

## Chapter 9: Special Needs Benefits

### (v) Emergency Assistance

<b>Intent:</b>	To clarify when emergency Income Support benefits can be provided to an applicant/recipient to address an emergency.
<b>Act:</b> (if applicable)	<b>16.</b> Notwithstanding another provision of this Act, the minister may, in an emergency situation or to ensure the immediate health, safety or well-being of an individual or family, determine the eligibility of certain persons for income support without reference to sections 14, 15, or 17.
<b>Regulations:</b>	<b>28. (1)</b> Where income support is required as a result of circumstances that, in the opinion of an officer, create an emergency situation, the officer may grant the income support that is necessary to meet the emergency needs of the applicant or recipient.
<b>Overview:</b> (if applicable)	N/A
<b>Policy:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Income Support benefits may be provided to recipients/applicants to meet an immediate need when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there is no eligibility for basic Income Support or</li> <li>eligibility for Income Support has not yet been determined or cannot be determined, but an emergency situation exists.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Emergency Income Support can only be considered when an applicant/recipient does not have or cannot avail of other resources such as liquid assets, readily marketable securities (except RESP's), assistance from family and/or friends, loans, credit from local stores or insurance, etc. to meet their immediate need.</li> <li>Occasionally, individuals or families are displaced from their homes as a result of a fire or flood. The Canadian Red Cross and/or Salvation Army will provide immediate support for the first three days. Based on a needs assessment, supports are provided for such things as food, clothing and shelter. For non-income support clients this allows them time to connect with their insurance company and reach out to family and friends. For income support recipients the three days of immediate support provided by the agency also gives them time to connect with the Department. If the recipients request emergency assistance, consideration must be given to the support that has been</li> </ul>

provided by the agency and other resources available within the community, to meet the individual or family's immediate basic needs.

- Emergency Income Support will only be provided to meet the basic amount necessary to address the immediate need (emergency) until such time as the recipient/applicant can avail of their own resources or until they are eligible for basic income support benefits.
    - Example: if a recipient is without food, or an emergency situation has been determined (a fire, flood, etc.) the amount of emergency Income Support issued is to be just sufficient to address the need for food and/or shelter.
  - When an applicant/recipient moves into an apartment, an overlap of rent and utilities can be provided. It may be necessary to issue further assistance for the individual(s) to become established, particularly when leaving shelters. In these instances, a minimal amount of emergency assistance may be required to provide sufficient funds to overlap the first month's rent. This should only be used in situations as described and in no circumstance should board and lodging daily rates or an overlap of Individual benefits be issued.
  - Emergency assistance cannot be considered as an on-going monthly requirement.
  - Emergency assistance cannot be provided in combination with basic Income Support benefits as a means to exceed the rates specified in the Regulations or to exceed levels of authority.
  - Emergency Income Support benefits cannot be provided to pay electrical arrears, fuel or any item not normally provided by the Department.
  - Emergency Income Support benefits can be provided to applicants/recipients who are victims of violence for emergency transportation to leave a violent situation (see policy on [Victims of Violence](#)).
  - An emergency drug card can be issued when there is an immediate (within 24 hours) need for prescription drugs and individuals have no ability to pay. This may occur for an applicant whose application has yet to be assessed or a non-client in an emergency situation. If an applicant requires a drug card prior to
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their application being assessed, and it is not an emergency situation, they should be referred to the [Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program \(NLPDP\)](#). NLPDP can complete a drug card assessment within a short period if the need exists; however, the applicant must have their income tax filed for the previous year.

- One-time emergency Income Support in the amount of \$175 can be issued to individuals released from incarceration without any notice or plan, such as those on remand status or those being released without an application for Income Support, submitted prior to their release date. The covering period for the one-time \$175 is 30 days commencing from their release date. Individuals cannot request this payment beyond 30 days after their release date. This payment should be issued through direct deposit if banking information on file is accurate, otherwise a cheque can be issued. This one-time \$175 emergency assistance is not set up as an overpayment, regardless of whether there is any overlap of the benefit period for regular Income Support once eligibility is established through the application process.

**Procedure:** The Client Services Officer must:

- Determine if the applicant/recipient has absolutely no resources of their own available to meet his/her emergency need
- Determine if a home visit is required to assess the emergency need
- Document and verify all the circumstances surrounding the request for emergency Income Support benefits.
- Determine the minimum amount of Income Support required to meet the immediate emergency need.
- Ensure when the Client Service Manager/Regional Manager (CSM/RM) approval is required, that the approval is recorded as part of the official record
- Refer to policy on [Transportation](#) if the need is for such services
- Not set up an overpayment when emergency Income Support benefits are provided except:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ if it has been determined by the CSM/RM, that the emergency Income Support is being repeatedly issued for the same requests (e.g. food) and the recipient has been advised future emergency Income Support will be set up as an overpayment;</li> <li>○ Where emergency assistance was provided when the Income Support benefit was suspended because of a Child Benefit Adjustment, (the overpayment being any emergency assistance provided prior to the new eligibility date); and</li> <li>○ where emergency Income Support benefits were used to pay mortgage arrears with the understanding of the recipient that the amount would be set up as an overpayment.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When issuing emergency Income Support under “Supplementary Benefits” select “Emergency Assistance” then select the reason for the emergency and the appropriate requirement code;</li> <li>• Enter the amount required to meet the emergency need.</li> </ul>
<b>Authority Level:</b>	<b>Basic Assistance</b>  <b>Client Services Officer</b> - up to \$1,000 per request, approval of setting up the emergency assistance as an overpayment where applicable  <b>Client Service Manager/Regional Manager of Income &amp; Social Supports</b> - up to \$2,500 per request,  <b>Regional Director</b> - over \$2,500 per request.
<b>Date revised:</b>	June 3, 2025