

Ontario Works provides financial and employment assistance to people in financial need. Eligibility for assistance depends on the number of members in your benefit unit, your shelter costs, income, assets and participation in approved employment assistance activities. If you are eligible for assistance, you will receive assistance each month for as long as you are eligible.

Your Rights

1. Any time that you meet with your worker you can bring someone with you. This person can be anyone you would like to have there.
2. We will inform you in writing of any decision that we make regarding your eligibility or amount of assistance including suspending or canceling your assistance.

If you do not agree with a decision that we make, you have the right to ask for an internal review. You must ask for an internal review within 10 days. We will notify you of the result of the internal review. If you do not agree with the result, you can file an appeal with the Social Benefits tribunal. If you did not first ask for an internal review, the Social Benefits Tribunal will not hear your appeal. There are a very limited number of decisions for which there are no rights of appeal. You will be informed of your appeal rights when decisions concerning your eligibility or amount of assistance are made.

Your Assistance

Every month that you are eligible, you will receive assistance for basic needs and shelter, a drug card, and employment assistance. You may also be eligible for the following items. If you need one of these items, **please contact your worker for more information. Some of these request forms are on our web site.**

Employment Start-up Benefits:

- Assistance for initial costs when you start a new job or an employment assistance activity. This includes advance child care payments, work boots, work clothes and uniforms, license and association fees, and other necessary work or employment assistance related expenses. Start up benefits cannot be used for union initiation fees or vision care for adults.

Participation Expenses:

- In addition to employment start-up, you **may** receive assistance to help cover additional expenses when participation in an employment assistance activity. For example transportation, clothing, grooming, special equipment, minor fees such as certification charges, child care costs.

Dental Care:

- Basic dental care is provided for all dependent children. Necessary or emergency dental services are provided on a discretionary basis for adults.

Vision Care:

- Basic vision care is provided for all dependent children. Vision care is provided on a discretionary basis for adults.

Back to School:

- In August, parents receive extra money for clothing and supplies for school age children.

Winter Clothing for Children:

- In November, parents receive extra money to help buy winter clothing for their dependent children. If the parent is not eligible to receive the winter clothing allowance in November, it may be issued in another month.

Community Start-up:

- You may receive assistance to help you establish yourself in the community if you are moving or leaving an institution such as a hospital, hostel, interval or transition home.

Northern Allowance:

- If you live north of the 50th parallel and do not have year round access, you will receive additional assistance.

Advanced Age Item:

- If you are 65 or older, you will receive additional assistance.

Other Items:

- Assistance is available for diabetic supplies, surgical supplies and dressing, approved medical transportation of \$15 or more per month, special diets, and guide dog benefit.

Discretionary Items:

- You may receive assistance for other items such as: moving expenses, home repairs, assistive devices, wheelchairs and inhalators, prosthetics including eyeglasses for adults, emergency or necessary dental care for adults.

Your Responsibilities

1. You are required to attend an employment information session at the second stage of the application process.
2. You may be required to take a literacy screening test at the second stage if you have not completed grade 12 or its equivalent. If you provide proof of a learning disorder, you are not required to take the literacy screening test.
3. If you are applying to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) through Ontario Works and you have assets above the Ontario Works asset limit and you have not previously used the one-time asset exemption, then you are required to complete an Agreement to Reimburse. If you are determined to be ineligible for ODSP, you must repay some of all of the assistance that you have received.
4. You will be required to meet with your worker at least every 3 months to review your participation in employment assistance activities and every 12 months to review your financial information.
5. Contact your worker promptly if:
 - You receive a message that your worker needs to speak to you.
 - There are any changes in your circumstances.
 - You are planning to leave the province for any period.
 - If you begin to receive income or your income changes.
6. Respond promptly if you receive a request for information or a form to complete.
7. All members of your benefit unit who are 18 years of age and older are required to participate in employment assistance activities including looking for work or better paying work. Activities that may be approved include:

Independent job search	Job search support (i.e. resume workshop)
Employment placement	Community placement
Education or training program	Addiction treatment program
Support to self-employment	Self-employment activity
Learning, Earning and Parenting program	Literacy training program

All members are required to immediately report any changes in their participation.

8. Keep receipts and statements so your worker can verify your income, expenses and assets. Keep receipts and statements such as:

Pay stubs	Hydro, water and heating costs	Bank account statements
Fire insurance	Rent or mortgage payments	Income tax assessment or returns
Child care costs		
9. Obtain and report all available income that you or a member of your benefit unit is owed or receives, including any earnings and training allowances. Each month, you will receive an income reporting form that is used to report all changes to your income. If you or any member of your family begin to receive income or your income changes, you must report this income to your worker and the completed statement must be received in your worker's office by the due date. Your worker will review your income history regularly.

Examples of income include:

Earnings	WSIB	Employment Insurance
Sponsor payments	Roomer/boarder income	Money owed to you
Interest or dividends	Pensions	Self-employment
OSAP	Insurance/accident claims	Farm income
Sale of assets	Child/spousal support	Child care income
Training allowances	Inheritances or lotteries	Compensation for Victims of crime

10. Report all of your assets. An asset is property of all kinds, including cash or anything that you own that can be converted into cash. The total dollar value of your assets affects your eligibility for assistance. The equity that you have in real estate other than your primary residence is included as an asset at the time of application.

Examples of assets include:

Primary or other residence or real estate	Life insurance	Collections or valuables
Investments	Vehicles	Money in bank account

Remember to tell your worker immediately if you or anyone in your benefit unit:

Sells or transfers an asset	Borrows money
Buys a new asset	Opens or closes a bank account

11. Report your living arrangements and any other changes. Tell your worker immediately if there are changes in your current living arrangement such as:
 - Your address or phone number changes
 - Your rent or other home cost changes
 - Your dependent leaves school, returns to school, starts work, leaves home or returns home
 - The number of people in your benefit unit changes
 - You or a member of your benefit unit leaves Ontario for a period greater than 7 days

12. You and your spouse/same-sex partner are responsible to repay all overpayments you may have. If you leave social assistance, you and your spouse or same sex partner are still required to repay the overpayment.
13. You are responsible for following the rules of the Ontario Works Program, including honest reporting of all circumstances and changes of circumstances that affect eligibility.