

Backgrounder

Saskatchewan Income Support Program (SIS)

Program Details

- The Saskatchewan Income Support program (SIS) launches this summer.
- The new program will focus on helping people overcome their challenges and move to employment or participation in their communities to the best of their abilities.
- We are shifting our emphasis from paperwork to people, from confusion to simplicity and from compliance to support.
- A simpler benefit with a few additional benefits for health and safety or job-related expenses means that we were able to increase the Adult Basic Benefit and Shelter Benefit in the new program.
- There will be increased earned income exemptions. This means that clients can keep more of what they earn before their benefits are reduced. It also encourages clients to take on more hours of work so they can move to self-sufficiency.
- Using a new approach called Motivational Interviewing, our staff will work alongside clients to make positive decisions, manage their benefits independently and accomplish their goals.
- Saskatchewan Income Support will also be more client friendly. For example, we're launching an online application tool so clients can apply whenever it's convenient for them and from wherever they are.
- Saskatchewan Income Support will provide a financial benefit for shelter and basic needs, with additional benefits for some situations such as emergency health and safety needs or starting a new career.
- Our staff will help their clients learn how to make good financial decisions, manage their benefits, budget for their household expenses, and work to make changes in their lives to become self-sufficient to the best of their ability.
- Staff will support clients to manage their household expenses using all sources of income that they receive. Under the Saskatchewan Income Support program, clients are responsible for paying their rent, damage deposits and utilities directly to landlords and utility companies. This is similar to how the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) program works today.
- The Ministry will stop taking new applications for the Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) and the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) when the new program launches this summer.
- Current SAP and TEA clients will not be immediately affected and will continue to receive benefits and services until the programs wind down in summer 2021, they decide to apply to the new program or they become self-sufficient and no longer require benefits. The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program will remain in place and run alongside the new Saskatchewan Income Support program.

- The Saskatchewan Income Support program is not the only source of income clients receive. Many clients also receive federal benefits such as the Canada Child Benefit.

Core Benefits

- The Adult Basic Benefit is provided to each adult who is eligible for the program. This benefit is for food, local transportation, clothing, personal, and household needs. The rates for northern residents are higher to reflect the increased costs of living in northern Saskatchewan.
- The Shelter Benefit is for rent, mortgage payments, utilities and other associated shelter costs including property taxes, insurance, etc.

Additional Benefits

Employment Incentives

- **Increased earned income exemptions** so clients can keep more of what they earn before their benefits are reduced as they transition to work.
- **Employment and Training Benefit** to help with the costs of starting a career or beginning a training program.

Health and Safety

- **Household Health and Safety Benefit** in an emergency situation to provide replacements for household items.
- **Stabilization Benefit** can be provided to support clients who have difficulty maintaining stable housing.
- **Short Term Emergency Assistance** may be provided to address unforeseen emergency situations that could result in harm.
- **Prescribed Diet Benefit** for clients whose medical conditions require additional nutritional supplements or food.
- **Travel Benefit** outside of the community for medical purposes.
- **Discounted Bus Pass** for clients and their immediate family members who live in the seven largest centres.
- **Alternate Heating Benefit** for clients who reside in a household where natural gas is not accessible and are required to heat their home with an alternative heat source.

Change in Circumstances

- **Children's Benefit** for a parent who is not eligible to receive the Canada Child Benefit for child-related costs.
- **Child Care Benefit** to help in the short term when looking for employment or going to a job interview.
- **Relocation Benefit** may be provided to assist with moving costs due to health emergencies, starting employment in a new location, evictions beyond client's control, or finding a more affordable place to live.
- **Travel Benefit** outside of the community for job interviews or beginning training/employment.
- **Security Deposits** can be provided up to the amount of the Shelter Benefit.
- **Funeral Benefits** to support the costs of funerals.