



Ontario Works Earnings Exemptions – Advancing Equity and Employment Outcomes

The City of Greater Sudbury's Social Services section administers the Ontario Works program under the Ontario Works Act, 1997, as mandated by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, and serves as the Service Manager for the municipality. Currently, 2,855 cases in Greater Sudbury receive social assistance through Ontario Works.

While the Provincial Government introduced inflation indexing for the Ontario Disability Support Program in 2022 and increased rates by 2.8 per cent this year, Ontario Works recipients have seen no rate changes since 2018, despite rising living costs. These measures have left Ontario Works clients behind in efforts to improve income supports.



Why is this important?

Ontario Works recipients face significant barriers to employment due to current income exemption rules. Under existing guidelines, recipients can earn up to \$200 per month without deductions, with any additional income subject to a 50 per cent claw back, meanwhile Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients can earn up to \$1,000 monthly without deductions.

This disparity discourages Ontario Works clients from pursuing part-time or low-wage jobs, undermining efforts to promote workforce participation. Many are unable to meet basic needs, increasing reliance on shelters, food banks and other community supports. To address this inequity, a flat-rate monthly earnings exemption of \$1,000 is recommended. This change would:

- Encourage labour market participation
- Support transitions to financial independence
- Reduce long-term reliance on social assistance



Supporting information

Ontario Works recipients in Greater Sudbury face compounded and systemic barriers that limit access to employment and economic participation. Challenges include increasing difficulty to access employment services, education and skills development programs due to geographic service gaps, high rates of chronic illness and mental health issues and seasonal employment trends that discourage short-term work.

While the province introduced inflation indexing for ODSP in 2022 and raised rates by 2.8 per cent in 2025, Ontario Works rates have remained frozen since 2018.

How can senior levels of government support us?

To help individuals access employment and exit social assistance, the City of Greater Sudbury is calling on the Provincial Government to implement a \$1,000 flat-rate earnings exemption for Ontario Works recipients. This would align with ODSP guidelines and support the goals of the province's poverty reduction and employment strategies.

Alignment with government policies/priorities

An Ontario, where everyone can participate in their communities and achieve greater independence, stability and, wherever possible, long-term job success to support themselves and their families.

– Building a Strong Foundation for Success:
Reducing Poverty in Ontario - Vision

The government will continue to empower individuals and families to better manage challenging times and sudden shocks to their finances. By reducing the cost of living, protecting consumers and helping people keep more of their hard-earned money, the government will help people become more financially stable and resilient.

– Building a Strong Foundation for Success:
Reducing Poverty in Ontario – Pillar #3



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