

**CIRCULAR**

**Date:** March 6, 2012

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** EIA #2012-20

**Alternate Program(s):**

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**To:** Community Social Service Supervisors/Program Managers

**Subject:** EIA Advocacy and Education Centre – Community Unemployed Help Centre

**Reference:** Agency Website: [www.cuhc.mb.ca](http://www.cuhc.mb.ca)

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**Type:** ☐ Policy ☒ Procedure ☐ Rate ☒ Information Only  
Replaces # \_\_\_\_\_

**Effective Date:** March 1, 2012

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EIA Programs recently signed an agreement with the Community Unemployed Help Centre (CUHC) for **EIA Advocacy Services**. These services are intended to provide information, advice and advocacy support to EIA participants in Winnipeg and outside of Winnipeg who:

- have questions/concerns regarding EIA Program decisions; and/or,
- who have appealed EIA program decisions to the Social Services Appeal Board (SSAB) (see Attachment 1 for a description of services and activities).

Neighborhoods Alive! is also providing funding to the CUHC for a Public Education/Outreach Coordination Project. This project is intended to provide training and support in poverty law and individual advocacy in community-based organizations.

The CUHC is a non-profit organization primarily dedicated to providing information, advice and representation to unemployed workers in Manitoba with Employment Insurance problems (see Attachment 2 for a description of services and activities). Through an ongoing pilot project with EIA Programs, the Centre also represents individuals who have been denied Canada Pension Plan disability benefits.

These new projects are funded in part in response to the May 2010 Ombudsman Report on the EIA Program recommending that the province enhance advocacy services for income assistance recipients. In addition, the Community Unemployed Help Centre, Legal Aid and the Public Interest Law Centre will be working side by side with services closely linked in the interest of participants.

This valuable partnership between the EIA Program and the CUHC is intended to be collaborative and should be considered an additional resource in assisting EIA participants to navigate and understand our program. It is the EIA Program's expectation that as much as possible, the services of CUHC staff will empower EIA participants to seek clarification of EIA policies and decisions themselves.

The CUHC will begin accepting referrals as of March 1, 2012. Brochures and posters are under development and will be forwarded to each office.

**Procedural Information:**

- Participants can be referred by the SSAB, a community agency, the EIA staff or access services on their own. The participant or referring agent can call: **204-942-6556**. A CUHC Staff Contact list can also be found in Attachment 3.
- NOTE: **Participants outside of Winnipeg** may also receive services from the CUHC by calling 1-866-942-6556 or by email at [cuhc@cuhc.mb.ca](mailto:cuhc@cuhc.mb.ca).
- CUHC Advocates will encourage the participant to seek further clarification on an issue by contacting his/her Case Coordinator/Counselor.
- CUHC Advocates will obtain a consent form from the participant (see Attachment 4) and contact the Case Coordinator/Counselor if further clarification/information is required.
- If appropriate, CUHC Advocates may also contact the Supervisor/Program Manager or Area Director if issues continue to be unresolved between the participant/CUHC Advocate and the Case Coordinator/Counselor.

**Requests for File Information:**

The participant and/or CUHC Advocate may ask the Case Coordinator/Counselor for participant file information (e.g., letters, action plan, case notes) to help address the participants issue/concern or for an appeal. Standard EIA procedures should be adhered to if asked to release information from the participant file (Confidentiality and Access to Information - [Section 6.14](#)).

If you would like to arrange a meeting and/or a short presentation with Advocacy Centre staff please call Crystal Desrosiers at 945-2996. Otherwise, if you have questions regarding any of the above information, please contact Andrea Taylor at 945-1259 or Brian Malkowich at 945-2684.

Dave Fisher, Executive Director  
Employment and Income Assistance Programs

Michelle Dubik, Executive Director  
Winnipeg Services, Community Service Delivery

Debbie Besant, Executive Director  
Rural and Northern Services, Community Service Delivery

cc: Distribution List

Attachments: Service Descriptions (Attachment 1 & 2)  
CUHC Advocate Contact List (Attachment 3)  
CUHC Consent Form (Attachment 4)

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **EIA ADVOCACY SERVICES**

#### **1.0 SERVICE DEFINITION**

The Community Unemployed Help Centre provides information, advice and advocacy services on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program decisions or issues. The Centre also provides information, advice and advocacy services to low-income individuals on housing related matters.

A separate agreement is funded through Neighborhoods Alive! for a Public Education/Outreach Coordination Project. Funding is provided so that the Centre will engage communities serving or representing individuals living in poverty by providing training and support to community-based organizations in poverty law and individual advocacy.

#### **2.0 SERVICE GOALS**

- a) To provide direct advocacy supports including information, advice and advocacy services to low-income individuals and applicants/participants of the EIA program.

#### **3.0 SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

The goals are realized through the following activities:

- a) To raise awareness of the services being offered by Community Unemployed Help Centre in accordance with this agreement;
- b) To identify and collaborate with community-based organizations that provide advocacy related services for EIA recipients; and
- c) To provide information, advice and representation on EIA Program decisions or issues as well as information, advice and advocacy support to low-income individuals on housing related matters.

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **COMMUNITY UNEMPLOYED HELP CENTRE**

#### **1.0 SERVICE DEFINITION**

Community Unemployed Help Centre provides information and advice to Manitobans on Employment Insurance (EI) matters and representation to unemployed workers who are appealing EI decisions. The Centre also does workshops and presentations on EI and unemployment related issues and engages in various social policy activities within its mandate.

#### **2.0 SERVICE GOALS**

- a) To ensure that unemployed workers obtain the Employment Insurance benefits to which they are entitled;
- b) To ensure that unemployed workers understand their Employment Insurance rights and obligations;
- c) To ensure that unemployed workers have the representation they require when appealing EI decisions;
- d) To ensure that the Employment Insurance program adequately meet the needs of unemployed workers; and
- e) To secure Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits for individual appellants on referral from Family Services and Labour.

#### **3.0 SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

The goals are realized through the following activities:

- a) Provides information, advice and assistance to unemployed Manitobans in regard to Employment Insurance;
- b) Engages in outreach activities with other organization including workshops and presentations on Employment Insurance;
- c) Works in partnership with other organizations in social policy, public interest advocacy, test case litigation and public education on Employment Insurance and unemployment and poverty related issues; and
- d) Represents, on referral from Family Services and Labour, individuals who have been denied Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits.

### ATTACHMENT 3

#### COMMUNITY UNEMPLOYED HELP CENTRE

501-275 Broadway  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4M6  
Phone: (204) 942-6556  
Fax: (204) 947-9557  
Toll free: 1-866-942-6556  
Email: [cuhc@cuhc.mb.ca](mailto:cuhc@cuhc.mb.ca)  
Website: [www.cuhc.mb.ca](http://www.cuhc.mb.ca)

STAFF	POSITION	PHONE	EMAIL
Neil Cohen	Executive Director	940-5530	<a href="mailto:cuhc@cuhc.mb.ca">cuhc@cuhc.mb.ca</a>
Bev Rawluk	Intake/Admin Support	940-5534	<a href="mailto:brawluk@cuhc.mb.ca">brawluk@cuhc.mb.ca</a>
Melissa Shurvell	Advocate	940-5533	<a href="mailto:mshurvell@cuhc.mb.ca">mshurvell@cuhc.mb.ca</a>
Erin Lyle	Advocate	940-5531	<a href="mailto:elyle@cuhc.mb.ca">elyle@cuhc.mb.ca</a>
Victoria Houston	Advocate	940-5538	<a href="mailto:vhouston@cuhc.mb.ca">vhouston@cuhc.mb.ca</a>

ATTACHMENT 4



**AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_ authorize staff of the Employment and Income Assistance Program, to disclose to Community Unemployed Help Centre any personal information and/or personal health information, in compliance with *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and *The Personal Health Information Act*. I understand that Community Unemployed Help Centre may require this information in order to assist me with questions or concerns regarding the Employment and Income Assistance Program, decisions and/or appeals to the Social Services Appeal Board.

The information disclosed will only be used for the purpose of clarifying any questions or concerns regarding Employment and Income Assistance Program decisions and/or for the appeal process as described below:

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I understand consents that I have given will last 4 years. I understand if I do not disclose this information, Community Unemployed Help Centre may be unable to assist me. Should I wish to withdraw or amend this consent to release information I may do so by submitting a written request addressed to my Employment and Income Assistance worker.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date