



**Legal aid,**  
a network at your service  
[www.csj.qc.ca](http://www.csj.qc.ca)



**Legal  
Brief\***

**Vol. 16**

**Number 4**

**May 2024**

## **Social Assistance - Understanding the New Basic Income Program**

Social assistance, social solidarity, basic income – it's easy to get lost in the many government programs available to people experiencing difficulties.

The Quebec government has established two programs for the province's residents who are in a precarious situation: (1) The **Social Assistance Program** is for people in precarious situations, whether or not their capacity for employment is temporarily limited; and (2) the **Social Solidarity Program** is for people who are in the same situation, but whose capacity for employment is severely limited (serious health problems that limit an adult's ability to work).

On January 1, 2023, (3) the **Basic Income Program** was introduced for recipients of social solidarity benefits (with severe limited capacity) who have received benefits for at least 66 months over the previous 6 years. These individuals automatically receive a notice informing them of their admission to the program.<sup>1</sup>

For 2024, the basic income has been set at \$1,273 per month, representing an annual income of \$15,276, which is indexed each year. A person who is single receives an additional \$354 per month, and people with dependent minor children receive an additional \$21 per child, per month.

What is new – and drastically changes the old rules – is that recipients under this program are entitled to earn income of up to \$15,276, without their benefits being affected. The calculation is based on the previous year's tax return.

Finally, recipients can have up to \$20,000 in liquid assets (cash), also without affecting their benefits. For every dollar over this limit, the benefit is reduced by one dollar. For property (assets), the maximum value that does not affect the benefit is \$500,000, and the principal residence is excluded from this calculation.<sup>2</sup>

If you have a dispute involving the programs of the [Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale](#) (MESS), contact your nearest legal aid office without delay for a consultation with a lawyer to find out about your rights and recourses.

\*\*\*\*\*

Don't hesitate to have your eligibility for legal aid evaluated by making an appointment at a legal aid office near you. You can also check your eligibility online [here](#).

To find the contact information for your legal aid office, please click on the following link [www.csj.qc.ca](http://www.csj.qc.ca).

Original text prepared by  
M<sup>e</sup> Jean-Pierre Gagnon, Lawyer  
at the Roberval legal aid office

### **Contact Us**

Commission des  
services juridiques  
Communications Department  
P. O. Box 123  
Succursale Desjardins  
Montreal, Québec  
H5B 1B3

Telephone: 514-873-3562  
Fax: 514-864-2351

**[www.csj.qc.ca](http://www.csj.qc.ca)**

\* The information set out in this document is not a legal interpretation.

The masculine gender is used to designate persons solely in order to simplify the text.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that other people may also be eligible for the Basic Income Program.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that above certain thresholds, the income and liquidities of a recipient's spouse may reduce the benefits paid under the Basic Income Program.