

# WHAT IS ODSP?

ODSP can feel complicated to navigate. This guide offers a simple, supportive overview of what ODSP is and what to expect.

## What is ODSP?

The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) provides financial and employment support to people in Ontario who have a significant, ongoing disability and need help with basic living costs. It is meant to help people live safely and independently in their community, while accessing the supports they need.

## ODSP offers two main types of support:

**Income Support** - monthly financial assistance and health-related benefits

**Employment Support** - help preparing for, finding, or keeping work  
You may apply for one or both depending on your needs.

## Who Can Qualify for ODSP?

### To be considered for ODSP, a person must:

Be 18 years of age or older

Live in Ontario

Qualify financially

**Have a substantial mental or physical disability that is expected to last one year or longer and makes it difficult to:**

Work,

Take care of daily activities, or

Take part in community life

Some people may also be eligible through alternate pathways noted in ODSP guidelines (e.g., those transitioning from specific youth programs or receiving certain federal disability benefits).

ODSP looks at both financial eligibility and disability eligibility before making a decision.

## What Supports Can ODSP Provide?

### **ODSP Income Support may include:**

Monthly financial assistance for basic needs and housing

Prescription drug coverage through the Ontario Drug Benefit Program

Basic dental, vision, hearing, and medical supplies/services for eligible recipients

### **Additional benefits such as:**

Support for children's clothing

Help with setting up a home or avoiding homelessness

Transportation for medical appointments

(benefits vary based on personal circumstances)

**Specific benefits can change over time. Ask your ODSP caseworker or check the Ontario government website for current details.**

## ODSP Employment Supports can include:

Job-search help

Skills training

Workplace accommodations

Support to maintain employment

**These supports are available whether or not you receive ODSP income support, if disability-related barriers make work challenging.**

## How to Apply for ODSP

Applying for ODSP generally involves two steps:

### **1. Financial Eligibility Interview**

You start by contacting your local ODSP office to book an appointment. This can be done over the phone or in person.

## **You will be told what documents to bring, such as:**

Identification (e.g., OHIP, SIN)

Proof of immigration status

Bank statements, income records, or expenses

Rent receipts or housing documents

School or employment information

## **During this meeting, ODSP will determine whether you meet the financial requirements.**

If you do, you will move to step 2.

## **2. Disability Determination Package (DDP)**

If you qualify financially, ODSP will give you a Disability Determination Package.

It includes:

A Health Status Report and Activities of Daily Living Index (completed by a healthcare provider)

A Medical Consent Form (signed by you)

A Self-Report where you can describe, in your own words, how your disability affects daily life, work, and community participation

This package must be completed and returned within the required timeframe noted during your appointment.

A specialized ODSP team reviews the package and decides if you meet the disability criteria.

## **If You Need Help Right Away**

ODSP can only issue financial assistance after the application is approved.

If you need urgent help, you may need to contact Ontario Works, which provides temporary financial support while your ODSP application is being reviewed.

## **If You Are Turned Down**

### **If ODSP denies your application, you have rights:**

You can request an Internal Review, where ODSP looks at your case again.

If you still disagree with the decision, you can appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal.

Further appeals may be available if needed.

You may contact a legal clinic for free help with appeals.

## Tips for Individuals and Caregivers

**The ODSP process can feel overwhelming- these tips may make it a little easier.**

### **If you are applying:**

Bring all required documents to your financial interview.

Ask your healthcare providers for clear descriptions of how your condition affects your daily life.

Use the Self-Report to share your lived experience in your own words.

### **If you are supporting a family member:**

Help gather paperwork, organize documents, or attend appointments if they want support.

Offer to help with the Self-Report by discussing examples of day-to-day challenges.

Encourage them to take breaks. This process can feel overwhelming.

Remind them that ODSP is meant to help people live safely and independently.

## Where to Get More Help

For current ODSP information, visit the official Ontario government website or contact your local ODSP office. Your community legal clinic can also help with questions or appeals.

If you need emotional or mental-health support while navigating the system, reach out to IAM's support channels.