



Information Bites...

**Bite sized chunks of information for families
that include a member with a disability**

**What parents need to know about Income
Assistance for their adult child with a disability...**

What is Income Assistance?

The GNWT Income Assistance Program helps people when they do not have enough money each month to pay for basic needs like food, shelter and utilities. The Income Assistance Program also provides enhanced benefits for longer-term supports, such as clothing or disability allowance. The amount of support available to individuals is based on overall needs, where a person lives, the size of the family, and the person's ability to provide his/her own financial resources. The program encourages people to make productive choices, allowing them to achieve self-reliance.

If you are the parent or caregiver of an adult child with a disability, you should know that your child may be eligible to receive income assistance. If you are your adult child's legal guardian you can apply for him / her, if you aren't, you can assist your child throughout the application process as their advocate. Your child is eligible to apply if he / she is 19 years of age or older and a resident of the NWT. All approvals are based on peoples' specific life circumstances and needs.

How do we apply?

Start by visiting your local Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) office. Once there, make your request for an Income Assistance Application Package (Intake Package) on behalf your child. If you can't go in person, forms are available on line. Each region has its own ECE office. To access your region's information on line use the website address www.gov.nt.ca; then click on Department of Education, Culture and Employment. On their home page you will find the tab for Income Assistance. If you don't have access to the internet you can call 1-866-973-7252, to get information on your local ECE office.

When the Income Assistance Application Package is completed, you will then need to return it to the ECE office, along with all the required documentation. Photocopies of your documents can be made at the ECE office. At that time the first appointment will be booked with your Client Service Officer. It is important for your adult child to be present at the appointments, as a relationship with their Officer will need to be developed. The length of the application process depends on the time needed for the collection of all the requested documents and information. Although the processing time is quite brisk, the decision is usually not obtained until the third appointment. After the decision is made the application can be processed in 5 days.

“Disabled Allowance”

For a person with a disability, the Officer must receive proof of the disability through a letter from a health care professional or through proof that a Client is receiving a federal pension or benefit. To be eligible, your child must have an Income Assistance Medical Form of more than 12 continuous months and meet the definition of a disabled person. Your child will not need to provide a note every year if a qualified health care professional has certified his / her condition as permanent. Every year, the Officer only needs to update the file and the exemption from “productive choices” requirements.

“Incidental Allowance”

Any person who receives the Disabled Allowance may also be eligible for further assistance in the form of an incidental allowance. The allowance is intended to assist with the costs of personal care products and household supplies. Income Assistance has a table which determines the maximum incidental allowance rates for all NWT Communities. Your Client Service Officer is also able to assist with this Application.

Monthly Responsibilities

Once the Application is approved payments will start to be made monthly. In order to get the monthly payment a Monthly Reporting Card will need to be filled out and submitted with all required financial documents. In order to get the payment on time it is preferred that the Monthly Reporting Card is submitted by the 24th of each month so that the Client Service Officer has time to process the month’s financial information. If everything is in order and submitted on time, your child’s Income Assistance payment will be received on the first of the following month.

Can my child have any additional income while receiving Income Assistance?

Your child can have a paying job and still receive Income Assistance. The amount your child earns from the job each month will need to be claimed on the Monthly Reporting Card, and the Client Service Officer will make the necessary adjustments to the amount payable. If your child is single, he or she can earn up to \$200.00 per month and an additional percentage of surplus earnings without their Income Assistance benefit being affected.

In addition, people are allowed an “unearned income exemption” of a maximum of \$1,200/year. A person receiving Income Assistance can choose to use their exemption all at once or spread it out throughout the year. Your Officer will be able to provide you and your child with more details.

For information on other disability support programs check out “Persons with Disabilities Online” at www.pwd-online.ca.



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