

## Income Support Program Overview

As a program of last resort, the purpose of the Income Assistance program is to:

- Support the basic and special needs of indigent residents of First Nations reserves and their dependents; and
- Support access to services to help clients transition to and remain in the workforce.

The desired outcome of the Income Assistance Program is an improved quality of life through the alleviation of poverty and hardship on reserve, so that Income Assistance clients are employable and able to secure and/or maintain attachment to the workforce.

## Income Assistance Objectives

The Income Assistance program provides funding to assist eligible individuals and families who are ordinarily resident on reserve with: basic needs, special needs, and employment and pre-employment measures designed to increase self-reliance, to improve life skills and to promote greater attachment to the work force. The expected outcome of the Income Assistance program is an improved quality of life through the reduction of poverty and hardship on reserve and improved participation in and attachment to the workforce

## The key principles of the INAC Alberta Region Income Assistance Program are:

- **Supports ensure improved outcomes for clients.** Benefits and services focus on assisting clients and their families participate successfully in the workforce, and to have sustainable employment, to the greatest extent possible given the individual's situation.
- **Supports are based on what people need.** Income Assistance benefits provided to clients and their families are based on an assessment of that person's individual and family situation, and are responsive to the client's unique needs.
- **Supports encourage personal responsibility.** Clients are supported to become independent through a cohesive system of employment and training initiatives, income supplementation.
- **Supports assist in building Alberta's workforce.** The Income Assistance Program provides the financial supports and services that assist clients and their families to obtain successful and sustainable employment, thus ensuring that employers are able to fill their jobs with qualified people.
- **Supports will protect people with long term needs.** Clients with circumstances preventing or severely limiting their capacity to support themselves continue to receive Income Assistance benefits.
- **Supports will be fiscally responsible and sustainable.** The Issuing Authority will always attempt to find the best value alternative to ensure the Income Assistance Program's long term sustainability.
- **Recognition of client rights.** Recognition that clients are honest, trustworthy, and accountable. Every individual or family, when need has been established, has a right to assistance in accordance with policy. Clients are deserving of the right to autonomy, dignity and personal choice. Clients have the right and responsibility to manage their own affairs to the highest extent possible in their individual circumstances.

## General Eligibility Rules

The intent of this section is to describe the minimum requirements used to determine client and household eligibility for Income Assistance benefits.

- Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status is required to qualify for Income Assistance benefits.
- All members of the household must ordinarily be residents on reserve in Alberta. The Issuing Authority must indicate on the Application that the client is living on reserve. In addition, the Issuing Authority should work with the Housing Department to verify residency on reserve.
- One member of the household must be 18 years of age or older.
- Clients are responsible to establish and substantiate their identity.
- The head of household, partner, and financial administrator are required to substantiate their identity by providing one document or a combination of documents which contain their:
  - Name
  - Picture
  - Signature
  - Date of birth.
- Identification is required for all dependent children. The identity of a dependent child is substantiated by providing a document which contains the child's full name and date of birth.
- The following are examples of acceptable personal identification documents. This is not a complete list. Documents similar to those listed may also be acceptable subject to Social Director discretion:
  - Driver's License,
  - Passport,
  - Birth, Marriage, or Baptismal Certificates,
  - Personal Health Card,
  - Social Insurance Number Card,
  - Employee or Student Identification Cards,
  - Bank or Credit Card,
  - Certificate of Indian Status Card,
  - Firearms Acquisition Certificate,
  - School, Health, or Hospital Records,
  - Parole Card,
  - Vehicle Registration or Insurance, or
  - Non-Driver Identification Card.
- The head of household, partner, or financial administrator is responsible to obtain and produce photo identification. In rare situations, Income Assistance benefits may be issued without photo identification to an otherwise eligible client who:
  - Does not have and is unable to produce, for good reason, photo identification, and
  - Is destitute and cannot access other resources while photo identification is being obtained.

In these rare situations, a photograph signed by the client and Issuing Authority must be included in the client's file until the client obtains and produces the required photo identification documents. Personal identification documents, other than a photograph, must be produced within a reasonable period of time.

- The Income Assistance Program provides financial assistance to eligible persons who are unable to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and other personal needs essential to their health and well-being.

Clients must provide any information or documentation requested by the Issuing Authority to assist in determining financial need.

Household assets and income are considered when determining client eligibility. Clients are expected to access all non-exempt income and assets.

Clients are required to report any changes in circumstances which may affect their eligibility for Income Assistance benefits.

- There must be a clear demonstration of financial need on file for the applicant and spouse. At least one of the following items must be included in order to demonstrate financial need:

1. Bank Statements

- Most current at time of application
- At least the last month of each quarter thereafter
- Social Departments may exercise discretion and request more information if necessary

2. Most recent Notice of Assessment (NOA) - (Revenue Canada)

- All 3 pages
  - Specifically Lines 150 and 77 must be clearly visible
  - Previous Notice of Assessment is valid until July of current year (i.e. 2015 NOA is valid until July 2016)
- or,

3. Confirmation from Employment and Social Development Canada that the client is not eligible for Employment Insurance Benefits.

- Other ways to demonstrate Financial Need:
  - Denial of CPP disability or AISH benefits (if client has a disability)
  - Denial of CPP benefits (if client is 60+ years of age)
  - Confirmation of Denial of CPP and OAS benefits (if client is 65+ years of age)
  - Confirmation of denial of Widower's Pension benefits (if client is widowed)
  - Confirmation of ineligibility for 3rd party payments (if client was injured in a Motor Vehicle Accident)

**Documentation demonstrating clear financial need should be collected on an annual basis (for on-going clients) OR if a client returns to the Income Assistance caseload.**