

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL	
Section: H. Ontario Works	Effective Date: July 1, 2021
Topic: 7B. Benefits/Discretionary Benefits	Replaces: January 1, 2013
Subject: 7B.12. Housing Related Benefit	
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POLICY

Housing-related benefits are discretionary and are provided on a case-by-case basis. The following housing related benefits will be considered:

- Home Repairs
- Moving Expenses
- Energy and Water Conservation Measures
- Alerting Systems

PROCEDURE

Home Repairs

Necessary repairs to homes owned by recipients will be considered where not providing it would be detrimental to the health and well-being of the recipient and/or any dependents living in the home. Funding is limited to a **maximum of \$2,500**, exceptions may be considered for eligible repairs **up to \$5,000**.

A benefit for home repairs can only be provided to recipients who own and occupy their home. Ownership can be verified by viewing the actual title or mortgage documents.

Recipients are required to exhaust other sources of funding before being eligible for the benefit.

If a recipient is a part owner in the property only the recipient's share of the repairs may be approved. For example, if a recipient owns the home with another person, the recipient would only be eligible for one-half of the repair cost. If the recipient owns the home or is a part owner, the recipient must also live in the property as their principal residence to be eligible for the repair benefit.

Approved Home Repairs

Examples of approved home repairs may include but are not limited to:

- electrical wiring repair or replacement if there is a potential fire hazard
- window or door repairs or replacement where necessary
- roof repair or replacement (i.e., shingles) depending on the state of the roofing material

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- furnace or wood stove repair or replacement where necessary
- emergency plumbing repairs (e.g., broken water pipes)

Repairs are only made on items that already exist in the home. Additions or renovations to a home are not considered repairs and are not covered as a benefit. This applies to the addition of new rooms or new items to the home.

Determining Necessary Home Repairs

Home repairs are considered necessary if:

- the damage requires immediate attention;
- the damage poses a risk to the recipient and/or any dependents; and
- failing to repair the damage would be detrimental to the health and well-being of the recipient and/or any dependents.

Other Sources of Funding for Home Repairs

A recipient is required to apply for assistance for home repairs from their homeowners' insurance company. If the insurance company refuses to cover the repair or covers only a portion of the repair, the recipient may be eligible for the home repair benefit.

Loans for Home Repairs

A recipient may be required to obtain a loan for home repairs if their shelter allowance is below the maximum. Monthly payments on the loan or mortgage would therefore be included as part of the shelter costs.

Moving Expenses

Funding is limited to a **maximum of \$300** within any **24 month period** **exceptions may be considered by the Director of Integrated Social Services.**

Moving **will only** be approved for the following reasons with verification:

- victim of family violence;
- persons who are homeless;
- uninhabitable premises (supporting documents must be part of the request);
- medical reasons (supporting documents must be part of the request);

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- person being discharged from institutions such as: Correctional facilities, hospitals, hostels, nursing homes, special care homes or interval and transition homes (supporting documents must be part of the request)
 - leaving a residence due to: Incapacity or death of a supporting care-giver / family member, overcrowding within the premises, documented need for children and sole-support parents to relocate, eviction from their premises, property sold, employment or training or a move to more affordable accommodations (supporting documents must be part of the request);
 - by exception as approved by the Director of Integrated Social Services.
1. Case Manager **will assess** the case to ensure that the criteria(s) to move are met. If criteria is met, a **discretionary benefit form is completed with the supporting documents are submitted to the Ontario Works Supervisor for approval.**
 2. Participant submits two estimates for cost of moving **prior** to the event.
 3. **The situation is noted in the social assistance computer program.**

Note: The lowest estimate is the one which is usually accepted.

Energy and Water Conservation Measures

Energy and Water conservation funding is limited to a **maximum of \$300** within any **24-month period**, **exceptions may be considered by the Director of Integrated Social Services.**

The discretionary benefit may be issued if:

- the costs are not covered by the Energy Efficiency Assistance Program for Houses;
- the recipient is responsible for that specific utility or heating cost;
- the costs are not included in monthly rent; and
- the low-cost energy or water conservation measures are being used to reduce or limit that specific utility or heating cost.

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Low-cost energy and water conservation measures may include:

- caulking
- sealing or weather stripping for doors and windows
- insulation for hot water pipes and hot water tanks
- flow restrictors for showerheads

1. Case Manager will assess the case to ensure that the criteria(s) for the energy and water conservation measures are met. If criteria is met, a discretionary benefit form is completed with the supporting documents are submitted to the Ontario Works Supervisor for approval.
2. Participant should submit two estimates for cost **prior** to the event.
3. The situation is noted in the social assistance computer program.

Alerting Systems

Alerting systems funding is limited to a **maximum of \$200** within any **24-month period**, exceptions may be considered by the Director of **Integrated** Social Services.

Recipients or a member of their benefit unit who are deaf and hearing impaired may be eligible to receive alerting systems as an approved discretionary benefit.

An alerting system picks up sounds from fire alarms, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide monitors, baby monitors, telephones, doorbells and building security systems and transmits a signal to a light-flasher, bed-shaker or other appropriate alerting mechanism.

Discretionary benefits may be issued for the purchase of alerting systems for the Deaf and hearing impaired

1. Case Manager will assess the case to ensure that the criteria(s) for Alerting Systems are met. If criteria are met, a discretionary benefit form is completed with the supporting documents are submitted to the Ontario Works Supervisor for approval.
2. Participant should submit two estimates for cost **prior** to the event.
3. The situation is noted in the social assistance computer program.