Financial Supports and Community Programs for York Region Residents

Leaving Ontario Works can be challenging. A wide variety of financial supports are available to help you transition off of Ontario Works. Below are some examples of benefits that you may find helpful, depending on your need and eligibility. The list is not meant to be exhaustive; please also consider the other supports that may be available in your community. **Talk to your case worker or call Access York at 1-877-464-9675 for more information.**

General Financial Supports

Extended Health Benefit: Provided to people who have high health-related costs but are no longer eligible for Ontario Works because of their income. For the first six months after leaving Ontario Works, individuals may be eligible for the benefit to help pay for the cost of prescription drugs, basic dental care, vision care and diabetic supplies.

Eligibility:

- You must have received Ontario Works in the previous month
- You must meet the prescribed asset limit
- You are leaving Ontario Works because you have income (e.g. CPP) and your health costs (e.g. prescription medications) are greater than your excess income (i.e. monthly income minus monthly Ontario Works benefit)

Extended Employment Health Benefit: Provided to people who are leaving Ontario Works for employment. For the first six months after leaving Ontario Works, individuals may be eligible for the benefit to help pay for the cost of prescription drugs, basic dental care, vision care and diabetic supplies.

Eligibility:

- You must have received Ontario Works in the last six months
- You are leaving Ontario Works because of earnings from a job or training program
- You do not currently have coverage under an Employer Benefit Plan
- You are not eligible for the Extended Health Benefit

Full-Time Employment Benefit: Ontario Works clients starting a new job may be eligible for help to cover the cost of items such as clothing, uniforms, safety gear, tools and special equipment, transportation and professional fees.

Eligibility:

- You must have been on Ontario Works for three consecutive months
- You are beginning full-time employment (30 or more hours a week) and require assistance with the costs of starting a new job

York Region Transit Discount Program: Ontario Works clients looking for work, currently working or leaving the program for employment may be eligible to receive up to six months of transit discount vouchers. Each monthly voucher may be used toward a discount on the purchase of a York Region Transit/VIVA adult monthly pass.

Eligibility:

- You are new to Ontario Works and looking for work
- You are exiting Ontario Works for employment
- You are receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program and working
- You are participating in the Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Support Program

Housing Stability Program: York Region residents who are receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program benefits may be eligible for financial assistance for rental or, mortgage arrears, utility arrears and/or reconnection, last month's rent and other housing stability supports to help residents obtain and/or retain their housing.

Eligibility:

- You must be a resident of York Region
- You must be homeless or at risk of homelessness
- You are receiving assistance from the Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program
- You must not have received benefits from this program within the last three years

Supports for Individuals Who are Unable to Work or Have a Disability

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP): Provides financial and employment support to help individuals with disabilities find jobs and pay for living expenses, such as food and housing.
Call 1-877-669-6658, TTY 905-715-7759 or visit www.mcss.gov.on.ca for more information including eligibility.

Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB): Provides assistance to people who were injured or became ill because of their job. Benefits that may be available through WSIB include the replacement of lost earnings, coverage for health care expenses, and services to help a person return to work.
Call 1-800-387-0750, TTY 1-800-387-0050 or visit wsib.on.ca for more information including eligibility.

Supports for Families or Students

Canada Learning Bond: Provides low-income families with up to $2,000 for their children's Registered Education Savings Plan for their education after high school.
Call 1-800-622-6232 or visit http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/savings/clb.shtml for more information including eligibility.

Child Care Fee Assistance: Provides financial assistance to low-income families living in York Region to help cover some or all of the cost of child care. Eligibility and the amount of assistance are determined by the family's income.
Call 1-888-703-5437 or visit york.ca for more information including eligibility.

Canada Child Benefit (CCB): Provides a tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age. Eligibility and amount are determined by the family's income. To be eligible, you need to file income tax every year. The CCB might include the child disability benefit and any related provincial and territorial programs.
Call 1-800-387-1193 for more information including eligibility.

Ontario Child Benefit (OCB): Provides financial support to low- and moderate-income families to help parents with the cost of raising their children.
Call 1-866-821-7770 or visit children.gov.on.ca for more information including eligibility.

Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP): Financial assistance program to help people with the cost of attending post-secondary programs.
Call 1-877-672-7411 or visit osap.gov.on.ca for more information including eligibility.

Supports for Housing

Homelessness Prevention Program: Helps prevent and reduce homelessness in York Region for residents behind on rent, mortgage or utility payments or living in a temporary shelter. Eligible residents not receiving assistance from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program can receive financial assistance once every five years for rental, mortgage and/or utilities arrears, first and last month's rent, moving costs and financial assistance for urgent medical needs.
Call 1-877-464-9675 or visit york.ca for more information including eligibility.

Social Housing (also known as subsidized housing): Assistance to find housing for people age 16 and up who cannot afford to pay market rent. Rent for social housing is based on the person's income. Special priority status is given to people who have been abused by another person living in their household.
Call 1-877-464-9675 or visit york.ca for more information including eligibility.

Rent Bank and Emergency Energy Program: A program for low-income residents not receiving social assistance who are at risk of homelessness. Eligible residents can receive assistance once every three years with rent and utility arrears. Eligibility is assessed by the program coordinator. The assistance is only available if you are behind on your bills or in arrears. This service is for emergency situations only and is not meant to provide you with ongoing help to pay your bills.
Call 905-895-6119 for more information including eligibility.

Supports for Life Skills and Counselling

There are a number of support programs available in York Region. For information on programs and services, visit www.York.ca or call Access York at 1-877-464-9675. Support services are available in the following areas:

- **Addiction**
- **Mental Health**
- **Disability**
- **Food Banks/Security**
- **Family Breakdown**
- **Sexual Assault**
- **Homemaker and Nurses Services**
- **Crisis Support**
- **Recreation Subsidies**
- **Other Community Supports as needed**

York Region on a Limited Budget: How to survive when you don't have a lot of money is published by the York Support Services Network. It contains information about existing services within the community which residents may want to access including the location of food banks, shelters, health clinics and other community resources. **Contact your case worker to receive a copy of the booklet or you can find it online at** www.yssn.ca/Publications**.**