

Nova Scotia

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Income Assistance

The Income Assistance (IA) program helps you when you are not able to support yourself or your family. Depending on your situation, you may get money for your [basic needs](#) or help with other [special needs](#).

Eligibility:

- You are a resident of Nova Scotia.
- You are 19 years old or over, or you are [16 to 18 in certain situations](#).
- You need financial support to pay for your basic needs.
- You have tried to find work or another source of income, unless it is not possible for you at this time.

Emergency situations can expediate the process:

- You have no food.
- You are in danger of losing your home.
- You need help to protect your health and safety or that of your spouse or dependent child.

Aboriginal person:

- You can apply if you live off Reserve. You apply the same as a non-Aboriginal person.
- You are not eligible if you live on Reserve. You must contact your Band for assistance.

Disability:

- You may be eligible for Income Assistance if you need financial support to pay for your basic needs.

- You should tell the caseworker that you have a disability. There are other supports and programs that may help you. Your caseworker may ask you to have your doctor confirm your disability.

under 19

You may be eligible if you are 16 to 18

- if your home is not safe for you to live in
- if you and your parents or guardians have conflicts that mean you can not come back to live in your home
- if you have no parent or guardian
- [Child, Youth & Family Supports](#) must confirm you are in need of protective services.
- You must agree to go to school or take training for work, and live in a supervised home or apartment while you are on Income Assistance.

HOW: call the Department of Community Services Intake Team at 1-877-424-1177 or find your local office. Tell the caseworker you speak to that you want to apply for Income Assistance.

Special Needs Assistance

Special needs are things for your health and safety, and for work or training. The special needs assistance you may get is based on your personal situation.

Income Assistance can help with these special needs:

- Ambulance Costs
- Arrears
- Mortgage Payments or Rent
- Property Tax
- Utility
- Car Seats and Booster Seats
- Child Care
- Emergency Dental Care - to get assistance for emergency dental care:
- You must tell your dental office that you are on Income Assistance and give them your [Nova Scotia Health Card](#) number
- Your dentist will find out for you if the procedure is covered. The amount covered is based on the [Dental Fee Guide](#) in the ESIA policy manual
- Income Assistance pays the major portion of the dental cost and you pay the rest.
- Emergency Heat
- Employment Supports
- Extermination Services
- Fire/Liability Insurance for Homeowners
- Food, Shelter and/or Transportation for Medical Attention
- Foot Care

- Funeral and Burial
- Furniture
- Guide/Service Dogs
- Hearing Aids
- House Repairs
- Maternal Nutritional Allowance
- Medical Equipment
- Medical – Essential Treatments
- Medical Supplies
- Moving Expenses – Within Region
- Optical Care
- Orthotics
- Over the Counter Non-Prescription Medications
- Personal Development – Employment Plan Activities
- [Pharmacare](#)
- Prescription Drug Coverage
- Relocation – Out of Region/Province
- Residential Respite
- School Supplies Supplement
- Security/Damage Deposits
- Special Diet
- Telephone for Health and Safety Reasons
- Transportation
- You may be eligible for transportation assistance depending on your situation. Income Assistance clients and their families in the Halifax Regional Municipality are eligible for a [free annual Halifax Transit pass](#).

HOW: If you are an Income Assistance client, contact your caseworker or call 1-877-424-1177 to request special needs assistance.

HEALTH

Prescription Drug Coverage (Pharmacare)

The Department of Community Services provides prescription drug coverage (Pharmacare) to:

- Employment Support and Income Assistance clients (including Extended Pharmacare and Transitional Pharmacare clients)
- Disability Support Program participants
- Children in the care of child welfare through either a district office of the Department of Community Services or a Children's Aid Society/Family and Children's Services agency
- Low Income Pharmacare for Children clients

Eligibility:

- Have a Nova Scotia Health Card.
- Show your health card to the pharmacist. If your health card is expired or you need a new one, visit Nova Scotia Health Card webpage or call 1-800-563-8880.

HOW: If you have any questions, please contact your caseworker to determine eligibility or call 1-877-424-1177.

Low Income Pharmacare (drug coverage) for Children

The Nova Scotia government funds a program that provides prescription drug coverage for children of low-income families. Families pay \$5 per prescription no matter how much the medication costs.

Eligibility: The program is available for families who receive the Nova Scotia Child Benefit.

HOW: To apply for Low Income Pharmacare for Children, complete and sign the application form (PDF) and mail it to the Department of Community Services at :

Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
Low Income Pharmacare for Children
5675 Spring Garden Road
PO Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T7

Applicants may also fax their application to 902-428-5818.

For more information about Low Income Pharmacare for Children, please call the Department of Community Services toll free at 1-866-424-1269.

Seniors' Pharmacare Program

The Nova Scotia Seniors' Pharmacare program is a provincial drug insurance plan that helps members with the cost of their prescription drugs.

Eligibility:

- you must live in Nova Scotia
- have a valid Nova Scotia Health Card
- be at least 65 years old
- and not have prescription drug coverage under any other plan or programs.

Once you are enrolled, your Nova Scotia Health Card becomes your Pharmacare Card.

As a member, you will pay an annual premium based on your household income. You will also pay an annual copayment either at the pharmacy or directly to the Seniors' Pharmacare Program. You can calculate your Seniors' Pharmacare premium using our online [calculator](#).

HOW: Packages will be mailed to you 3 months before your 65th birthday (its automatic)

For help contact: Toll-free phone: [1-800-544-6191](tel:1-800-544-6191) (in Nova Scotia)

Phone: [902-429-6565](tel:902-429-6565)

DISABILITY

Disability Support Program

The Disability Support Program (DSP) serves children, youth and adults with intellectual disabilities, long-term mental illness and physical disabilities in a range of community-based, residential and vocational/day programs.

These are voluntary programs designed to support people at various stages of their development and independence.

1. Disability Requirement

4.1.1 To be eligible for DSP a person with a disability must meet the DSP eligibility criteria, and have a diagnosis that confirms one or more of the following disabilities:

1. Intellectual Disability: a disorder that includes an intellectual deficit which creates difficulties in functioning in two or more activities of daily living and/or instrumental activities of daily living within the range considered typical for a person of the same age and gender, which occurs prior to the age of 18 years. Each of these criteria must be present:

a) Deficits in mental abilities such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning and learning from experience. An intelligence quotient (IQ) below the population mean, which is typically an IQ score of approximately 70. There are four levels of intellectual disability:

- Mild: IQ of 50 to 70;
- Moderate: IQ of 39 to 55;
- Severe: IQ 20 to 40 and;
- Profound IQ 20 to 25

This includes persons with a Developmental Disability, which is a disorder characterized by substantial impairment in several key areas of development, for example: social interaction, communication, behavioural presentation.

A learning disability is not the same as an Intellectual or Developmental Disability, as average or above average intellectual functioning is required for a learning disability; and

2. b) Impairments in functioning within two or more aspects of activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living; for example, communication, social participation, functioning at school or at work, or personal independence at home or in community settings; and
3. c) Onset before the age of 18 years; or
2. Long Term Mental Illness: a diagnosis of chronic and persistent mental illness which affects a person's thinking, feeling or behaviour and creates significant difficulties in functioning in two or more aspects of activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living within the range considered typical for someone of the same age or gender.
3. Physical Disability: a long-term, chronic and persistent physical limitation that creates significant difficulties in functioning in two or more aspects of activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living within the range considered typical for someone of the same age or gender. The physical disability substantially limits functional independence and results in the person requiring ongoing support and skill development.

4.1.2 Persons with an Acquired Brain Injury, which results in damage to a person's brain that occurs from events after birth rather than as part of a genetic or congenital disorder, may be included in one of the above three categories depending on their functional assessment.

4.2 Age and Residency Requirements

A person with a disability may apply for admission to the DSP if the applicant:

- a. is 19 years of age or over;
- b. is lawfully entitled to be in or to remain in Canada;
- c. makes their home in and is a resident of Nova Scotia; and
- d. has a valid Nova Scotia Health Card.

4.3 Age Criteria Exceptions

1. 4.3.1 A person with a disability between the ages of 16 and 19 may be considered for placement in a residential support option or an Alternative Family Support home, if:
 1. a) they meet all other DSP eligibility requirements;
 2. b) their assessed needs can be safely and consistently met by the DSP;
 3. c) no alternative support program exists in Nova Scotia;
 4. d) the placement is an appropriate option that can best meet the needs of the applicant;
 5. e) the Director of DSP approves the placement.

2. 4.3.2 Participants in the DSP may continue to receive services and supports as they age as long as they continue to be eligible and until their assessed support needs can no longer be safely met by the DSP.

HOW: more specific eligibility may apply call 1-877-424-1177 to find more information or visit a Community Services office Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm.

FULL POLICY PDF:

https://novascotia.ca/coms/disabilities/documents/Disability_Support_Program_Policies.pdf

Alternative Family Support Program

The Alternative Family Support Program (AFS) supports persons with disabilities in an approved, private family home. Support and supervision is provided for up to two individuals unrelated to the AFS provider. The program provides a family-like setting for individuals who may require varying levels of support and supervision, who may prefer living with a family, and who will benefit from the additional support a family environment can provide.

Eligibility: Residents are eligible to receive funding based on their need for items such as room and board, support and supervision, and respite

HOW: call our toll-free number at 1-877-424-1177 or visit a Community Services office Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm.

To find your local office, click here.

Independent Living Support

Community-based option that provides funding for hours of support services from a Service Provider, based on the assessed needs and circumstances of an eligible participant who is semi-independent and requires support to live on their own.

The purpose of the ILS program is to promote independence, self-reliance, security and social inclusion by creating a flexible and responsive delivery system that incorporates the strengths of a participant, their personal and community resources, and approved ILS Service Providers. This is achieved using a person-directed, and collaborative approach.

- The goals of the ILS Program are to:
- assist a participant to maximize independence in their instrumental activities of daily living, such as:
 - maintaining a household
 - laundry
 - shopping and banking
 - preparing meals
 - transportation for community access
 - participating in leisure, volunteer, or work activities;

- assist a participant to build and maintain connections and relationships with family, friends and other community members and resources;
- assist a participant with the promotion and maintenance of their health and wellness;
- recognize the potential of a participant and facilitate opportunities for their continuing growth and personal development;
- delay the need for, or assist in the prevention of, admission to a staffed residential support option.

Eligibility - Eligibility for the ILS Program is determined by a functional and financial assessment.

HOW: call our toll-free number at 1-877-424-1177 or visit a Community Services office Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm.

To find your local office, [click here](#).

Direct Family Support for Children

Provide funding to enable families to support their child with a disability at home. DFSC and EFSC provide funding for the purchase of respite services to assist with scheduled breaks for family care givers. An enhanced funding component may be available for children and families who meet EFSC eligibility criteria.

To be eligible for the DFSC or EFSC the child and family must meet the following criteria:

- a. the family and child are permanent residents of Nova Scotia;
- b. the family and child are lawfully entitled to be in or to remain in Canada;
- c. the child is under 19 years of age;
- d. the child is living in the home of a family member/guardian;
- e. the child has been diagnosed by an approved clinician with a disability as defined as:
 - i. a mild or moderate intellectual developmental disability with a significant behavioural challenge that has been documented within the last two years; or
 - ii. a severe intellectual developmental disability that has been documented within the last two years; or
 - iii. a significant physical disability with ongoing functional limitations that are a result of the disability which seriously limits their capacity to perform age appropriate activities of daily living; or
 - iv. a dual diagnosis consisting of any of the above.
- f. the family net income meets the DFSC Program Income Guidelines; and

g. the child's family agrees to participate in the assessment process.

HOW: call toll-free number at 1-877-424-1177

or visit a Community Services office To find your local office, click here.

Wheelchair Recycling Program

Wheelchairs for children and adults with a net family income that falls within program guidelines.

The Assistive Devices program enables clients to borrow a wide variety of refurbished health equipment which has been generously donated to us by our supporters. Items available may include mobility aids, as well as bathroom and bedroom safety equipment. A limited supply of donated equipment is available for short and long term loan to the public.

HOW: Submitting a Request

In order to submit a request for this program, you must have an application form filled out by a Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist. They will evaluate your needs, and will then submit a request to us.

For more information, please contact Assistive Devices at assistivedevices@easterseals.ns.ca or at 902.453.6000 ext. 229.

Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities - improve employment outcomes of persons with disabilities by increasing labour market participation rates.

There are two components to the Workplace Support Program:

1) Workplace Attendant Support component - Funding through the Workplace Attendant Support component of the Program is intended to support individuals having a significant disability who are starting an employment opportunity and require supports related to the performance of the job. This program is intended to support individuals who have employment in the competitive labour market only. The program is not intended to support individuals who are self-employed. (Support Application)

2) Technical Aids and Assistive Devices component. - Funding through the Technical Aids and Assistive Devices component of the Program is intended to support individuals having a disability who are currently employed or are starting an employment opportunity in the competitive labour market and require supports to do the job. (Technical Aid Application)

OTHER

Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP)

Apply to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program for help with the cost of home heating. You can receive up to \$200 if you qualify for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program.

Rebate amount:

Household income if you live alone	Household income if you live with kids, dependents, or other adults	Rebate
Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), the Allowance or Income Assistance	Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), the Allowance or Income Assistance	\$200
\$27,000 or less	\$42,000 or less	\$200
\$27,001 - \$27,500	\$42,001 - \$42,500	\$175
\$27,501 - \$28,000	\$42,501 - \$43,000	\$150
\$28,001 - \$28,500	\$43,001 - \$43,500	\$125
\$28,501 - \$29,000	\$43,501 - \$44,000	\$100

Eligibility:

To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home (residential) heat and meet 1 of the following criteria:

- have a net income of \$29,000 or less and live alone with no kids or dependents
- have a combined net income of \$44,000 or less and live with kids, dependents or other adults
- receive Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services
- receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

If your personal or financial situation has changed since last year, you still may qualify. Examples of changes include becoming widowed, getting divorced or legally separated, losing your job, turning 18, recently arriving in Canada, or having the custody of your children change. Contact the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services to find out if you qualify.

HOW:

1. Apply [online](#) for the rebate.
2. Check the application for details on all required supporting documents.
3. Submit your completed application and any supporting documents.
4. [Check your application status online](#) (if you apply online).
5. If your [income tax refund is direct deposited](#), your heating assistance rebate is too. If not, your rebate is mailed to you.

Nova Scotia Affordable Living Tax Credit (NSALTC)

- This credit is a tax-free amount paid to make life more affordable for low and modest incomes to individuals and families. The credit offsets the increase in the HST and provides additional income for these individuals and families.
- For July 2021 to June 2022, the program provides a maximum annual credit of \$255.00 for an individual or a couple, plus \$60.00 for each child. The credit is reduced by 5% of [adjusted family net income](#) over \$30,000.
- This amount is combined with the quarterly payments of the federal GST/HST credit.

Nova Scotia Child Benefit (NSCB)

This benefit is a tax-free payment from the provincial government made to eligible families to help with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age.

Eligibility and Rates

Income	Family with 1 child	Family with 2 children	Family with 3 children	Each additional child
\$0-\$25,999	\$925/year \$77.08/month	\$1,750/year \$145.83/month	\$2,650/year \$220.83/month	+\$900/child/year +\$75/child/month
\$26,000-\$33,999	\$925/year \$77.08/month	\$1,337.50/year \$111.46/month	\$1,787.50/year \$148.96/month	+\$450/child/year +\$37.50/child/month

Poverty Reduction Credit (PRC)

This credit is a tax-free amount paid to Nova Scotian individuals and couples, without children, living in poverty.

Eligibility:

1. You are an individual or couple that received Income Assistance from January to December in the previous year. If you are a married or common-law couple, only one person in your household can receive the credit.
2. You filed your Income Tax Return for the previous tax year.
3. Your annual adjusted income was below \$12,000* in the previous tax year.
4. You had no children in the previous tax year.

* This amount is increasing. Starting in July 2021, you may get the PRC if your annual adjusted income was below \$16,000 in the previous tax year.

HOW: Automatically determined, for help or questions contact the Poverty Reduction Credit Line: 1-866-424-1269.