



Income Assistance Helpful Tips

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<http://www.dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas/public-legal-education.html>

General Tips

If you have a client who comes to you with an IA issue your first point of contact should be their caseworker.

Be persistent! Caseworkers can be very difficult to reach via phone, and often only have certain hours during which they return calls.

If you do not hear back from a caseworker, or you are not able to make any progress with them you should speak to their casework supervisor.

Supervisors have more discretion in making decisions, and sometimes you can reach a resolution regarding your client's issue. Specifically supervisors are able to make decisions involving greater sums of money than caseworkers. A caseworker can only make decisions costing up to \$200.00.

Appeals

The first step of the appeal process is a paper process only.

If you have additional evidence to submit in support of your client's appeal you should do so at the first stage of the appeal process. Sometimes the additional information will be sufficient to overturn the initial decision.

If you go to an appeal hearing be sure to gather all of the evidence you think you will need to prove your client's case. This could include documentary evidence and/or witnesses who can testify about certain events. If you have documentary evidence be sure to bring 3 copies to your client's appeal hearing – one for you, one for the Department and one for the AAB member.

You must also ensure that you have all of the evidence that the Department will be using against your client. The best way to ensure you have all of that evidence is to make a Freedom of Information request to view your client's IA file. The Department's FOIPOP coordinator can be contacted at **424-5558**.

Remember that the appeal hearing will be your client's first chance to provide their version of events to a live decision maker. The result of the appeal hearing may come down to their credibility in the eyes of the decision maker.

During the hearing you may refer to sections of the *ESIA* and *ESIA Regulations* to support your case. Remember that the Policy Manual is not the law.

Depending on the complexity of the issue you may wish to make written submissions on the law to the AAB prior to the hearing.

First Meeting

Ensure that a potential IA client brings the following with them to the first meeting:

- i. Name and contact information of their caseworker;

- ii. Any relevant correspondence from the Department of Community Services; and
- iii. Any relevant evidence supporting their position.

During the first meeting you should obtain the following:

- i. Consent from your client to speak with the Department of Community Services about their file;
- ii. A completed FOIPOP request form.
- iii. Consent forms for any other professionals, i.e. doctors, if applicable.

Acknowledgement

Dalhousie Legal Aid Service would like to gratefully acknowledge and thank the [Law Foundation of Ontario](#) for its financial support of LEAP.

Disclaimer

This document contains general legal information and not legal advice. **If you need advice about a specific legal problem then you should contact a lawyer.** If you will have difficulty affording a lawyer then you should contact [Nova Scotia Legal Aid](#) or [the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia's lawyer referral service](#).

Laws change frequently. We will try our best to make sure the information contained in all of our documents, as well as any other information you receive from Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, is reliable. However, **we cannot guarantee that the information in this document is completely accurate and up-to-date.** By accessing information from Dalhousie Legal Aid Service you assume any risks that arise from doing so.