



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 17, 2020
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Temporary Emergency Benefit for Persons on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program to Assist with COVID-19 Related Expenses (HSC20033) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Erica Brimley (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4815
SUBMITTED BY:	Bonnie Elder Director, Ontario Works Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not Applicable

INFORMATION

The provincial Emergency Benefit was created as a one-time, temporary discretionary benefit in March 2020 to assist with immediate and exceptional costs related to COVID-19 for Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients. The Emergency Benefit was extended in April 2020 for an additional three months to continue supporting clients who had extra costs for food, non-medical transportation and other health and safety items that were more difficult to access due to public health restrictions. This benefit was 100% provincially funded.

On July 28, 2020, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) announced that this benefit would no longer be extended and would end on July 31, 2020. The direction from MCCSS stated that OW Administrators have the discretion to provide supports for exceptional COVID-related costs to OW and ODSP clients through their regular discretionary benefits capped funding envelope.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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Effective August 1, 2020, the City of Hamilton Ontario Works will be providing a temporary one-time Emergency Benefit to support those that are most medically vulnerable and directly impacted by COVID-19. This benefit will be available to persons in receipt of the City of Hamilton OW and ODSP programs. Those who are in receipt of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) income will be ineligible.

Eligible persons will receive a one-time payment up to \$100 for singles and \$200 for families to assist with exceptional COVID-19 related costs, for example:

- personal protective equipment (PPE) required for hospital or clinic visits;
- cleaning supplies for those who have a family member diagnosed with COVID-19;
- delivery cost of food, medical or other essential supplies for those that have to self-isolate or be quarantined; and,
- travel costs to pick up food staples, medical or essential supplies to avoid public transit.

Clients who are requesting this benefit can contact the Ontario Works Special Supports Program at 905-546-2590. Clients will be required to submit supporting medical documentation to confirm eligibility.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None