- Productive Choices need to be more specific and clearly defined to ensure that the choices align with the client's goals.

Recommended Policy:

Through service management planning, a combination of two or more Productive Choices may best realize the client's goal(s).

Clarification: definition of available Productive Choices:

- Employment that generates wages or a salary
 - The CSO should be verifying employment through paystubs and/or with the job verification form.
- Traditional Activities: Hunting, trapping and fishing are generally considered traditional activities. The CSO may use his/her discretion in other activities that are presented as traditional activities i.e. art, sewing, hunters, trappers or fishers and are associated with a Renewable Resource office, local hunting organization or have an non

Income Assistance Policy Working Group
Productive Choices
October 2008

government organization in the community that will verify the client's involvement in this productive choice.

- Education choices may include post-secondary, ALBE or other training programs as agreed to by the CSO. Conditions for this Productive Choice include:
 - A copy of the educational institutions attendance policy should be requested prior to the signing of the productive choice. If the client's current attendance record is not meeting the educational insitutes attendance policy the CSO should contact the educational institution,
 - or
 - a passing grade for each registered course, if the clients school marks begin to decrease, the file should be reviewed with the educational institution
- Career Counselling: There must be a career plan or action plan developed.
- Wellness programs such as:
 - medical treatment supported by a note from a medical practitioner
 - self improvement workshops; grieving workshops, parenting, budgeting, etc.
 - counselling: personal, spiritual, family, financial
 - addictions treatment: drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc.
- Parenting:
 - A biological child or the client is the legal guardian, from birth to three years of age,
 - Two children under the age of six
- Caring for a disabled adult dependent(s) or a dependent requiring homecare services.
 - The duties of the client and the needs of the adult family member must be outlined by a health care provider that is familiar with the family member.
- Volunteering (unpaid community work)
 - Recreation
 - School
 - Elders/youth group
 - Community clean up
 - Non profit organizations that do not have the dollars to hire employee for specific job
 - Community activities advertising for volunteers
 - Elder/disabled person home care
- Participating in a 'Plan of Care' developed by the Department of Health and Social Services

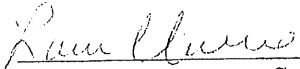
The Officer must speak to his/her Regional Supervisor and get approval from the Director for all Productive Choices not shown on the list above. Exceptions to Productive Choice

Income Assistance Policy Working Group
Productive Choices
October 2008

participation, must be discussed and approved by the Director. Reasons for this exception may include an emergency, tragedy in the family or crisis in the community.

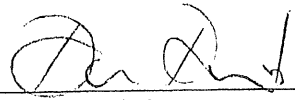
Resources:

- Income Assistance Policy Working Group



Director of Income Security Division

Dec 12/08
Date



**Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment**

18/12/2008
Date

Indicators of Separated

Current Policy: Definition of Separated: When couples no longer live together but are not divorced. The Director must be consulted if other circumstances exist.

IA Regulation: None

Regulation change required: No

Recommended Policy:

Indicators for Separation:

A partner of legal or common law marriage, who claims to be separated when applying for income assistance, must sign a statutory declaration in support of this separation.

Evidence of family violence: physical evidence or information provided by police, medical, social worker, accompanied by a change in residence for the client or partner.

Physical separation for at least three months with evidence of separation to include: change in addresses, separation of bills, and as relevant, initiation of child maintenance order.

New relationship information i.e. evidence that the partner is now living with another partner

Indicators for Concern:

Repeat pattern of separation with potential for qualifying for income assistance and financial gain.

Reason for Change:

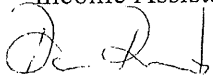
A more comprehensive review of indicators for separation is required to assist in the determination of clients' marital or common law status.

Separation can be used to describe a number of situations for the purpose of income assessment and income assistance eligibility. For example:

- work that requires a partner to leave the community temporarily: mine work routinely has 2 week shifts)
- temporary separate living arrangements where a partner may remain in an active relationship but claims to be separated.

Resources:

- Income Assistance Policy Working Group



Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment

Date

24/11/08

Income Assistance

Policy Amendment

November 16, 2010

Temporary Travel Outside of the Northwest Territories

Current Policy:

An Officer shall stop assistance immediately where a client:

- Leaves the NWT, unless it is to receive medical treatment or an activity or program related to a Productive Choice (PC) that is not available in the NWT, such as specialized counselling or employment training, etc. A Client can continue to receive assistance, for a time-period of up to three months, to maintain his/her home and care for his/her dependants if the home and dependants are in the NWT. All basic needs from Schedule A and B are issued at the Director's discretion. (The Director must be contacted for approval of the type of activity or program a Client requests in order to leave the NWT.)

Income Assistance Regulation:

- S. 16(2)

Regulation Change Required:

- No

Reason for Change:

- There is currently no procedure for the Client Services Officer (CSO) to follow when a client requests to continue their income assistance benefits while away from the NWT to participate in a PC.

Recommended Procedure:

- Each time a client requests to leave the NWT to participate in a PC that is not available in the NWT, they must complete the *Temporary Travel Outside of the NWT* form and seek approval from the Director, Income Security Programs to continue receiving income assistance benefits.
- The CSO will sign the *Temporary Travel Outside of the NWT* if they recommend that the Director approves the continuation of income assistance benefits while the client is outside of the NWT.
 - If the CSO does not recommend the continuation of income assistance benefits, the CSO must provide the Director with a written explanation

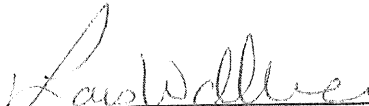
Income Assistance

Policy Amendment

November 16, 2010


describing the reasons that they do not support the client leaving the NWT to participate in a PC that is not available in the NWT.

- If the CSO recommends the continuation of income assistance benefits, he/she will forward the completed *Temporary Travel Outside of the NWT* to the Regional Manager, Income Security Programs who will seek approval from the Director.
- If the CSO does not recommend the continuation of income assistance benefits, he/she will forward their written explanation and the completed *Temporary Travel Outside of the NWT* form to the Regional Manager who will forward the information to the Director.
- The Director will review the request and provide a response to the Regional Manager.
- The Regional Manager will forward the response to the CSO
- The CSO inform the client of the Director's decision and will document the response in CMAS attachments, including the purpose of the travel, travel dates, whether the Director issued an approval and any other information the CSO deems necessary.
- If approved, upon return to their home community, the client must provide the CSO with a copy of their:
 - Flight Itinerary and receipt showing proof of purchase, or
 - Gas receipts, or
 - Bus ticket and receipt showing proof of purchase



Director of Income Security Division

Nov 17, 2010
Date



Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment

23/11/2010
Date

Fostering Dollars

Current Policy: Foster Dollars are counted as unearned income.

IA Regulation: s. 20(4)(r)

Regulation change required: Yes, need to add reference to this type of income: Repeal 20(4)(r) and include 20(5).

Recommended Policy:

The income obtained for fostering children will not be included as unearned income.
The foster child will not be included in the assessment.

If a foster parent applies for Income Assistance the CSO must contact Social Services and a case management process must be initiated on this file. The foster children will not be added to the Income Assistance file.


Reason for change:

- Foster care allowances, applied as an unearned income, in the assessment of income assistance eligibility, is considered to be a deterrent in the recruitment and maintenance of foster care resources by Health and Social Services.
- Foster care children often have additional needs and placement issues that need to be accommodated by a more generous maintenance allowance than that available through Income Assistance dependant benefits.
- Care-givers of children who apply for Income Assistance are required to apply and qualify for the Child Tax Benefit. Foster parents are not the legal guardians of the foster children they care for and as such cannot obtain or qualify for Child Tax Benefits. The government remains the legal guardian of these children, regardless of foster home placement.
- Foster payments are designated specifically for the care and maintenance of the foster child. Under the present policy, this payment is included in the household income assessment and does not reflect the intent of this payment.
- 5/5 jurisdictions exempt Foster Care payments

Resources:

- Income Assistance Policy Working Group
- Regulations & Policies from other P/T jurisdictions
- Jude Billiard, Foster Care and Adoption Worker, YK Health and Social Services

Date:



Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment

24/11/08

Date

Income Assistance Policy Working Group
House Hold Income: Age 18 years old and under
October 2008

House Hold Income: age 18 years old & under

Current Policy: All earned income in the household is considered in the calculation of income security benefits.

IA Regulation: s.20

Regulation change required: Yes

Regulation authority: 20.(5)(e) moneys paid or payable that, in the opinion of the Director, having regard to social and economic circumstances of the applicant, it would be unreasonable to include in the calculation of monthly income.

Recommended Policy:

When a dependent is under the age of 19 years and is a full time student, income earned from employment, will be exempt.

Proof of school enrollment and attendance must be submitted to the Client Service Officer for verification.

Reason for change:

Promotion of self-reliance is key element in the Income Security Programs. The current policy discourages work and self-reliance. In some situations families are telling their children not to work since it affects their income assistance application.

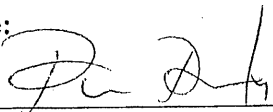
To keep programs consistent with one another it should be exempt from the Income Assistance Program as student income is exempt from the Public Housing Rental Subsidy and Student Financial Assistance Program.

4/4 P/T jurisdictions do not include this as income.

Resources:

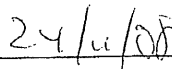
- Income Assistance Policy Working Group
- Regulations & Policies from other P/T jurisdictions

Date:



Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment

Date



24/11/08

Per diem Allowances

Current Policy: A policy regarding a client's receipt of per diem allowances for food and accommodation from an organization, agency or employer, does not currently exist.

IA Regulation: No

Regulation change required: Yes

Regulation authority: Until there is a regulation amendment (for interim use): S.20.(5)(e) moneys paid or payable that, in the opinion of the Director, having regard to social and economic circumstances of the applicant, it would be unreasonable to include in the calculation of monthly income.

Recommended Policy:

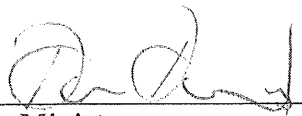
- The per diem allowance for accommodations and food allowances will not be considered earned or unearned income when the accommodation and food costs are incurred and match the established need and schedule.
- When the travel per diem is 15 days or more it must be sent to Headquarters for calculation and approval.

Reason for change:

- The money is given to cover the cost of the client's meals and accommodations while on duty.
- Honoraria is not the same as per diem food and accommodation allowances.
- The Department would like to promote clients to become involved in the community through participation on Boards, committees etc.
- Promotion of self-reliance is key element in the Income Security Programs.

Resources:

- Income Assistance Policy Working Group



Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment

2009-2-13

Date

Accommodation: Rent to Parents

Current Policy: A policy regarding adult children renting from parents does not exist.

IA Regulation: Schedule A

Regulation change required: No

Recommended Policy:

Rent to parents:

- Rent can be paid to a parent on behalf of an adult child if the dwelling is a separate living quarter. The parent must have a lease signed with the adult child and must be on the waiting list for low cost housing.
- Rent will not be paid to parents on behalf of an adult child when the parent and child are living within the same living quarters, owned by the parent. However, in these cases the adult child's portion of the utilities can be paid on their behalf and they must be on the waiting list for low cost housing.
- If the parent is in low cost housing or a market rental accommodation the adult child must be added to the lease before utilities and their portion of the rent is paid.

Rent to children:

- Rent can be paid to an adult child on behalf of a parent if the dwelling is a separate living quarter. The adult child must have a lease signed with the parent and must be on the waiting list for low cost housing.
- Rent will not be paid to the adult child on behalf of a parent when the parent and child are living within the same living quarters, owned by the adult child. However, in these cases the parent's portion of the utilities can be paid on their behalf and they must be on the waiting list for low cost housing.
- If the child is in low cost housing or a market rental accommodation the parent must be added to the lease before utilities and their portion of the rent is paid.

Community Support Clients:

- Rent maybe provided to a parent when they have a disabled child who requires assistance with daily living activities.

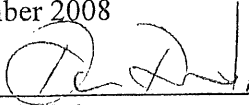
Reason for change:

- There is no current policy addressing rent to parents or children.

Resources:

n/a

Income Assistance Policy Working Group
Accommodation: rent to parents
December 2008



Deputy Minister
Education Culture & Employment

2008-12-17

Date

Child Support: Guardians

Current Policy: Child Support is a financial resource that is included in the assessment of income for determining income assistance benefits. Currently, the biological mother or father of a child in his/her care must request/ apply for this financial resource from the non-custodial parent.

IA Regulation: 16(1)(a.1)

Regulation change required: No

Recommended Policy:

Anyone who has guardianship for a child must provide documentation that they are or have made an attempt to apply for all financial resources on behalf of that child such as the Federal Child Tax Benefit, Child Support, etc.

Documentation that the client has day-to -day care of the named child can be one or more of the following:

- a letter from Health and Social Services (does not include Foster children)
- a signed Statutory Declaration from the parent outlining that guardianship has been given over.
- Guardianship Order

This would NOT apply in a custom adoption situation as the child will be considered legally adopted. In the event of a separation the parent who has day -to -day control of the child must apply for child support.

Reason for change:

The current policy/procedure focuses on a biological parent(s) and not other family members who may assume care for a child(ren) outside the immediate family.

There are a number of clients that have guardianship of a family member's child and they are not receiving the Child Tax Benefit or receiving any sort of financial assistance from the biological parents.

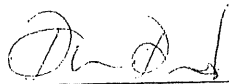
The Policy Working Group felt that if a single mother is required to seek financial assistance from the father of the child, an aunt or grandmother who has the child should be requested to seek financial assistance from the biological parents.

5/5 P/T jurisdictions require a client to seek financial assistance from the legal parents as they should be contributing to the child(rens) financial welfare.

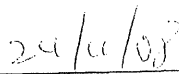
Resources:

- Income Assistance Policy Working Group
- Regulations & Policies from other P/T jurisdictions

Income Assistance Policy Working Group
Child Support
October 2008



Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment



Date