

## Ontario Social Assistance Data

### A. Purpose for which the data are collected

To support the administration of social assistance programs in Ontario

### B. Overview of social assistance programs in Ontario

Ontario's social assistance programs provide income and employment support to single adults and families who are in financial need. There are two social assistance programs:

- Ontario Works provides financial and employment assistance to help people move towards paid employment and independence.
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) provides financial assistance and employment support to enable people with disabilities and their families to live as independently as possible in their communities.

Both programs are legislated entitlement programs; everyone who meets the eligibility criteria is entitled to a prescribed amount of assistance. To qualify for Ontario Works or ODSP, an applicant must meet the financial and asset tests of either respective program, reside in Ontario, live in the geographic area where they apply for assistance, and be legally residing in Canada. In addition, an Ontario Works applicant must agree to participate in employment/employment assistance activities, while an ODSP applicant must meet the definition of a person with a disability as defined by the ODSP Act, 1998, or be a member of a "prescribed class"<sup>1</sup>.

In both Ontario Works and ODSP, monthly financial assistance is paid to family units or households, known as "benefit units". A benefit unit consists of an applicant and all of their dependents that reside with them (i.e., everyone is a "member" of the benefit unit). Generally speaking, family types include single persons, with or without children; and, couples, with or without children. In ODSP, a "double disabled" couple refers to a household where the applicant and his/her spouse is a person with a disability or a member of a prescribed class.

In addition to monthly payments, both programs provide a range of supplementary cash and in-kind benefits (e.g., prescription drug coverage).

Social assistance policy directives can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/social/directives/index.aspx>

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals in a "prescribed class" do not have to undergo disability adjudication. Prescribed classes include:

- i. People in receipt of disability benefits under the Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan;
- ii. People who are 65 years old and not eligible for Old Age Security;
- iii. People who reside in a psychiatric hospital, facility under the Developmental Services Act or in a home under the Homes for Special Care Act; and,
- iv. People who were receiving Family Benefits and were grand-parented into the Ontario Disability Support Program when the Act was proclaimed on June 1, 1998
- v. Residents of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in the City of Toronto and the Homewood Health Centre in the City of Guelph
- vi. Former residents of a facility that is designated under the Developmental Services Act who ceased to be residents of that facility on or after June 1, 1998

### C. Files provided

Ontario social assistance data can be transferred using 5 files (in a CSV format) by grouping the data into the following broad categories:

- benefit unit (family) information
- member information
- pay detail (benefit) information
- income/deduction information
- skills information

In addition, the initial data transfer would include a file showing monthly caseloads by program from January 1990.

Name of file	Description
Benefit unit (family) information record file	Characteristics (e.g., family type and composition, type of accommodation) of benefit units on social assistance, including status on the program (ongoing/ terminated and reason for termination)
Member information record file	Characteristics (e.g., birth date, gender) of members of benefit units on social assistance
Pay detail (benefit) information record file	Types and amounts of benefits paid to benefit units on social assistance
Income/deduction information record file	Types and amounts of income reported by benefits units on social assistance
Skills information record file	Skills acquired by an individual on social assistances

### D. Entity represented

Name of file	Entity represented at the record level
Benefit unit (family) information record file	Benefit unit ( <i>Case reference number</i> ) in receipt of social assistance income support ( <i>Program</i> ) during a specific month ( <i>Extract year and month</i> ) and its characteristics
Member information record file	Individual on social assistance ( <i>Recipient reference number</i> ) and his/her characteristics as of the end of a specific month ( <i>Extract year and month</i> )
Pay detail (benefit) information record file	<i>Amount of deduction or benefit</i> for a specific <i>Benefit/deduction type</i> intended to cover a specific month ( <i>Month of benefit or deduction</i> ) and paid/applied to an individual on social assistance ( <i>Recipient reference number</i> ) in a specific month ( <i>Extract year and month</i> )
Income/deduction information record file	Income amount for a specific type of income reported by an individual ( <i>Recipient reference number</i> ) in a specific month ( <i>Extract year and month</i> )

Skills information record file	Skills acquired by an individual ( <i>Recipient reference number</i> ) that are recorded by a caseworker. At a specific month ( <i>Extract year and month</i> ), the skills acquired up to that date is reported
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#### E. Data Fields

The record layouts of each of the 5 data files are presented below.

Benefit Unit Record File		
Field	Field Name	Type
1	Extract year and month	char(6)
2	Case reference number (masked version)	char(10)
3	Program (OW,ODSP)	char(3)
4	Reason family/person is on assistance	char(3)
5	Type of accommodation	char(3)
6	Family type	char(3)
7	Beneficiaries	int
8	Spouse	tinyint
9	Dependent adults	tinyint
10	Children	tinyint
11	Amount of financial assistance	dec(10,2)
12	Amount of employment assistance	dec(10,2)
13	Program status	char(3)
14	Date program status changed to ongoing status	datetime
15	Grant date (effective date of ongoing program status)	datetime
16	Hold/suspension reasons	char(3)
17	Cumulative number of months on social assistance	smallint
18	Termination date	datetime
19	Primary termination reason	char(3)
20	Secondary termination reason	char(3)
21	Address: postal code	char(10)
22	Municipal code	char(4)
23	Number of member records	tinyint

Member Record File		
Field	Field Name	Type
1	Extract year and month	char(6)
2	Case reference number (masked version)	char(10)
3	Program (OW,ODSP)	char(3)

4	Recipient reference number (masked version)	char(9)
5	Applicant, spouse, dependent adult or child	char(3)
6	Member status	char(3)
7	Member gender	char(1)
8	Member birth date	Datetime
9	Marital status	char(3)
10	Educational attainment	char(3)
11	Current status (in school)	char(3)
12	Reason left last job	char(3)
13	Official language preferred and language in which service is received	char(3)
14	Disability indicator	Y/N
15	Disability type: ICD9 code1	char(3)
16	Disability type: ICD9 extension1	char(2)
17	Disability type: ICD9 code2	char(3)
18	Disability type: ICD9 extension2	char(2)
19	Immigration status: foreign born	char(3)
20	Immigration status: immigration status code	char(3)
21	Immigration status: immigration category code	char(3)
22	Immigration status: landing date	Datetime
23	Immigration status: Canada arrival date	Datetime
24	Reason members participation is deferred	char(3)
25	Independent job search	Tinyint
26	Structured job search	Tinyint
27	Basic education and training	Tinyint
28	Community participation (placement)	Tinyint
29	Employment placement with incentives	Tinyint
30	Employment placement without incentives	Tinyint
31	Job skills training	Tinyint
32	Addiction services initiative	Tinyint
33	Literacy	Tinyint
34	Independent self employment	Tinyint
35	Assisted self employment	Tinyint
36	LEAP voluntary	Tinyint
37	LEAP mandatory	Tinyint
38	ODSP Employment Support indicator	Y/N
39	Number of pay detail records (benefits)	Tinyint
40	Number of income/deduction records	Tinyint

41	Number of member skills records	Tinyint
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Pay Detail Record (Benefits) File		
Field	Field Name	Type
1	Extract year and month	char(6)
2	Case reference number (masked version)	char(10)
3	Program (OW,ODSP)	char(3)
4	Recipient reference number (masked version)	char(9)
5	Benefit/deduction type	char(3)
6	Amount of deduction or benefit	dec(12,2)
7	Month of benefit or deduction	char(6)

Income/Deduction Record File		
Field	Field Name	Type
1	Extract year and month	char(6)
2	Case reference number (masked version)	char(10)
3	Program (OW,ODSP)	char(3)
4	Recipient reference number (masked version)	char(9)
5	Type of income or deduction	char(3)
6	Gross income or deduction amount	dec(12,2)
7	Net income or deduction amount	dec(12,2)

Skills Record File		
Field	Field Name	Type
1	Extract year and month	char(6)
2	Case reference number (masked version)	char(10)
3	Program (OW,ODSP)	char(3)
4	Recipient reference number (masked version)	char(9)
5	Member skill code	char(3)
6	NOC (national occupation code)	char(4)