

Legislation <i>Social Assistance Act. Reg. 4(4)(6), 5(1) Supports for Persons with Disabilities Gen. Reg. 34(a)</i>	Division	Social Programs	
	Program	AccessAbility Supports, Social Assistance	
	Policy Name	Cohabitation	Policy # SA 3.3-9 AAS 2.5-2
Effective Date:	SA November 2, 1995 AAS July 1, 2022		Authorized by:
Revised Date:	November 15, 2025		Deputy Minister Doriann Macmillan

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To verify an applicant's living arrangements for the purpose of determining eligibility for Social Assistance (SA) and Assured Income (AI).

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Applicant:** a person who applies for or on whose behalf an application is made for SA or AI.
- 2.2 **Assured Income (AI):** a component of AccessAbility Supports (AAS) that provides monthly financial supports to eligible applicants with disabilities to use towards securing basic needs.
- 2.3 **Case Audit:** an independent, third-party process that confirms the accuracy of the information provided by the applicant, the applicant's entitlement to social benefits, and ensures Social Programs staff apply policies in a consistent and appropriate manner.
- 2.4 **Cohabitation:** refers to the arrangement in which two people live together in an intimate relationship or partnership that resembles marriage and usually involves sharing a household, responsibilities and finances.
- 2.5 **Department:** the Department of Social Development and Seniors.
- 2.6 **Social Assistance (SA):** assistance provided in accordance with the *Social Assistance Act* to persons in need and other persons and includes financial assistance and social services.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1 An applicant who is cohabitating (i.e. living with an intimate partner) must make a joint application for Social Assistance (SA) or Assured Income (AI), regardless of their partner's gender, sexual orientation, or the length and/or stability of the relationship.
- 3.2 When an applicant denies cohabitation and there is sufficient evidence that supports the Department to determine an applicant to be cohabitating, it is the responsibility of the applicant to disprove the relationship. The Department may consider various sources of information in its assessment, including but not limited to familial, social, financial, or other sources, such as public records.
- 3.4 When the Department is unable to confirm an applicant's living arrangement, the Department will seek additional verification, information, or other evidence as part of the application or review process.
- 3.5 Applicants may be required to swear an affidavit respecting the applicant's living arrangements, participate in a case audit, or sign an authorization to release confidential information to support the Department in determining whether an applicant is cohabitating.
- 3.6 Applicants who refuse to swear an affidavit respecting the applicant's living arrangements, participate in a case audit, or sign an authorization to release confidential information will be deemed ineligible for SA or AI.
- 3.7 When the Department determines that a couple has separated for the purpose of qualifying for SA or AI, the applicant will be deemed as ineligible for SA or AI and assistance will be refused or closed.

4.0 REFERENCES

- 4.1 *Social Assistance Act*
- 4.2 *Supports for Persons with Disabilities General Regulations*
- 4.3 July 1, 2022 – Editorial, content, and format changes. Policy and procedure statements have been expanded. New AAS policy. Combines SA policies 3.2 Cohabitation and 3.3 Separations.

November 15, 2025 - Policy updated to new format; definitions have been added for clarity; policy replaces polices SA 1.3/AAS 3.2.