

## Application Process

### General Principle

The band social development worker (BSDW), on behalf of the administering authority, shall develop a consistent procedure to collect all relevant information from an applicant in order to determine eligibility for assistance.

All individuals have the right to apply for income assistance, and to receive a written decision, if they so request, concerning their eligibility.

### Policy

Applicants for income assistance must apply at the office of the administering authority for the reserve on which they are living.

Applicants and recipients must meet all eligibility requirements (i.e., residency, citizenship, etc.).

The following approved forms must be used in the application process:

- *Application for Social Assistance (901-27)*
- *Children Out of the Parental Home Assistance Application Financial Assistance (COPH-001)*
- *Persons with Disabilities Designation Application (SA 301)*
- *Budget and Decision Form (901-25)*
- *Employment Insurance Information Form (BCSA 11)*
- *Consent to Release Information (901-23)*
- *Social Assistance Monthly Renewal Declaration (901-28)*
- all other required forms

The purpose of income assistance is to ensure that recipients receive the necessary support to become independent. To assist in this, applicants' or recipients' circumstances may be reviewed at any time to ensure that:

- all eligibility requirements are met
- when required, applicants or recipients seek alternative sources of income

Information provided by the applicant or recipient will be subject to a verification process as set out by the BSDW.

Until the information has been verified by the BSDW, applicants have not been determined eligible for income assistance and are not entitled to income assistance, with the following exception:

- When the health and welfare of the applicant or dependent children may be at stake, the BSDW may assess the applicant's application for assistance as presented and subsequently determine eligibility for income assistance or hardship assistance (see Chapter 7, Hardship Assistance).

The administering authority must be committed to ensure that applicants or recipients comprehend the importance of the declaration.

The administering authority staff must not sign documents on behalf of an applicant.

## **Annual Review**

Every income assistance case, regardless of category of assistance must be reviewed by the administering authority at least once every 12 months, with the following exception:

- Annual reviews must be completed at least every two years for residents of specialized adult care settings or special care facilities.

The annual review must involve the client in a personal interview and is to focus on the client's continued eligibility, and where appropriate an exploration of the client's efforts to pursue all other sources of support or income and plans for self-sufficiency

## **Procedures**

Review existing files and documentation.

Identify information that may be lacking or requires clarification.

**Interview**

1. Use a consistent procedure to review or complete all sections of the application form with the applicant, and ensure that the information is accurate.
2. If a subsequent occasion arises where the administering authority staff must present evidence in court, staff will be able to testify to an invariable procedure, though the specific details may not be recalled, thereby strengthening the administering authorities position.
3. Ensure that applicants, recipients, and dependants understand both of the following:
  - the content of the application and declaration
  - rights and responsibilities of all parties
4. Review all required documentation with applicants and recipients, and make copies for the file.
5. Ensure all copies of documents are either of the following:
  - initialled and dated by the applicant or recipient, and staff
  - stamped “certified true copy” and signed by the applicant or recipient
6. Explain to the signatories that the declaration makes the application form a legal document, and that it makes the signatories liable for the accuracy of its contents, and that false statements could lead to charges under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Ensure that this is understood.
7. All forms should be completed by the applicant, and every section on the forms must be answered. Those questions which are not applicable to the applicant’s situation must be marked N/A.
8. The BSDW and the applicant or recipient are to initial all changes made to the information on the forms.
9. Observe the signing of the declaration of the applicant and applicable parties—the BSDW signs the declaration as a witness and on behalf of the administering authority.
10. The BSDW must sign all approved forms on behalf of the administering authority.

11. The BSDW will explain to the eligible applicants or recipients how and when assistance will be provided (i.e., when the monthly renewal is due, explain how the client will be issued continued assistance and when the client will receive assistance each month).
12. The *Budget and Decision Form* (901-25) is used to document all applicant resources and monthly requirements to determine whether the applicant is financially eligible for income assistance, and the amount of that eligibility.
13. The applicant has a right to be informed of the decision, and for this purpose should be given the client's copy of the *Budget and Decision Form* (901-25) which includes information about the appeal process. If applicants disagree with the decision they must be informed of the right to appeal the decision.
14. Explain how the *Social Development Monthly Renewal Declaration* (901-28) form must be placed in each client file along with other required documentation and forms that are used to determine continued eligibility.
15. Explain how changes reported on the *Social Development Monthly Renewal Declaration* (901-28) form must be noted, and any required documentation placed on the file. Changes in the amount of eligibility require a recalculation using the *Budget and Decision Form* (901-25). Some changes may require the completion of a new application (i.e., recipient reunites with spouse, recipient has employment income, etc.).
16. Refer the applicant or dependant to suitable services or resources.
17. The administering authority staff must never sign documents on behalf of an applicant or recipient.
18. File recordings showing the date of the application or annual review, decisions made, rationale for decisions, type of contact made to do application or annual review, issues, requests, or concerns raised by client during application or annual review.