

Backgrounder – Social Services’ 2017-18 Budget

Change	What does this change mean?	Why are you making this change?	When does the change come into effect?
<p>Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) Rate Reduction</p>	<p>Each adult receiving TEA benefits will see a \$20/month reduction.</p> <p>All TEA clients will be affected by the change. As of January 2017, there were 5,292 cases with approximately 5,500 adults receiving TEA benefits.</p> <p>For example, after July 1, a single parent in a major centre will receive \$946 per month after the change (currently \$966 per month).</p> <p>The estimated savings are \$954K in 2017-18.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that programs remain sustainable, Government is making changes to focus on meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. • All TEA clients are fully employable and are expected to return to work as soon as possible. • TEA is a temporary support, with about 65% of clients requiring support for six months or less. 	<p>This change comes into effect on July 1, 2017 for all new and existing clients.</p>

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<p>Eliminate the travel benefit for people who live in residential care settings</p>	<p>This change eliminates a \$20 per month travel benefit within the SAP and SAID programs for those who live in residential care settings.</p> <p>This change will impact approximately 4,100 SAID beneficiaries and fewer than 100 SAP clients who accessed this benefit in 2015-16.</p> <p>The estimated savings in 2017-18 are \$750K.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients will continue to have their actual travel costs covered when they attend day programs or medical appointments. • To ensure that programs remain sustainable, Government is making changes to focus on meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. • SAID benefits for those living in residential care settings have increased by 57% since 2009. These benefits can be directed to support additional travel costs due to a disability if the beneficiary chooses to do so. 	<p>This change comes into effect on July 1, 2017 for all new and existing clients.</p>

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<p>Focus funeral costs on basic needs</p>	<p>Income Assistance will continue to cover the cost of basic burials or cremations for SAP clients and SAID beneficiaries.</p> <p>The Ministry will also continue to provide these benefits on behalf of people without financial resources who are not Income Assistance clients prior to their death.</p> <p>As of July 1, optional costs such as viewings or services will be the responsibility of the family.</p> <p>This benefit is accessed approximately 400 times a year.</p> <p>The estimated savings are \$1M for 2017-18.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that programs remain sustainable, Government is making changes to focus on meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. 	<p>This change comes into effect on July 1, 2017.</p>

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SAP, SAID and TEA Home Repairs	<p>The Ministry will review the practice of providing funding to beneficiaries for home repairs.</p> <p>The savings and number of clients affected will be determined through the review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that programs remain sustainable, Government will be focusing on meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. • Clients can access the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation’s Emergency Home Repairs program to meet these specific needs. 	To be determined.
SAP, SAID and TEA Overpayment Recovery Rates	<p>Income Assistance will review the monthly repayment rates for overpayments for active SAP, SAID and TEA beneficiaries.</p> <p>The savings and number of clients affected will be determined through the review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overpayments are any funds provided to clients in excess of their entitlement. Overpayments may occur if a client’s circumstances change and retroactive adjustments to benefits are required. • The overpayment recovery provisions have not been updated in more than two decades. • This will help to ensure that programs are sustainable and that the Ministry is a strong steward of public funds. 	To be determined.

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SAP and TEA Asset Exemptions	<p>The Ministry will review how applicants’ assets are considered as resources when assessing whether they are eligible for SAP or TEA.</p> <p>The savings and number of clients affected will be determined through the review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients are expected to access all available resources to support themselves before relying on Government assistance. • To ensure that programs remain sustainable, Government will be focusing on meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. 	To be determined.
SAP, SAID and TEA School Supplies Benefit	<p>Income Assistance will review the annual benefit for school supplies.</p> <p>The savings and number of clients affected will be determined through the review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that programs remain sustainable, Government will be focusing on meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. • Income Assistance clients can access the recently created Canada Child Benefit, a Government of Canada program that assists parents with the costs of raising children. The benefit can be as much as \$533 per month per child. 	To be determined.

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<p>Review SAP and SAID 3,000 plus calorie diet benefits</p>	<p>The Ministry is moving toward focusing special diet provisions to address specific conditions ,as opposed to offering calorie-based diets. The 3,000 plus calorie diet benefit will be reviewed.</p> <p>The savings and number of clients affected will be determined through the review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No other jurisdiction has a 3,000 plus calorie diet benefit. • Clients can continue to access several other special diet benefits through Income Assistance, as prescribed by a health professional. 	<p>To be determined.</p>

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First Home Plan

In this challenging budget year, the Ministry will suspend the First Home Plan for recent graduates offered through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. Commitments already made will be met. Graduates already in the program will have 90 days to complete their purchase agreement.

In May 2016, the Province, through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, began delivering the First Home Plan, a new initiative which allowed eligible post-secondary graduates to borrow up to \$10,000 of their unused Graduate Retention Program (GRP) tax credits to put towards the down payment on their first home. The Plan was to help recent graduates who have the income to qualify for a mortgage but may be having challenges saving for a down payment.

The Province is proud to have helped more than 400 new graduates with the down payment on their first home in Saskatchewan. In 2016, SHC advanced nearly \$4 million in loans to help make homeownership a reality for these young people.

Since 2007, Government has made significant investments in developing housing for Saskatchewan people. Home buyers in particular have benefitted through a number of programs, including the First-Time Homebuyers’ Tax Credit, the Affordable Home Ownership Program, HeadStart on a Home, and Habitat for Humanity.