

POLICY & PROCEDURE:**COMMUNITY START-UP BENEFIT****POLICY REFERENCE:****Directive 31.0****Legislative Authority: Part VII, Section 55(1)****CRITERIA:**

1. Mandatory item of assistance for **eligible participants**
2. The participant must be **establishing** a **new** permanent residence
3. It is necessary for the health and welfare of the person to leave their previous place of residence and establish a new residence
4. The request should be made prior to the participant establishing their new residence, but can be considered if there were extenuating circumstances preventing them from submitting it earlier. In addition, the request must be submitted within one (1) month of the 'start up' event occurring.
5. Community Start-Up Benefit can be paid once in a twelve (12) month period, or in specific circumstances, can be issued in increments over twelve months
6. If the person is moving from one delivery site to another, the practice is to issue from the delivery site where the person is leaving. Where this has not occurred and the new delivery site is being asked to issue the benefit, under no circumstances will the participant be re-directed to the previous delivery site

Allowable Start-Up Situations

The following are the **only** situations where Community Start-Up Benefit is provided;

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Allowable Start-Up Situations Cont'd

1. Victims of family violence
 - police reports, outside agency documentation, etc must be provided
2. Homeless
3. Uninhabitable Conditions
 - must be documented through a building/health inspector or physician
4. Overcrowding
 - number of persons and size of accommodation must be taken into consideration
5. Disabled and moving due to lack of caregiver
 - caregiver is no longer able to care for the disabled participant
 - caregiver is deceased
6. Person facing eviction
 - eviction notice required
 - eviction is not a result of client's actions
7. Relocating for employment or training
 - verification of job or training program required
8. Moving to more affordable accommodation
 - client is suffering undue hardship due to high shelter costs
 - must ensure that the new accommodations are more within the current shelter ranges
9. Discharged from an institution, nursing home, hospital, correctional facility, special care home, hostel or transition home
 - verification of discharge is required

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Restrictions

1. The maximum benefit payable in a twelve month period is

- \$1500 for participants with dependent children
- \$ 799 for all other participants

2. Allowable Costs are determined as follows;

- clothing \$200/person
- household items \$300
- furniture Actual Cost
- last months rent Actual Cost
- fuel and hydro deposit Actual Cost
- moving expenses Actual Cost

Participant should be seeking secondhand or the most economical items wherever possible.

PROCEDURE:

1. Ontario Works Case Manager receives information from the participant that they require Community Start-Up Benefit
2. Ontario Works Case Manager asks the participant to provide a written request listing the reason for moving and the required need including costs accompanied by any necessary estimates
3. Ontario Works Case Manager requests participant provide written verification regarding the circumstances necessitating the move.

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4. Ontario Works Case Manager creates a note in SDMT with the details of the request

Note Category: Payments/benefits
Note Type: Benefits
Subject: Community Start-Up Benefit

The note should detail

- the reason for the request
 - the verification/documentation submitted supporting the request
 - the items/expenses required and the associated costs
 - details of how the request meets the 'start-up event' criteria
 - confirmation that the request was received in writing or under exceptional circumstances where it is a verbal request
 - details regarding any information the participant has been asked to submit
 - any previous CSUB the participant has received in the past 12 months
 - decision to approve or deny request and reason
 - amount approved
 - method of payment - to the participant or third party
5. Ontario Works Case Manager will search SDMT to determine if the participant has received a Community Start-Up Benefit in the past 12 months and ensure that the approved amount does not exceed the allowable maximum

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6. Once the written request has been submitted, the Ontario Works Case Manager will review it to ensure that the items listed and the associated costs are reasonable
7. Ontario Works Case Manager will not approve the benefit until all required documentation has been provided
8. Once the Ontario Works Case Manager has received all required information regarding the Community Start-Up Benefit request they will have the authority to approve or deny it. They must document their decision by appending the original note in SDMT
9. The Ontario Works Case Manager will advise the participant in writing of their decision when denying the benefit
10. Requests that exceed the allowable limits outlined in this policy, do not meet the prescribed conditions as listed or require clarification must be forwarded to the Team Leader for approval.

Method of payment

1. The preferred method is direct payment to the client except where the payment is for rent or utility costs. These **must** be made directly to the landlord or utility company
 - the Ontario Works Case Manager will ensure that the payment to the third party (landlord or utility company) is made via vendor cheque
 - the Ontario Works Case Manager will create the benefit in SDMT and issue the payment

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2. Where the payment is being directed to a third party other than landlord or utility company (i.e. moving company), the Ontario Works Case Manager will advise them to forward an invoice to the Finance Clerk for payment
 - The Ontario Works Case Manager will create the benefit in SDMT leaving the Release Date blank
 - When the invoice has been received by the Finance Clerk, they will verify the benefit has been approved by searching for the applicable note
 - The Finance Clerk will search for the created benefit, complete the Release Date, verify the payment amount, append the original note and issue the payment

3. Vouchers are to be used when time restriction does not permit the issuance of a system-generated cheque
 - The Ontario Works Case Manager will create the benefit in SDMT entering the amount of the voucher and leaving the Release Date blank
 - A copy must be forwarded to the Finance Clerk
 - Once the invoice is received from the vendor, the Finance Clerk will search for the created benefit, revise the amount of the benefit based upon the invoice, complete the Release Date, verify the payment amount, append the original note and issue the payment

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Reviewed and Approved By:

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02/05/09

Date

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02/05/09

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