

PROVIDING SUPPORT DURING AN EVALUATION OF A SEVERELY LIMITED CAPACITY FOR EMPLOYMENT

Brochure for professionals supporting a person applying for access to the Social Solidarity Program

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.

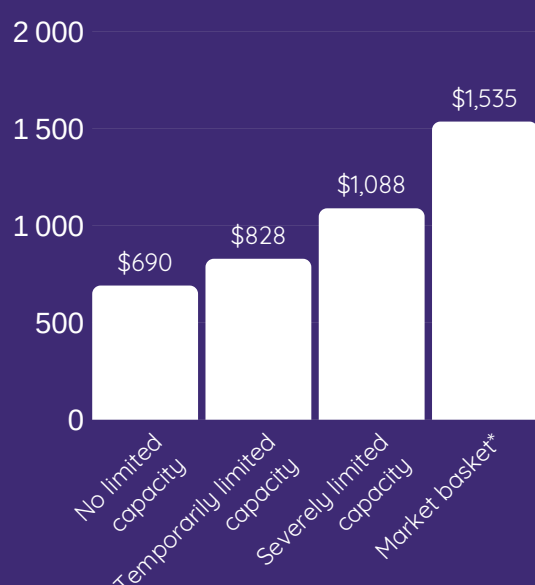
THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAM

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.*



WHAT IS A SEVERELY LIMITED CAPACITY FOR EMPLOYMENT?

A severely limited capacity for employment is a recognition of significant difficulties in getting a job or holding one in a permanent or prolonged manner over the next 12 months.

The recognition of this severely limited capacity by a doctor and by the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS) is to date the primary means of access to the Social Solidarity Program.

SEVERAL FACTORS CAN EXPLAIN A LIMITED CAPACITY FOR EMPLOYMENT

Though a diagnosis must obligatorily be provided in the medical report, it is rarely sufficient to fully explain a severely limited capacity for employment. The interplay of medical and socioprofessional factors must be taken into account.

If the primary diagnosis does not appear on the MTESS's list of obvious diagnoses, the MTESS will proceed with an in-depth evaluation of the case. It will verify whether the individual possesses the physical and mental capabilities, as well as the socioprofessional characteristics (age, education, work experience, adaptability), that enable him or her "to work full time (based on the Quebec reality) in a sustained (pace) and continuous (duration) way."

If there is no medical report signed by a doctor, the individual does not get an in-depth evaluation of his or her case by the MTESS.

As a professional, you can support the individual throughout the process and provide information that complements the doctor's input and that is necessary for the MTESS's evaluation.

SUPPORTING THE RECIPIENT THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ACCESSING THE PROGRAM

The process is a source of tremendous anxiety for recipients. The support of a professional may help the individual get through it and help avoid the abandonment of the procedures.

A professional who is providing support can :

- Inform the recipient of the different steps in the process;
- Alleviate the person's fears regarding the establishment of a diagnosis that justifies the severely limited capacity for employment;
- Deconstruct the stigma of "inevitable permanence" often associated with a severely limited capacity for employment;
- Inform the person of the possibilities for returning to employment or training that may be available to recipients of the Social Solidarity Program;
- Inform the person of existing protective measures in case of an attempted reintegration: preservation of medication claim slips, simplified readmission in case of a failed reintegration;
- Make a plea to the doctor;
- In the event the application for access to the program is turned down by the Ministère, support the person in the filing of a new application or in undertaking a review process*;
- Inform the person of his or her recourses in case the application for review is rejected (e.g., support from legal aid for a proceeding before the Tribunal administratif du Québec).

*In the case of admission to the program following an application for review, the person is entitled to amounts applying retroactively to the date of the first application.

PREPARING FOR THE MEDICAL APPOINTMENT

The medical appointment is stressful for numerous recipients, who don't know how to explain the complexity of their situation, often in the very little time allotted.

A preparatory meeting ahead of the medical appointment, for the purpose of summarizing the situation and preparing arguments, where appropriate, may be quite helpful for the applicant.

The fact that a professional assigned to the case has contacted the doctor prior to the medical appointment may also facilitate the application, the individual being reassured by the fact that the doctor has already been apprised of the case and that another professional supports his or her application.

You can also inform the doctor of the conditions for access to the program (sometimes not well known) and thereby mitigate certain discriminatory biases that may seep into the evaluation.

THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF ACCESS TO THE SOCIAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAM

The recognition of a severely limited capacity for employment, by the doctor and then by the MTESS, gives access to the Social Solidarity Program. The income supplement associated with the program:

- Increases food security and residential stability;
- Diminishes the stress, anxiety and sense of hopelessness arising from a recurrent lack of money;
- Favours personal motivation and social engagement (therapeutic initiatives, volunteer work, etc.).

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 doctors;
- An informative brochure on the process for accessing the Social Solidarity Program;
- 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

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