



What are Discretionary Benefits?

Discretionary benefits are a one-

time amount of money from Ontario

Works (OW) to a person with urgent or special circumstances.

How do Discretionary Benefits differ from Regular or Mandatory Benefits?

Regular or *mandatory benefits* **must** be provided to people on OW, if you are eligible or qualify.

If Ontario Works denies you these benefits and says you do not qualify, the decision to deny you benefits can be appealed.

Discretionary benefits are granted at the discretion of the Administrator only, and there is **no** right of appeal.

If I am on ODSP Disability Benefits, can I apply for Discretionary Benefits from Ontario Works?

Yes, Ontario Works can pay discretionary benefits to people receiving OW or ODSP.



Who can apply for a Discretionary Benefit?

- ❖ Anyone receiving assistance through OW or ODSP can apply for a discretionary benefit.
- ❖ A family member in a benefit unit receiving OW or ODSP assistance can apply for a discretionary benefit.
- ❖ If you are **NOT** on OW or ODSP you can apply for Emergency Assistance.

What is Emergency Assistance?

Emergency Assistance is a *discretionary benefit* that



anyone can apply for. It is intended to help those in *serious financial hardship*, but who are not receiving OW or ODSP benefits. NOTE: Emergency Assistance is a one-time grant of money.

Do ODSP & OW Discretionary Benefits cover the same things?

Not always. ODSP recipients can receive discretionary benefits for all the things that OW recipients can. In addition, ODSP recipients can receive extra discretionary benefits.

Examples of what things are covered by Discretionary Benefits

- Vocational training and retraining
- Funeral and burial costs
- Vision care for adults
- Dental care for adults
- Newborn child costs
- Employment Assistance to cover out-of-pocket expenses (above Employment Start-Up costs)
- Prosthetic appliances
- Travel and transportation costs for non-medical trips
- Moving expenses
- Threat of utility cut-off
- Heating payments
- Payments for low-cost heating energy conservation measures
- Any other special service, item or payment that the Administrator authorizes





How much can I receive for a Discretionary Benefit?

The OW Administrator

decides the amount of a discretionary benefit. You have no say in how much money you will receive, if approved.

How do I apply for a Discretionary Benefit?

Ask your OW worker. If you do not have a worker, contact your local OW office. There may be a form to fill out.

Always get the decision in writing if your request is denied! Also, if you do not understand the process, bring someone with you to help.

Can I appeal if I am denied a Discretionary Benefit?

If denied by a case worker, you can ask in writing for an Internal Review (within **30 days**) for the Administrator to review the matter. If the Administrator denies the benefit, you cannot do anything further. There is no right of appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal.

For more information on Discretionary Benefits, contact your caseworker or your local Ontario Works Office.



The information in this pamphlet is current to August 2011 and will not reflect further changes to the rules or regulations.

For information about your rights or questions about OW benefits or other issues, please contact the

**Northwest Community Legal Clinic
Kenora & Red Lake districts
468-8888 or 1-800-403-4757
Fort Frances
274-5327 or 1-800-799-2485
Atikokan 597-2811**

**In Sioux Lookout & Dryden districts
Legal Aid Ontario
737-3074 or 1-800-465-7552**



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