

Employment and Income Assistance Program – An Overview

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What is Employment and Income Assistance (EIA)?

- Provides financial help to Manitobans who have no other way to support themselves or their families.
- Provides additional financial supports for EIA participants with disabilities to help with the costs of living with a disability in the community.
- Helps EIA participants consider, prepare for and find a job by providing supports to employment.
- Provides funding to community-based partners to help support EIA participants improve their employability and attachment to the labour market.

** All Manitobans have the opportunity to apply for EIA

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- Persons eligible for EIA are enrolled under the following categories depending upon their circumstances:
 - Persons with Disabilities
 - Single Parents
 - General Assistance
 - Other (aged, special cases, etc.)

What Happens During An Intake Appointment ?

In order to determine EIA eligibility, EIA staff ask some basic questions at an intake appointment about the applicant's/household's:

- Personal and/or household member situation and identification
- current housing situation
- current income being received such as employment earnings, etc. .
- available assets such as savings, investments, etc..
- education background, current work status/history and plans to find work
- health needs and/or medical conditions that may be keeping the applicant from working or result in additional needs
- outstanding legal problems that need to be addressed

How is Financial Eligibility for EIA Determined

Financial eligibility is calculated by taking difference between an applicant's financial resources and the cost of basic necessities the household requires (based on EIA rates).

EIA **does not count** some ongoing financial resources or assets. Examples include:

- A portion of employment earnings (i.e. the first \$200 + 30% of remaining pay).
- Money saved in a bank account up to \$4,000 per person/\$16,000 per household.
- Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP), or amounts in a recognized EIA Disability Trust
- Income tax refunds/GST credit payments.

Financial resources that **do count** toward EIA eligibility include:

- Employment income above exempted amounts.
- Canada Pension Plan (Retirement or Disability) benefits, or other ongoing federal income benefits (e.g. Employment Insurance, War Veterans Allowance.)
- Child maintenance/spousal support.



What Makes Up a Monthly EIA Budget?

The monthly benefit payment provided to an EIA participant also requiring help for rental costs consists of:

- **Basic Needs** - amounts for food, clothing, personal, household items
- **Rent Assist** - shelter amount provided to all EIA participants with eligible shelter costs in both private rent and subsidized housing arrangements .
- **Income Assistance for Persons with Disabilities (IAPD) benefit** - \$105.00/month additional benefit for EIA participants with disabilities to help support some of costs of living in the community with a disability.
- **Basic and essential health needs** - prescription drug, dental, optical, supplies/equipment, etc..
- **Supports for Employment/Training** - transportation, work clothing, etc..

Note: Each participants' circumstances are unique and result in different monthly income assistance budgets!

EIA Health Services

All EIA participants are eligible for basic and essential health-related coverage where these needs are not available to them through another program or services.

Prescription Drugs, Basic Dental and Optical

- Drugs covered typically consistent with Manitoba Health Pharmacare Formulary.
- Essential drugs covered at point of enrolment.
- 3-month waiting period for single parents and persons with disabilities. 6-month waiting period for General Assistance.
- No waiting period for emergency situations.

Other Health Needs:

- Medical transportation (verified appointments), telephone for health-related purposes, podiatry/orthotics, chiropractor (above MHSC coverage), Meals on Wheels, Health Life line, ambulance fees.
- Health Card-only coverage, or health-related single grants for households not financially eligible for EIA but that are unable to meet an essential health need.
- Rewarding Work Health Plan – up to two years of continued health coverage (EIA benefit levels) for persons leaving EIA for employment.

Disability and Health Supports Unit

- The Disability and Health Supports Unit (DHSU) is a centralized assessment and procurement unit helping eligible participants from EIA, Children's disABILITY Services and Community Living disABILITY Services access essential medical supplies and equipment.
 - Health-related items/supports approved by the DHSU are based upon individual program guidelines
 - Program participants with alternate health coverage must access these options first.
- The DHSU reviews/approves these needs based upon information provided by medical practitioners in the appropriate Request and Justification Form.
 - **Medical Supplies and Equipment** – such as assistive devices (e.g. bath seats, grab bars, raised toilet seats, etc..), customized wheelchair seating components, hearing aids/batteries, etc..
 - **Therapeutic Diets and Nutritional Supplements**

Supports for Shelter (via Rent Assist)

EIA Rent Assist

- EIA Households in private rent (base amount equal to 75% Median Market Rent)
- Board & Room
- EIA Households in subsidized rent (e.g. Manitoba Housing)
- EIA Homeowners - financial supports for costs of monthly mortgages, interest, taxes and utilities (equivalent to Rent Assist guidelines)
- Rent Assist benefits for those in private market rent/board and room arrangements are based upon median market rental rate data compiled by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Annual indexing effective July 1st



Obligations While Receiving EIA

- EIA participants have a variety of responsibilities while receiving income assistance. Examples include:
 - Completing an Annual Review form once a year to show they are still eligible for EIA.
 - Immediately reporting all changes in family size, living arrangements, address, income or assets.
 - Speaking with staff as needed to assist in confirming ongoing financial eligibility and to discuss personal and/or action plan activities.
 - Making reasonable efforts to get and use all other financial resources available to reduce dependence on income assistance (e.g. federal benefits, child or spousal support or pensions).
 - Meeting the terms of any action plan activities (e.g. work expectations) .

Note: If participants are having difficulty meeting these responsibilities, it is important that they speak with their EIA workers so that their ongoing EIA eligibility is not affected.

EIA Issue Resolution Process

Participants who are not satisfied with a worker's position/decision or feel that they have not been treated fairly may consider the following next steps.

- Speak to the case worker. Things may be misunderstood and can be explained better.
- If participants continue to have questions/concerns, they may ask to speak to a supervisor.
- If participants still feel the issue has not been addressed, they can contact The Fair Practices Office.

Fair Practices Office - Can ensure that:

- You understand EIA eligibility requirements/rules and the benefits/supports you are able to receive
- You are told the reasons why a program decision was made about your case
- You are able to give your worker new or additional information to help them understand your needs or situation better

....and if the issue remains unresolved, participants may file a formal appeal with the:

Social Services Appeal Board:

- A formal and independent appeal board for decisions about EIA, eligibility for the market *Abilities* Program, as well as a number of programs offered by Manitoba Families.

Transitional Benefits

The following low-income supplement options are designed to help households leaving, or not on EIA to meet some of their ongoing financial needs and remain independent of EIA.

- **Rewarding Work Health Plan:** all participants closing due to work will receive drug, dental and optical benefits for up to two years.
- **Non-EIA Rent Assist:** Manitobans not receiving EIA can receive up to \$563 per month if living in eligible rental accommodation or board and room arrangements. The amount of benefits will depend on total household income and actual monthly rent.
- **Manitoba Child Benefit:** provides financial assistance of up to \$35.00/month per child for families with children under 18 years old.
 - Children's Opti-Care Program - offers help to MCB households with some of the costs of children's prescription eyeglasses.
- **55 Plus:** provides quarterly benefits to lower-income Manitobans who are 55 years of age and over, and whose incomes are within certain levels.
 - \$161.80 single/\$173.90 to each eligible person in a married or common law relationship

EIA Eligibility - Transitions at Age 65

- EIA eligibility continues until participants turn 65 years of age (or they become financially ineligible)
- A letter is sent to participants six months before their 65th birthday advising them to complete their applications for Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement.
 - Participants can consult with EIA staff to help them complete this application process.
- OAS/GIS benefits are higher than EIA so the EIA case closes at the end of the month in which participants turns 65 years.

Note: some individuals over 65 who have not lived in Canada long enough to qualify for federal OAS/GIS Programs may remain with EIA under the "Aged" category.

Questions?

THANK YOU