

The Two-Year Welfare Time Limit

Time limits on welfare mean that income assistance is provided on a time limited basis. The two-year time limit means that you qualify for welfare for only **two years out of five years**. This new legislation means that, after two years of collecting welfare, you will have your income reduced or you will not qualify for income assistance for the following three years. Time limits only apply when you are receiving income assistance. Canceled or stopped cheques will not be counted towards the two-year time limit.

Who is affected by the time limit?

Time limits apply to individuals and families receiving income assistance who are classified as employable.

Who is NOT affected by the time limit?

- You are a member of a family who is receiving hardship assistance
- You are a member of a family where at least one person has Person with Disabilities (PWD) designation
- You are in a family where everyone is over the age of 65
- You are in a family in which all people have Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB)
- You are in family where everyone is receiving accommodation and care in a special care facility, private hospital or are in hospital because of needing extended care (this does not include alcohol or drug treatment centres)
- You are a child who is receiving Child in Home of Relative (CIHR) assistance

What will happen to me once I reach my time limit?

- no eligibility for singles
- no eligibility for couples who have both reached their time limit
- \$300 reduction for employable couples with one adult over the time limit
- \$100 reduction for single parents
- \$100 reduction for two parent families where one is over the time limit
- \$200 reduction where both parents are over the time limit

When does the time limit begin?

Time limits began April 1, 2002, and include any month that you have received income assistance where you have been seen as employable. However, the two year time limit does not count the months that you qualify for exemptions.

What months do NOT count towards the time limit?

Health Related Exclusions

You are excused if...	The proof that you need
You are living in a special care facility or a private hospital	A letter, note, or phone call from the institution confirming that you are in the residency and how long you will be staying.
You are admitted to hospital and need extended care	A letter, note, or phone call from the hospital confirming that you are in hospital and how long you will be there.
You have drug/alcohol addictions	<p>A note, letter or telephone call from a health worker that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies the addiction • indicates that you are unable to seek work • indicates any available treatment <p>Your welfare worker can exclude you from up to three months of looking for work if you are unable to contact a health worker, and it is obvious to your worker that you have drug/alcohol addictions. The district supervisor may be able to extend this after the three months based on information from your welfare worker, a mental health worker and/or a drug and alcohol counsellor.</p>
You have a temporary medical condition	<p>A note, letter or telephone call from a health worker that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies your condition • indicates that you are unable to seek work • indicates how long the medical condition is going to last <p>If you are not able to get this information, your worker can exclude you from having to look for work for up to three months if they know about this medical condition, and it is obvious that it interferes with your ability to look for work.</p>
You are part of treatment or rehabilitation program	<p>A letter, note or telephone call from a person from the treatment centre that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirms you are participating in treatment • indicates that you cannot seek work • indicates for how long you will be in the treatment program
You have a mental health condition	<p>A note, letter or telephone call from a health worker that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies your condition • indicates that you are unable to seek work • indicates if there is any treatment for your condition <p>If you are not able to get this information, your worker can exclude you from having to look for work for up to three months if they know that you have this condition. The district supervisor may be able to extend this after the three months based on information from your welfare worker and/or a mental health worker.</p>

Age Related Exclusions

You are excused if...	The proof that you need
You are 65 years of age	Birth certificate
You are under the age of 19	Birth certificate

Caregiving Related Exclusions

You are excused if...	The proof that you need
You are the only caregiver of a child, foster child, or CIHR under age three	Birth certificate of your child
You are the only caregiver of a dependent child, CIHR, or foster child with a physical or mental condition	Birth certificate of your child and a note or letter from a health worker that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identifies the condition• indicates that you are unable to leave the home to seek work• identifies how long the condition will last
You live with and care for a spouse who a mental or physical condition	Birth certificate of your spouse and a note or letter from a health worker that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identifies the condition• indicates that you are unable to leave the home to seek work• identifies how long the condition will last

Training or Educational Exclusions

You are excused if...	The proof that you need
You are participating in a job training program	The ministry has given you prior approval for participating in this program
You are in a ministry approved literacy, upgrading ABE, or ESL training program	The ministry has given you prior approval for participating in this program
You participating in a Bridging Employment Program	The ministry has given you prior approval for participating in this program

Other Exclusions

You are excused if...	The proof that you need
You have separated from an abusive spouse/relative in the last six months	A note, letter, or telephone call from a social worker, police officer, transition house staff person, or court officer that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• confirms the situation• indicates that you are unable to seek work• states the date of separation
You are pregnant	A note, letter, or telephone call from a health worker that confirms the pregnancy, and when your child is due.

NOTE: A health worker is defined a person who is a doctor, a registered psychologist, a registered nurse or psychiatric nurse, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a social worker, or a registered clinical counselor.

**For more information on the two-year time limit, contact
End Legislated Poverty at 604-879-1209 or email elp@telus.net.**

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