

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION: HOLIDAY CLOSURE

All York Region Ontario Works offices (Georgina, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan) will be closed for the week of Monday, December 26 to Friday, December 30. Offices will reopen on Monday, January 2.

**On Thursday, December 29 the Contact Centre will be open regular business hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and can be reached by calling 1-888-256-1112.**

## OW FINANCIAL

### Social Assistance Rate Increase

The Ontario government has increased the maximum monthly Ontario Works rates by 1 per cent, starting December 2011.

This means that the following rates have increased by 1 per cent:

- Adult basic needs allowance for renters and owners (\*see note)
- Maximum shelter allowance for renters and owners
- Board and lodging rates (\*see note)
- Northern Allowance for recipients living north of the 50th parallel without year-round road access
- Amounts for people in nursing homes, and interval and transition homes for abused women
- Temporary Care Assistance
- Guide Dog Benefit

If you are a renter or a homeowner, your shelter allowance is based on your actual shelter costs, up to the new maximum amount.

**\* Note:** The 1 per cent rate increase does not apply to the single parent supplement, which may be included in the basic needs portion of your monthly cheque.

#### For more information

If you have questions about these changes, contact your local office or the Service Ontario INFOLine toll-free at 1-888-789-4199, TTY toll-free: 1-800-387-5559. Alternate formats available upon request.

### JANUARY INCOME REPORTING STATEMENTS *(December only)*

To allow more processing time during the holiday season, please return your Income Reporting Statement (IRS) and other documents requested by your worker by December 9, 2011.

- Record all income received from November 16 to December 8, 2011.
- Estimate any income expected between December 9 and December 15. This will help you avoid a large deduction on the next month's cheque.
- Income received between December 9 and December 15 and not estimated on your December 9th IRS must be reported on your January 16, 2011 IRS.

January IRS due:	December 9, 2011
Report income earned:	November 16 to December 8, 2011
Estimate income:	December 9 to December 15, 2011

## EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

### Have you tried Career Cruising yet?

**Career Cruising** is a career resource website that can help you explore different career options. You can access the website at an Ontario Works Employment Resource Centre or from home. Just go to [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com) and enter the username: **ontarioworks** and password: **york**

To get started, create a new portfolio or sign-in to your existing portfolio and click on one of the following tabs:

- **Explore Assessments** – Learn more about yourself and careers that suit your interest.
- **Explore Careers** – Search for careers and find out what they are really like.
- **Education & Training** – Find out where to get the education you need to start your career.
- **Employment** – Strengthen your job search skills and find current job postings.

Don't forget to save the results to your portfolio. For more information, contact an Employment Specialist in your local office.

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

### Have you called 211?

*An information helpline for residents of York Region*

211 provides free and confidential access to information in 150 languages.

211 connects you with organizations that can help you with:

- food programs
- child services
- seniors services
- housing
- legal issues
- language classes
- settlement services
- employment education and training
- financial assistance
- many other services

211 will help you find out about the local services and supports in your community.

211 operates 24 hours a day and 365 days a year.

Simply dial the three-digit phone helpline, 2-1-1, or visit [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca)

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**PLAY**

**FREE** RECREATION AND SPORT PROGRAMS

**FOR ELIGIBLE children and youth AGES 4 TO 18** and single parents receiving Ontario Works.

Choose from: arts and crafts, dance, martial arts, sports, swimming, yoga and much more!



Gym memberships and drop-in activities are also an option.

Call the KIDSLINE at **1-888-703-KIDS (5437)** TTY 905-762-0401 and press Option 6 to see if you qualify.

Eligibility includes: children, youth and single parents receiving Ontario Works, Child Care Fee Assistance or Rent Geared-to-Income tenants.

**Rose of Sharon** Services for Young Mothers

*Young Parent Programs for Mothers under the age of 25*

- Learn about parenting tips and resources
- Take part in educational programs
- Join in on fun activities with your baby or child in a welcoming environment

*Five locations, including: Keswick, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Woodbridge*

For more information please call:

**Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers**  
Phone: 905-853-5514 Ext. 231  
Toll free: 1-877-516-3715

**NUTRITION**

**Healthy Eating for the Holiday Season**

The holiday season is here which means many celebrations with family and friends. Here are some tips to help you enjoy the holiday season while keeping your health in mind:

- Plan ahead for the meals you'll be having at home and bring a shopping list to the store.
- You can never go wrong with brightly coloured fruit and vegetables.
- Snacks and finger foods can really add up if you don't pay attention to how much you are eating. Go ahead and enjoy most of the foods you want, but limit your portion sizes.
- Ease up on the drinks - beverages such as eggnog, fruit punch and alcohol have lots of extra calories. Try sparkling water, 100 per cent fruit juice or vegetable juice instead.
- Keep active! It's sometimes hard to find time to exercise during the holiday season. Just bundle up and go for a walk with family and friends as part of the celebration.

**Gift Giving Soup Mix**

Layer the following ingredients, in order, in a clean 500 mL glass jar. You can buy all the ingredients from a bulk food store.

¼ cup	Chicken or vegetable bouillon powder	¼ cup	Dry vegetable flakes	¼ cup	Yellow split peas
¼ cup	Red lentils	¼ cup	Pearl barley	¼ cup	Brown and wild rice
		¼ cup	Very small bow pasta	¼ cup	Red lentils (to fill jar)

Decorate the jar and attach a tag with the following directions:

Combine the contents of jar and 8 cups of water in a large pot or dutch oven. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for about 45 minutes until peas and rice are tender. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Makes about 8 cups. Adapted from: Company's Coming Gifts from the Kitchen. Pare, Jean. Company's Coming Publishing Limited, Edmonton, Canada. 2001.

**COME IN AND DISCOVER**



FREE Early Child Development and Parenting Programs in your community for parents and caregivers with children up to six years old.

For more program information and times of operation, please contact the site you are interested in attending.

**EAST GWILLIMBURY**

Holland Landing Public School  
905-841-1314

**GEORGINA**

St. Bernadette Catholic Elementary School and Black River Public School  
905-722-9630

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Elementary School, Keswick  
905-722-9630

**THORNHILL**

Promenade Mall  
The Family Resource Centre  
905-882-8509

**MARKHAM**

Unionville Library  
905-471-1620  
Markham Library  
905-471-1620  
Ashton Meadows Public School, Markham  
905-471-1620  
Parkland Public School  
Markham  
905-472-9685  
Milliken Mills Library  
Unionville  
905-471-1620

**RICHMOND HILL**

Doncrest Public School  
905-731-9596  
Lake Wilcox Community Centre  
Oak Ridges  
905-883-6901  
Moraine Hills Public School  
Richmond Hill  
905-883-6901  
Charles Howitt Public School  
Richmond Hill  
905-841-1314  
16th Avenue Public School  
Richmond Hill  
905-883-6901

**VAUGHAN**

Maple Community Centre  
905-832-8500 or 905-773-4323 ext. 318 for Mother Goose  
Maple Creek Public School, Maple  
1-866-404-2077  
Teston Village Public School, Maple  
1-866-404-2077  
King City Library  
Mother Goose Program  
905-773-4323 ext. 318  
Michael Cranny Public School, Vaughan  
1-866-404-2077