

Basic information regarding the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) for students attending Sir James Whitney School

How to apply

- Call the local ODSP office for an appointment. The office is open between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday. The phone number for the local (Belleville area) ODSP office is 613-962-9562 (V) or 613-962-2927 (TTY). The fax number is 613-966-9788.
- Be sure to ask for an interpreter. You can also bring someone else to support you.
- The local office is located at 199 Dundas St. E., Belleville.
- You will probably need two appointments. The worker will want to know about your assets (your or your family's property or possessions, like cash, money in a bank account, savings plans, a house, a car, investments) to determine if you are financially eligible, because ODSP is a program for people who have low incomes.
- There is a limit on the assets (the property or possessions) you can have (for example, a second car or a snowmobile), or money you have in cash, in your bank account, or in investments. However, the asset limit does not include clothing, your home, furnishings for your home, one vehicle, life-insurance policies, or Registered Educational Savings Plans (RESPs). The limit depends on the number of people in your family. The limit is \$5000 for a single person, \$7500 for a couple, \$500 for each dependent. You need approval to save money beyond your limit if you want to purchase a disability-related item or service or an item that is necessary for your health.
- If you are financially eligible to receive ODSP income, you will receive a package of forms. The Health Status Report and the Activities of Daily Living Index must be filled out by a professional (for example, your family doctor or a psychologist). You can fill out the Self Report yourself, or someone can help you complete it. You do not have to fill it out yourself.
- When the forms are completed, you mail them to the Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) in Toronto. Workers there decide if you are a person with a disability and should receive an ODSP income. If your application is denied, you have the right to appeal. You have 30 days to do an internal review request. **Your local community legal clinic can help you. For the Belleville area, contact The Community Advocacy & Legal Centre (CALC) at:**

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| ○ Phone: | 613-966-8686 (V) | Toll Free Phone: | 1-877-966-8686 (V) |
| ○ TTY: | 613-966-8714 | Toll Free TTY: | 1-877-966-8714 |
| ○ Fax: | 613-966-6251 | Email: | calcgen3@lao.on.ca |

Your rights

- You can start receiving ODSP income once you are 18 years old. You can apply before you are 18, though.
- If you are approved by the Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) any time after the first day of the month, you will receive pro-rated ODSP income for that month. For example, if you are approved on June 11, you would receive 2/3 of the ODSP income for that month.
- If you are in jail, your ODSP payments would be put on hold but not terminated. You would only receive payments for that part of the month you were not in jail.
- You will receive your ODSP income for the month on the last working day of the month.
- There are two ways you can receive your ODSP income:
 - It can be mailed (through Canada Post) to the address you provide.
(You can use your home address or the school address. If you decide to use the school address, you have to remember to inform ODSP when you go home for the summer.)
 - It can be deposited directly to your bank account.
(This way you have access to your money year-round from anywhere.)
- The amount of ODSP money you receive will depend on where and how you are living.
 - You will receive the basic-needs amount if you are living in residence or at home with your parents and not paying any rent or room and board.
 - You will receive more if you are paying rent.
 - If you have children, you will receive more.
 - If you are married or living with someone, you would receive more.
- The ODSP money is expected to cover food, clothes, personal items (for example, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.) and rent/mortgage, heat, utilities.
- Otherwise, there are no restrictions on what you can do with your money. However, if your worker believes that you are not using your money properly, your worker can appoint a trustee. That trustee can be anyone: a parent, another family member, a friend, an agency representative. The trustee would have financial responsibility for your ODSP income.

- In a general sense, not using your money properly could include: not paying your rent on time, receiving disconnect notices from utilities (electricity, water, etc.), receiving notices from collection agencies, being victimized.

Other sources of income

- You can keep all of your GST/HST rebate, your income tax refund, and any gifts up to \$6000 each year.
- Your ODSP income will be reduced if you receive other income from:
 - someone renting or boarding with you;
 - Employment Insurance;
 - legal settlements (but not settlements for pain and suffering from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board);
 - Workers' Compensation;
 - Pensions, such as the Canada Pension Plan;
 - child or spousal support.
- If you have a job, your ODSP income will be reduced by 50 cents for every dollar you earn, unless you have work costs, such as child care, transportation costs, or clothing costs.
- Other sources of income might also affect your ODSP income. You should talk with your worker or call your local legal clinic for more information.

ODSP Benefits (for you, your spouse, and your dependents) include:

HEALTH CARE:

- a monthly prescription drug card (for most medications)
- a monthly dental card (for basic dental care once a year)
- vision care (glasses every 3 years, lenses as needed, and eye exams every 2 years); your worker will need to pre-authorize payment for glasses and lenses
- an allowance for a special diet, if required for a medical condition, pregnancy, or breast-feeding; diabetic supplies; surgical supplies and dressings
- money for travelling to necessary medical appointments; your doctor will need to submit a completed form to your worker
- assistive devices for deaf people (for example, hearing aids, repairs, and batteries; TTYs; fire alarms; baby monitors; smoke detectors; etc.); your worker will need to pre-authorize payment, so you should discuss your needs with your worker before ordering or buying anything; you will need to pay for batteries yourself, but you will then be paid back

HOUSING:

- financial assistance if you are moving or fixing your current residence because it is not safe or healthy; the amount you receive will depend on how many dependents you have; you might receive money to help pay for the last month's rent, necessary furniture, utility deposits, and moving expenses; you will have to supply receipts or other documents
- a one-time amount (up to \$50) to help reduce the cost of energy bills
- you would need to discuss housing assistance with your worker
- if you are denied money to move, you can appeal; you must do an internal review request within 30 days; if you are denied, your local legal clinic can help

EMPLOYMENT:

- employment supports if you are interested in preparing for, getting, or continuing to work
- financial assistance when you begin a job search or training or to start or change your job, or to help with transportation, clothing, or equipment costs
- assistance with disability-related items or services in order to do your job or
 - participate in a training program (for example, specialized equipment, sign language interpreting services, note-taking services)
- health benefits to help you keep your job even if you are no longer receiving ODSP income support
- assistance with child care costs

If your allowance from ODSP is refused, reduced, or cut off, you should contact your local legal clinic right away for free legal advice and help.

Your responsibilities

- You might have an interview with your worker about once a year. Someone can attend the interview with you. Insist that ODSP supply an interpreter.
- You must show proof of your income and expenses (for example, rent/mortgage, heat, electricity, water, fire insurance, child care, etc.) and an up-to-date bank statement.
- You must inform your worker if there are any changes in your life; for example, if:
 - you move or change your phone number;
 - you get a job;
 - you receive any money (for example by borrowing);
 - you get, transfer, or sell assets (for example, money in a bank account, property, a trust fund, investments, life insurance, valuable items you own, vehicles);
 - your home costs change (for example, your rent increases);

- there are changes in who you live with;
 - one of your dependents leaves or returns home, leaves or returns to school, or starts work;
 - you or your spouse or a dependant is in jail, an institution, or a hospital, or is leaving the province for more than 30 days.
- Your spouse and any dependent 18 years of age or older will be referred to Ontario Works Employment Supports for assistance in finding employment, unless they:
 - are in school full-time;
 - are in an employment training program;
 - are working or looking for work;
 - are unable to work because of their health;
 - are required in the home as a care-giver; or
 - have a disability.

This summary is only intended to be a guide, is not complete, and might not be completely accurate. This information is not legal advice. For more information, contact your local legal clinic. In the Belleville area, contact:



**Community Advocacy and Legal Centre
158 George Street, Level 1
Belleville, Ontario K8N 3H2**

Phone: 613-966-8686 (V)
TTY: 613-966-8714
Fax: 613-966-6251

Toll Free Phone: 1-877-966-8686
TTY Toll Free: 1-877-966-8714
Email: calcgen3@lao.on.ca

Website: www.communitylegalcentre.ca

You can find legal clinics in other communities by calling 1-866-641-8867 (TTY).

Created by Dr. Ken Palmer, Registered Psychologist
in February, 2011, with assistance from CALC