

## Chapter 5: Basic Benefits

### (iii) Comfort Allowance

<b>Intent:</b>	To clarify when an applicant/recipient is eligible to receive Income Support benefits while a resident/patient of a hospital/facility.
<b>Act:</b> (if applicable)	N/A
<b>Regulations:</b>	<p>19 (2) Where an applicant or recipient who has no spouse, cohabiting partner or dependent students is hospitalized or in an emergency shelter approved by the minister</p> <p>(a) the applicant may receive an amount of income support up to \$175 a month; and</p> <p>(b) the recipient may continue to receive income support under subsection (1) or sections 13 and 16 if applicable, or section 14 or 15 for 90 days from the date of admission, and after that time period, he or she may, on the approval of an officer continue to receive income support for an additional 90 days under paragraph 16(b) if applicable, and an amount of income support up to \$175 a month; or</p> <p>19 (3) Where an applicant or recipient with dependents is hospitalized or admitted to an emergency shelter approved by the minister, that applicant or recipient may receive or continue to receive income support under subsection (1) or sections 13 and 16 if applicable, or section 14 or 15, and effective the month following the month of admission, the applicant or recipient may receive an additional amount of income support up to \$175 a month.</p> <p>19 (4) Notwithstanding paragraph (2)(b), the minister may, in certain circumstances, extend the time period for which the recipient referred to in that subsection may receive income support under subsection (1) or section 13 or 16 if applicable, or section 14 or 15.</p>
<b>Overview:</b> (if applicable)	N/A
<b>Policy:</b>	<p><b>(a) General</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comfort Allowance is a monthly Income Support benefit provided to applicants/recipients to cover the cost of clothing</li> </ul>

and personal care items while they are patients in a hospital, including palliative care, or are in a residential facility or emergency shelter where board and lodging is provided separately.

- The approval of emergency shelters and shelter provision for individuals experiencing homelessness is the responsibility of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. Individuals who reside in these temporary accommodations are eligible for a Comfort Allowance if they financially qualify.
  - Individuals who are placed in shelters administered by a Regional Health Authority such as women's shelters, Emmanuel House, Pleasant Manor, Access House or Naomi Centre; receive a Personal Allowance provided by the Health Authority and are not eligible for a Comfort Allowance.
  - Eligible clients under the age of 18 receive a Personal Allowance from Eastern Health.
  - Comfort Allowance is only available for applicants/recipients aged 18 years and over.
  - Correctional Facilities:
    - Individuals who are residing in a halfway house such as West Bridge House and Howard House are eligible for a Comfort Allowance.
    - Inmates/prisoners in correctional facilities that are not halfway houses such as Her Majesties Penitentiary or the NL Correctional Centre for Women are not eligible for the Comfort Allowance, and continue to be ineligible if transferred to a hospital/facility for treatment or rehabilitation.
    - Individuals involved in the court system who are ordered to a medical facility for a psychiatric assessment because they are deemed not fit to stand trial, or those who are found to be not criminally responsible; are entitled to a Comfort Allowance if they meet other conditions of Income Support eligibility.
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**(b) Applicants/Recipients with Dependents****Applicants**

- When an adult with dependents is hospitalized or in an emergency shelter and is requesting a Comfort Allowance, they must apply for Income Support in the regular manner as outlined in policy on [Families and Single Persons](#). Eligibility for Income Support benefits will be based on the needs of the entire family.
- If deemed eligible, effective the month following the month of admission, the applicant is entitled to a Comfort Allowance of \$175 per month in addition to the basic Income Support benefits the family may be eligible to receive.

**Recipients**

- In a hospital/treatment facility:
    - When a recipient with dependents who is maintaining a residence is admitted to a hospital/ treatment facility, including palliative care, they may continue to receive their current Income Support benefits uninterrupted. Effective the month following the month of admission, the recipient is also entitled to a Comfort Allowance of \$175 per month.
  - In a hostel because of a hospitalized child/dependent:
    - Recipients with dependents who have to reside in a hostel because of a hospitalized child, can continue to receive their regular Income Support benefits provided to the family. Effective the month following the month of admission of the child, the recipient is entitled to receive a Comfort Allowance to offset the extra costs the adult recipient may incur while staying in a hostel.
    - Eligibility for the Comfort Allowance is dependent on the recipient (parent) having to remain in the hostel.
  - **Family in an emergency shelter**
    - When recipients with dependents are admitted to an emergency shelter/residential facility as a family unit and will not be returning to their home, benefits will be reduced to a Comfort Allowance in the month
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following admission for each adult in the family unit. Comfort Allowance will not be provided to dependents under age 18.

- If recipients with dependents admitted to an emergency shelter/residential facility as a family unit are returning to their home, regular benefits may continue for up to ninety days. In these instances, a Comfort Allowance will not be issued in addition to their basic benefits.
- This policy does not apply to victims of violence. Please refer to the [Victims of Violence](#) policy for further information.

- Family in a transition house
  - For recipients with dependents who move to a transition house, refer to policy on [Victims of Violence](#).

### **(c) Applicants/Recipients without Dependents**

#### **Applicants**

- Applicants without dependents may apply for the Comfort Allowance. Eligibility for this allowance is based upon the eligibility criteria for Income Support benefits.
- Please see the policy on [Families and Single Persons](#) for more information. If eligible, only the Comfort Allowance will be issued.

#### **Recipients**

- Recipients without dependents may continue to receive the same level of Income Support benefits provided prior to admission to the hospital/facility, including palliative care, for a period of three months, on the assumption that the recipient will be returning to his/her former residence.
    - Beyond these three months, continued benefits for mortgage only can be approved for an additional three months with CSM approval.
  - If the recipient will not be returning to their former residence, their Income Support benefits will be reduced to the basic Comfort Allowance rate.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recipients without dependents are not entitled to the individual benefit beyond three months, but they can receive the Comfort Allowance.</li> <li>Recipients without dependents receiving the special board and lodging rate under <a href="#">Regulation 19 (1) (k)</a> in addition to the board and lodging benefit under <a href="#">Regulation 14 (1)</a> will continue to the same level of benefits that were provided prior to admission on the assumption the recipient will be returning to the former residence. These Income Support benefits will continue for three months. Beginning the fourth month after admission, these benefits will be reduced to the Comfort Allowance.</li> <li>Requests for extensions of individual benefits, board and lodging or rent beyond the three month period for recipients without dependents, are to be submitted to the Income Support Division.</li> </ul>
	<p>Client Services Officers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determine eligibility for Income Support benefits for applicants as per the general eligibility criteria</li> <li>make adjustments to Income Support benefits for recipients with dependents, effective the month following the month of admission to include the Comfort Allowance</li> <li>for recipients without dependents set up a KIV for three months to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determine if the recipient will be returning to their former residence;</li> <li>reduce individual benefits to a Comfort Allowance rate if the recipient remains hospitalized or in a residential facility;</li> <li>where applicable, request the continuation of mortgage for an additional 3 months.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Authority Level:</b>	<p>Client Services Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issuance of a Comfort Allowance</li> <li>issuance of regular Income Support benefits for recipients without dependents for 3 months.</li> </ul>

Client Service Managers/Regional Manager of Income and Social Supports:

- approval to extend the payment of a mortgage for a recipient without dependents for an additional 3 month period.

Minister via the Income Support Division:

- approval to extend the payment of a mortgage for a recipient without dependents beyond a 6 month period.
- approval to extend the payment of rental assistance for a recipient without dependents beyond 3 months.
- approval of regular Income Support benefits or board and lodging benefits for a recipient without dependents beyond three months.

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