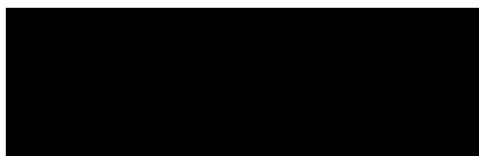


August 2, 2019



Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* [Our File #: AESL/054/2019]

On July 31, 2019 the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour received your request for access to the following records/information:

“June 2019 Information Note titled Income Support File Review Process.”

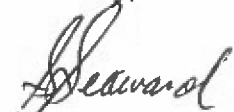
I am pleased to inform you that your request for access to this information has been granted and the requested record is attached.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 (act) requires us to provide an advisory response within 10 days of receiving the request. As this request has been completed prior to day 10, this letter also serves as our Advisory Response.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at (709) 729-4276 or SharonSeaward@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,



SHARON SEAWARD
ATIPP Coordinator

Attachment

Information Note
Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour

Title: Income Support File Review Process

Issue: Implementing Income Support File Review Process Enhancements

Background and Current Status:

- Income Support files are reviewed regularly, as per Section 29, *Income and Employment Support Regulations*, which states "The amount of income support payable to a recipient shall be reviewed by an officer periodically in order to determine the continued eligibility of the recipient and may also be reviewed at the request of the recipient."
- The Income Support file review process provides an opportunity to contact clients on a regular basis to confirm continued eligibility.
- Although the format has evolved and changed over time, a consistent effort has been made to ensure Income Support files are reviewed on a regular basis. The most recent process update occurred in 2015.
- An enhanced file review process has been developed for implementation in August 2019 as part of the new Case Management model. Modifications are aimed at significantly increasing the number of files to be reviewed each year, from the current 500 files to approximately 10,000 files.
- Enhancing the Income Support file review process is an activity under the following published 2018-19 Strategic Plan indicator "Enhanced case management approaches for financial support".

Analysis:

- A regular Income Support file review process, as per *Income and Employment Support Regulations*, is a key program integrity function. The goals of a file review process are to ensure clients receive only the benefits to which they are entitled, and to identify and address any fraudulent activity that may occur. A file review may result in a reduction or suspension of Income Support benefits in some cases.
- As Income Support program delivery has evolved, so has the file review process. In the early 2000's, upon implementation of a telephone service delivery model, the Department discontinued the practice of home visits for the purpose of file review. A mass mail-out process was established, which was effective in reaching high numbers of clients, but did not include any direct client contact. In 2015, in an effort to increase quality interactions with clients, an expanded review and telephone interview process was developed, which limited the number of files that could be reviewed each year.
- Since 2015, approximately 500 files per year have been reviewed, which is considerable lower than the approximately 10,000 per year reviewed under the previous process.
- Currently, an enhanced file review process has been developed in conjunction with regional service delivery as part of the recently enhanced case management service delivery approach. The enhanced file review process, focused on financial eligibility, will provide Client Services Officers with an opportunity to complete a brief telephone interview with all recurring pay cases once every two years.

- The annual time-frames for the enhanced file review process will include two 21 week review periods, from February to June and September to January. During each 21 week review period, 35 Client Services Officers will complete telephone interviews with approximately 150 clients (approximately 7 per week) each, totaling approximately 5,250 per cycle and 10,500 per year.
- Consistent with all previous file review processes, when it is found that a client is receiving benefits to which they are not entitled, necessary adjustments will be made, including a reduction or suspension of benefits. When a client does not respond to a series contact attempts, benefits will be suspended until a file review can be completed and eligibility can be established. Prior to 2015, approximately 7 per cent of files were suspended per review cycle.
- Following each review period, a report detailing any impacts on the caseload and related budgetary savings will be generated.
- Regional service delivery processes are in place to facilitate immediate implementation.
- Work with OICO to implement CAPS fixes that will automate data tracking and reporting is ongoing, and it is anticipated that these changes will be in place for the fall 2019 review.
- It has been confirmed that the additional documents related to the enhanced file review process will not impact the Document Processing Unit (DPU), as these documents will be filed and not actioned.

Action Being Taken:

- The file review process will be implemented in August 2019.
- Work with the OCIO to implement automations in CAPS is in progress.

Prepared/Approved by: C. King/ W. Mavin
Ministerial Approval:

J. Langor


June 21, 2019

JUN 25 2019