

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL	
Section: H. Ontario Works	Effective Date: Dec. 1, 2013
Topic: 7A. Benefits/Mandatory Benefits	Replaces: February 1, 2013
Subject: 7A.10. Employment Benefits	
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POLICY

Authority **OW Act: Sec 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8**
OW Directives: Dir. 7.4

Full-time Employment Benefit

The Full-time Employment Benefit (FTEB) is provided to a recipient, a spouse included in the benefit unit or a dependent adult to help with expenses associated with beginning full-time employment. The benefit may be paid in one or more installments, up to the maximum in any 12-month period.

The maximum amount that may be provided through the FTEB is up to \$500 in a 12-month period for each eligible recipient.

Recipients are eligible for this benefit if they meet the following criteria:

- have been on social assistance for three consecutive months; and
- are beginning full-time employment and require assistance with the costs of going to work.

Beginning full-time employment means working 30 or more hours per week in one or more jobs.

Receipts, other documentation or verification for expenses associated with accepting or changing employment or an employment assistance activity should be visually verified, and documented in the social assistance computer system.

A participant who is self-employed is not eligible for the FTEB.

Other Employment and Employment Assistance Activities Benefit

The Other Employment and Employment Assistance Activities Benefit is provided to a recipient, a spouse in the benefit unit, a dependent adult not attending secondary school full-time or a training program, or a dependent child who has graduated from secondary school. This benefit is provided to assist with costs associated with beginning or changing employment or an employment assistance activity.

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Recipients are eligible for this benefit if they are:

- beginning or changing participation in employment assistance activities, which means beginning a new training program with different duties and responsibilities, or shifting from job training to work experience; or
- beginning or changing employment with a current or new employer where the duties and responsibilities are substantially different than the previous job.

Expenses associated with accepting or changing either employment or an employment assistance activity, including a training program, include but are not limited to, the following:

- appropriate work wear;
- grooming costs;
- licensing fees, association costs;
- tools and equipment;
- transportation costs.

The maximum amount that may be provided for each eligible recipient of this benefit is up to \$253 in a 12-month period.

If a portion of the \$253 was issued to the recipient during the 12 months, the balance may be issued at any time in the 12-month period following the original payment.

Employment and Training Start Up Benefit (ETSUB) for ODSP Participating individuals

A maximum of \$500 in a 12 month period can be issued for but not limited to:

- new full-time or part-time employment
- a training program
- to start a business
- an approved employment activity, such as job search

ESUB can be issued for but not limited to:

- appropriate work wear;
- grooming cost;
- licensing fees, association costs;
- tools and equipment;
- transportation cost

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Advance (Up Front) Child Care Payment

An advance (up front) child care payment may be provided to a recipient, a spouse included in the benefit unit, a dependent adult or a dependent child with a dependent child if in the opinion of the Administrator the person is required to pay in advance for child care that is necessary to permit employment or an employment assistance activity.

The advance child care payment can be issued up to the following maximum amount in any 12-month period:

- actual costs for licensed child care under the Day Nurseries Act; or
- up to \$600 for unlicensed (informal) child care costs.

Note: FTEB and Other Employment and Assistance Activities Benefits (ESUB and Advance Child Care Payments) are issued prior to accessing the Employment Related Expenses Benefit (ERE) or Community Participation Expenses (CPE).

Any employment related benefit must **not be issued for an employment related activity that has not been agreed to and included on a signed Participation Agreement.**

Employment Related Expenses

Employment-related expenses (ERE) are provided to support participants as they progress toward sustainable employment.

Employment-related expenses are also available for ODSP recipients who are participating in Ontario Works employment assistance activities.

Where a participant is eligible for the mandatory Other Employment and Employment Assistance Activities Benefit, that benefit is accessed first.

Community Participation Expenses

Community Participation Expenses (CPE) are available to participants who are participating in the Community Placement Component of the Ontario Works Program as part of the employment activity plan. This plan must be mutually developed and agreed to by the participant and his/her Case Manager. The need for funds must be documented on file and approved as appropriate.

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Participants are eligible for CPE when they require financial assistance to attend and participate in a Community Placement. CPE may be provided to a participant to enable him/her to commence a Community Placement without incurring “out-of-pocket” expenses.

The decision of whether or not to issue ERE and or CPE and the amount **is not a decision that can be appealed** to the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT).

A participant who becomes employed as a result of participating in a Community Placement is eligible to receive ESUB provided that he/she requires funds in order to start a job **and** has not received the maximum allowable in the year. If a participant **has received** the maximum allowable in the year or ESUB funds are **not sufficient** to meet the participant’s needs, alternative funding methods should be reviewed with the Supervisor.

Participants in Ontario Works may receive ERE / CPE assistance to:

1. attend pre-employment workshops;
2. participate in basic education and job-specific skills training;
3. search for and obtain employment; and
4. participate in community placement activities

FUNDING

ERE and or CPE issued on a one-time or on an ongoing basis. The payment **must not exceed \$175 per month per participant** and the maximum advance payment should not exceed \$500.

Requests which exceed \$175 must be approved by the Supervisor.

Participants may receive funds either in advance to purchase necessary item(s) or may be reimbursed for items already purchased, provided **prior** approval was given by the Case Manager.

ELIGIBLE ITEMS

Eligible Items can include but not limited to:

- transportation
- clothing, grooming, and special equipment
- safety equipment

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- supplies & equipment
- books
- minor tuition (non-OSAP eligible courses)
- supplies and services
- minor fees
- protective clothing

Direct payments for ERE and or CPE should first be accessed through the Employment Start-up Benefit (ESUB). In cases where these funds are not sufficient to meet the participant's needs, ESUB may be supplemented through the use of ERE and or CPE.

Employment Related Expenses are available from the date a participant is eligible for Ontario Works until the month in which **employment commences** or until the participant receives the **first full pay cheque**.

Participants must access any other sources of financial assistance which might be available (i.e. Ontario Student Assistance Program).

Every precaution is taken to avoid duplicating funds which could be available from another source. Case Managers are to contact agencies to ensure that the participant is not eligible for funds from those sources before funds are issued.

TRANSPORTATION

Due to our vast geographic area, it may not be possible to cover all clients' transportation needs. It will be necessary for the Case Manager to develop Participation Agreements that ensure the clients shortest route to employment. Where it is determined that the shortest route requires extensive travel dollars, it is incumbent upon the Case Manager to discuss with the client the possibility of sharing rides, and/or where appropriate relocating.

1. Where participants will be using their own vehicles for travel, they may be eligible for a kilometre allowance equal to the Ministry of Health's Northern Health Travel Grant mileage rate, but the amount may be less where longer distances are involved.
2. The mileage could include travel to and from child care, if child care is required for the parents to participate in one of the employment components. Parents are required to find child care in the community from which they come or are going to.

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Note: The most economical method of travel **must** always be considered.

CLOTHING

Funds may be provided for clothing items that participants need to attend specific training courses, job interviews or required as part of the participation agreement.

GROOMING

Funds may be provided for grooming items that participants need to attend training courses, job interviews or required as part of their participation agreement. These expenses may include haircuts, permanents, shaving equipment, and dry cleaning costs.

Services to improve health and personal appearance may be provided (i.e. membership in a health club to lose weight.) Issuance of these funds is subject to the approval of a Supervisor.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment such as safety glasses, work boots, tools for the trade and other similar items may be provided if:

- The participant requires equipment in order to conduct an effective job search;
- It's required as part of the participation agreement.

BOOKS

The cost of books required to attend an approved training or educational program can be covered if funding is not available through any other source.

MINOR TUITION

Funds may be provided for specific courses e.g. First Aid, CPR that are not eligible for funding through OSAP or other funding sources.

The course must be less than three months in duration and the cost of tuition **must not exceed** maximum allowable employment related amount. However, courses that exceed this limitation may be considered if it is demonstrated it will

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directly result in employment and will require the prior approval of the OW Supervisor.

Application Fee / Fee to Hold Seats: If clients are able to prove they have met the eligibility requirements of the program, and/or they are motivated to attend said program, Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will remit the fee to hold a seat and/or the application fee on behalf of the client. This is a once per lifetime issuance, however, it may be considered a second time based on extenuating circumstances and the previous outcome with approval of the Supervisor.

SUPPLIES

Participants attending **Adult Alternative Programs** may be allowed \$20 per school year for school supplies.

Participants are encouraged to access the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Resource centre for job searching on the Internet, resume preparation, faxing of resumes, etc.

Only in remote areas, where the costs of travelling to the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB office would be excessive may funds be issued for supplies required during job search. Items may include, but are not limited to postage, paper and envelopes for mailing out resumes, responding to job ads, etc... In these remote areas, clients can be issued a **one-time payment of \$20/year**.

MINOR FEES

Funds for various fees may be available to participants involved in approved vocational/employment programs. Approval of the Supervisor is required to access these funds. Minor fees include:

- driver's licence and/or renewal;
- trade licence and/or renewal;
- union dues;
- education related fees (student fees);
- immunization required for training/education;
- criminal record checks.

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PROCEDURE

Case Managers can approve Employment Benefits provided the need for same is clearly documented in the social assistance computer system and policy limits are not exceeded. Where appropriate, estimates for items have been received and placed on file.

1. The participant is to provide written verification of his/her involvement in an employment related activity.
2. The Case Manager will issue the employment related benefit in the social assistance computer system. Estimates or verification of cost will be required.
3. The Case Manager will complete a note in the social assistance computer system. The Case Manager will also visually verify the expense receipt.
4. The participant will submit a receipt for the employment related expense prior to the next cheque run. Case Manager will note in the social assistance computer system that a receipt has/has not been received.
 - OW Assistance cheques are not to be placed on hold if the receipt is not submitted.
5. If no receipt is subsequently received, all future employment related expenses to be issued on a **reimbursement basis** only.

For ODSP participating individuals:

1. The participant is to provide written verification of his/her involvement in an employment related activity. Where appropriate, estimates for items will make part of the request.
2. The Case Manager will contact the ODSP worker by e-mail requesting the funds. The e-mail will contain all the necessary information for the ODSP to make a decision and issue the benefit. Verification / documentation will be attached to the e-mail.
3. The Case Manager will complete a note in the social assistance computer system. The Case Manager will verify the expense receipt and note it accordingly.