



Memorandum

Date: September 1, 1992

To: Directors of Income Security

From: Bryan McTaggart
Gerry Schmidt
Directors of Field Operations
Social Allowances Program

Telephone:

Subject: **Head of Household (Two Adult Families)**

The Department is introducing policy changes which will affect the way the Social Allowances Program assesses the eligibility of two-adult families applying for social allowances benefits.

Effective immediately the Program will: (i) allow eligibility to be based on either adult in the household, (ii) enable two-adult families the flexibility to choose who will be the applicant when enrolling or re-enrolling for social allowances benefits, and (iii) place employment expectations on employable spouses.

This directive provides information on the policy and procedural changes which will be implemented to facilitate these changes.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

(i) Eligibility:

- Two-adult families can occur under the Disabled, Student, General Assistance and Aged categories under the Social Allowances Program.
- ~~When applying for assistance, two-adult cases will now have the choice in deciding which adult will be the applicant in the case.~~
- Employment expectations will be placed on employable spouses.
- Field staff are expected to advise clients of these provisions during enrollment or during the normal course of contact (e.g., during home visits).

(ii) Change of Applicant:

- District Offices may be approached by existing two-adult cases requesting that the female become the applicant in the case.
- To effect the change in applicant, the case will have to be closed. A new Social Allowances Application form will have to be completed and a new social allowances case opened. Specific SAMIN procedures regarding this process are discussed later in this directive.

- Existing two-adult social allowances cases deciding to change the applicant will be entitled to receive a deficit payment for the difference between the level of benefits they were receiving and the level of benefits they will receive with the change of applicant. The deficit payment will only be paid to cover the period back to the date of the new application.
- Benefit cheques will continue to be issued to the applicant in the case, unless otherwise specified.

(iii) Employment Expectations:

(a) Employable Spouse:

- As a condition of continuing eligibility, employable spouses in a two-adult case will be expected to seek employment with a view to achieving the self-sufficiency of the family unit. Employable spouses of Disabled, Student, General Assistance or Aged applicants will be expected to accept training opportunities or available employment and to report earnings on a monthly basis.
- For new and re-enrolled cases, the employment expectation is to be explained during the intake process. For existing cases, the employment expectation is to be explained during the next regularly scheduled home visit or other regular client contact. It is expected that this communication to existing cases will be completed over the course of the next two years; this communication should be documented on hard copy.

(b) Exemption from Employment Expectations:

- At the discretion of the District Director, the expectation for the employable spouse to seek employment may be waived temporarily or permanently under certain conditions, such as:
 - where care needs of a disabled applicant preclude the pursuit of employment by the employable spouse;
 - where child care would otherwise need to be purchased as the disabled applicant is unable to provide the necessary care; or
 - where labour market conditions preclude all reasonable opportunities for employment.
- It should be noted that hard copy file documentation is required which specifies the reason(s) the District Director has exempted an employable spouse from the employment expectation provisions.

(c) Condition of Continuing Eligibility:

- In accordance with Section 9 of the Social Allowances Regulations, the District Director may suspend or terminate assistance should the employable spouse in a two-adult case fail to accept reasonable.