



<i>Act/Regulations</i> <i>Social Assistance Act Section 6</i> <i>Social Assistance Act Reg. 5(1), 6(1-2), 13-14, 30</i>	Program	Social Assistance	
	Subject	Eligibility	Policy # 1.2
Effective Date: April 1, 1995		Authorized by:	
Revised Date: July 1, 2022		Deputy Minister Jamie MacDonald	

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To define the eligibility requirements for Social Assistance (SA).

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 **Applicant:** a person who applied for, on whose behalf an application is made, or receives SA.

2.2 **Co-Applicant:** the spouse of an applicant, and includes a person who, although not married to the applicant, lives with the applicant as if they were married.

2.3 **Established Rates:** rates of financial assistance established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under subsection 4.1(1) of the Social Assistance Act.

2.4 **Financial Resources:** the financial resources of an applicant as determined by the Director in accordance with the *Social Assistance Act Regulations* sections 13 and 14.

2.5 **Permanent Residency Status:** a status granting someone who is not a Canadian citizen the right to live and work in Canada without any time limits on length of stay. Permanent residents have the right to get most social benefits that Canadian citizens receive, including health care coverage, have the right to live, work or study anywhere in Canada; have the right to apply for Canadian citizenship; and have the right to protection under Canadian law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

2.6 **Person in Need:** a person who is unable to provide adequately for themselves on the basis of a test that relates the person’s liabilities to the assets available to the person to meet those liabilities and may include dependents of the person.

- 2.7 **Resident of Prince Edward Island:** a person who is legally entitled to remain in Canada and maintain a primary residence on Prince Edward Island. Students who are ordinarily residents outside Prince Edward Island are considered non-residents.
- 2.8 **Supports Coordinator:** a staff member that provides direction and case management support in delivering a range of social benefits and services to applicants eligible for SA.
- 2.9 **Support Needs Assessment (SNA):** systematic process for determining an applicant's eligibility for SA and potential support needs.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

- 3.1 SA provides financial assistance to applicants who are unable to provide for their own basic needs. SA requires verification of eligibility of applicants upon application, at minimum once every 12 months, and when a change in circumstances occurs.
- 3.2 To be eligible for SA, an applicant must:
- be lawfully entitled to be in or to remain in Canada; with a permanent residency status;
 - be a resident of Prince Edward Island;
 - be present in Prince Edward Island to receive financial assistance;
 - be 18 years of age or older;
 - be a person in need;
 - provide all required documentation to substantiate need;
 - pursue all other feasible sources of income;
 - have a demonstrated need for financial support where the needs of the applicant exceed the applicant's financial resources.
- 3.3 As a condition of maintaining eligibility for SA, applicants are required to:
- use the assistance granted for basic needs and in the best interest of the applicant, co-applicant, and dependents;
 - report any change in circumstance that may affect their eligibility or the amount of assistance they are entitled to;
 - assign to the Department any income or benefits paid to or payable to an applicant for any period for which SA will be or has been granted;
 - avail themselves to and accept reasonable employment, and/or training opportunities, unless exempted by the Department;
 - participate in the development and execution of a case plan.
- 3.4 An applicant who is cohabitating as a couple must make a joint application for SA, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, length and/or stability of the relationship under SA policy 1.2 - Cohabitation.

- 3.5 SA may be granted to a minor applicant where the Department has determined the parental home is unavailable and/or unsuitable for the applicant's care, training, or development under SA policy 1.3 – Minors Living Apart from Parents.
- 3.6 An applicant's eligibility for financial benefits will be calculated based on their individual circumstances and the established rates as determined pursuant to the *Social Assistance Act* & regulations.
- 3.7 Applicants may not be eligible for financial assistance when:
- absent from the province;
 - sentenced to a correctional facility; or
 - hospitalized for more than 30 consecutive days.
- 3.8 Applicants will be advised of their eligibility in writing.

4.0 PROCEDURE STATEMENTS

- 4.1 Applicants must be informed that personal information is collected under Section 31(c) of Prince Edward Island's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP)* and is used for the purpose of the administration of SA.
- 4.2 Applicants must be informed that information obtained by the Department while providing services is confidential and may be shared only with other government departments, private agencies, or other persons when necessary as outlined in section 6 of the *Social Assistance Act*.
- 4.3 Applicants will be scheduled to meet with a Supports Coordinator to complete an intake appointment. At intake, a Supports Coordinator is responsible to advise the applicant of the process for determining eligibility for SA, the assessment(s) and/or documents(s) required, and their authority for obtaining the information required to complete an application for financial assistance. Applicants are responsible to ensure that the information provided for the purposes of determining eligibility for SA is accurate and complete.
- 4.4 Supports Coordinators are responsible to inquire into the living conditions, financial resources, and other circumstances of an applicant to determine whether the applicant is a person in need.
- 4.5 Applicants are responsible to provide documentation, information, and other evidence to ensure the Department can accurately assess eligibility for SA as per Social Programs

policy 2.6 Documentation Requirements. Documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- verification of assets, income and expenses;
- medical documentation;
- confirmation of residency; and/or
- bank statements.

4.6 Supports Coordinators are responsible to complete a SNA with the applicant to identify an applicant's support needs and to confirm an applicant's eligibility for SA.

4.7 Where an applicant has open service, the Supports Coordinator will complete a SNA when a significant change in the applicant's circumstances occurs or at minimum once every 12 months as part of an applicant's annual review.

4.8 Where an applicant has open service, applicants are responsible to provide documentation when requested by the Department and to advise the Department of changes that may affect their eligibility as soon as they are aware of these changes to ensure the Supports Coordinator can accurately determine on-going eligibility for SA.

4.9 Supports Coordinators are responsible to review any assessment or document completed with an applicant and obtain an applicant's signature prior to issuing benefits. Assessments and documents require signatures of both spouses, except when extenuating circumstances prevent the obtaining of the second signature. Extenuating circumstances must be approved by the designated authority.

4.10 Where an applicant is determined to be eligible for SA, the applicant will be informed in writing of their eligibility, the amount of assistance to be paid, the likely duration of the benefit period, and of their right to appeal any decision rendered by the Department.

4.11 Where an applicant is determined to be ineligible for SA, the applicant will be informed of their eligibility and the reason(s) for the decision in writing, and the applicant's right to appeal.

5.0 REFERENCES

5.1 SA Policy 1.2 Cohabitation

5.2 SA Policy 1.3 Minors Living Apart from Parents

5.3 Social Programs Policy 2.6 Documentation Requirements

HISTORY:

July 1, 2022: Editorial, content, and format changes. Significant revisions that include the removal of information from policy to staff orientation and training. Policy and procedure statements have been expanded. Policy title has been changes from Eligibility – General to Eligibility. Policy number has been changed from 3.1 to 1.1. Replaces policies 2.1 Application for Assistance – General, 2.2 New Applications, 2.3 Application/Reviews, 3.14 Change in Circumstances