

Section: Policy
Subject: Programs
Title: **ACCESS-A-HOME-PROGRAM**
Date: January 19, 2007

1. **PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of the Access-A-Home Program is to provide assistance to participants with the removal of architectural barriers to make the housing wheelchair accessible.

2. **DEFINITIONS**

2.1 In this policy statement:

- a) “Program”, means the Access-A-Home Program.
- b) “Participant” means an eligible person(s) under the program.
- c) “Architectural Barrier” means any physical restriction which limits the use of a wheelchair in the applicant’s housing.
- d) “Housing Unit” means a residential premise occupied as the permanent residence of the participant who is limited to a wheelchair by reason of a long-term disability or a person who is a member of the participant’s immediate family who is limited to a wheelchair by reason of a long-term disability.
- e) “Income” means the household income, which is calculated as the total gross annual income of the participant including any other person in the household 18 years of age and over from all sources excluding the child tax credit or any special need allowance.
- f) “Special Need Allowance” means an allowance paid to cover the cost of those items which are in addition to basic requirements, e.g. V.O.N., Homemaking or attendant types of Personal Care Services.
- g) “Child Tax Credit” means a tax-free monthly payment to help families with the cost of raising children under age 18. The benefit is administered under the Income Tax Act.
- h) “Immediate Family” means mother/stepmother, or father/stepfather, son/stepson or daughter/stepdaughter, spouse or a permanent member of the household.

3. **ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS**

3.1 To be eligible, participants must meet the following criteria:

- a) be limited to a wheelchair by reason of a long-term disability or have a member of his or her immediate family limited to a wheelchair by reason of a long-term disability;
- b) be expected to become limited to a wheelchair by reason of long-term disability within six months of the date of application, have a member of his or her immediate family be expected to become limited to a wheelchair by reason of a long-term disability within six months of the date of application, and provide proof by way of medical documentation of this likelihood;
- c) the housing unit must be the principal place of residence of the individual limited to a wheelchair;
- d) provide written approval of the owner, if the participant is not the owner of the housing unit, and;
- e) have an annual income, as defined herein, of less than or equal to \$39,000.00

4. **INCOME GUIDELINES**

4.1 The participant's annual income, as defined herein, shall be less than or equal to \$39,000.00.

5. **ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES**

5.1 Any existing family residential housing unit is eligible provided:

- a) it is occupied as the permanent residence of the participant.
- b) it contains architectural barriers which restrict the use of a wheelchair.

6. **ELIGIBLE ALTERATIONS**

6.1 Additions and alterations shall be related to housing and shall be permanently installed, and improve access to the housing unit and/or basic facilities within the dwelling and/or increase the safety of the person limited to a wheelchair.

7. **INELIGIBLE ALTERATIONS**

7.1 Any alterations carried out prior to approval of assistance are not eligible.

7.2 Supportive care related items and special equipment required for therapeutic purposes whether permanently fixed or not, and portable appliances and aids are not eligible for funding.

7.3 Repairs, alterations or adaptations not related to the use of a wheelchair are not eligible.

8. **ELIGIBLE COSTS**

8.1 Costs eligible for assistance are limited to:

- a) eligible material and necessary equipment rental;
- b) contractor labour and related costs; and
- c) Harmonized Sales Tax.

8.2 Immediate family members of participants may include a charge for their own labour only where they are normally employed in the renovation or construction industry. Such costs shall not exceed trade prices for the area, as determined by regional inspection staff of the Department of Community Services.

9. **ASSISTANCE**

9.1 Assistance shall be in the form of a grant, to a maximum of \$ 5,000.00.

10. **APPROVALS**

10.1 The approval is conditional on the participant providing a contractor's quote (or estimate of material cost where applicable), which is accepted by the Program Director, or designate.

10.2 On receipt of the contractor's bid (or estimate of material cost), which is acceptable to regional staff, the application shall be submitted to the Program Manager, or designate, for final approval.

11. **INSPECTIONS**

11.1 Site inspections to determine that eligible work has been completed for purposes of issuing payment are only required as determined by the Program Manager, or designate.

12. **INCREASES/DECREASES/DISBURSEMENT**

12.1 Increases or decreases to the approved amount may be provided if:

- any associated change to the work is eligible;
- funds are available;
- the final amount does not exceed the maximum;
- both client and contractor agree to the change and the cost.

13. **EXCEPTIONS**

13.1 Within Program Regulations, exceptions with respect to the level of assistance can be made at the discretion of the Minister, or designate, for demonstrated hardship cases.