

Social Assistance Update - June 2012

Important information about changes to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW) benefits.

ODSP/OW Home Repairs Benefit Ends - Apply by June 30, 2012

The Home Repairs Benefit helps people on ODSP/OW who own their homes to pay for emergency/essential home repairs (please see **Ontario Budget 2012** on page 2 for more information).

If you are on ODSP/OW, you own your home and need home repairs, you must apply for the Home Repair benefit by June 30, 2012. To apply for the benefit, contact your ODSP/OW worker now.



If you disagree with any ODSP decision, you have the right to request an Internal Review within 30 days (extension of time may be possible). You should get legal advice right away. Please see page 2 for Getting Legal Help.

Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit Ends **- Apply before December 31, 2012 -**

The Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) will end as of January 1, 2013. The government has said that 50% of the CSUMB funding will be combined with funding from other housing and homelessness programs, but we do not know yet how it will work.

The CSUMB is an ODSP/OW benefit that helps with costs like: first and last month's rent deposits, buying or replacing furniture, deposits for utilities, overdue utility bills, and other similar expenses (please see **Ontario Budget 2012** on page 2 for more information).

If you are on ODSP/OW and you think you might be eligible for the CSUMB, you must apply before December 31, 2012. To apply, contact your ODSP/OW worker.

If you disagree with any ODSP decision, you have the right to request an Internal Review within 30 days (extension of time may be possible). You should get legal advice right away. Please see page 2 for Getting Legal Help.

Campaign to save the Home Repair and CSUMB

There is a campaign to save the Home Repair Benefit and the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit:

<http://sareview.ca/isac-news/act-now-to-save-housing-supports-for-people-on-ow-and-odsp/>

Ontario Budget 2012: Changes to Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works

The Ontario Budget makes some significant changes to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW).

The Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC) prepared its ***Ontario Budget 2012: Analysis after the negotiations***, which is available in English and in French (en français):
www.incomesecurity.org/OntarioBudget2012.htm

The ISAC document reviews and analyses the impact of decisions made in the Ontario budget about:

1. OW and ODSP Rates: 1% increase
2. Ontario Child Benefit implementation delayed
3. Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) ends January 2013
4. Home Repairs Benefit ends January 2013
5. Cap on health-related discretionary benefits for OW and ODSP
6. Move toward integrating employment supports under Employment Ontario
7. Centralizing collection of outstanding debts

Ontario's Social Assistance Review

As we have reported in past editions of our ***HALCO news*** newsletters, the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario has been conducting a major review of Ontario's Social Assistance system. The Commission has announced that its final report, which was due in June 2012, will be released in September 2012. Here is a link to the Commission website:
www.socialassistancereview.ca

Getting Legal Help

If you disagree with any ODSP/OW decision, you have the right to request an Internal Review within 30 days (extension of time may be possible). You should get legal advice right away.

If you are living with HIV in Ontario, please call HALCO for free legal advice at 416-340-7790 or toll-free 1-888-705-8889.

If you are not living with HIV, you can contact your local community legal clinic for free legal advice. To find your local community legal clinic, contact Legal Aid Ontario:

Legal Aid Ontario telephone 416-979-1446 or toll-free 1-800-668-8258

TTY 416-598-8867 or TTY toll-free 1-866-641-8867

www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/contact.asp?type=cl