

## **Alternate Benefits Methods Policy**

### **Objective**

To establish when alternate benefits methods will be used as part of the administration of the Income Assistance Program.

### **Policy Statement**

Chief and Council recognize that Income Assistance is a social program intended to assist individuals and families in meeting their most basic needs. However, in some instances this resource is misused and abused, resulting in children, families, and Elders being denied necessities to meet their basic needs.

To protect the safety and well-being of our Nation and our Nation's most vulnerable people, alternate benefits methods will be used in appropriate circumstances to ensure basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing are provided to individuals and families.

This policy is intended to empower persons receiving social assistance to assume responsibility for their own well-being to ensure that their basic needs and those of their families are being met. It is also intended to enhance community safety.

### **Procedures**

#### **1.1 Responsibilities**

The Executive Management Team is responsible for overseeing and managing the implementation, administration, monitoring, and evaluation of this policy.

The Income Assistance Program is responsible for the implementation of programs and services; including referrals, investigations, data collection, and timely reporting to the Executive Management Team and others as required.

The Peacekeepers Tribunal is responsible for addressing all appeals of decisions made in relation to the administration of this policy.

#### **1.2 Application**

The alternate benefits methods referred to in this policy will be utilized in the following circumstances where data from various sources indicates an NCN Citizen's basic needs or those of their families are not being met:

(a) Income Assistance Recipients and Eligible Applicants:

- (i) have failed to abide by the Nisichawayasi Community Protection Law, 2019, c. C-1 and regulations;
- (ii) have been charged with an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada or other relevant legislation;
- (iii) have engaged in aggressive or violent behaviour and/or harassment of NCN staff or members of Chief and Council or have been lodged under the Intoxicated Persons Detention Act (IPDA);

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(iv) are parents or guardians whose children are in the care of a child and family services agency or alternate caregiver as reported by CFS;

(v) are parents whose children have not attended school regularly in the previous month as reported in the nominal roll reports.

(b) individuals who have caused damage to and/or destroyed NCN property including NCN housing, buildings, storage sheds, equipment, businesses, motor vehicles.

(c) individuals who are known gang members or affiliated with gang activity (colours).

(d) individuals who are reasonably believed to be engaged in drug dealing and bootlegging.

(e) individuals who have been banished and the Peacekeepers Tribunal has determined that they should not be allowed to return to the community; or

(f) individuals who request advance benefits for two consecutive months.

### **1.3 Relevant Information**

A determination of whether alternate methods of benefits should be applied to an individual in accordance with this policy will be made by taking into consideration relevant data and other information provided by individuals and NCN community partners and service organizations, including but not limited to:

- Nisichawayasi Nehetho Culture and Education Authority Inc.
- Family and Community Wellness Centre
- RCMP – NCN Detachment
- First Nation Safety Officers
- Court of Queen’s Bench
- Provincial Court
- Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Housing Authority
- Nelson House Medicine Lodge
- Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre
- Development Corporation
- Nursing Station
- Circle of Life Program – Elders Advocacy Program

### **2.0 Investigation and Determination Criteria Met (?)**

#### **2.1 Investigation – Initial Meeting**

Upon receipt of relevant information, Income Assistance staff will conduct an investigation to assess whether the person falls within one of the categories listed in section 1.2 of this policy. If

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it is determined that a person falls within section 1.2, a meeting will be held to discuss why the person will be subject to alternate benefit methods and a Circle of Care plan will be developed to assist the person and/or the person's family take steps to assume responsibility for their actions and improve their lives using a restorative justice model where appropriate;

The investigation shall be completed at least fourteen (14) days before the person's next social assistance issuance is to be made. Upon completion of the investigation, the Income Assistance staff person shall prepare a written report confirming whether the Recipient/Applicant meets the criteria and conditions outlined within this policy for alternate payment methods to be implemented, the proposed Circle of Care plan to be implemented or the person's refusal to participate in such a plan.

The report will be dated and signed by the Income Assistance staff person and will be submitted to the Executive Management Team for a decision to accept, reject or modify the recommended actions.

### **2.2 Written Notice**

If alternate benefit methods are to be implemented, the person will be notified in writing that any income assistance benefits for which they qualify will only be available by an alternate benefits method for a minimum period of 2 months for the first incident, and 4 months for all subsequent incidents until the person has met the conditions outlined and agreed to in writing by the person and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and that any breach of the written agreement will result in an extension of the alternate benefit methods for at least an additional two months.

The written notice shall also advise the Recipient that the decision can be appealed to the Peacekeepers Tribunal by filing a Notice of Appeal with the Chairperson of the Tribunal with a copy to the Director of Justice and Public Safety within seven (7) days of receipt of the letter.

### **2.3 Transfer to Alternate Benefit Methods**

Upon the expiry of the appeal period, the Income Assistance staff person who made the recommendation will complete Schedule "B" and place the completed form in the Recipient's file. The decision made by the Executive Management Team will be final and binding on the person from that point forward.

### **2.4 Development of Health and Wellness Plan**

The Income Assistance staff person will coordinate an implementation meeting with the Recipient to develop a Circle of Care Plan and confirm in writing the conditions to be met for the Recipient to be able to receive regular social assistance benefits. Part of the Plan will include regular monthly reviews with the Recipient to assess their progress in meeting the conditions set out in the Plan.

## **3.0 Appeal Committee**

### **3.1 Peacekeepers Tribunal**

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The Peacekeepers Tribunal shall hear and determine any appeals in accordance with the Peacekeepers Tribunal Law, 2019, c. P-1 and may set aside, vary with or without conditions the decision of the Executive Management Team or may confirm the order.

### **3.2 Determination of Appeals**

The Peacekeepers Tribunal will consider and determine appeals within 10 days of receipt of a Notice of Appeal from the Recipient unless there are extenuating circumstances that require an extension.

### **3.3 Final and Binding Decisions**

A decision of the Peacekeepers Tribunal shall be final and binding on NCN and on the Recipient.

## **4.0 Alternate Forms of Benefits**

### **4.1 Alternate Forms of Benefits/Issuances**

Purchase Orders will be honoured at the following businesses or any other businesses NCN makes arrangements with:

- (i) Giant Tiger
- (ii) Thompson Family Foods
- (iii) Three Rivers Store
- (iv) OT Gas Bar

### **4.2 Limitations**

Tobacco products purchased under the Purchase Order will be limited to:

- One carton of cigarettes for a full month issuance or
- Four packs of cigarettes for a half month issuance (bi-weekly)

### **4.3 Prohibitions**

The business and the Recipient will be notified that the purchase order cannot be used to purchase certain products defined as “intoxicants” that can not be transported onto NCN Lands in accordance with the Nisichawayasi Protection Law.