

**Backgrounder – Supporting People in Need Keeps Saskatchewan Strong
June 1, 2016**

Below is an overview of Social Services’ Income Assistance changes in 2016-17. The changes will not come into effect on June 1, 2016. Affected clients will be given notice before the changes take effect.

Change	Why are you making this change?
Eliminate the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS) exemption in the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program	Currently, the SRHS is not considered as income when a client is given additional benefits for shelter. As a result, benefits can be stacked (SAID + excess shelter + SRHS). Ending this exemption will ensure that SAID clients receive more equitable shelter benefits.
Discontinue grandfathering for Saskatchewan Assistance Plan (SAP) and SAID clients who receive excess shelter benefits as a result of living in communities that previously had low vacancy rates	This policy was implemented in 2008 when there was a serious shortage of affordable rental options. The policy was discontinued in July 2015 when rental vacancy rates rose above 3% and access to affordable options improved. Clients who were granted excess shelter under the policy prior to July 2015 were “grandfathered” (continued to receive the benefit). The provincial vacancy rate is now at a point where renters have options.
End the practice of exempting Seniors Income Plan (SIP) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) Top-up Benefits from SAP and SAID	Benefits provided under the provincial SIP and federal GIS, together with the federal Old Age Security (OAS) benefits, are intended to provide for the basic needs of seniors with low income. Currently, SIP and GIS top-up income are exempt from the calculation of benefits provided by SAP and SAID, but OAS benefits and base GIS benefits are not exempt from these calculations. This change will restore simplicity and fairness in how income is treated under SAP and SAID.
End the practice of grandfathering families with children aged 13 and over receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES)	In 2015-16, SES was changed to target the supplement to applicants with children 12 years old and under. However, there was a grandfathering provision, leaving families who were already in the program eligible to receive support for children 13 years and older. The grandfathering provision is now being removed to focus the program on families with the highest need.