

Ontario Works Policy Directives

5.7 Casual Gifts and Payments

Legislative Authority

Section 7(3) of the Act.

Sections 54(1)8 and 54(1)11.1 of Regulation 134/98.

Audit Requirements

Random file reviews are completed to ensure that:

- all reported income has been verified;
- all financial documents have been visually verified; and
- all visually verified documents have been documented in the SDMT or any other file system used by a First Nations delivery agent.

Application of Policy

Applicants or recipients may receive occasional financial help in the form of casual gifts and payments from relatives, friends or other sources. At the discretion of the Administrator, casual gifts and payments may be exempt as income.

When determining if a casual gift or payment is exempt as income, factors such as the size and frequency of the gift or payment and the circumstances of the applicant or recipient should be considered.

Casual gifts or payments of small value should be infrequent and should not be provided by a person who has a legal obligation to support the recipient and/or his/her dependents, unless the gift or payment is intended for a special occasion such as a birthday or holiday.

Where gifts or payments are received regularly and continuously over a prolonged period of time (i.e., six months) they may no longer be considered casual and should be treated as income.

Accrued interest and dividends up to a total of \$30 per year are considered to be a casual payment of small value, and are exempt as income ([see Directive #5.8: Interest and Dividends](#) for more information).

Casual gifts or payments of large value can include costs associated with an eviction, fires, roof repairs, basic appliances (e.g., fridge, stove, etc.), or

education related costs such as tuition, books, transportation and compulsory fees.

A casual gift or payment of large value is considered exempt as income if it's clear that it will be used to meet an extraordinary need to maintain the health and well-being of a benefit unit, and there are no other financial resources that are accessible. A casual gift or payment of large value may be considered exempt as income only once in a 12-month period.

If it is anticipated that an applicant or recipient will require financial assistance for only a short period of time (e.g., while pending an eligibility determination for the Ontario Disability Support Program), a casual gift or payment of large value may be considered exempt as income.

Casual payments of small or large value that are received by an applicant or recipient and contributed to a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) are exempt as income.