

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why do on reserve members receive less money?

The rates for income assistance on-reserve are the same as provided off-reserve by the BC Ministry for Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI).

There are four types of assistance:

Basic Allowance (food, clothing and transportation)
Shelter Allowance (rent and utilities)
Child Out of the Parental Home (COPH)
Special Needs

Rates:

Basic Allowance Rate for employable clients:

Single Person	\$235.00
Couple without child/ren	\$307.22
Couple with child/ren	\$401.06
Single Parents	\$375.58

Basic Allowance Rate non-employable clients:

Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers:

Single	\$282.92
Couple without child/ren (one PPMB)	\$396.22
Couple without child/ren (two PPMB)	\$452.06
Couple with child/ren (one PPMB)	\$490.06
Couple without child/ren (two PPMB)	\$546.06
Single Parent	\$423.58

Person With Disability (PWD)

Single	\$531.42
Couple without child/ren (one PWD)	\$672.08
Couple without child/ren (two PWD)	\$949.06
Couple with child/ren (one PWD)	\$794.56
Couple without child/ren (two PWD)	\$1043.06
Single Parent	\$672.08

Shelter Allowance Rates:

Family Size	Shelter Allowance (Maximum)
One Person	\$375.00
Two People	\$570.00
Three People	\$660.00
Four People	\$700.00
Five People	\$750.00
Six People	\$785.00
Seven People	\$820.00

For each additional person over seven in a family, add \$35.00

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How is the hydro and rent money paid for each client allocated?

Shelter rates are based upon the number of people in the client's family unit. At no time may payments exceed the monthly shelter maximum.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) requires documented proof on each client file for shelter expenditures (rent, hydro, phone, garbage, water & sewer). Since the inception of the social assistance program, the practice has been to pay these direct to the service provider (landlord, BC Hydro). The exception is Telus (local line charge only) which is usually added to a client's basic entitlement.

If a house is shared by more than one 'family unit', the costs for shelter are divided by the number of people (regardless of age and including children) in the house and portions are paid from the client file. If one or more people in this house are not on assistance, their shelter portions are their responsibility to pay.

Hydro Disconnections – Why does this happen?

Here are a couple of reasons why your hydro bill may be difficult for us to pay:

- 1) If a person has an outstanding amount owing to BC Hydro when they apply for social assistance, this debt cannot be paid with their Shelter Allowance. We can only pay for hydro usage incurred after the application for assistance has been completed and a client is deemed eligible.

Example: A client no longer requires assistance due to obtaining a job. A few months later, the client is laid off and reapplies for assistance. If the client has not kept their hydro up to date, the debt incurred during this time cannot be covered by their shelter allowance.

Example: Client applies for SA and brings a Hydro bill for \$201.28. The bill shows they have an outstanding amount owing of \$100.00 as well as a \$1.28 late fee and their monthly EPP amount of \$100.00 is now due. Our office can pay the EPP amount of \$100.00 but cannot pay the outstanding \$100.00 nor the late fee of \$1.28. The client will have to make their own arrangements with Hydro to pay this or agree to make payments from their Basic to BC Hydro. This outstanding amount cannot be paid from their Shelter Allowance even if their monthly shelter costs are less than their shelter maximums.

- 2) If a person on assistance is sharing their house with someone, their hydro is divided by the number of people in the house and then only a portion of the hydro is paid from the client's benefits. This can be an issue if the other person/people in the

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

house do not pay their share as AANDC does not allow Shelter Allowance to be used for someone not on assistance (regardless of their age) or if the debt was incurred prior to an application for assistance.

Example: Two families share a house. One family is a single person; the other family is a couple with a child. Rent is \$300.00; Hydro is \$120.00; Telus Local Line Charge is \$30.79 and Garbage, Water & Sewer is \$20.32 monthly. Family of one has shelter limit of \$375.00, family of three has shelter limit of \$660.00

	<u>Family of 1:</u>	<u>Family of 3</u>
Rent	\$75.00	\$225.00
Hydro	\$30.00	\$90.00
Telus	\$7.69	\$23.10
G/W&S	<u>\$5.08</u>	<u>\$15.24</u>
Total:	\$117.77	\$353.34

- 3) If the shelter costs for rent, hydro, garbage, water and sewer exceed the shelter maximums. In these cases, clients are asked if they will allow a portion of their Basic to be paid to BC Hydro to avoid a debt to accumulate which would result in a Disconnection Notice being issued.
- 4) Annual Adjustments – these can take some time to pay if the monthly shelter costs are close to the shelter maximums for a family unit. For clients on EPP, we encourage clients to check their usage amount against their payment amount to see if there will be an outstanding amount at their anniversary/annual adjustment date.

Why do I have to pick up my cheque each month?

Budget & Decision forms are what is used to authorize a payment and this form must be signed and dated by both client and their spouse/partner as well as the Band Social Development Worker. If these are not signed and dated by both parties, the payment is recoverable by AANDC.

Recently, our cheque production software was upgraded. This newer system produces the Budget & Decision form after a cheque is produced. This means that each month a new Budget & Decision Form is created and we require the client(s) signature before we can release their cheque.

I have a medical appointment out of town on cheque issue day, can I get my cheque before I leave?

We have confirmed with our Financial Services Officer at AANDC, that under no circumstances can we release benefit cheques prior to our cheque issue day.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

During any compliance review of our program by AANDC, the compliance officers will check to see what date a cheque was cashed to ensure that we are not providing benefits prior to our issue dates.

How do I complete the Monthly Renewal Declaration Slip?

Each question must be answered or this may cause a delay in receiving your cheque.

All monies must be reported, including family allowance, Child Tax Benefits, Universal Child Care Benefits, GST rebates, tax reimbursements, earnings, family maintenance payments received.

Clients must fill out their Band Name (Namgis or other), their status number, sign and provide a full date (day, month, year). Yes, we know who our clients are but AANDC policies state that each field must be properly completed or the document is invalid meaning benefits cannot be paid.

If the form is not completely filled out, AANDC compliance may deem any payments we made as ineligible and may recover these payments. Therefore, your worker will make you complete the form properly before issuing your cheque in order to protect the Nation from recovery of monies by AANDC.

I forgot to bring my Monthly Renewal Declaration Slip in. Why do I have to wait for my cheque?

During a compliance review of our program, the compliance officers will look to see when this form was signed, when it was received as well as when the cheque was written as well as when the cheque was cashed.

We cannot create a cheque for a client without the Monthly Renewal Declaration Slip confirming a client is still in need of assistance. We can only create the cheque after we have received the Monthly Renewal Slip.

Why does my partner have to come to my appointment?

AANDC policy requires that both the applicant and their partner/spouse must both sign and date the following documents:

- Application for Assistance
- Budget and Decision Form
- Monthly Renewal Declaration Slip

If we do not have both signatures, AANDC may deem the document as invalid and that benefits cannot be issued or paid.