

THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAM

WHAT IS IT? HOW DO YOU ACCESS IT?

IN QUEBEC, LAST-RESORT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED BY TWO DISTINCT PROGRAMS:

THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Accessible to persons with no obstacle to employment or a temporary one.

THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAM

Accessible only to persons with a severely limited capacity for employment, attested by a medical report and validated by the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale.

* The market basket measure is a calculation by Statistics Canada that estimates the minimum monthly cost of meeting basic needs.

The monthly benefits shown are for 2020 for a single person. The most recent market basket measure is the indexed measure for 2019, for a single person in Montreal. Sources: MTESS and IRIS.

Table comparing the monthly benefits paid by each of the programs and the market basket measure.*



THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAM

If you receive social assistance and a medical report indicates you are unable to hold down a job for the next 12 months, you may be entitled to benefit from the Social Solidarity Program.

Having access to the Social Solidarity Program does not mean you will never again be able to work. The income supplement available to you could help you to feel better and may encourage you to integrate the labour market later on. There are training and employability programs that can be provided to program recipients.

If you have access to the Social Solidarity Program and attempt a return to work, you can keep your medication claim slips for 4 years.

If your return to work doesn't go as planned, you have 4 years to reintegrate the program without needing to complete the medical report again.

STEP 1 - PREPARING FOR YOUR MEETING WITH THE DOCTOR

You must meet with a doctor who will agree to sign a medical report indicating you have a severely limited capacity for employment. This could be for reasons to do with physical or mental health, or related to other situations that would prevent you from having a job for the next 12 months. It is important to inform the doctor of any problems that can explain your difficulties with work. This will help in properly filling out the medical report.

If you don't have a family doctor, you can apply for one by registering with the Québec Family Doctor Finder (QFDF). A health professional or a community outreach worker can help you prepare for the meeting with the doctor or register you with the QFDF.

STEP 2 - THE DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE

The medical report is available at any local employment centre (CLE) or at certain community organizations. You must bring it to the medical appointment.

- If the doctor signs the medical report, he or she must :
- Provide a diagnosis that explains your difficulties;
 - Stipulate that you will have these difficulties for the next 12 months;
 - Sign and date the medical report.

Most often, a diagnosis by itself will not fully explain your difficulties with work. The doctor will also have to provide other details or ask the social assistance doctor to call him or her so he or she can explain your situation.

STEP 4 - THE TELEPHONE APPOINTMENT WITH THE MINISTÈRE

The doctor and another professional from the Ministère may wish to speak with you.

They will send you a letter to set an appointment for a telephone call.

During the call, they will ask you questions about the state of your health and your difficulties with work.

If this appointment is stressful for you, you can ask to be accompanied by a professional (legal aid clinic, social worker, community organization, etc.).

STEP 3 - THE EVALUATION BY THE MINISTÈRE DU TRAVAIL, DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALE

If you have a diagnosis that is on the Ministère's list of obvious diagnoses, the agent at the CLE will be able to provide you direct access to the program.

Otherwise, the doctor and another professional from the Ministère will study your case. They will look at the medical report. They will take into account your physical and mental health, and also your age, education and employment history.

They will probably ask you to fill out the form *Renseignements complémentaires au rapport médical* in order to provide complementary information with which to update your record. The content of this form is very important for the evaluation. Professionals from the health network or community network can help you to fill it out.

Several months may elapse between the filing of the medical report and your gaining access to the Social Solidarity Program.

STEP 5 - THE APPLICATION FOR REVIEW

If the Ministère refuses to grant you access to the Social Solidarity Program, you can request that your case be reevaluated.

This means an application for review. You have 90 days to file your application for review. For this step, you can ask to be represented by a legal aid lawyer.

If the Ministère still refuses, you have 60 days to appeal the decision before the Tribunal administratif du Québec.

When filing an application for review, it is recommended that you submit as many documents as possible: a complete medical record, a case summary from a social worker, a letter from your psychologist, and so on.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE RESEARCH

The information in this brochure is excerpted from the results of research conducted by a CREMIS team, in partnership with the Programme du Centre de Recherche et d'Aide pour Narcomanes (CRAN) of the CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

For more information, check out our web dossier on promising practices for a more equitable access to the Social Solidarity Program, including:

- A brochure for professionals providing support;
- A brochure for doctors;
- An overview of the research results.

Download it at: www.cremis.ca/contrainte

OTHER AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Social rights group
- Health network professionals
- Committees for social assistance recipients
- Legal aid for applications for review

CREMIS

Centre de recherche de Montréal sur les inégalités sociales, les discriminations et les pratiques alternatives de citoyenneté

Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Québec