

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ODSP

Prepared by the Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC)

You have the same obligations under ODSP as you had under Ontario Works (OW). You must report any income, changes of address, children's attendance at school, changes in rent, changes in your circumstances, etc. You can expect to have a financial review on a yearly basis, when you will be asked to show bank records, hydro bills etc. You will be sent a letter setting up an appointment and providing a list of papers to take with you. If you think there could be a problem at the ODSP interview, please call us before the interview.

There are some particular rules for ODSP recipients we would like to point out:

### RESIDENCY

- If you **are out of Ontario for more than 30 days**, you must tell ODSP and you will lose your benefits unless you have received approval in advance for your absence. Requests will only be approved for travel if it is necessary for medical treatment. If you permanently move away from Ontario, you cannot get ODSP benefits.

### ASSET LIMIT

- If you are a single person you are permitted to have up to \$40,000.00 in **savings or other assets**. If you have dependents this amount is higher. If you own and live in your home, or have one car, these are not counted as assets.

### YOUR SPOUSE OR COMMON LAW PARTNER

- If your spouse or common law partner is not disabled they will typically have to meet certain employment requirements. They will be referred to OW and may have to go to school, do volunteer work, or look for a job. They will not have to meet employment requirements if:
  - they are a caregiver for a young child, or a disabled family member
  - they are working already
  - they are over 65
  - other exceptional circumstances – discuss your situation with your ODSP caseworker.

### INCOME AND WORKING

#### Gifts and Voluntary Payments

- You are permitted to receive up to \$10,000 in "gifts or other voluntary payments" in a 12-month period without any effect on your ODSP.
- Gifts or voluntary payments of any amount are also exempt if they are used to purchase a principal residence, purchase an exempt motor vehicle, or to pay first and last month rent.
- You still need to declare this money to ODSP on your monthly reporting form.

### **Working and Employment Income**

- You can work and still get ODSP. You must tell ODSP about any employment earnings.
- As of February 1, 2023, if you are a person with a disability, you can earn up to \$1,000 a month through employment without it affecting your ODSP income support, benefits or eligibility. After that, 75% of your employment income will be deducted from your ODSP cheque. If you have a non-disabled spouse or child 18 years of age or older (who is not attending high school or postsecondary school full-time), they can earn up to \$200 a month in net earnings with no reduction in your income support. After that, 50% of their employment income will be deducted.
- The employment earnings of your spouse or common-law partner will also be deducted from your cheque. The employment earnings of children who are attending secondary school are not deducted, but you must report them to ODSP.
- If you earn too much employment income to continue receiving ODSP benefits, then your benefits will stop. If the job doesn't work out, you will be eligible for "rapid reinstatement" to ODSP – you just need to call ODSP to tell them when your job ends, and they will put you back on ODSP. You may also continue to receive your drug card and your ODSP health benefits unless you are covered by your employer. You should talk to your ODSP caseworker about your health benefits.
- **If you are self-employed, these rules about working may not apply.** Contact us for more information.

### **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

- The Assistive Devices Program (ADP) may pay for up to 75% of the cost of devices like wheeled walkers, wheelchairs, visual aids, hearing aids, prosthetic devices, ostomy supplies and respiratory equipment. ODSP can sometimes help with the costs not covered by the ADP.
- To get ADP funding, you need to get approval from a physician or qualified professional who is registered with ADP. ADP will not reimburse you for devices you buy **before** getting approval.
- You can get more information about the ADP, including how to apply, here:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program>

### **DRUG COSTS & DENTAL/VISION BENEFITS**

- You, your spouse and children under 18 are eligible for basic dental care from a dentist. You should check with the dentist if they accept ODSP dental benefits before your appointment. The Gateway Community Health Centre offers low cost dental services to residents of Central and North Hastings. The Belleville & Quinte West Community Health Centre offers low cost dental services to residents of Belleville and Trenton. Public Health Units offer some low cost dental services for youth under 17 years old.
- You, your spouse and children are eligible for part of the cost of prescription glasses. You may be eligible for part of the cost of contact lenses ONLY if they are medically necessary. Routine eye exams are covered once every 24 months.
- If you are not OW when you start to get ODSP benefits, you can ask to be reimbursed for your prescription drug costs during the period that you waited for ODSP benefits. Ask your drug store to give you a list of the medications you got during this period of time and their cost. Give this to your ODSP caseworker and ask them to reimburse you. Call us if they refuse to reimburse you.

### **MANDATORY SPECIAL NECESSITIES**

- You, your spouse and children can get coverage for certain medically-necessary supplies, including diabetic supplies, incontinence supplies, surgical supplies and dressings.

### **TRANSPORTATION COSTS**

- You, your spouse and children can get coverage for transportation to meet with your healthcare provider(s). ODSP will reimburse the actual cost of the transportation if you take a bus or train. If no public transportation is available where you live, ODSP will cover the cost of a taxi. If you drive yourself or get a ride, you are paid 40¢ a kilometer for mileage. Parking costs are covered with receipts. You need to keep all of the receipts and submit them to your ODSP caseworker.
- Travel to attend mental health or addictions counselling is covered if the treatment is prescribed by a doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist. Travel to groups such as AA or NA meetings are covered if prescribed by a doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist and the program is available locally.
- If ODSP refuses to pay medical transportation costs, call us for help.

### **SPECIAL DIET**

- If you, your spouse or children have certain medical conditions, you may be entitled to extra money from ODSP. Examples of medical conditions that may qualify for a special diet allowance include diabetes, wheat or dairy allergies, and hypertension. A special diet form must be completed by your healthcare provider. You can get this form from your ODSP caseworker.

**\*If you are denied** any of the above benefits you should contact ODSP and ask for a written letter explaining why your benefits were denied. If you want to dispute the denial, you must do so within 30 days of getting the denial letter. You can contact us for help and advice.

ODSP keeps all their policies online.

You can find them at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-disability-support-program>.

For more information about ODSP visit:

<https://stepstojustice.ca/legal-topic/income-assistance/ontario-disability-support-program/>

This is legal information not advice. If you have a legal problem you should contact us.  
Call 613-966-8686 or 1-877-966-8686  
[www.communitylegalcentre.ca](http://www.communitylegalcentre.ca)