



Q & A

Housing Stability & Utility Arrears Support

1.) Who can apply for the Housing Stability Benefit (HSB)?

People in receipt of Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program and households with low-incomes are eligible to apply for the Housing Stability Benefit. Low-income is defined as having an income at or below the 2013 Low-Income Cut Off.

2.) What are the changes to eligible expenses under the HSB?

- Effective, April 1, 2015 clothing, furniture and household items are no longer eligible expenses under the HSB.
- Expenses relating to preparation for bed bug treatment are now eligible as are treatment expenses for homeowners.

3.) How much assistance can I receive?

The maximum amount of assistance within a 24 month period is \$800 for a household with no children and \$1,500 for a household with children.

4.) Do the Rent Bank and Emergency Energy Fund still exist?

The Rent Bank and Emergency Energy Fund have been merged into the Housing Stability Benefit. Operating one program, rather than three, will make it easier for people to know where to get help.

5.) What are households with low-incomes eligible for under the HSB?

Households with low-incomes are only eligible for assistance with rent arrears and utility arrears.

6.) Where do I apply for the HSB?

- OW participants apply through their OW Case Manager.
- ODSP clients apply through the Housing Help Centre.
- Households with low-incomes apply through the Housing Help Centre
- People staying in emergency shelters apply for the HSB through the OW Shelter Case Manager attached to the shelter.

Hamilton Housing Help Centre
119 Main St. East
Hamilton, Ontario
(905) 526-8100
www.housinghelpcentre.ca

7.) How is the Utility Arrears Benefit different from HSB?

- The HSB covers utility arrears expenses. People in receipt of OW and ODSP may apply for the Utility Arrears Benefit only if their HSB has been exhausted.
- The maximum benefit available under HSB and the Utility Arrears Benefit is the same - \$800 for an individual or couple with no children and \$1,500 for a family with dependent children or adults. The Utility Arrears Benefit may be available every 24 months.

8.) Can people with low-incomes apply for the Utility Arrears Benefit?

People with low-incomes apply for assistance with utility arrears through the Housing Stability Benefit.

9.) How do I apply for the Utility Arrears Benefit?

- OW participants apply for Utility Arrears Benefit through their OW Case Manager.
- ODSP clients should contact their ODSP worker who will review the shelter allowance to see if there is room to cover utility expenses and provide a referral to Housing Help Centre if appropriate.

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