



What is ODSP?

ODSP is a program of the Ontario government (Ministry of Community and Social Services) that provides financial support to individuals with a proven disability who are in financial need. Its goal is to allow such individuals to live independently in the community.

Who qualifies for ODSP income supports?

To meet the requirements for ODSP, you must:

- Have a verified substantial mental or physical disability that is expected to last a year or more, and makes it difficult for you to care for yourself, participate in community life or work;
- Qualify financially
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a resident of Ontario
- Those who qualify financially and are (residents of psychiatric hospitals, developmental services facilities, or homes for special care; those receiving Canada Pension Plan – Disability Benefits; those who are about to turn 18 and currently get a benefit called the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Benefit) may also be eligible for ODSP.

How do you know if you qualify financially?

You may qualify if you:

- Are single and have less than \$5,000 in cash, RRSPs, or in insurance policies,
- Have a spouse or same sex partner and have less than \$7,500 in cash, RRSPs, or in insurance policies.

If you fit into either of the above categories and have dependent children, you are allowed an additional \$500 in assets for each dependent.

ODSP encourages applicants to pursue employment as means of gaining self sufficiency. In general ODSP will deduct 50% of the net earned employment income and the remaining 50% can be retained by the recipient. You may also be eligible to receive up to \$100/month in addition to your employment income to assist with work related costs such as transportation or clothing.

ODSP recipients are also allowed to hold certain assets. (A complete listing is available at your ODSP office.)



Where do you apply for ODSP?

The first step in applying for ODSP involves setting up an appointment at your local ODSP office. This can be done in person or over the phone. To find the address and phone number of the ODSP office nearest to you, call 1-888-789-4199 or visit the Government of Ontario website www.gov.on.ca and select the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

When your appointment is set up, you will be provided with a list of documents that you need to bring to that appointment, such as: Social Insurance Number, OHIP Number, proof of birth date and immigration status, records of bank statements, assets and income, proof of expenses (e.g. rent receipts), school and employment activities.

What is the application process?

The application process involves two steps:

1. Your appointment at the ODSP office will be to determine if you qualify financially.
2. If you qualify financially you will be given a package of forms to fill out. This package is called the Disability Determination Package (DDP). The forms are:
 - **Health Status Report and Activities of Daily Living Index**
To find out who can fill out each part of this form, please read the list on the front of the form.
 - **A Medical Consent Form**
You must sign this form so that your doctor or medical professional has your permission to release medical information to ODSP.
 - **Self-Report**
This is your chance to tell ODSP, in your words, what it's like to live with your disability. Please note: This form is not compulsory but ODSP appreciates your comments.

Once you've completed the forms, you will send them to the Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. You must have your forms filled out and sent to the DAU in 90 days from the date of your interview. Staff at the DAU will review your file to see if you qualify for supports.

How much could you get from ODSP?

The amount you may be eligible to receive depends on your individual situation.

- You could get a maximum of \$999 per month if you are single,
- You could get a maximum of \$1521 per month for a family of two.



What if you require immediate financial assistance?

ODSP offices can only provide financial assistance after your application has been reviewed and a decision has been made regarding your disability. If you require immediate financial assistance you must contact your local Ontario Works office. To find the Ontario Works office nearest to you, call 1-888-789-4199.

What if you are turned down for ODSP?

If you are turned down for ODSP you have the right to ask for an Internal Review. You must request this in writing within 10 days of receiving the decision. You may provide additional medical information with your Internal Review. If you do not agree with the decision of the Internal Review, you have 30 days in which you may appeal this decision to the Social Benefits Tribunal. If you do not agree with the decision of the Social Benefits Tribunal you may request a Reconsideration of the Decision with a further appeal to the Divisional Court of Ontario. Contact your local Legal Aid Clinic (listed in the white pages of the phone book) for more information on appeals.

What benefits are included in ODSP?

The benefits of ODSP include:

- monthly financial assistance,
- an Ontario Drug Benefits Card, which covers medications listed in the Ontario Drug Benefits formulary,
- basic dental care,
- vision care and hearing aids,
- Back-to-school and winter clothing allowance for dependent children,
- Community Start-Up benefits for those facing eviction, leaving an institution or setting up their home (normally available once in a 24-month period).

ODSP support may continue while attending university or community college. However, the allowable amount a person can apply for through the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) will be reduced to cover only direct school costs such as tuition, books, etc.



What is the ODSP Employment Support Program?

This is a program that assists people with a wide range of disabilities to prepare for, find and keep employment. To be eligible for Employment Support:

- You must have a physical or mental disability that is expected to last for one year or more, and which makes it difficult for you to find or keep a job,
- You must be willing and able to work,
- You may also qualify if you are currently working but are having difficulty keeping your job because of your disability,
- You do not have to be receiving ODSP Income Support to qualify for Employment Support.

This document provides a general overview of ODSP Income and Employment Supports. The information is current as of the time of printing. For more detailed information, please visit www.archlegalclinic.ca or the Ministry of Community and Social Services website www.cfcs.gov.on.ca. You can also visit Persons with Disabilities Online www.pwd-online.ca for more helpful information on disability-related programs and services.