

## Eligibility and Under Nineteen Years of Age

### General Principle

Parents bear the primary responsibility for their dependent children. Persons under 19 years of age may be considered for income assistance apart from the family only under exceptional circumstances, and after reasonable efforts have been made to have the parent or guardian support the child.

### Definition of Child

*Child* means an unmarried person under 19 years of age.

### Considerations

The determination of eligibility of an applicant under 19 years of age will be made on the basis of whether the applicant has established a separate household and has been self-supporting prior to the time of application.

Provision of income assistance to this age group can present a host of concerns. Therefore, the administering authority may consider consultation with the band welfare committee, First Nation Child and Family Services (FNCFS) agency, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), or other community services before determining eligibility.

In all cases, if there are child protection concerns regarding any applicant under 19 years of age, referral must be made to the appropriate FNCFS agency or the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) prior to the eligibility decision. (Refer to Volume 3 Appendix 4.1 Protection of Children Duty to Report suspected Child Abuse and Neglect)

Assistance may be granted on a temporary basis during the period of review conducted by the first nations child and family services agency or MCFD.

Temporary assistance issued during this period must be closely monitored.

## **Child in Apparent Marriage-like Relationship**

Due to the additional legal responsibilities and child protection concerns, the administering authority must seek written approval from the appropriate child welfare authority before assistance may be granted to an unmarried child living in a marriage-like relationship.

## **Parental Support Contributions**

There is no exemption on parental support contributions or maintenance payments to the recipient under 19 years of age.

If the parent or parents of a child are not willing to support a child financially, or if they are willing to support the child away from home but the amount is not sufficient to meet the need for assistance, the administering authority must inform the parents that they will need to discuss a financial support agreement with the administering authority before eligibility can be determined.

## **Children-in-care as Parents**

Children-in-care of either the MCFD or first nations child and family services agency and who are residing in foster homes or in approved independent living situations with their dependent infant children may apply for assistance to provide for the infant's needs. The assistance paid to the under 19 year old parents will be based on the unit support and shelter rate, minus the basic foster home payment.

## **Right to Appeal**

Applicants and recipients under 19 years of age have the right to appeal the denial, reduction, or discontinuance of assistance.