

Social Assistance Program

General Information	
Lead Department	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)
Partners	In most instances, the program is delivered by First Nations.
Effective Date	1964
Expiry Date	Ongoing.
Web Site	http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/soci_e.html
Purpose	The Social Assistance Program (SAP) has the broad objective of providing individuals and families living on reserves with the means to meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter.
Roles and Contributions	<p>Provinces have the jurisdictional framework for SA, the department follows the rates and eligibility requirements of the general welfare program of the provinces and Yukon Territory, and each region and some First Nations have their own policy and procedures manual.</p> <p>INAC funds the program through block funding arrangements and contribution agreements, except in Ontario where the province funds the First Nations directly and INAC reimburses on a cost-shared basis.</p> <p>First Nations usually deliver the program, in a few cases INAC delivers the program directly.</p>
Resources	
Funding	\$651 million in 2001/2002
Tracking and Reporting	<p>Funding Agreements require First Nations to report to their members.</p> <p>Funding Agreements with First Nations include provisions for financial report (Audit) and program reporting on a monthly or annual basis depending on the type of agreement.</p> <p>Funding Agreements include requirements for Program Reporting as outlined in the "First Nation National Reporting Guide" which includes a series of data elements which are used to measure delivery of the program.</p> <p>Publicly available reports include: Main Estimates - Report on Plans and Priorities, Departmental Performance Report, Basic Departmental Data and Overview of Program Data</p>
Measurement and Reporting	
Outcomes	Social Assistance funding provided to support individuals and families at rates and eligibility comparable to those of the province or territory.
Indicators	<p>Annual number of individuals and families receiving assistance and other data elements as per the First Nations National Reporting Guide.</p> <p>The only source of non program data on First Nations individuals in their communities is the Census of Canada (Aboriginal Peoples Survey). This is not complete since a number of communities refuse to participate in</p>

	<p>the census.</p> <p>The Income Security Reform (ISR) initiative is reviewing the Social Assistance program (see the ISR template for details).</p>
Comparable Indicators	Comparisons with Canadian population based on Statistics Canada census data, Aboriginal Peoples Survey and related data.
Evaluation/Third Party Assessments	<p>Compliance reviews are conducted for CFA funded programs.</p> <p>In accordance with funding agreements, First Nation financial and activity reports, program evaluations, management assessments, and other standards, policies or procedures are available to community members. (FNNRG).</p>
Shared Information and Best Practices	<p>Information and best practices on SA are being shared through the Income Security Reform initiative (see the ISR template for details).</p> <p>Publications and reports are available from departmental information kiosk and headquarters and regional contact persons.</p>
Public Reporting	<p>First Nations provide annual reports to their community members</p> <p>Expenditures are reported in the Main Estimates - Report on Plans and Priorities.</p> <p>Departmental Performance Report and other departmental publications i.e. <i>Basic Departmental Data and Overview of Program Data</i>.</p>
Involving Canadians	
Provisions for Citizens to Participate in Developing Social Priorities and Reviewing Outcomes	<p>Through the ISR demonstration projects, there is First Nation involvement in informing new policy development.</p> <p>SA is a field that may be included in self-government agreements. These negotiation processes include specific provisions for consultations and communications with third parties.</p>
Feedback Mechanisms to the Public	<p>No specific measures for tracking involvement in self-government consultations.</p> <p>See also the ISR template.</p>
Service Commitments	
Public Availability of Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility criteria are explained in regional and First Nation Social Assistance Policy and Procedures Manuals available from the First Nation administering organisations and INAC regional offices.
Existence and Availability of Service Commitments	<p>Service standards available in the Social Assistance Policy and Procedures Manuals.</p> <p>In accordance with funding agreements, First Nation financial and activity reports, program evaluations, management assessments, and other standards, policies and procedures are available to community members. (FNNRG).</p>
Measurement and Public	Department wide reporting is available through the Departmental Performance Report.

Reporting	In general, First Nation audits are available to the membership of that First Nation.
Appeals and Complaints	
Existence, Availability and Communication of Mechanisms	<p>Funding Agreements require First Nations to have in place a formally defined, publicly available appeals process for administrative decisions.</p> <p>Social Assistance Policy and Procedures Manuals outline appeal mechanisms.</p> <p>Individuals may also write to the Minister, Members of Parliament, First Nation governments.</p> <p>Self-Government Agreements must include provisions for appeals and dispute resolution.</p> <p>Members of the public may also make allegations of any perceived inappropriate operations directly to INAC.</p>
Tracking and Public Reporting	<p>Depending on the funding arrangement, First Nation councils establish their own procedures for tracking of appeals or complaints.</p> <p>Allegations made to the Department are tracked internally.</p>
Mobility	
Existence of Measures	<p>INAC provides funding to First Nations to deliver SA to members and other individuals in need residing on reserve. There are no distinct federal eligibility criteria for access to social assistance programming on reserve. First Nations adopt provincial general assistance eligibility criteria and benefit rates.</p> <p>This is a targeted program for individuals in need on reserve. The program policy does not restrict access to Social Assistance based on First Nation membership.</p> <p>Continuing measures include:</p> <p>Continue systematic program monitoring in accordance with funding agreements and reporting requirements.</p> <p>If a program is found not to meet the standard, protocol agreements could be developed to ensure an alternate delivery agent. These may require tripartite discussions.</p> <p>Where appropriate, for example in the Yukon, negotiate agreements between self-governing First Nations, Canada and the Yukon Territorial Government for reciprocal agreements for the delivery and payment of social assistance.</p>