

## Social Assistance Program

- The Social Assistance Program provides people with funding for basic necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing, when they are unable to provide for these needs themselves.
- In 2012, more than 9,000 Islanders received social assistance at some point during the year. Approximately 4% of the Island's population receives social assistance each month.
- Recognizing the difficulty faced by vulnerable Islanders in meeting their basic needs, the Social Assistance Program saw a \$2 million increase in the latest provincial budget.

Since 2007, Social Assistance Program funding has increased by \$4.7 million, or 16%. This included increases in rates for shelter (11%), food (10%) and community care (33%).

Government has implemented several other measures to improve Social Assistance benefits, and to assist clients who wish to move into the workforce:

- Approximately 10% of clients are engaged in either full or part time employment. Staff resources are being realigned to better assist clients to enter the labor market.
- Through annual investments of \$750,000, the provincial government ended the National Child Benefit clawback, which provided for 800 families to keep this income in addition to their Social Assistance benefits.
- Government recognizes the need for additional resources to help clients move into the workforce, and as such, it exempted the Working Income Tax Benefit from eligibility calculations.
- Annually, \$100,000 is invested in literacy training for Social Assistance clients, ensuring access to Adult Basic Education at Holland College locations across the province.
- To help families plan long-term for a family member with a disability, the Registered Disability Savings Program is now exempt from eligibility calculations up to the after tax low income cut off threshold.
- Government is working to improve programs so that Islanders in need of short-term assistance are not required to exhaust their savings to be eligible for assistance.

**Social Assistance Program Funding**

