

FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING CIRCULAR

Date: June 29, 2011

CIRCULAR NUMBER: EIA #2011 - 37

Alternate Program(s): NA

To: Community Social Service Supervisors/Program Managers

Subject: The Opportunity to Apply for Employment and Income Assistance

References: Section 6.1.2 of the Administrative Manual - Participant Intake and Determination of Eligibility

Section of the EIA Administrative Manual 6.5.4 - Obligation Not To Leave or Refuse Employment/Just Cause for Leaving or Refusing Employment

Circular 2011 - 35 Obligation Not To Leave or Refuse Employment/Just Cause for Leaving or Refusing Employment

Type: ☒ Policy **Replaces:**

☐ Procedure

☐ Rate

☐ Information Only

Effective Date: Immediately

In a recent review of the Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program, the Ombudsman reported complaints that a number of people approaching the Department for income assistance were turned away without having yet completed an application, either on the assumption that they would not be eligible, or because they were expected to complete tasks assigned by EIA staff before they would be given an intake appointment.

The Ombudsman recommended that the Department create policy enforcing a person's "right" to apply for income assistance. In considering this recommendation, the Department developed the following policy statement:

*Any person in Manitoba who approaches Employment and Income Assistance with a request for financial support will be given the **opportunity to apply**. This opportunity is to be granted without conditions or prerequisites such as the need to first apply for jobs. Eligibility for income assistance benefits is determined through the application process. Staff are not to deny requests for applications, regardless of whether it appears that the person would not be eligible. Instead, those seeking an application should be provided with the opportunity to proceed through the intake process, during which eligibility will be formally determined.*

While staff are not to refuse people requesting an application before trying other activities to become financially independent including job search, they are still encouraged to inform potential applicants of alternatives to enrolment such as the Job Centre in Winnipeg, and Job Banks. (Alternatives to EIA Enrolment section 6.1.2 of the Administrative Manual)

Finally, the opportunity to apply does not guarantee that everyone approaching EIA will be eligible. Some participants may be denied benefits because they do not qualify for financial reasons, while others may have left or refused employment or participation in an employment enhancement activity, without just cause. (See Just Cause section 6.5.4 of the Administrative Manual and circular 2011-35). In situations where an individual is not eligible for benefits at the point of intake, they are to be advised in writing of the denial of benefits and the right of appeal, and should be notified of the steps required in order to proceed with a renewed application to potentially establish eligibility.