

FOR RELEASE
June 13, 2016

Government to repay missed social assistance exemptions

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon will be issuing cheques to approximately 465 social assistance clients who did not receive exemptions for their National Child Benefit (NCB) between 2008 and 2016.

Health and Social Services Minister Mike Nixon apologized today for the error on behalf of the government but stressed that the department did not do it intentionally. He responded only days after being informed and said that it is important to correct the error made in administering the social assistance regulations.

"We know that our social assistance policies and regulations are complex and we are in the process of simplifying them to benefit everyone," Nixon said. "The error was discovered during a regular review of a case file."

The NCB was originally considered income by all provinces and territories when determining eligibility for social assistance. The Government of Yukon changed its social assistance regulation in 2008. The NCB was still to be deducted from assistance payments, however a basic income exemption was to be applied towards NCB, along with all other sources of income. This basic exemption was not applied towards the NCB.

The minister was first made aware of the issue on June 8 and was fully briefed by departmental officials the next day.

"Right now, we are doing the work to determine who is or was eligible at the time, how much they are owed and where they are. Once we have all these pieces in place, we will begin issuing cheques," Nixon said.

Cheques should start going out before the end of June. The total repayment could amount to \$700,000 and individual repayments could range from as low as \$100 to several thousands of dollars.

Recipients will not have to declare this money as income for the purposes of social assistance as it is replacing assistance benefits that they were eligible for and should have received in the first place. It is taxable income.

With changes to the NCB imminent with the new consolidated Child Care Benefit beginning July 1, this will no longer be an issue. Recipients can contact their case manager if they have any questions.

-30-

Contact:

Pat Living
Health and Social Services Communications
867-667-3673
patricia.living@gov.yk.ca

News Release #16-230



Stay up to date with the latest Yukon government news by subscribing to our RSS feed here:
<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/rss.html>. Or follow us on Twitter @yukongov.