

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

ADDENDUM TO POLICY DIRECTIVE: CW 002-08

Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent (OCBE) Pooled Fund

On June 26, 2008, the Minister of Children and Youth Services announced that the provincial government would provide new funding equivalent to the Ontario Child Benefit directly to children's aid societies (CASs) in respect of children and youth in care or in formal customary care. This funding would consist of a one-time down payment for July 2007 and monthly payments commencing July 2008.

Policy Directive CW 002-08 for the OCBE Pooled Fund (hereafter "the Fund") came into effect on November 14, 2008, requiring CASs to establish a separate general ledger account to hold and pool all OCBE payments and to provide children and youth in care or in formal customary care, ages 0 to 17, with increased access to recreational, educational, cultural, and social opportunities (now known as and hereafter "Activities Program") from the Fund.

Effective September 30, 2009, this addendum to Policy Directive CW 002-08 requires CASs to allocate OCBE funds from the Fund in respect of youth in care or in formal customary care,¹ ages 15 to 17, to a savings program (hereafter "Savings Program").

The purpose of the Savings Program is to assist older youth who have been in care or in formal customary care for an extended period of time in recognition of their need for transition planning and supports to transition successfully to independent living. The Savings Program will provide all eligible youth with:

- financial skills to help prepare them for independent living; and
- savings to assist with the costs of their basic needs upon leaving care.

Youth participating in the Savings Program will continue to be eligible to access the Activities Program in accordance with their plans of care.

Both the Activities Program and Savings Program are intended to support children and youth in care or in formal customary care in their achievement of the following outcomes:

- higher educational achievement;
- higher degree of resiliency, social skills and relationship development; and
- a smoother transition to adulthood.

¹ "Children and youth in care or in formal customary care" refers to children who are in the care of a CAS either pursuant to a court order or a Temporary Care Agreement made under the *CFSA* and children in formal customary care. Formal customary care means the care and supervision of an Indian or native child by a person who is not the child's parent according to the custom of the child's band or native community. There must be a customary care agreement in place, the home must meet foster care licensing regulations and standards, and the child must be supervised by a CAS pursuant to the band declaration.

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

REQUIREMENTS:

This addendum to Policy Directive CW 002-08 under s 20.1 of the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) requires CASs to manage OCBE payments for the Savings Program in the following manner:

1. A youth is eligible (hereafter "eligible youth") to participate in the Savings Program when the youth:
 - is age 15, 16 or 17; and
 - has been in the care of a CAS or in formal customary care for 12 or more **consecutive** months.
2. When a youth becomes eligible to participate in the Savings Program, the youth's worker shall inform the youth about the Savings Program, including:
 - specific requirements for the Savings Program (*see Requirement 8*); and
 - methods of disbursement of savings to eligible youth (*see Requirements 11 and 12*).
3. CASs shall establish a Savings Program. For each youth participating in the Savings Program, CASs shall allocate the **current** monthly OCBE payment per youth (*see revised OCBE payment levels per child/youth on page 8*) to the Savings Program for each month that the youth is in care or in formal customary care. The OCBE payments are to be saved (hereafter "savings") by CASs on behalf of eligible youth.
4. Where a youth has been in care or in formal customary care for 12 consecutive months when he or she turns 15 years old, CASs shall allocate the OCBE payment amounts to the Savings Program for that youth beginning with the month that the youth turned 15 years old.

Where a youth meets the eligibility requirement of being in care or in formal customary care for 12 consecutive months after he or she turns 15 years old, CASs shall allocate the OCBE payment amounts to the Savings Program for that youth starting with the month that he or she turned 15 years old or came into care or formal customary care, **whichever occurred later**.

5. CASs may hold the savings for eligible youth within their Fund with ledger accounting for individual youth, or in a separate general ledger account with ledger accounting for individual youth, in accordance with the society's business practices and generally accepted accounting principles. Funds allocated to the Savings Program shall not be used by CASs for any purposes other than providing savings to assist youth with their basic needs upon leaving care as set out in this addendum.

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

6. CASs shall generate and provide savings statements quarterly to each eligible youth and to the worker assigned to the youth that indicate the amount of savings, including any interest accrued, being held on the youth's behalf.
7. CASs shall disburse savings to each eligible youth using one of three methods of disbursement:
 - Total amount directly to youth;
 - Total amount to third parties on behalf of youth; or
 - Partial amount directly to youth and partial amount to third parties on behalf of youth.

CASs shall determine the method of disbursement for each eligible youth as set out in Requirements 11 and 12 below.

8. CASs shall work with each eligible youth to assist them to meet the following requirements for the Savings Program (hereafter "Savings Program Requirements"):
 - acquire financial skills and demonstrate financial competency relevant for independent living;
 - establish a personal bank account, or an alternative savings mechanism to receive funds where banking is not feasible;
 - develop an appropriate plan for the use of the savings; and
 - secure stable housing.
9. To support eligible youth to meet the Savings Program Requirements, CASs shall make available to each eligible youth a program, which is consistent with the ministry's financial literacy program framework, to acquire financial skills and demonstrate financial competency appropriate to the youth's cognitive and developmental skills (hereafter "Financial Literacy Program"). This Financial Literacy Program shall be delivered to each youth either through the CAS directly or another entity (e.g., community-based youth-serving agency) that has expertise in effectively teaching financial skills to youth.
10. CASs shall disburse the total savings, including any interest, to eligible youth **no later than six months** after CAS care or formal customary care has ended for that youth with no prospect of resumption.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., youth completing a *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) custodial sentence after age 18) CASs shall have the discretion to extend the time period within which the savings must be disbursed to eligible youth.

11. Where a youth has successfully met the Savings Program Requirements, the CAS shall disburse the total savings, including any interest, to the youth directly into his or her bank account (or an alternative mechanism where banking is not feasible).

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

12. Where a youth has not successfully met the Savings Program Requirements, the CAS shall meet with the youth to establish a plan for the disbursement of all or part of the savings to third parties (e.g., rent payments to landlord) on behalf of the youth.
13. CAS workers shall record discussions with the youth regarding the Savings Program in the youth's file, including discussions about the:
 - Savings Program Requirements;
 - methods of disbursement and when the funds will be disbursed;
 - quarterly savings statements; and
 - youth's progress in meeting the Savings Program Requirements.
14. CASs shall inform CAS staff, foster parents, residential care operators, and probation officers/case managers (where applicable) about the purpose of the Savings Program and encourage them to discuss this program and the youth's progress with respect to the Savings Program Requirements as opportunities arise.
15. Each CAS shall develop operating policies and procedures for the Savings Program that shall be reviewed by its Ministry Regional Office for compliance with this addendum prior to the CAS implementing the Savings Program.
16. CASs shall develop and monitor written protocols that enable effective case coordination and planning to take place between CAS workers and probation officers/case managers for youth eligible to participate in the Savings Program who are serving an YCJA custodial sentence while in the care of a CAS.
17. In cases where an eligible youth cannot be located at the time that CAS care or formal customary care has ended, the CAS shall hold the funds saved on behalf of the youth for a maximum of one year from the date that care or formal customary care ended to allow for the CAS to make reasonable efforts to locate the youth or for the youth to contact the CAS, and document these efforts in the youth's file. If the savings are not disbursed to the eligible youth within the one year period, the CAS shall re-allocate these funds to the Activities Program.
18. Where an eligible youth dies prior to qualifying for the disbursement of the savings, the CAS shall re-allocate these funds to the Activities Program.
19. CASs shall continue to provide any and all financial supports currently provided by the CAS to youth participating in the Savings Program. The provision of savings shall not have a detrimental impact on a youth's overall eligibility to receive other funds or services provided by the CAS as he or she transitions from care, including funds that may be provided through an Extended Care and Maintenance (ECM) agreement with the CAS.

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

20. One-time Exceptions:

- a. In cases where a youth would have been eligible to participate in the Savings Program between July 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009 and is still in care or in formal customary care, CASs shall calculate the OCBE payment for each month that the youth would have qualified to receive savings during this period and allocate the total amount, including interest, to the Savings Program for that youth.
- b. In cases where a youth has entered into an ECM agreement and would have been eligible to participate in the Savings Program between July 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009 CASs shall disburse the savings, including interest, for any qualifying months during this period to the youth.

CASs shall calculate the total savings for each youth based on the number of months that the youth was eligible to participate in the Savings Program from July 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009 multiplied by the OCBE payment rate for those months.

CASs shall disburse the savings either directly to youth and/or to third parties on behalf of youth based on its assessment of how well the youth has met the Savings Program Requirements and is able to manage his or her savings.

Where a youth has demonstrated that he or she has met all the Savings Program Requirements, the CAS may disburse the funds directly to the youth through his or her bank account (or alternative savings mechanism where banking is not feasible).

Where a youth has not demonstrated that he or she has met the Savings Program Requirements, the CAS shall meet with the youth to establish a plan for the disbursement of all or part of the savings to third parties (e.g., rent payments to landlord).

If a youth who would have been eligible for the Savings Program from July 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009 returns to the CAS and enters into an ECM agreement, the youth will be eligible to receive savings. CASs will disburse these savings in the same manner as outlined above.

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

21. Reporting Requirements:

CASs shall document and report to the Ministry on the OCBE funds in the Savings Program on a quarterly and annual basis. Using a template provided by the Ministry, CASs shall report the following information:

- Total amount of OCBE revenues being allocated to the Savings Program;
- Total number of eligible youth for whom OCBE funds are being held in the Savings Program;
- Total number of eligible youth, by age, who received OCBE funds from the Savings Program;
- Total amount of OCBE funds paid out of the Savings Program to eligible youth, by age; and
- Total number of eligible youth, by age, who received either a lump sum OCBE payment or on whose behalf the CAS made structured OCBE payments to the youth and/or third parties.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

The Addendum to Policy Directive CW 002-08 will come into effect on September 30, 2009.

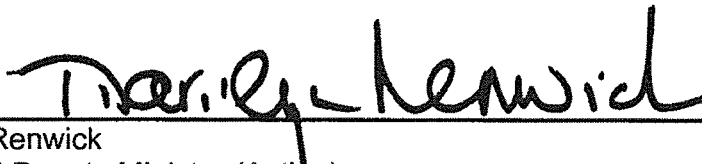
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

ISSUANCE OF ADDENDUM TO POLICY DIRECTIVE CW 002-08:

September 30, 2009



Aryeh Gitterman
Assistant Deputy Minister
Policy Development and Program Design Division
Ministry of Children and Youth Services



Marilyn Renwick
Assistant Deputy Minister (Acting)
Service Delivery Division
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent (OCBE) Payment Levels

The maximum annual OCBE payments per child/youth from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011 have been revised from the payment levels indicated in the Policy Directive for the OCBE Pooled Fund to reflect the new rate increases with respect to the Ontario Child Benefit.

Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent per Child/Youth					
	July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009	July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010	July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011	July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012	July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013
Month	\$50	\$91.67	\$91.67	\$91.67	\$109.17
Year	\$600	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,310
Down-payment	\$250	-----	-----	-----	-----

The total monthly OCBE payment for a CAS is based on the number of children and youth for whom the CAS receives the Children's Special Allowance multiplied by the monthly OCBE payment for that month. All eligible children and youth have access to OCBE programs regardless of whether or not the CAS receives the Children's Special Allowance for that child or youth.