

PASSPORT

PASSPORT:

Information Guide for Individuals and Families/Caregivers

Niagara Region
June 2006

An Information Guide for Individuals and Families / Caregivers

The Ontario government created the Passport initiative to provide opportunities for individuals who have a developmental disability and who have left school, to find more ways to participate in their communities.

What is Passport?

Passport is an initiative of the Ministry of Community and Social Services for young adults who have a developmental disability.

Through Passport, participants can receive funding for activities that encourage their personal development and help them achieve their potential. Passport also helps to:

- ❖ Improve the quality of participation in the community by providing supports that focus on individual goals, work activities and community participation
- ❖ Smooth the transition from school to life as an adult in the community
- ❖ Promote independence
- ❖ Foster social, emotional and community participation skills
- ❖ Promote continuing education and personal development

Who can apply for Passport funding?

Passport is intended for residents of Ontario who have a confirmed developmental disability, who:

- ❖ Have left school and would benefit from supports that will help them participate in recreational, vocational or educational opportunities in the community
- ❖ Have been waiting for service and are in need of community participation supports; and
- ❖ Are not eligible for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Employment Supports

Participants in Passport can live independently or in supportive living. Priority will be given to applicants who are living at home with their families.

It's important to remember that direct funding for community participation supports under Passport is a limited resource and not an entitlement program. Passport is a time limited program that individuals and families apply for and depending on available funding, individual needs and other priorities, may or may not receive funding.

Please be aware that all requests for this phase of Passport funding must be received by Contact Niagara, by **August 30, 2006**.

What can the funding be used for?

As an adult, to be active and included in your community you may need some help and support. These supports are called 'community participation supports'. For example, a support person or service may help you to:

- ❖ Prepare for a job
- ❖ Volunteer in the community
- ❖ Learn how to get along with others, live on your own or look after yourself
- ❖ Continue your education after high school
- ❖ Learn how to shop for yourself, use the library, the bus, participate at your local community centre, etc.

How do I apply for Passport funding?

Contact Niagara is responsible for administering the Passport program for residents of the Niagara Region. There are three basic steps in the process:

STEP 1:

- ❖ Individuals and families who are interested may call Contact Niagara to determine if they are eligible.
- ❖ A Contact Niagara Resource Coordinator will then gather some initial information and set an appointment with you.
- ❖ We will then send out to you an information package which will include an application form. If you wish, the application form can be obtained from our website at www.contactniagara.org

STEP 2:

- ❖ While not mandatory, when you apply for Passport funding it would be helpful for you to have a plan. Whether you are an adult already in the community who has changing needs or you are changing from student life to life as an adult in the community, a plan will help you and other people understand what you want to do, what you need, how you want to do things and who you want to help you. This plan can also tell you and other people what community participation supports you need. There are a number of ways you can develop your plan:
 - If you are still in school you can work with a school staff person, a Building Bridges or Foundations worker.
 - If you have already left school and are not working with a community agency you can call Contact Niagara at (905) 684-3407 for assistance
 - If you would like to develop your plan on your own, there is a booklet, designed by the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario, called *Creating a*

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Good Life in Community: A Guide on Person –Directed Planning that can help you with this planning. You can read or print a copy of the booklet online at www.mcass.gov.on.ca or at the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario website at www.individualizedfunding.ca .

STEP 3:

- ❖ The Contact Resource Coordinator will meet with you, along with anyone else that you may want at the meeting, to review the application form and complete the gathering of any further information about your situation. If necessary, the Resource Coordinator can assist you with the completion of the application form at this time.
- ❖ The Contact Resource Coordinator will also be available to assist you to obtain other supports and services.
- ❖ On conclusion of this meeting, the completed application form must be signed.

What happens after the application process is finished?

Contact Niagara will review the application form and:

- ❖ Determine the individual's eligibility
- ❖ Determine the individual's level of support needs and the financial allocation that the individual is eligible for. Contact Niagara will use a provincially developed guideline to make these determinations.

Passport funding is limited. We anticipate that the number of individuals eligible for Passport will exceed the available funding. A waiting list will be created for those for whom Passport funding is not currently available. Contact Niagara will follow Ministry of Community and Social Services guidelines for prioritizing applications. Prioritization will consider:

- ❖ Individuals' ability to benefit from support
- ❖ Effect of supports in preventing crisis (for individual and/or family)
- ❖ Ability of the family to cope
- ❖ Community capacity
- ❖ Availability of unpaid supports
- ❖ Length of wait for community participation supports
- ❖ Individuals who are living at home with their families

Contact Niagara will notify individuals and families of the outcome of their application by the end of October 2006.

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All Passport recipients need to re-apply every three years. (Individuals or families may request an earlier review if their circumstances change.) This will provide an opportunity to re-assess the plan and level of need.

Information about funding

People approved for Passport can either have money directly allocated to them to buy community participation supports and service (called **Direct Funding**) or use the funding to access services through a community agency (also called **Transfer Payment Agency**) that already has a funding agreement with the Ministry.

- ❖ Individuals and families must ensure that they have a signed agreement clearly stating what services will be received and the expectations for everyone involved when accessing either funding option.

Here are some considerations about Direct Funding:

- ❖ Individuals and families who choose this method will enter into a contract with Contact Niagara, to provide direct funding to the individual/family or to someone on the individual's behalf. Individuals/ Families will submit invoices to Contact Niagara to verify the use of direct funding in a manner that is consistent with the plan developed.
- ❖ Families selecting Direct Funding will become the employer including recruiting, hiring, supervising and paying staff
- ❖ If approved, you can use up to 10% of your total Passport money if you want an agency to look after paying your service provider (e.g. writing a cheque to your service provider, keeping your receipts for you and sending your receipts to Contact Niagara or if you would like someone to help develop and coordinate a plan for your community participation supports.

Where individuals and families choose to use Passport funding to access services through a community agency, Passport funding will flow from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to the agency.

For more information:

- ❖ Please call Contact Niagara at 905-684-3407 or 1-800-933-3617
- ❖ The complete provincial guidelines are available on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website. Visit:
http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/developmental/programs/young_leave_school.