

**Chapter 9: Special Needs Benefits**  
**(xii) Victims of Violence**

<b>Intent:</b>	To clarify the services available through the Department for persons who are victims of violence.
<b>Act:</b> (if applicable)	N/A
<b>Regulations:</b>	N/A
<b>Overview:</b> (if applicable)	N/A
<b>Policy:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any individual, not just a person in receipt of Income Support, who self identifies as a victim of violence can receive emergency transportation to a safe place regardless of distance.</li> <li>• Although the responsibility for emergency accommodations has moved to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC), this Department, NLHC or transition houses/shelters can also issue emergency transportation to a safe place.</li> <li>• Financial assessments are not required prior to providing emergency transportation to persons who self-identify as victims of violence and who require a safe haven.</li> <li>• Emergency transportation may include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transportation from the victim’s home to a shelter/transition house; or</li> <li>○ Transportation to a safe location other than a shelter (i.e., with friends/family, at a hotel/motel)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Victims of violence who are in receipt of Income Support benefits when they enter a transition house/shelter can continue to receive their individual/family benefits. This will assist in providing financial stability during a critical period of transition. The ex-spouse should be removed from the allowance, if applicable.</li> <li>• Payment of rent or mortgage may continue if the person intends to return to their own home/rental property.</li> </ul>

- Victims of violence who are not in receipt of Income Support benefits when they enter a transition house/shelter may be eligible for a “Personal Allowance” for part of/full duration of their stay depending upon their financial situation. The Personal Allowance is not provided by the Department, but by the transition house through an agreement with the Department of Health and Community Services.
  - It may be necessary for a person who is a victim of violence to apply for Income Support benefits. Eligibility for Income Support will be based on the immediate need of the applicant.
  - Applicants must normally provide all required documentation (see policy on [Application Requirements, Reporting Requirements, and Supporting Documentation](#)) when applying for Income Support; however, this may not always be possible for victims of violence. In these cases, some flexibility can be provided with the approval of the Client Services Manager/Regional Manager.
    - Birth certificates for all family members
      - If not available, the Client Services Officer (CSO) can complete an “Application for Birth Certificate” and forward to the Vital Statistics Division of Service NL. In situations when the applicant was born outside of the province, the CSM/RM can extend the number of days to 90 without the appropriate documentation.
    - Social Insurance Number(s)
      - Verification of the Social Insurance Number is required within 60 days of the application. As it may be difficult for a person who is a victim of violence to provide verification within this timeframe, it can be extended to 90 days with the approval of the CSM/RM.
      - The CSO may be able to assist, with the consent of the client, by contacting Service Canada to obtain authentication of the applicant’s Social Insurance Number.
    - Child/Spousal Support
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- The CSO should advise the client of the services available through departmental social workers, and determine if they want to complete a Support Referral form. If the client does not, the CSO should determine if and when the case should be KIV'd for future discussion surrounding a referral for spousal support. As effective June 1, 2019 child support is exempt income, a referral for child support is voluntary.
  - o Verification of Income
    - Verification of income of the ex-spouse to determine eligibility in the previous 60 days **is not required**.
    - Verification of applicant's income and liquid assets is required.
    - The CSO can assist an applicant in acquiring the necessary documentation, with consent, by sending the Rights, Responsibilities and Client Consent form to financial institutions.
    - Once the documentation has been received, the CSO should discuss with the applicant if they have access to any assets (i.e. bank account).
    - Note: In situations where it is not safe for the applicant to access the family assets, the CSO should discuss this with the CSM/RM.
  - o Other Related Needs
    - When considering net income, employed persons who are victims of violence may continue to work while staying in the safe environment. As this may result in additional costs associated with travelling to and from employment, these increases can be considered as legitimate expenses.
  - o Assistance with Rent
    - Assistance with board and lodging, especially with a relative or friend, may be more appropriate in order to meet the needs of the victim of violence.
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- If board and lodging is not appropriate, rental assistance can be provided with the approval of the CSM/RM.
- Once a person is safe and plans to remain apart from the family home, additional services may be available based on eligibility for Income Support.

**Procedure: Client Services Officer**

- **Maintaining client confidentiality is particularly crucial when working with victims of violence, as providing information without the client's consent can compromise their safety and well-being, as well as that of their children.**
- Provide as much information as possible about services available within the Department and the community to persons who are victims of violence. With consent, it may be beneficial to contact community agencies/services on the client's behalf.
- Discuss the importance of having a plan in place if they decide to leave the violent situation including storing information such as SIN cards and birth certificates in a safe accessible location should they need to leave abruptly, and memorizing emergency telephone numbers such as crisis lines/police.
- Set up a service plan if requested (a non-financial case in CAPS or a physical file record) containing: information pertaining to the person, information provided to the person on services offered by the Department and the community, and a record of information provided by the person to the Department, which would be readily available in the event that the person calls in a crisis. Note: Information held in the service plan records or even the existence of these records must not be revealed to anyone other than the person named on the record.
- An alert can be added in CAPS to indicate that the individual is a victim of violence who has a service plan in place.
- When adding case notes on issues of a delicate/highly confidential nature for a victim of violence (i.e. a client's

safety plan) the CSO should tick the sensitive box in the CAPS system.

- Reassure recipients of Income Support that their individual/family benefits can continue if they enter a transition house/shelter.
- Inform persons not in receipt of Income Support on how to apply for benefits prior to leaving the violent home.
- When paying invoices for services authorized for victims of violence:
  - Transportation to a shelter/safe house and/or out of province shall be authorized under “Special Needs - Non-Medical Transportation” in the CAPS system.
  - the Start-Up Allowance must be authorized under “Special Needs – Furniture.”
- Continue basic Income Support benefits for recipients who have moved from a violent situation.
- Determine if a recipient who is a victim of violence and has moved from their original residence, will be returning in order to continue payment of rent or mortgage benefits.
- Provide a “Start-Up Allowance” to assist recipients moving into new accommodations to purchase the necessary items to set up a new home (e.g. beds, dishes, linens, clothing, etc.).

Adult	Child	Island	Coast of Labrador
1	0	\$500	\$600
1	1	\$600	\$750
1	2	\$700	\$900
1	3	\$900	\$1,150
1	4	\$1,000	\$1,300
1	5	\$1,200	\$1,550
1	6	\$1,300	\$1,700
1	7	\$1,500	\$1,950

- Forward subsequent requests for "Start-Up Allowance" to the CSM/RM for approval.
- A request for transportation outside the province is based on the following criteria:
  - the person who is a victim of violence must be eligible for Income Support; and
  - a written recommendation verifying that the move is necessary must be received from one of the following: police (RCMP, RNC), transition house worker, a women's council, Health and Community Services, Children Seniors and Social Development or Victim Services (Dept. of Justice and Public Safety).
  - Document the request including:
    - an outline of the recipient's circumstances,
    - why the move to another province is the most appropriate option, and
    - verifying that the person/family has a place to stay in the receiving province, and forward to CSM/RM for approval.
- Upon approval of the request for transportation outside of the province, inform the appropriate social services office in the receiving province that the individual is coming; giving dates of arrival, covering period of assistance, etc.
- **Note:** This Department only provides transportation to a safe place and to help move a client from a shelter/safe place to new accommodations. Other than medically necessary appointments (which is the responsibility of the Department of Health and Community Services), NLHC is responsible for all other transportation.

#### **Client Services Manager/Regional Manager**

- Review and approve/deny request for transportation outside of the province, including moving expenses for household furniture and other belongings if required.
    - Consideration must be given to what are reasonable expenses. In some situations, it may be more cost effective to provide funds for furniture or "start-up" in
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another province rather than paying actual moving expenses.

- o If the request is denied, inform the recipient in writing of the reason for denial, his/her right to appeal and how to do so.
- Review and approve/deny subsequent requests for a “Start-Up Allowance” to recipients moving into new accommodations.

**Authority Level: Client Services Officer**

- Emergency transportation
- Transportation to assist persons to move household furniture from one residence to another, if the reason for the move is the personal safety of the individual/family
- Continuation of basic Income Support benefits for recipients who have moved from a violent situation
- “Start-Up Allowance” to recipients moving into new accommodations

**Client Services Manager/Regional Manager**

- Transportation outside of the province including moving expenses for household furniture and other belongings if required
- Approval of subsequent requests for a “Start-Up Allowance” to recipients moving into new accommodations
- Approval of extension when required documentation cannot be provided within the application timeframes

**Date revised:** June 1, 2019