

# Knowing Your Welfare Rights & Responsibilities in Manitoba

A Plain Language Advocacy Guide

Janet Smith and The Social Planning Council of Brandon

October, 2000



the care it extends to all citizens"

## The Social Planning Council of Brandon

The Social Planning Council of Brandon (SPC) is a voluntary, non-profit organization committed to improving the quality of life in Brandon and area. The SPC was founded in 1995 as a result of the City of Brandon Forum on Poverty. Issues of concern to the SPC include: poverty, housing, health and safety, justice, employment, environment, urban planning and development.

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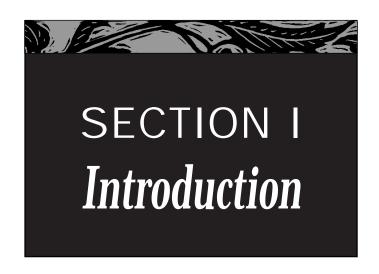
Appreciation is also extended to the following groups and individuals: The Manitoba Department of Family Services and Housing and the Social Services Advisory Committee for their review of Section II; the Manitoba League For Persons With Disabilities for their review of the Advocacy section. Special thanks to the Salvation Army Literacy Program students in Winnipeg, and Brandon Community Welcome Co-op Inc. members for piloting the *Guide*.

To the many people receiving welfare who told their stories and asked important questions about the welfare system - a very special thank you. We hope that this *Guide* will help you to better understand the welfare system, and to speak up for your rights.

This book is dedicated to friend and fellow advocate,
Brent White

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## **About This Book**

The number of welfare cases in Manitoba in 2000 was 35,850<sup>1</sup>. Research has shown that many welfare recipients do not fully understand their welfare rights and responsibilities. In addition, information on the welfare system is sometimes difficult to find and understand.<sup>2</sup>

This *Guide* attempts to answer some of the most frequently-asked questions about welfare, and gives readers helpful information on how to deal with the welfare system. The *Guide* also lists

Advocacy: speaking up for your rights. organizations and resources that address other questions and concerns you may have about the welfare system.

Knowing Your Welfare Rights & Responsibilities in Manitoba is written primarily for welfare recipients. It can also be used as a teaching and advocacy tool by literacy instructors and others who support people receiving welfare. It is written at an approximate Grade 6/7 level.

The *Guide* is intended to provide people with information, not advice. Every welfare situation is unique and readers should consult with their case worker about their own specific situation. If you need legal advice or representation, contact the Lawyer Referral program at the Canadian Legal Education Association (see Section V).

The information contained in the *Guide* is accurate as of July, 2001. Because welfare laws and policies frequently change, readers should call the Income Assistance office nearest them for updated information (see Section V). You can also check the following internet sites:

The Human Services Guide - http://direct.gov.mb.ca/bsi/swi/sac.htm

Dept. of Family Services and Housing - www.gov.mb.ca/fs/index.html

<sup>1 1999/00</sup> Family Services Annual Report

<sup>2 &</sup>lt;u>Literacy Welfare and Work Preliminary Study</u> (1997); and <u>Two Hundred Voices: Manitobans with Disabilities Share their views on Income</u> <u>Assistance and Employment</u> (1999)

# Language and Design

There are many words used to describe the welfare system. In this book we use terms that are familiar to most people. We also introduce words that may be new to you, so that you will become more comfortable using them.

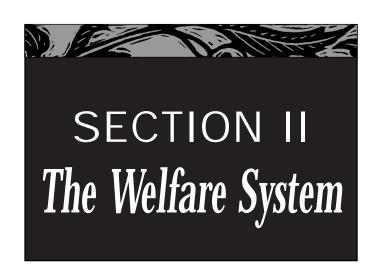
Here are some of the terms used in this Guide:

- Welfare refers to the welfare system as a whole. Also called 'income assistance' or 'social assistance'.
- Assistance means the benefits (money and other services) received by people using the welfare system.
- Employment and Income Assistance or EIA refers to the Provincial welfare program.
- Municipal Assistance refers to the Municipal (city) welfare program.

- Welfare recipients are people who receive assistance. Also referred to as participants of the Income Assistance program.
- Case workers, counsellors, and case coordinators are the EIA or Municipal assistance staff who deal directly with participants.

A number of words are written in *italic* to show that they are important to remember. Other words are set in **bold print**, and their definitions are listed beside the word. If you come across any other new words, look them up in a dictionary or ask a friend or teacher for the meaning. Use the page at the back of the book to write down these new words.

The design for this book (the leaf) was chosen to show growth, change, and the power of information. It was inspired by the stories told by people living on welfare.



## **Basic Facts About Welfare in Manitoba**

Welfare is a program that helps people who have no other way of supporting themselves or their families. The goal of welfare, wherever possible, is to help people find work so that they can be self-supporting.

Eligible:

To meet

certain

requirements;

to qualify for.

There are two welfare programs in Manitoba: Employment and Income Assistance (also known as EIA or provincial welfare), and Municipal Assistance (sometimes called city welfare). Both programs are part of the Manitoba Department of Family Services and Housing.

**Employment and Income Assistance** works with all **eligible** people living in the city of Winnipeg, as well as places where no municipal government exists. EIA also serves certain groups of people within municipalities, including:

- People with a physical or mental disability that is likely to last more than 90 days;
- Single parents with children;
- People staying in a women's crisis shelter;
- Dependent children whose parents are dead or unable to meet their basic needs.

Municipal Assistance works with people who live *outside* Winnipeg and are *not* eligible for the EIA program: primarily *non-disabled single people, couples without children,* and *two-parent families with children.* Some examples of people who might qualify for Municipal assistance are those who are:

- Employed, but making less than they would on welfare;
- Employed, but don't have enough money to last until their first pay cheque;
- Temporarily unemployed and cannot support themselves
- Waiting for their Employment Insurance (E.I) benefits and cannot support themselves;
- Unemployed for medical reasons for less than 90 days and cannot support themselves.

Eligibility for either welfare program is based on a needs test. If a persons *costs* (what they need) are higher than their *financial resources* (what they have), they may be eligible for assistance. Welfare recipients receive a monthly allowance to cover their basic needs. The monthly allowance is different for every participant. It is based on individual and family needs.



Some groups of welfare recipients are expected to prepare for and look for work. These include:

- Single parents with children over the age of six and in school;
- Single persons or couples (with or without children) who are not enrolled under the Persons With A Disability category.

Participants who are required to look for work must develop a personal job plan with their counsellor and do everything they can to find a job. In addition, all participants must:

- report regularly and accurately to their counsellor;
- make a reasonable effort to collect any money they may be entitled to, including divorce payments, child maintenance, C.P.P (Canadian Pension Plan) E.I (Employment Insurance), Workers Compensation;
- use the assistance received for the cost of basic necessities (including food, shelter, and clothing);
- tell their counsellor about any change in their situation (for example: an increase or decrease in family size, marriage or commonlaw union, change of address, return to school, or employment).

# **Common Questions & Concerns**

These questions were developed by people receiving assistance. The answers to these questions will fit *most*, but not all situations. Rules sometimes change and every welfare situation is different. If you want to find out about your own specific case, talk to your case worker or one of the organizations listed in Section IV.

## APPLYING FOR WELFARE

Q: How do I apply for assistance?

**A:** There are several basic steps to applying for assistance.

STEP 1: Call, write or go to the nearest EIA or Municipal Assistance office. Tell the worker that you wish to apply for assistance (a list of EIA offices in Manitoba is included in Section IV).

STEP 2: The worker will ask you questions about yourself and your financial situation. This information will be put on an Application Form. You will be asked to show some I.D (identification) and any other documents that show your financial situation.

STEP 3: You will then be asked to read and sign the Application Form. If you are married or living common law, your partner may have to cosign the Application Form. You will be asked to give the worker permission to confirm the information you have provided. Note: The Application Form for assistance is a legal document. It is very important that you look over the form before you sign it. If some information is incorrect, ask the worker to change it. If there is anything you do not understand, ask him or her to explain it before you sign.

STEP 4: Your worker will now review your Application Form. He or she will decide if you are eligible to receive assistance.

STEP 5: If you are required to look for work, you may be asked to attend an Orientation Session. You will also prepare a Personal Job Plan with your worker.

## Q: What I.D do I have to show?

- A: You will be asked to show two of the following pieces of identification when you apply for assistance:
- · Birth certificate
- Manitoba Health Services card
- Social Insurance number
- Old Age Security number, if you're over 65
- Drivers license
- Marriage certificate
- Passport



# Q: I don't have any I.D. Can I still apply for assistance?

A: Yes. If you don't have ID, ask someone who knows you to write a letter on your behalf until you can get some I.D. It is best if this person is someone who has a position of responsibility, say a doctor, lawyer, minister or a social worker. They should write the letter on office letterhead.

## Q: What other documents will I need to bring?

A: You will need to give the worker any documents that show your financial position. For example:

- · A copy of your lease or rent receipts;
- If you own your home, your mortgage and property tax bill, or a bank statement that shows your monthly payment;
- Utility bills for hydro, heat, and water;

Assets: anything of value
that belongs to
a person and
can be turned
into cash. For
example:
bonds, RRSPs,
and other
investments.

- Receipts for regular prescriptions and other medical supplies;
- Receipts for Employment Insurance (E.I)
   payments, pension
   benefits, family maintenance, disability
   benefits, workers compensation, or any
   other payments you
   receive on a regular
   basis;
- Your bank book or bank statements showing how much money you have;

• A list of any assets you own.

# Q: I can't get to a welfare office. How do I apply?

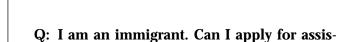
A: If you're unable to get to an office in your area, call the government switchboard (1-800-282-8069) and ask for the EIA department. An Application Form can be mailed to you, or a worker may arrange to meet with you in your community or in your home.

# Q: Help! I need assistance in a hurry. Is there anything I can do?

A: In an emergency situation (meaning you have completely run out of food and/or money), you can often get assistance the same day you apply. Call your nearest welfare office, and be sure to tell the receptionist that you need emergency assistance. In Winnipeg, you can call the After Hours Line at 945-0183. Outside of Winnipeg, go to your local RCMP detachment.

# Q: I've just moved to Manitoba from another province. Can I receive assistance?

A: Yes, you can apply for financial assistance if you've just moved to Manitoba. If you recently received assistance from another province, you may have to prove that you are currently in need of assistance.



tance?

A: Yes. Landed immigrants can apply for financial assistance. *Sponsored* immigrants may be asked to seek assistance from their sponsor. If the sponsor is unable or unwilling to provide assistance, welfare will provide assistance if you can show that you are in need.

Note: The sponsor will not be contacted if there is reason to believe that this would harm you in any way. Talk to your worker about your situation.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

## Q: How much money will I get?

A: Every persons case is different. When determining your rate, your worker will look at things like: family size, age of children, and the group category you fit under. The basic formula however, is very simple:

What your basic needs are (-) What you have (your financial resources)

= What you get

## Q: What are basic needs?

- A: The government sets rate guidelines for basic needs. Basic needs fall into several categories:
- 1. Food, clothing, personal needs and household supplies (May include coin laundry for certain categories of applicants: Persons

With A Disability, Aged, Persons in a Crisis Facility and Special Dependent Care). If you require a special diet for medical reasons (including pregnancies beyond the fourth month), you may also qualify for a special diet allowance. Ask your your case worker.

- 2. Shelter Mortgage payments (including principal, interest, taxes and insurance), rent, or room and board (up to the maximum guidelines). Homeowners may receive monies to pay for home repairs. Ask your worker for details.
- 3. Utilities heat, water and hydro
- 4. Health care expenses including glasses, dental care, prescription drugs, transportation for health reasons, and a housekeeper or attendant during illness or emergency.
- 5. *Employment related expenses* special work clothing, tools, childcare, transportation, basic telephone and parking may be covered upon approval.
- 6. Funeral costs basic funeral expenses up to a maximum set guideline.

## Q: What about Special needs?

**A:** EIA may provide additional assistance in the following areas:

Newborn Allowance – Up to \$250 in additional assistance for your first-born child, and up to \$75 for each additional newborn child.



Large Appliances – When absolutely necessary, welfare may pay for the purchase or repair of a washer, fridge, or stove.

School Supplies – Your family can receive money to cover the cost of school supplies. Amounts are: for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6: \$60; for Grade 7 and 8: \$80; and Grades 9 - 12: \$100.

Essential Household Items – A one-time only allowance of up to \$500 can be made for the purchase of essential household items if:

- You have experienced a recent marriage breakup and cannot keep household furniture (includes those leaving an abusive relationship),
- You've reached age 18 and have moved out on your own, and cannot afford household furnishings.
- You are a Person With A Disability leaving an institutional setting.
- You have lost your furniture through fire, flood, or other natural disaster.

Mattress and Bedding – A new mattress, box spring and frame may be approved every seven years for each member of your family. New bedding may be approved every three years. Does not apply if you are paying room and board.

Moving expenses – Welfare may pay for your move, but only the cheapest method of moving will be approved. You must provide a written cost of the move, along with all invoices or receipts. In order to receive assistance, the move must be for one of the following reasons:

- Your present residence is no longer livable;
- There has been a change in your family size;
- Rent at the new location is less than what you pay now;
- The new residence is closer to where you will be working or training.

**Note:** Municipal welfare may have different rules with respect to 'Special Needs'. Ask your worker about your specific case and needs before you spend money or make plans.

# Q: What am I allowed to keep when I am on welfare?

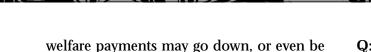
A: Some of your financial resources are not included when calculating your financial resources. Ask your worker to go over the list of exempted income and assets to see if anything applies to you.

# Q: I own a car. Will this affect my welfare assessment?

**A:** Your car will *not* affect your welfare assessment. However, welfare does not provide money for the maintenance and operation of your car (including Autopac payments).

# Q: Can the amount I am receiving from welfare change? Can I lose my benefits?

A: Your level of assistance will change as your needs change. For example, if you have a new family member, your level of assistance will increase. If your needs decrease (if a dependent child leaves home; death of a family member; or if you or your spouse become employed, for instance), then your



welfare payments may go down, or even be discontinued. Remember to report any changes in your situation to your worker.

# Q: I received an overpayment on my cheque. What happens now?

A: You will be held responsible if welfare overpays you because you fail to report changes in your living conditions or financial situation. The overpayment amount will be deducted from your cheques. You can ask your worker to deduct this amount gradually until it is paid off. You do have the right to appeal this decision (see page 16 on the Appeals Process).

If the welfare department is completely responsible for an overpayment because of a mistake made by them, you may not be required to pay it back.

## WELFARE & WORK

# Q: Do I have to look for work while on welfare?

A: Some people will be required to look for work while on assistance. If you have work expectations, you will develop a Personal Job Plan with your worker. You will be expected to look for work, and accept any reasonable job offer. You must also keep a record of the jobs you have applied for.

# Q: If I find work, how much money am I allowed to keep?

A: Everyone who finds work while on EIA is allowed to keep a portion of their earnings. Municipalities may have different rules than the EIA program. Talk to your worker about your specific case and how much you are entitled to keep.

## Q: What happens if I leave my job?

- **A:** Your assistance may be reduced or discontinued if you:
  - Quit a job, or do something to get you fired from a job that you could *reasonably* have kept working at;
  - Refuse any reasonable job offer;
  - Do not actively search for a job;
  - Fail to take a course of training that your case worker has recommended.

Note: Contact your worker immediately if you are fired from, refuse to take, or quit a job due to safety issues, harassment, discrimination, family responsibilities, or major changes in working conditions. He or she will look into the case. Your assistance will not be affected if you quit for acceptable reasons.

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Q: Are there programs that can help prepare me for work?

- A: Programs such as the province's *Building Independence* program help low-income families find and prepare themselves for work. Talk to your case worker about training and employment assistance programs you might qualify for.
- Q: I did not finish high school. Can I enroll in an adult upgrading program?
- A: Talk with your worker about your education needs. He or she may suggest that you enroll in a literacy program. These programs help adults improve reading, writing, math and computer skills.
- Q: I want to go to University or a Community College. What help is available?
- A: Welfare does not normally cover the costs of enrolling in a university or college program, unless that program fits in with your own Personal Job Plan, and might reasonably lead to long-term employment. You *may* be eligible for some assistance to cover tuition, living allowance, child care and/or transportation costs. You may be expected to look for work or remain employed, if possible, while pursuing your studies. Talk with your worker about your options.

## **CHILDCARE**

- Q: Can I receive assistance with day care while I'm out looking for work or in training?
- **A:** Yes, you can receive assistance with day care while both looking for work or taking train-

ing. Call the Child Day Care Intake Line at 945-0776 in Winnipeg or toll-free at 1-800-282-8069 for more information. You can also get an application form for a child care **subsidy** from any licensed child care provider.

Subsidy:
Government
aid or support
to cover the
cost of a
particular
program.

## **HOUSING**

- Q: How much am I allowed to spend on rent?
- A: The government sets rent guidelines for income assistance. Ask your worker how much your maximum rate is. You are allowed to have one or more roommates, but welfare will only pay for your share of rent and utilities up to the maximum amount.



## Q: What if I decide to move?

A: It is important to tell your case worker if you decide to move. Welfare only covers your moving expenses if the move is essential. Welfare will only pay for one damage deposit in your lifetime. You must pay the damage deposit of your new residence with the refund from the damage deposit at your old residence.

## **COMMON-LAW RELATIONSHIPS**

## Q: What is a common-law relationship?

- A: A common-law relationship means that you are living with another person as if you were married. This means that you and you partner are known in the community or registered officially as husband and wife or common-law partners. Living common law also means that you and your partner live at the same address and share financial resources and responsibilities such as joint bank accounts, loans, credit, or own property together. You may also share rent, groceries, hydro and other bills.
- Q: Does living common law affect my assistance?
- A: Yes. Your common-law partner's income will be included with yours to determine your assistance rate. Either person in a common-law relationship can enroll as the applicant, including a person with a disability. You must tell your worker if you are living with a common-law partner.

## **HOME VISITS**

Q: Will welfare workers ever visit my home?

A: From time to time your case worker or another welfare worker may wish to make a home visit. Workers must schedule their visit ahead of time. However, they are not entitled to look through your personal or household belongings.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

# Q: Can welfare release information about me to other people or groups?

- A: When you apply for assistance, you will be asked to sign an *Authorization Form*. This form allows welfare to obtain only the information they need to determine your eligibility for assistance. This information is confidential and cannot cannot be released to anyone without your permission. It is kept in your case file.
- Q: Am I allowed to see the information contained in my file?
- A: You are allowed to see *most* of the information that is kept in your case file. Some information, such as information used in a court action, information which could invade privacy, or cause harm to any person, will not be shown to you. Whenever information from your file is withheld from you, you should get the reason for this in writing from your case worker.



## Q: How can I get access to my file?

A: There are two ways you can see what is in your welfare file. The easiest way is to simply set up an appointment with your case worker to go over the file. You can also make a formal application to see your file. Fill out a Freedom of Information form at your local welfare office, and send it to the following address:

Freedom of Information Access Co-ordinator Manitoba Family Services and Housing 219 – 114 Garry Street Winnipeg, MB R3C 4V6

There is no charge for the application. If the search and preparation time on your file exceeds two hours, you will be charged a fee. Any confidential information will be removed from your file before it is shown to you.

## **APPEALS**

- Q: How will I know if my application for assistance is denied, or my benefits have been reduced or suspended?
- A: You will receive an official letter of these decisions from the Welfare Office. The letter must tell you why the decision was made and that you have the right to launch a formal Appeal.

## Q: How do I launch an Appeal?

A: Fill out a *Notice of Appeal* form (copies are available from your local Welfare Office and from the Social Services Advisory Committee office). Your Appeal can also be written on a plain piece of paper. Mail or deliver it to:

Social Services Advisory Committee 7th Floor, 175 Hargrave St. Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R8

Phone: (204) 945-3003 or 945-3005; toll free: 1-800-282-8069; TTY: 948-2037

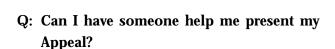
Fax: (204) 945-1736

Once the Committee receives your notice of appeal, the Appeal Board will schedule a hearing, usually within about fifteen days.

## Q: How do I prepare for my Appeal hearing?

A: You will receive an *Appeal Guide* from the Committee explaining the Appeals process in detail. The Appeals Guide can also be picked up from your local Welfare Office. Read it before your Appeal hearing.

It is important that you are well prepared for your Appeal. Organize any documents that you think will help you with your case (see Keeping Records - Advocacy section). These may include letters to and from Welfare, notes from conversations with your case worker, receipts of money you have spent, letters from your doctor, and pay stubs from work you might have done.



A: You have the right to be represented by a lawyer or anyone else at this meeting. Your representative can speak on your behalf, or they may just offer you moral support.

If there are any witnesses that you think might help your case, you can invite them to the meeting. Make sure you let the Social Services Advisory Committee know that you have invited witnesses. If your witness(es) cannot attend the hearing, they may write and sign a statement that supports your case.

## Q: Who hears my Appeal?

A: Your Appeal hearing will be heard by 3 members of the Social Services Advisory Committee. These committee members are independent and are not government employees. A secretary will take notes at the meeting. Your case worker or another welfare representative will also be there to present their side of the story. Welfare will sometimes bring their own lawyer.

## Q: Where is the hearing held?

A: Appeal meetings are held in your home community. Committee members will travel to your town or city to meet with you. Video conferences are set up for people who live in the North (Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas and Lynn Lake). Transportation costs will be covered for people who live outside of these northern centres.

## Q: What happens at the Appeal Hearing?

A: Appeal hearings are informal. You will be asked to present your case, and then the people from Welfare will present their argument. You may be asked questions by the Committee. You may also be asked to give the Committee copies of any documents you have presented. *Do not give any original documents away - only copies.* 

The entire Appeals process usually takes less than an hour, but can go longer if you need more time. No decision will be made until after the hearing. You will receive a written copy of the decision, usually within one week of the hearing.

## Q: What if I lose my Appeal?

A: If you lose your appeal you will be sent a letter from the Social Services Advisory Committee stating the reasons. You have the right to take this decision to the next level, The Court of Appeals. These Appeals must be handled by a lawyer and must take place within 30 days from the date on the letter.





This *Guide* has given you information on your rights and responsibilities as a welfare recipient in Manitoba. While information is a powerful tool, sometimes it is not enough. You may find that even though you know your rights, you may be turned down when you ask for something you need.

Policy:
A rule,
procedure or
guideline.

For example, you may wish to go back to school and get your Grade 12, but your case worker wants you to look for work instead. What do you do? One option is to get mad and storm out of the office. While it may feel

good at the time, it will not solve your problem. Another option is to use *advocacy skills*.

Advocacy means *speaking up for your rights.* The goal of advocacy is to *make change* - to turn a problem into a positive solution. This could mean changing a law, a **policy**, or even an attitude.

There are two main types of advocacy: Self-Advocacy and Group Advocacy. People use *Self-Advocacy* to speak up for themselves and solve their own personal problems. *Group Advocacy* is when a group of people get together to speak up for the rights of themselves or others. Group Advocacy is used to change laws or policies that affect a large group of people (such as cuts to welfare rates or rent increases).

The following section looks at tips for effective Self and Group Advocacy. While the examples we use are related to Welfare, advocacy skills can be used to solve almost any problem.

# **Self Advocacy**

"You must do the thing you think you cannot do"
- Eleanor Roosevelt

People use *Self-Advocacy* to speak up for themselves and solve their own personal problems. If you disagree with a decision about your own case, or feel that you have been treated unfairly by Welfare, there are a number of things you can do. Before you take any actions however, it is important to have a Self-Advocacy Plan.

## **SELF-ADVOCACY PLAN:**

STEP 1: Think about *why* you disagree with the decision and *what* you want changed. Write these things down!

STEP 2: Find out *who* can make decisions on your request. Think about how you want to approach the person. Do you want to meet in person? Call him or her on the telephone? Write a letter?

STEP 3: Decide *what* you want to say to the person. Be clear. Tell him or her what you need and why. Talk to the person about what you want him or her to *do*. It helps to write your request down and try it out with a friend before talking to the person in charge. Always remember to be *polite but direct*. Keep your voice confident, but not loud or aggressive.

For example, you might say: "I want to go back to school to get my grade twelve instead of looking for work at this time. Getting my grade twelve will help me get a better job and will lead to independence".

## **Self- Advocacy Tips:**

- Speak directly with the person in charge of the decision. Ask him or her to explain their decision and to put it *in writing*. Tell them why you think you have been treated unfairly, and what you would like them to do. Also, talk about what *you* are prepared to do.
- If they do not change their mind, talk to the person's supervisor. Again, ask them to put their decision in writing.
- If you are still not satisfied with the decision, contact one or more of the following groups:<sup>3</sup>
  - a. The Provincial Ombudsman The Ombudsman investigates complaints about government departments and staff.
  - b. Your MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) elected provincial politicians.
  - c. The Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister or the Minister of Family Services and Housing.

<sup>3.</sup> See Section IV for contact information



4. If your complaint is about something in the Welfare law or regulations, consult with a lawyer. He or she may suggest taking the decision to court. If you want general legal information or help finding a lawyer, call the Canadian Legal Education Association (CLEA). Contact information can be found in Section IV.

## How to Handle 'No'

Even the best made plans are turned down at times. Don't get discouraged! There are many ways you can handle no's.

## Ask Again

If the person in charge does not want to give you

Assertive:
Self-assured,
confident
and positive.

what you need, try asking again. Remember the old saying: the squeaky wheel gets the grease!

Ask differently

If you are shy and soft-spoken, you may need to try
being more assertive.

Practice with a friend before your meeting. Always be *polite but direct*.

### Ask someone else

If the person does not give you what you need, or tells you that they cannot make a decision on your request, ask to speak with someone who can make the decision. This may be their supervisor or the Director of the department.

Ask an advocate to help you

You have the right to invite a friend or advocate to attend meetings with you. Your advocate will support you and help you speak up for your rights.

## Look for a Compromise

Sometimes you will not be able to get exactly what you want. You may have to look for a **compromise** to your problem.

## **Keeping Records**

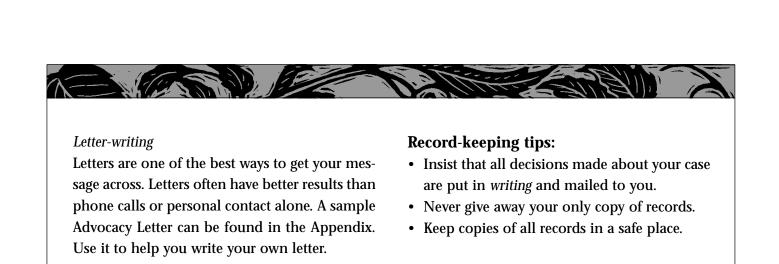
It is very important that you keep records of everything that happens when you are doing advocacy. These records help you remember what was said or decided in a meeting. They also remind you of what needs to be done in the future. Records can help if you ever need legal help with your case.

## Contact forms

You must keep notes of every meeting or phone call that takes place between you and the person you are dealing with. A good way to keep detailed records is by filling in a *Contact Form*. This form lists *who* is going to do *what* and *when*. A sample is included in the Appendix (Section V).

## Compromise:

A settlement of differences in which each side gives something to the other.
Sometimes called a win-win situation.



# **Group Advocacy**

"Never doubt that a small group of citizens can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has"

- Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

Sometimes you will be unable to solve problems on your own. If the problem has to do with a policy or law that affects many people, it may be time to try a *Group Advocacy* approach.

Group Advocacy happens when people come together to speak up for themselves (or others)

Anthropologist:
A social scientist
who studies
human cultures
and societies.

in order to solve a problem. Group Advocacy can be very effective, because there is strength in numbers! What you cannot do alone can often be done when people work together.

Here's an example: lets say you do not have enough money to pay for rent. You try on your own to get an increase in your welfare budget. You use all of the steps outlined in the Self-Advocacy section, but you are not successful. Then you talk to other people on welfare. You find out that they too do not have enough money for rent. You may feel angry. In order to turn that anger into a positive solution however, you need two main things: an *Advocacy Group* and an *Advocacy Plan*.

## **Advocacy Groups**

Sometimes you will be lucky enough to find an Advocacy Group in your area. They may already be working on your issue or they may be willing to take it on. You may wish to join this group and work with them on solving the problem.4

"The place to start is where you are, with the people you care about, the issues you're angry about, the things you'd like to have changed in your life and the lives of the people you spend time with".

- Si Kahn, folk singer and community organizer

If an Advocacy Group does not exist in your area, you can also start your own organization. Ask yourself these questions:

- What will the *purpose* of the group be?
- What will the group do?
- Who should join the group?
- Where can I find group members?
- Where and when should we meet?

<sup>4.</sup> A list of welfare advocacy groups can be found in Section IV



Your group does not have to be big to start with. Sometimes it is best to begin with a few people who share the same concerns. Invite others to join when you are clear about what you want to do.

Don't worry if you don't have experience working with an Advocacy Group. Most people learn by doing, so just take it one step at a time. You will learn new skills as you go along - even by making mistakes!

## Leaders

A good group usually has a good leader (sometimes called the Chairperson).<sup>5</sup> A good leader:

- believes strongly in the issue
- · is a hard worker
- is organized
- knows how to run a meeting
- is a good listener
- is a good talker
- · doesn't get discouraged too often
- is honest and mature
- encourages others to take on tasks
- helps others develop their own leadership skills.

**Note**: You don't have to have all of these skills to begin with. Leadership skills can be learned!

#### Members

A good Advocacy Group also has members who work together to get things done. Every member

in an Advocacy Group should have tasks they can do and skills they can develop along the way. Even though the work you do may be hard and take a long time, it is important to have *fun*, be *patient*, and keep a *positive attitude*.

## Secretary

Someone in your group should write *things down* and keep a record of all your meetings, phone calls, letters and other actions (see section on Keeping Records on page 23). This person is usually called the *Secretary*.

#### **Treasurer**

If your group is raising and spending money, you will need a Treasurer . He or she keeps records of all the money that comes in and is spent. The Treasurer reports back to the group on a regular basis.

## Advocacy Plan<sup>6</sup>

Once you have put together an Advocacy Group, you will need to develop a *plan*. The Advocacy Plan is like a road map: it helps you figure out

where you are going and how you will get there. Write your plan down. That way, you can go back to it at any time and make changes if you need to. Ask someone you trust to help develop your Advocacy Plan.

"If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up someplace else"

Yogi Berra (Famous baseball player)

<sup>5.</sup> A resource on building leadership is found in Organizing, Si Kahn, 1981. See Section IV.

<sup>6.</sup> This section adapted with permission from the Manitoba League for Persons With Disabilities (MLPD) booklet: <u>Getting What You Want:</u> <u>Self-Advocacy By People With Disabilities</u>, 1997



Step 1 - Identify the Problem

Step 2 - Think About the History of the Problem

Step 3 - List Possible Solutions

Step 4 - Look at Advantages & Disadvantages of each solution

Step 5 - Choose your Advocacy Goal

Step 6 - Plan your Strategy

Step 7 - Take Action

Step 8 - Evaluate

## **Step 1- Identify the Problem**

- Your group may have a number of problems that need to be solved. Some may be big and some may be small. Write as many problems as you can think of on a big piece of paper.
- Pick *one problem* to work on. You can choose the problem that you feel is the most important *or* start with a problem that you think will be easiest to solve.
- Write a problem statement. It might sound like this: "People on welfare do not have enough money for rent."

## **Step 2 - Think about the History of the Problem**

Once you have a problem statement, it helps to look at the *history* of the problem itself. Ask yourself these questions:

- why does this problem exist?
- how did it come about?
- who is involved in this issue?
- what is getting in the way of solving the problem?

## **Step 3 - List Possible Solutions to your problem**

Advocacy is about *changing problems into positive* solutions. Make a list of as many possible solutions to your problem statement as you can. Don't worry if your solutions seem silly or impossible at this stage. Make sure you list at least *three* possible solutions.

# Step 4 - Look at the advantages and disadvantages of each solution

Now, look at the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three solutions you have listed. For each possible solution, ask yourselves these questions:

- Is this solution realistic? Can it be done?
- Do we like this solution? Will it solve the problem?
- What skills do we have to make this solution work?
- Are there other people who can help us?
- How much work will this solution take?
- Are we willing to put in that much work?

## **Step 5 - Choose your Advocacy Goal**

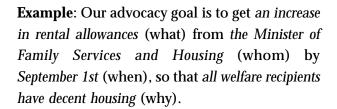
The next step is to pick the one solution you think is best. That becomes your *advocacy goal*. Advocacy goals tell you *what* needs to be done, *who* needs to do it, *when* it should be done and *why* it should be done.

## **Advocacy Goals should be:**

POSSIBLE - a realistic action

POSITIVE – focus on solutions rather than problems

PRECISE - detailed and clear-cut



## Step 6 - Plan your Strategy

Once you have chosen your Advocacy Goal you will need to look at strategies: *how* you will solve the problem. Group Advocacy strategies go beyond personal problem-solving (such as one-on-one meetings with a case worker). Group Advocacy strategies include:

Coalition:

A group of organizations working together to solve a common problem.

- meetings with politicians
- letter-writing
- petitions
- public meetings
- demonstrations
- the media
- court actions
- forming coalitions

See next page for more information on Group Advocacy strategies.

## Step 7 - Take action

The next step is to take action to change the *problem* into a *solution*. Remember that all actions should be:

POSSIBLE, POSITIVE, and PRECISE

**Advocacy tip**: Always try to start with a cooperative approach and look for compromises whenever possible.

## Step - Evaluate Your Advocacy Plan

After completing steps 1 to 7, look back and **evaluate** your entire Advocacy Plan. Ask yourselves these questions:

- Did your plan work?
- Did parts of it work?
- Why? Why not?

Evaluate:

To review or

assess.

Even if you were successful, it is always useful to review your Plan. Your group may have learned things that will help you the next time you have a problem.

If your Plan did not work (or if it was partly successful), go back to your Advocacy Plan and follow steps 3-8 again, using a different possible solution. If all else fails, you may have to choose another Advocacy Goal. Whatever you decide, don't give up. Remember, change takes time!

## **Group Advocacy Strategies**

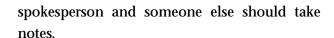
Strategies are simply the different ways used to solve problems.<sup>7</sup> Always try to start with a cooperative approach and look for compromises whenever possible.

## Meeting with politicians

This is one of the best ways for your group to express its concerns.<sup>8</sup> Contact the politician's office to ask for a meeting date. Prior to the meeting, prepare a list of questions and things you would like the politician to *do* to solve the problem. A group of 3-4 people should attend the meeting. One person should be the main

<sup>7.</sup> A very good resource on Group Advocacy strategies is *Toolbox For Justice and Stewardship* written by the Citizens for Public Justice. See Section IV.

<sup>8.</sup> Contact information for Manitoba MLA's is included in the Section IV



## During the meeting:

- Focus on the main issue. Don't get off topic or get angry!
- State what you want the politician to *do* for you.
- Insist on straight answers to your questions.
- If he/she agrees to do something for you, ask them to put this in writing.
- Even if the politician doesn't agree, thank him or her for their time and leave politely.
- Follow-up several weeks later with a phone call or letter to ask about any actions they agreed to take.

## Writing letters

Letters help draw attention to your groups issue. Politicians pay attention to letters from the public. Follow the sample advocacy letter in the Appendix. Adapt it to your groups concerns.

## **Petitions**

A petition is a formal request signed by many people to support your cause. Your petition statement should be clear so that people know what they are signing. Begin with a statement of what you *believe in, who* you are sending the petition to, *what* you want this person to *do* and *why.* For example:

"We the undersigned believe that *education* is a universal human right. We petition the Minister of Family Services to change the Employment and Income Assistance Act to ensure that everyone, including those on Employment and Income Assistance, has access to education".

## **Public meetings**

Public meetings serve many purposes. They help to educate people on your issue, gather public support, and get new members for your group. You can also invite public officials to speak at the meeting in order to question him or her about the issue.

Before the meeting, your group should decide what the purpose of the meeting is, when and where it should be held, who should come, and how you can get people there. Group members should divide up responsibilities for all tasks. Here are some planning tips:

## Facilities:

Make sure the place you choose for your event is somewhere people will feel comfortable. The space should be in a central location and be free of charge or have a low rental fee. If you are hoping to attract people with children, offer free childcare at the event. The facility should also be accessible for people with disabilities.<sup>9</sup> It should have enough chairs to seat everyone and a good sound system, if needed.

<sup>9.</sup> Contact the Manitoba League For Persons With Disabilities for an Accessibility Checklist. See Contact Info. in Section IV.



## Program:

Have one person for your group act as the spokesperson for the event. He or she will welcome and introduce speakers and lead the program.

#### Refreshments:

It is always nice to offer refreshments at an event. Approach businesses for donations of tea, coffee, juice and something to eat. One or more persons from your group should be in charge of organizing the refreshments table.

## Displays:

Your group and other organizations may want to put up display tables at the event. You can place information about your group, as well as sign-up sheets to attract new members.

## **Publicity:**

You will need to inform the public and the media about your event. Here's how:

- Send out *Public Service Announcements* (PSA's) to all local media at least 2 weeks before the event. PSA's should be brief, and list all of the major points of your event: name and purpose of the event, date and time, contact person and phone number and any other important information. See sample in Appendix.
- Put up *posters* around your community with the same basic information as is included in the PSA at least 2 weeks before the event.
- Invite the media to cover your event (see next section)

#### The Media

The media (television, newspapers, magazines, radio, and the internet) is a powerful tool and should be used carefully. Many advocacy groups appoint a *media spokesperson:* someone who knows about the issues and can talk about them with confidence.

One of the simplest ways of getting news about your issue to the media is to write a *Press Release*. The press release should grab the attention of the media by using quotes from people and information that is 'catchy' or newsworthy. Send your *press release* to the media at least one week in advance. Follow up with a phone call to invite them to your event (see sample press release in Appendix).

Your group can also invite the media to attend a *Press Conference*. Develop a short presentation about your issue and concerns, and be prepared to answer questions.

Interviews are another way to get media attention for your group. If you are organizing a meeting or event, the media may want to talk with your spokesperson and ask them to comment.

## **Coalitions**

Coalitions are formed when several Advocacy Groups work together on a particular issue or issues. These groups may be quite different from one another, but share some common goals. Again, there can be strength in numbers when more than one group works together.



## **Demonstrations**

Demonstrations are another way to raise awareness about your issue and gather public support. Effective demonstrations can sometimes pressure politicians to change their policies. They are usually used when more cooperative approaches (letters, meetings, etc.) have failed.

Demonstrations can take many forms. The most common practice is to hold a *rally* outside of a politicians office or government building to speak about your concerns and invite politicians to answer you in public. You will need to call the police for a *permit* to hold a demonstra-

tion. Again, it is a good idea to inform the media before you hold a demonstration, and have a spokesperson ready to answer their questions.

## **Court actions**

If your group's issue is a legal one, you may decide to take it to court. Talk to a lawyer for his or her advice. If you need help finding a lawyer, contact the Lawyer Referral Service at the Community Legal Education Association (CLEA) at 204-943-2305 or 1-800-262-8800.





## **Government of Manitoba Central Switchboard**

Use this number to call all provincial government departments: 1-800-282-8069

## **Canadian Legal Education Association (CLEA)**

501-295 Portage Ave.

Winnipeg, MB. (204) 943-2382

Lawyer Referral program: (204) 943-2305;

1-800-262-8800

info@communitylegal.mb.ca

# Department of Family Services and Housing (Minister's office)

Rm. 357 Legislative Building, 450 Broadway Ave. Winnipeg R3C 0V8 (204) 945-4173; 1-800-282-8069

## (Deputy Minister's office)

Rm. 351, Legislative Building, 450 Broadway Ave. Winnipeg R3C 0V8 (204) 945-6700; 1-800-282-8069

## **Employment and Income Assistance Division**

305-114 Garry Street Winnipeg, MB. (204) 945-2177 eiad@fs.gov.mb.ca

## **Legal Aid Manitoba**

402-294 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, MB. R3C 0B9 (204) 985-8500; 1-800-261-2960

## **Manitoba League for Persons With Disabilities**

Unit 105, 500 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, MB. R3C 1X3 (204) 943-6099; 1-888-330-1932 mlpd@mb.sympatico.ca

## **Municipal Assistance**

Central Office: 305-114 Garry St. Winnipeg, MB. R3C 4V7 (204) 945-8522 eiad@fs.gov.mb.ca

## **Provincial Ombudsman**

Rm. 750, 500 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, MB. R3C 3X1 (204) 982-9130; 1-800-665-0531

or

Rm. 603, 1011 Rosser Ave. Brandon, MB. R7A 0L5 (204) 571-5151; 1-800-543-8230

## **Social Services Advisory Committee**

7th Floor, 175 Hargrave St. Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R8

Phone: (204) 945-3003 or 945-3005 toll free:

1-800-282-8069; TTY: 948-2037

Fax: (204) 945-1736



## Member of the Legislative Assembly - (MLA's)

## Government of Manitoba Contact Information

All correspondence to Members of the Legislative Assembly can be addressed to: 450 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C OV8

Outside Winnipeg, you can call the Legislative Assembly toll-free at 1-800-282-8069

Member	Constituency	Party	Phone	E-mail	Fax
Aglugub, Chris	The Maples	NDP	945-3153	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Allan, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP	945-7555	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Ashton, Hon. Steve	Thompson	NDP	945-3723	minhwy@leg.gov.mb.ca Mings@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-7610
Asper, Linda	Riel	NDP	945-4686	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Barrett, Hon. Becky	Inkster	NDP	945-4079	minlab@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-8312
Caldwell, Hon. Drew	Brandon East	NDP	945-3720	minedu@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-1291
Cerilli, Marianne	Radisson	NDP	945-1567	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Chomiak, Hon. Dave	Kildonan	NDP	945-3731	minhlt@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-0441
Cummings, Glen	Ste. Rose	PC	945-4698	gcummings@leg.gov.mb.ca	942-6613
Dacquay, Louise M.	Seine River	PC	945-0122	sriver@escape.ca Idacquay@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-5921
Derkach,Len	Russell	PC	945-4812	lderkach@leg.gov.mb.ca	942-6613
Dewar, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP	945-0143	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Doer, Hon. Gary	Concordia	NDP	945-3714	premier@leg.gov.mb.ca	949-1484
Driedger, Myrna	Charleswood	PC	945-3280	mdriedger@leg.gov.mb.ca Myrnamla@escape.ca	945-5921
Dyck, Peter George	Pembina	PC	945-4469	pdyck@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2092
Enns, Harry J.	Lakeside	РС	945-0541	henn@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2092
Faurschou, David	Portage la Prairie	PC	945-8088	dfaurshou@leg.gov.mb.ca	942-6613
Filmon, Gary	Tuxedo	PC	945-3593	gfilmon@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-1299



Friesen, Hon. Jean	Wolsely	NDP	945-3788	minia@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-1383
Gerrard. Jon	River Heights	Lib	945-5194	jgerrard@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-3220
Gileshammer. Harold	Minnedosa	PC	945-0258	hgilleshammer@leg.9ov.mb.ca	942-6613
Helwer, Ed	Gimli	PC	945-1790	ehelwer@leg.gov.mb.ca	942-6613
Hickes, Hon. George	Point Douglas	NDP	945-3706	speaker@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-1443
Jennissen, Gerard	Flin Flon	NDP	945-2936	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Korzeniowski, Bonnie	St. James	NDP	945-7510	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Lathlin, Hon. Oscar	The Pas	NDP	945-3730	mincon@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-3586
Laurendeau. Marcel	St. Norbert	PC	945-1689	mlaurendeau@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2879
Lemieux, Hon. Ron	La Verendrye	NDP	945-4256	mincca@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-4009
Loewen, John	Fort Whyte	PC	945-4046	jloewen@leg.gov.mb.ca	942-6613
Mackintosh, Gord. Hon	St. Johns	NDP	945-3728	minjus@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-2517
Maguire. Larry	Arthur- Virden	PC	945-4975	Imaguire@leg.gov.mb.ca	942-6613
Maloway, Jim	Elmwood	NDP	945-2175	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Martindale, Doug	Burrows	NDP	945-2645	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
McGifford, Hon. Diane	Lord Roberts	NDP	945-3729	minchc@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-5223
Mihychuk, Hon. Maryann	Minto	NDP	945-0067	minitm@leg.gov.mb.ca	945-4882
Mitchelson, Bonnie	River East	РС	945-0008	bmitchelson@leg.gov.mb.ca	942-6613
Nevakshonoff. Tom	Interlake	NDP	945-4966	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2005
Penner, Jack	Emerson	PC	945-5639	jpenner@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2092
Penner, Jim	Steinbach	PC	945-0231	jrpenner@leg.gov.mb.ca	948-2879
Pitura, Frank	Morris	PC	945-3525	fpitura@leg.gov.mb.ca fpitura@mb.sympatico.ca	948-2092



Praznik, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC	945-2190	dpraznik@leg.gov.mb.ca	942- 6613
Reid, Daryl	Transcona	NDP	945-0774	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948- 2005
Reimer, Jack	Southdale	PC	945-1357	jreimer@leg.gov.mb.ca	945- 5921
Robinson, Hon. Eric	Rupertsland	NDP	945-3719	minna@leg.gov.mb.ca	945- 8374
Rocan, Denis	Carman	PC	945-0079	drocan@leg.gov.mb.ca Denis@denisrocan.com	948- 2092
Rondeau, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP	945-3185	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948- 2005
Sale, Hon. Tim	Fort Rouge	NDP	945-4173	tsale@leg.gov.mb.ca	945- 5149
Santos, Conrad	Wellington	NDP	945-4918	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948- 2005
Schellenberg, Harry	Rossmere	NDP	945-7349	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948- 2005
Schuler,Ron	Springfield	PC	945-4321	rschuler@leg.gov.mb.ca	942- 6613
Selinger, Hon. Greg	St. Boniface	NDP	945-3952	minfin@leg.gov.mb.ca	945- 6057
Smith, Joy	Fort Garry	PC	945-8041	jsmith@leg.gov.mb.ca	942- 6613
Smith, Scott	Brandon West	NDP	945-8793	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948- 2005
Stefanson, Eric	Kirkfield Park	PC	945-5174	estefanson@leg.gov.mb.ca	945- 5921
Struthers, Stan	Dauphin- Roblin	NDP	945-1464	ndpmlas@leg.gov.mb.ca	948- 2005
Tweed, Marvin	Turtle Mountain	PC	945-5083	mtweed@leg.gov.mb.ca	945- 5921
Wowchuk, Hon. Rosann	Swan River	NDP	945-3722	minagr@leg.gov.mb.ca	945- 3470



# <u>In Winnipeg</u> (Employment and Income Assistance):

For service in English: 111 Rorie Street, Winnipeg R3B 1A1 (tel. 948-4000)

For service in French: 1031 Autumnwood Dr.,

Winnipeg R2J 1C6 (948-4000)

#### **Outside** of Winnipeg (Municipal Assistance):

Central Office: 305-114 Garry St.

Winnipeg, MB. R3C 4V7

(204) 945-8522 eiad@fs.gov.mb.ca

\*There are 183 municipal offices in Manitoba. If you are not sure where to go, call one of the Provincial offices listed above or contact the Manitoba Government toll-free line at 1-800-282-8069 and ask for Municipal Assistance.

### Outside of Winnipeg (Employment and Income Assistance):

BEAUSEIOUR (Eastman Region) Box 50, 20 - 1st. Street South Beausejour, Manitoba ROE 0C0 268-6028

BRANDON (Westman Region) 340-9th Street Brandon, Manitoba R7A 6C2 726-6438

DAUPHIN (Parkland Region) Box 6, 27- 2nd Ave. SW Dauphin, Manitoba R7N 3E5 622-2040 MORDEN (South Central Region) 63 A Stephen St. Morden, Manitoba R6M 1Z6 822-4496

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE (Central Region) 25 Tupper Street North Portage La Prairie, Manitoba R1N 3K1 239-3060

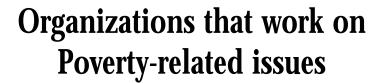
FLIN FLON (Norman Region) 201-143 Main Street Flin Flon, Manitoba R8A 1K2 687-1600

SELKIRK (Interlake Region) 101-446 Main Street SELKIRK, Manitoba R1A 1V7 785-5105

SWAN RIVER (Northern Parkland Region) Box 997, 201- 4th Ave. South Swan River, Manitoba ROL 1Z0 734-3491

THE PAS (Norman Region)
Box 2550, Ross Avenue & 3rd Street
The Pas, Manitoba R9A 1M4
627-8311

THOMPSON (Thompson Region) Box 22, 59 Elizabeth Drive Thompson, Manitoba R8N 1X4 677-6713



# Canadian Association for the Non-Employed (CANE)

100-222 Furby Street Winnipeg, MB. R3C 2A7 204-772-2952 cane@pangea.ca

#### **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**

309-323 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, MB. R3B 2C1 ccpamb@mb.sympatico.ca

#### **Canadian Council on Social Development**

441 MacLaren St., 4th Floor Ottawa. ON. K2P 2H3 613-236-8977 council@ccsd.ca www.ccsd.ca

#### **Centre for Social Justice**

Suite 303-489 College Street Toronto, ON. M6G 1A5 416-927-0777 justice@socialjustice.org www.socialjustice.org

#### **Citizens for Public Justice**

Suite 311, 229 College Street Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4

#### **National Anti-Poverty Organization**

316-256 King Edward Avenue Ottawa, ON. K1N 7M1 tel (613) 789-0096 Fax: (613) 789-0141 email: napo@web.apc.org

#### **Social Planning Council of Brandon**

c/o Community Services Building 153-8th Street Brandon, Manitoba R7A 3W9

#### **Winnipeg Harvest**

1085 Winnipeg Ave.
Winnipeg, MB. R3E 0S2
(204) 982-3663
harvest@xpressnet.com
www.winnipegharvest.org

#### **Winnipeg Social Planning Council**

Winnipeg, MB. R3A 0A9 (204) 943-2561 spc@solutions.net www.spcw.mb.ca

412 McDiarmid Ave.



**Action Link Toolkit.** The Council of Canadians, Toronto, 1995.

Getting What You Want: Self-Advocacy By People With Disabilities. Manitoba League of Persons With Disabilities Inc., Winnipeg, 1997.

Literacy, Welfare and Work Preliminary Study. Janet Smith, 1997.

Literacy, Welfare and Work Year 2: A Case Study of Seven Adult Learners. Janet Smith, 1998

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Monitoring the Impacts on Social Assistance Recipients of Welfare Cuts and Changes: An Overview. National Anti-Poverty Organization, 1996. Organizing. Si Kahn. McGraw-Hill, 1981.

**Toolkit for Justice and Stewardship**. Citizens for Public Justice, Toronto.

Two Hundred and Forty-Four Voices: Manitobans with Disabilities Share their views on Income Assistance and Employment. Manitoba League of Persons With Disabilities, Winnipeg, 1999.

Welfare In Manitoba: An Advocacy Guide. Mel Holley, Public Interest Law Centre, Legal Aid Manitoba, 1995.

Workfare: Ideology for a new Underclass. Eric Shragge (ed.), Garamond Press, 1997.



### **Contact Record Form**

Date:
Time:
Person you spoke to:
Organization or department:
Phone #:
NOTES:
I asked him/her to:
He/she said that:
TO DO's
I am supposed to:
By: (date):
He/she is supposed to:
By: (date):

### **Standard Advocacy Letter**

- 1. Your address
- 2. The date
- 3. Name, official title, and address of the person to whom you are writing
- 4. Salutation (Dear Mr./Ms.)

- 5. Paragraph #1 Why you are writing
- 6. Paragragh #2 The facts. What has happened so far.
- Paragraph #3 What you want the other person to do. Why they should do it. When you would like it done.
- 8. Paragraph #4 When you would like to be <u>contacted</u>. <u>How</u> the person can reach you (phone or mailing address).
- 9. Closing (for example, Yours Sincerely)
- 10. Your signature (written in ink)
- 11 Your name (typed or printed)



# Sample Public Service Announcement (PSA)

### Public Meeting on Welfare Rates

The Brandon Social Planning Council welcomes you to a meeting on Welfare Rates.

When: Thursday, August 4th

Time: 7:00 pm

Where: Anywhere centre, XYZ Street

Free event. Childcare and refreshments available. Call 725-0000 for more information.

# Sample Press Release August 2, 2000

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Poverty Coalition Applauds Provincial Government**

The Provincial Coalition of People Against Poverty (PCPAP) applauded the provincial government's decision today to raise welfare rates to the level of Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Offs (LICO). This change will take effect April 1st and will benefit the approximately 15,000 families that rely on welfare to meet their basic needs. The average income for social assistance recipients will increase by approximately 30% as a result of this change.

"Our government believes that no one should have to live in poverty," said the Minister of Income and Social Services in a prepared statement. "Raising welfare rates to the level of an established poverty line will help make sure that families and children can afford the things they need."

Statistics Canada has long published lowincome cut offs for families of different sizes according to the population of the cities and towns where they live. In 1998, the low-income cut-off for a family of three living in a city the size of Winnipeg was \$27,315. Low-income cut-offs are generally described as the "poverty line".

"This is an important step forward for people living in poverty in this province," said the Chairperson of PCPAP. "With this change the provincial government has demonstrated its' commitment to ending poverty in our province."

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For more information contact: Jane Doe, Chairperson - PCPAP (Tel: 555-5555)

> PCPAP 123 - Z St. Anywhere City, MB. XY1 Z23

