

Education, Culture and Employment

Income Assistance Program

Policy Manual

JUNE 2002



Northwest Territories

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

Income Assistance Program

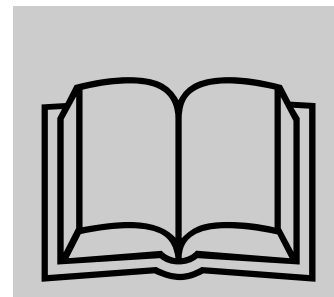
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The Income Assistance Program:

The purpose of the Income Assistance Program is to help people make decisions about their future in order to maintain their independence or to become independent. The Income Assistance program does this by helping individuals to assess their financial, personal and social needs. The Income Assistance Program also provides financial assistance to people in order for them to become independent. In many cases, the Program also helps people make productive choices to help them gain independence.

Different people have different needs. Some people only need financial Assistance for a short time. Others need financial assistance to supplement a limited income. Others need help with personal or social problems, which block their ability to get a job or prepare for work.

Communities have many programs to help people with their different needs. Some programs such as education, training or work offer career activities that help people prepare for work.



Program Policies and Guidelines

Note: underlined words are defined in the Glossary at the end of the Policies.

16-19 YEAR OLDS

Clients under 19 who are Head Of Household will be grandfathered, if they have already received assistance, until they reach the age of majority (19) or if they are legally married to a recipient who is a Head of Household.

AGED ALLOWANCES

Schedule B (3): Clients are eligible for the Aged Allowance of \$300 per month if:

- They have reached the age of 60
- An assessment has been completed and they qualify for income Assistance that month
- Clients cannot receive both the Aged and Disabled allowance at any one time.

ARREARS

The Income Assistance Program does not consider arrears a need when determining whether a person is in need. For further information, see Housing Evictions.

ASSETS

Income Assistance Officers must verify the information provided by clients by checking bank accounts and their ownership of other assets, such as vehicles, boats or other personal property. To determine the amount of unearned income to be deducted from client assistance, the following *Social Assistance Regulations* applies:

20. (4) (m) financial instruments or other assets that can be realized within 90 days or can be converted into cash at a loss not exceeding 25% of reasonable market value such as real property, equity in real property, personal property, moneys in a bank or other institution, a right to receive or recover a debt on demand, the immediate realizable value of stocks, bonds or other securities, mortgages, agreements for sale, life insurance and wills or other settlements;

If clients request assistance for mortgage payments, the Income assistance Officer must ensure they have first negotiated refinancing with their Bank. The Income Assistance Program may assist clients with mortgage payments for up to a maximum of three months.

Also See Mortgage/Loan Payments

ASSISTANCE IN HOME COMMUNITY

Section 2 (A): When a client is visiting another community or has advised that they have moved to that community and applies for income Assistance, the Income Assistance Officer must contact the home community to verify if the client has been assisted for that month.

In all cases the client must continue to undertake, and may need review of, their Productive Choice in order to maintain their eligibility for income Assistance.

ASSISTANCE TO RELATIVES

Income Assistance Officers are required to identify all applicants for financial assistance to whom they are related. Relatives are to include immediate family, as defined in the GNWT Collective Agreement, to be father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, common-law spouse, child, step-child, foster child, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, and any relative permanently residing in the employee's household or with whom the employee presently resides.

Financial assistance must not be granted to a relative of the Officer without prior approval of a Supervisor.

COHABITATION

Couples are considered to cohabit, forming an economic unit, from the first day they reside together. The person moving in with a client is expected to share in the cost of running the household and their income is to be included in the *Assessment of Needs*. Clients are to avail themselves of every resource while they are on Income Assistance.

If clients dispute that they live in a common law situation, then they must sign a *Statutory Declaration* indicating they are not sharing living accommodations, household chores, and expenses. False or misleading statements will result in criminal prosecution. This must be explained in detail to clients before the declaration is signed.

COMPENSATION

S. 20 (5)(u)(v)(w) Money paid or payable under the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement or Merchant Navy Agreement is exempted income. Money paid or payable under the 1986-1990 Hepatitis C Settlement Agreement made June 15, 1999, is also exempted income, except money paid or payable under Section 4.02 or 6.01 of Schedule A or of Schedule B of that Agreement.

S. 20 (5)(g) The value of any Indian Treaty Money received in accordance with the provisions of Treaty No. 8(June 21,1899) and Treaty No. 11 (June 27,1921) will not be included in the calculation of net monthly income. This beneficiary distribution will be considered exempt.

S. 20 (5) (h) The value of any money or goods received in accordance with the provisions of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement or any other land claims agreement will not be included in the calculation of net monthly income. This IRC distribution payment will be considered exempt.

DEDUCTIONS

Fishing, Hunting and Trapping (S. 20(3)(b) of the Regulations)

For income derived from fishing, hunting and trapping, there is an allowance of \$2,000 per 12-month period per family. After the deduction, the balance is to be considered Earned Income.

Handicraft (S. 20(3)(b) of the Regulations)

Fifty (50)% of the price a handicraft Officer receives from the sale or a piece of work, can be deducted from income, if the person bought all the materials to make the item.

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The full amount of the money received must be reported as Earned Income if the materials were received free of charge under a government program and the work was done in a place where the craft Officer has no expenses.

After the deduction, the balance is to be considered Earned Income.

Carvings (S. 20(3)(b) of the Regulations)

Twenty five (25)% of the price a carver receives for a carving, can be deducted from income, if the person bought all the material to make the carving, OR

Ten (10%) of the price can be deducted from income, if the stone was supplied free of charge under a government program.

After the deduction, the balance is to be considered Earned Income.

DISABILITY

S. B (3): The Disabled Allowance is an Enhanced Benefit. Clients must meet *all* of the following criteria to qualify for the Disabled Allowance of \$300 month:

- Clients must have a severe disability that substantially limits their ability to earn a living. The disability must be the main reason for providing assistance, not age, lack of education or availability of jobs.
- The disability must be permanent or at least for a minimum of 12 consecutive months. Clients may not qualify for the Disabled Allowance if treatment for the condition would help them to be able to work.
- Clients must not have refused to accept reasonable employment for reasonable wages or have quit work that was within their ability.
- Clients must not have refused or neglected to take training, rehabilitation or medical treatment that would help them to be able to work.
- Clients' income and that of their spouse must not exceed the limits allowed under the program.
- Clients must be at least 19 years of age but not yet 60 years of age so not eligible to receive the Aged Allowance.
- Clients cannot receive both the Aged and Disabled allowance at the same time.
- Clients must be a permanent resident of the Northwest Territories.

INCOME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES

Manuel Revision: September 16, 2002

Clients will only receive the Disabled Allowance if they have the Disability Assessment form signed by a practising licensed medical practitioner; a Medical Doctor, physiotherapist/occupational therapist or psychologist, stating their disability prevents them from working or participating in any other productive choice for a term of 12 consecutive months or more. A Disability Assessment form covering the dates of disability must be signed by the medical practitioner and be kept up to date and on file. Every year the information is to be updated in the files. Aged/Disabled screens are to be updated by Income Assistance Officers. If the Disability is permanent, the form does not need to be updated. Officers must update the screens accordingly.

Revision: September 16, 2002.

- Clients must apply for all other income benefits they may qualify for such as the Canada Pension Plan disability benefits.
- Clients will only receive the Disabled Allowance if they have a letter from a practising licensed medical practitioner: a Medical Doctor, physiotherapist /occupational therapist or psychologist, stating their disability prevents them from working or participating in any other productive choice for a term of 12 consecutive months or more. A letter covering the dates of disability must be signed by the medical practitioner and be kept up to date and on file. Every year the information is to be updated in the files. Aged/Disabled screens are to be updated by Income Assistance Officers.
- Income Assistance Officers must obtain a letter from a licensed medical practitioner on behalf of permanently disabled/handicapped clients who are at least 19 years of age but not eligible to receive an Old Age Security pension, who fall into the category of Community Living, and whose handicap substantially limits their ability to earn a living. The letter does not need to be updated annually for those clients with a permanent disability. However, Income Assistance Officers must update the Aged/Disabled screen.
- Chronic alcoholism may be considered a long-term disability if assisted by a letter from a licensed medical practitioner.
- Clients are eligible for the disability benefit without entering a Transitional Period, upon receipt of a letter from a licensed medical practitioner as stated above.
- The Disability Allowance is to compensate clients, with disabilities, for not being able to substantially supplement their income assistance by working.

ELIGIBILITY

In accordance with S. 13 of the Regulations, Income Assistance will only be provided to Youth Educational Assistance and Adult Benefit clients if they have entered into, and are honouring the terms of, a Productive Choice Agreement.

INCOME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES

Revision July 8,2002

For purposes of clarity , if either the HOH or spouse in the family is disqualified for any valid reason under the regulations and policies of the Income Assistance Program, the disqualification extends to the family.

EMERGENCY

Schedule B (18) Emergency assistance is an Enhanced Benefit. It may be provided up to \$500 per year per single client, up to \$1,000 per family, or one month's food allowance for which the client is eligible, whichever is less. Greater amounts need approval by the Superintendent. In certain unexpected situations, the *Social Assistance Regulations* permit Income Assistance Officers to provide assistance even if the clients have a budget surplus. This situation may arise, if for example, a household fire destroys the family home and clients must use the income for that month to recover from the fire. These clients would require emergency assistance.

FOSTER PARENTS

S. 20(5)© Income earned from being a foster parent is exempted income.. Clients who are foster parents will still need to be involved in a productive choice such as parenting their own children (see Parenting), employment, training etc.

FURNITURE

Schedule B (12)(2): Furniture is an Enhanced Need. Clients must have been on assistance for at least six of the previous 12 consecutive months in order to be eligible for this benefit. Therefore, the 7th month they are in receipt of assistance they may be eligible for this benefit. The benefit is for purchase, repair or replacement of furnishings, equipment and supplies for the home such as bedding, towels, dishes, utensils and essential items of basic household furniture such beds, mattresses, tables, chairs, sofas etc.

Clients with overpayments on file shall have their assistance for furniture and clothing (except for clothing for children) deducted from their assistance as a recovery of their overpayment.

GIFTS/WINNINGS LESS THAN \$50

In accordance with S. 20(4)(l), gifts of money, assets, or winnings of \$50 or less in value are exempt from being reported as income for the assessment month.

HOUSING EVICTIONS

S 16 (1)(a.1): The Income Assistance Program does not pay rental or utility arrears or outstanding bills such as for telephones or credit cards. Clients facing eviction for non-payment of rent in public housing should be counselled by Tenant Relations Officers and encouraged to enter into repayment schedules as part of their productive choice. Clients are expected to have rental arrears deducted at a rate of a minimum of \$25 per month from their Enhanced Benefits as part of their Income Assistance Assistance. In those instances where clients are only eligible to receive basic benefits, and wish to make repayments, they must state that they agree in writing to have the deduction made from future Assistance payments.

Clients evicted from public housing are not eligible for rental assistance, above the \$32 rent, or the rent charged by the Housing Authority, for clients on Income Assistance. They must negotiate a return to public housing, as they are to avail themselves of all resources including public housing before and while they are on Income Assistance. If they are evicted, they are deemed to have not availed themselves of all other resources.

Effective: September 23, 2002

For purposes of clarity:

Clients evicted from public housing are not eligible for rental assistance, above the \$32.00 rent charged by the Housing Authority for clients on Income Support. All clients evicted from public housing must provide confirmation from the housing authority that they have been returned to the waiting list in order for the Income Support Program to be able to include market rent in the assessment process. Housing authorities may require full payment of any arrears before they will return clients to the waiting list.

IMMIGRANTS

Income Assistance does not provide assistance to sponsored immigrants or those "In Canada Without Status" – those who are not either Visitors, Tourists, Officers with foreign employment authorization, students with student authorization, Landed Immigrants or Canadian Citizens. Income Assistance Officers are required to contact Human Resources Development Canada in Yellowknife regarding these situations.

INSTITUTIONAL CARE

Room and board allowances will be provided for indigent seniors and individuals, with disabilities, in long term and extended care facilities. Clients' disability must meet the criteria as described in the policy for Disability.

Refer to the definitions in the Regulations regarding specific facilities.

MAINTENANCE/CHILDREN'S BENEFITS

Clients claiming that the parent of dependent children is deceased must acquire a death certificate and apply for children's benefits through the Canada Pension Plan. The benefit is paid to the natural or adopted child of the deceased contributor, or a child in the care and control of the deceased contributor at the time of death. The child must be either under age 19, or between the ages of 19 and 24 and in full-time attendance at a recognized institution.

With respect to child Assistance, a confirmation letter must be on file stating the clients are pursuing a Maintenance Order or are making arrangements with the other parent for financial Assistance.

Clients claiming the father is *unknown* must produce the child's birth registration stating *Father: Unknown*.

MORTGAGES/LOAN PAYMENTS

If clients request assistance for mortgage payments, the Income Assistance Officer must ensure they have first negotiated refinancing with their Bank. The Income Assistance Program may assist clients with mortgage payments for a maximum of three months.

See also Assets.

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT

National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) income and the children for which it is intended must be on the same income Assistance file. The primary caregiver receiving the NCBS from the Federal Government should be the custodial parent in the automated information system called the Case Management and Administration System (CMAS).

Caregivers who have not filed their Income Tax returns and are therefore not receiving NCBS have two months to file. At the end of this two-month period, if they do not show proof of filing, assistance is denied until they do so.

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Income Assistance Officers will use the Social Insurance Number (SIN) appearing on the Child Benefit Notice, if it is missing in CMAS, after confirming with clients that it is the correct one. Note that a copy of the SIN card, Health Care Card and Birth Certificate are to be kept on clients' files. No assessments are done prior to the 20th of the month to permit the NWT Seniors' Supplementary Benefit and NCBS amounts to appear in CMAS.

OUT-OF-TERRITORY CLIENTS

Assistance may be continued for a period, under extenuating circumstances, not exceeding three months if clients leave the Northwest Territories.

Sec. 16(2) Where a recipient leaves the Territories to receive treatment or medical care, assistance may be continued for a temporary period, as determined by the Director. R-199-96,s.17.

OVERPAYMENTS

Overpayments are a result of clients receiving more assistance than they were eligible for in a given month. This may be due to administrative error or client error or withholding information. Income Assistance Officers will undertake recovery of overpayments, for current clients, at a minimum rate of \$25 per month. If clients are receiving only basic needs, and wish to make repayments, they must agree in writing to have the deduction made.

Clients with overpayments on file shall have their assistance for furniture or clothing (except for clothing for children) deducted from their overpayment as a recovery.

PARENTING

Parenting is a productive choice for clients if their youngest child is under 3 years of age or if there are two or more children under 6 years of age. If there are two parents in the household, then one may be parenting as a productive choice, but the other must participate in a productive choice of their own.

There may be clients who have parenting as a productive choice and also have a Plan of Care, developed in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services. The productive choice for these clients includes following their Plan of Care.

Parenting does not exclude clients being referred to wellness choices. Both activities would therefore comprise their productive choice.

Also see Foster Care

PRODUCTIVE CHOICES

S. 1.1(2) The penalty for the first time, for not entering into a productive choice, or for quitting or being fired from a job or productive choice, without justifiable cause, is two months disqualification from assistance; and for the second time is three months disqualification. Income Assistance Officers shall discuss the case with the employer or instructor, etc. and work with the family for one month to review issues and to develop a plan to overcome them in cases where clients believe there was just cause. The family may be assisted during this time. Justifiable cause is judged on a case-by-case basis in consultation with those involved and would include**:

- *Sexual or other harassment;
- Needing to move with a spouse or dependent child to another part of the country;
- *Discrimination;
- *Working conditions that endanger their health or safety;
- Having to provide care for a child or another member of their immediate family;
- Reasonable assurance of another job in the immediate future;
- *Major changes in the terms and conditions of their job affecting wages or salary;
- *Excessive overtime or an employer's refusal to pay for overtime work;
- *Major changes in work duties;
- *Difficult relations with a supervisor, for which they are not primarily responsible;
- *Their employer is doing things which break the law;
- Labour disputes such as a strike or lockout where clients have exhausted their EI or require additional assistance;
- *Discrimination because of membership in an association, organization or union of Officers, and
- *Pressures from their employer or fellow Officers to quit their job.

*An appeal to the Labour Standards Board should be made in these cases.

** from Employment Insurance website

If the productive choice is attendance in school or enrolment in some form of upgrading/training course, then attendance records indicating at least 80% attendance must be provided to Income Assistance Officers every month. Penalty for less than 80% attendance is subject to disqualification as stated above.

A Plan of Care developed by Health & Social Services may be incorporated into clients' productive choice.

Revision July 8,2002

For purposes of clarity, when there is a spouse in the family household, both HOH and spouse must each enter into a Productive Choice. If either the HOH or spouse is disqualified for not entering into a Productive

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Choice or for quitting or being fired from a job or productive choice, any disqualification extends to the family.

RENT

Schedule A (5) Rent is a Basic Benefit. If Income Assistance is paying for the household rent or the clients live in public or College housing then they must report 100% of the income they receive, from subletting part of their household to others, as unearned income for purposes of the Income Assistance Program. If the renters are also Income Assistance clients, Income Assistance Officers must ensure that each tenant only receives assistance for their portion of the rent. Income Assistance is not to be double paid on the same unit. Damage deposits are the responsibility of the leaseholder(s).

If the clients live in their own home, and are not receiving rent or mortgage assistance from Income Assistance, then the following applies as unearned income:

- a) 40% of the gross income received from roomers, lodgers or renters or \$20 a month for each roomer, lodger or renter, whichever is the greater;
- (b) 20% of the gross income received from boarders or \$10 a month for each boarder, whichever is the greater;
- (c) 50% of the gross income received from rented self-contained living quarters or property the applicant is allowed to retain.

RENT TO PARENTS

The Income Assistance Program will not pay rent to the parents of clients if the parents own the dwelling; if the parents are renting public housing from the NWT Housing Corporation; or if the parents are Income Assistance clients. However, in those cases, assistance may still be provided to the clients for food, and their share of utilities, and enhanced benefits based on substantiated need.

If the parents are in market rental accommodation, then the clients must show proof that they are listed on the lease before rent will be paid on their behalf.

If the clients are in the Community Living Category, rental assistance, in the amount of a maximum of \$750 for single clients, and disabled allowance, in addition to the other benefits, may be provided but only if the parents own their own home or are in market rental accommodation.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

Applications to the Rental Officer are made by the landlord, as a result of a tenant breach of the Tenancy Agreement or Residential Tenancies Act. Applications must be filed within 6 months of the breach or situation complained of in the application.

Breaches of the Act may result from:

- A) Non-payment of rent
- b) Disturbance
- c) Damage to property
- d) Failure to report income (Public Housing breach)

Once an application is filed, the Rental Officer investigates and holds a hearing within an average of 30-45 days. Both the landlord and tenant are notified to attend the hearing and may wish to attend to defend their position. The Rental Officer provides a remedy, which may include termination of the tenancy, according to the Act (section 42(3)).

An application would be filed only after the landlord had determined the issue was substantial and not just a temporary occurrence.

SEASONAL CLOTHING

Schedule B 2(2): Seasonal Clothing is an Enhanced Need. Clients must have been on assistance for at least six of the previous 12 consecutive months in order to be eligible for this benefit. Therefore, the 7th month that they are in receipt of income Assistance they are eligible for this benefit.

Clients with overpayments on file shall have their assistance for furniture and clothing (except for clothing for children) deducted from their assistance as a recovery of the overpayment.

SECURITY DEPOSITS

S. 17 (2) of the Regulations: Assistance for damage and security deposits is considered an Enhanced Benefit.

This Benefit will be paid according to the Residential Tenancies Act s14 (2):

Where a tenant is liable for a security deposit for a tenancy other than a weekly tenancy, the tenant may pay

(a) 50% of the security deposit at the commencement of the tenancy; and

(b) The remaining 50% of the security deposit within three months of the commencement of the tenancy.

Repayment of all deposits, such as for rent, water and electrical hook ups, is mandatory. Deposits become payable in full once clients leave the accommodation for which deposits were paid and are payable before subsequent deposits are issued. Approval from the Superintendent is required before a second deposit, of the same type, may be issued if the

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first is not paid. The Superintendents' approval is only granted in those instances where the client has agreed to enter into a repayment plan for the first deposit. .

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Income Assistance Officers may need to refer to bank statements, business account books, and/or Income Tax returns to verify information and assess a client's financial situation and eligibility under the Program. Financial assistance may only be granted if hardship will occur for the family. Assistance for food, shelter and utilities, if required, may be granted for one month if clients:

1. Are without financial resources.
2. Have accessed all possible resources to meet their basic needs e.g. money from the business, bank loan, collection or monies owing, etc.

Before further assistance is granted, Income Assistance Officers must refer the applicant to the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED), to determine the viability of the business. Income Assistance Officers will consult with the RWED Officer for assistance in evaluating the business operation and to determine sources of income that may be available to clients.

The approval of the Superintendent is required if:

1. the business is considered to be viable and financial assistance for more than one month is required or
2. The business is considered not to be viable and the recipient is not prepared to terminate their business and seek other employment.
The approval of the Director is required if assistance is being provided for more than three months.
Long term financial assistance will not be provided as this action would constitute subsidizing a business venture.

SENIORS' OLD AGE/GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENTS COMBINED CHEQUES

Seniors receiving the NWT Seniors Supplement also receive the Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits, since they must qualify for OAS and GIS to qualify for the NWT Seniors Supplement.

However, because of Federal privacy restrictions, only the \$135 NWT Seniors' Supplement is shown on the CMAS system. It appears as unearned Income. All those seniors receiving the \$135 monthly benefit must be also receiving the OAS and GIS and/or the spouse's

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allowance. Income Assistance Officers are required to request OAS/GIS cheque stubs or deposit slips to verify this income.

SENIORS HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

Seniors who own their own homes may be eligible for the Seniors Home Heating Subsidy.

SUBSIDY

Applicants will be eligible for a maximum of the following amounts of fuel depending on the type required, their household income level and the community in which they reside.

ZONE / COMMUNITIES	FUEL TYPE	QUARTERLY FUEL DELIVERY	MAXIMUM ANNUAL FUEL
<u>ZONE 1</u>			
Dettah Enterprise	CUT WOOD (CORDS)	1.25	5
FORT LIARD FORT SMITH	FUEL OIL (LITRES)	600	2,400
FORT PROVIDENCE HAY RIVER	PROPANE (LITRES)	800	3,200
KAKISA LAKE RAE EDZO	NATURAL GAS (CUBIC FEET)	20,000	80,000
YELLOWKNIFE NDILO	ELECTRICITY (KWH)	1,500	6,000
<u>ZONE 2</u>			
Deline Fort Norman	CUT WOOD (CORDS)	1.50	6
FORT MCPHERSON FORT SIMPSON	FUEL OIL (LITRES)	700	2,800
FORT RESOLUTION INUVIK	PROPANE (LITRES)	900	3,600
JEAN MARIE RIVER NAHANNI BUTTE	NATURAL GAS (CUBIC FEET)	22,500	90,000
NORMAN WELLS RAE LAKES	ELECTRICITY (KWH)	1,750	7,000
<u>ZONE 3</u>			
Aklavik Colville Lake	CUT WOOD (CORDS)	1.75	7
FORT GOOD HOPE HOLMAN	FUEL OIL (LITRES)	800	3,200
LUTSEL K'E SNARE LAKE	PROPANE (LITRES)	1,000	4,000
TROUT LAKE	NATURAL GAS (CUBIC FEET)	25,000	100,000

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PAULATUK SACHS HARBOUR TSIIGEHTCHIC TUKTOYAKTUK WHA TI WRIGLEY	GAS (CUBIC FEET) ELECTRICITY (KWH)	2,000	8,000
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Fuel suppliers will deliver fuel to the applicant’s home and the fuel supplier invoice the Seniors’ Home Heating Subsidy Program directly. Fuel delivery can be made all at once or in quarterly amounts.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME TEST

To be eligible, the applicant’s maximum allowable net household income /year (Line 236 of the Federal Income Tax Return) to qualify for the Seniors’ Home Heating Subsidy Program will be no more than the following:

Zone 1		Zone 2		Zone 3	
\$Max. Income	% of Subsidy	\$Max. Income	% of Subsidy	\$Max. Income	% of Subsidy
35,000-36,249	100%	40,000-41,249	100%	45,000-46,249	100%
36,250-37,499	75%	41,250-42,499	75%	46,250-47,499	75%
37,500-38,749	50%	42,500-43,749	50%	47,500-48,749	50%
38,750-39,999	25%	43,750-44,999	25%	48,750-49,999	25%
40,000+	0%	45,000+	0%	50,000+	0%
Dettah Enterprise Fort Liard Fort Smith Fort Providence Hay River Kakisa Lake Rae Edzo Yellowknife Ndilo		Deline Fort Norman Fort McPherson Fort Simpson Fort Resolution Inuvik Jean Marie River Nahanni Butte Norman Wells Rae Lakes		Aklavik Colville Lake Fort Good Hope Holman Lutsel K’e Paulatuk Sachs Harbour Snare Lake Trout Lake Tsiigehtchic Tuktoyaktuk Wha Ti Wrigley	

The Department may discontinue the fuel subsidy if applicants do not use it for the purpose

INCOME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES

intended or if they obtained the subsidy through intentionally incomplete or inaccurate information provided on their application. Any benefit provided for a period when the applicant was actually ineligible may be recovered by following established GNWT guidelines on recovery of overpayments.

SEPARATIONS

Income Assistance Officers are required to verify with public housing, landlords and employers that clients have separated from a partner or spouse. Clients must also sign a *Statutory Declaration*.

SHARED CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

Clients must provide Income Assistance Officers with the terms of any custody agreements that outline how financial responsibility will be split where parents are sharing custody of children. Needs such as food and clothing should be prorated according to the length of time the children are actually with each parent. The appropriateness and rental cost for each family configuration needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis.

TRANSIENTS/TRANSITIONAL CLIENTS

Transient clients are treated as transitional, similar to those who have been on and off Income Assistance and who are not in a Productive Choice. These clients have two months to move into another category or they will be disqualified from the Program.

TUITION

Schedule B (9.1)(2): Tuition is an Enhanced Need available for up to \$1750 per semester for a full-time approved program of study in an accredited post-secondary institution. Assistance is only available to those clients in the Adult Benefits or Youth Educational category who are ineligible for Student Financial Assistance (SFA) and the ineligibility is not the result of the application of subsection 36(4) or (10) of the *Student Financial Assistance Regulations*. In addition to tuition, clients may be provided with \$50 for school supplies and \$300 for books. This benefit is not available to clients for more than one semester.

Clients must complete a Productive Choice plan with the assistance of a Career Development Officer (CDO) prior to any payment of Tuition. The CDO must confirm, either by checking the Student Financial Information System (CMAS) or contacting the Student Financial Assistance (SFA) office, that clients have been denied SFA and advise the Income Assistance Officer.

UTILITIES

Income Assistance Officers should discuss with clients any consumption of fuel, electricity and water, which appears to be unusually high for family and dwelling size. For clients living outside of Yellowknife, and who live in public housing, the NWT Housing Corporation subsidizes electricity costs to Yellowknife rates for the first 700 kilowatt hours (KWH) per month. The Income Assistance program will pay invoices greater than 700 KWH hours per month for one month only. During that time, clients should be encouraged to take electricity saving measures such as plug in timers, etc. Clients should be encouraged to arrange for Energy Audits and Assessments through the Arctic Energy Alliance office where available.

Clients should must have proof that they have complained about the condition of their unit to their landlord.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Action Plan - the development of short and long-term plans for productive choices that will help clients achieve independence.

Adult Benefits - One of four categories of Income Assistance. This category is for clients ages 25 to 59. Typically these clients need financial help from time to time. This may be to pay for provisions to go back on the land or to bridge the gap between pay cheques from different activities.

Aged Benefits - One of four categories of Income Assistance. This category is for clients over 60 years of age. Typically these clients are not required to participate in Productive Choices.

Appeal Committee - the Chair and the Appeal Committee hear cases and issue decisions for clients who have requested an appeal of the Income Assistance Officer's decision.

Assets - real property, cash on hand, money in the bank, registered retirement saving plans (RRSP), mortgages and any other asset that can be readily converted into cash.

Basic Benefits – Food, Shelter and Utilities

Children's Group Home - see Group Home definition in the Regulations.

CMAS - Case Management and Administration System.

Community Living Assistance – One of four categories of Income Assistance. This category is for clients who are either handicapped (as certified by an occupational therapist or a health professional) or 60 years of age or over.

Community Resources - people and programs that help clients and improve community life.

Community Officers - people who are responsible for community wellness and career activity programs.

Earned Income - the income earned from employment .

Enhanced Benefits – In addition to Basic Benefits, Enhanced Benefits may be provided to clients who are in a productive choice as part of Youth Educational or

INCOME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES

Adult Benefits category. Enhanced Benefits include Clothing, Furniture, Educational Expenses, Tuition, Emergency and Damage Deposits.

Financial Resources - includes income from wages or other sources as well as other assets.

Income Exemption - the reduction of the actual earned income by \$200 for single clients and \$400 for families.

Income Assistance Program - provides funding to clients in financial need while helping them make decisions about their future in order to maintain their independence or to become independent.

Long term and extended care facilities - See definition in the Regulations

Net Earned Income – the earned income deductions subtracted from the gross amount earned income.

Net monthly Income - the earned income less the allowable income exemption of \$200 for single clients and \$400 for families plus unearned income

Overpayment - clients receive more financial assistance than what they are entitled to receive.

Productive Choices - ways for clients to work towards independence including wellness and career activities. Productive choices include:

Traditional activities Harvesting School Adult Basic Education Employment Community Volunteer Work Job Coaching	Addiction counseling or treatment Parenting Family Assistance Early Intervention Mental Health treatment Career Counselling
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Repayments - recovering the financial assistance that clients were overpaid.

Safe Shelter - see definition in the Regulations

Statutory Appointment - the Income Assistance Officer is an official with legal powers and responsibilities as defined in the Social Assistance Act and Regulations.

INCOME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICIES

[Suspected Fraud](#) – when clients are suspected of deliberately giving wrong information and benefited by getting more Income Assistance than what they are entitled to receive under the Social Assistance Act and Regulations.

[Transitional Assistance](#) – One of four categories of Income Assistance. This category is for clients who can work and who may be new to income Assistance and not yet participating in a productive choice.

[Unearned Income](#) – the client does not work to receive the income

[Wellness Activities](#) – programs that help clients overcome personal and social obstacles to an independent and productive life.

[Youth Educational Assistance](#) – One of four categories of Income Assistance. This category is for clients who are between the ages of 19 to 24, who may be either in school or in a productive choice, and who may not have a great deal of employment experience. Focus is on providing these clients with career and/or wellness development.