

# Independent Youth Benefit

For young people in school,  
training, actively looking  
for work or unable  
to work temporarily



**Work and Income**  
Te Hirainga Tangata

*A service of the Ministry of Social Development*

## Can I get the Independent Youth Benefit?

We can grant you financial assistance from the date you first contact us, if you complete your application within 20 working days of that date.

To qualify for the Independent Youth Benefit you need to be:

- aged 16-17 years without children *and*
- have lived in New Zealand continuously for two years at any one time since becoming a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident.

You also need to be both:

- unable to live with your parents *and*
- unable to get financial support from them or anyone else.

There must also be a serious reason why you can't live with and be supported by your parents.

## You also must be

- enrolled in, and regularly attending, secondary school *or*
- a full time trainee on an approved work related course. Ask your training provider if your course is approved, or call us to check. The course must usually be less than 12 weeks long to qualify *or*
- unemployed, actively looking for work and ready to start a job or training course *or*
- unable to work temporarily because of sickness, injury, pregnancy or disability.

**If you have a partner you will only qualify in special circumstances, so please ask us about this if you live with a partner.**

## Your obligations

When you apply you must take part in activities that we agree to.

These may include:

- further education
- training *or*
- preparing yourself for work.

We may ask you to complete a plan with us to show how you are developing your knowledge, skills and experience through these activities.

## Payments

Here's a guide to what you may be able to get weekly after tax (it all depends on your situation):

If you are...	Weekly payments (after tax)
Single person	\$161.76
Married, civil union or de facto couple (if both qualify)	\$161.76 each
<i>You may get less if you have other income.</i>	

Rates at 1 April 2010

Your benefit is paid into your bank account every week. Payments usually start 2-3 weeks after you apply, or from the date your training course starts.

You may have to wait longer if you have recently been in work and:

- left your job without a good reason
- lost your job because of misconduct
- got holiday pay or another payment at the end of your job
- are getting sick pay from your employer.

## What happens if I work?

You may earn other income, including income from part time, temporary or seasonal work. You can earn up to \$80 a week (before tax) before your benefit is affected. When you earn more than this, the deduction is usually 70c for each dollar over the \$80 limit.

Please note that any income you have may affect any extra allowances you get from us, even if it's under the \$80 limit. How this income affects your allowances can vary, so please ask us for more details about this.

Any time you take on full-time work your benefit stops, but you may still be able to get help with things like accommodation. If your job is for less than 26 weeks we may be able to start your payments again straight away when your job ends. You can call us for an estimate to find out how working affects your payments.

## Other help

The **Community Services Card** can help reduce the costs of going to the doctor and getting prescriptions. To apply, call our Community Services Card Centre free on **0800 999 999**.

You may also qualify for the Accommodation Supplement, the Disability Allowance and other income support. For a guide to allowances and extra payments ask for our brochures *Need extra help with costs?* or *How can we help you?*



If you have any questions,  
you can call us free on  
**0800 559 009**.

## Important

**Make sure you bring everything you need to your meeting.** There is a list of all the basic things you need to bring in *How can we help you?* There are also some other things you need to bring:

**If you are a trainee,** you need to get a training statement filled in by your course provider before we meet (they usually have a supply of forms – or we can send you one).

**If you are aged 16-17 years and sick, injured, pregnant or have a disability,** you will need a medical certificate from your doctor or dentist. A registered practicing midwife can fill this in if you are pregnant. We'll give you a form or you can get one from your doctor, dentist or midwife.

**If you are aged 16-17 years and still at school,** you need to get a letter from your school before we meet to show that you are still enrolled there and regularly attending classes.

## Tell us about changes

You need to tell us any time your circumstances change as it may affect your payments eg if you change your name, address or bank account. The sort of things we need to know are listed in the *How can we help you?* brochure.

**Remember,** if you don't think you qualify for this benefit, there may be some other way we can help, so please ask us.

**If you have any questions,**  
call us on **0800 559 009** from  
7am to 6pm Monday to Friday  
and Saturday 8am to 1pm or  
contact your Case Manager at  
your nearest Service Centre.

**If you are deaf or find it hard to  
communicate by phone,** you can  
send a message to our Deaf Link  
free-fax on **0800 621 621** or email  
**MSD\_Deaf\_Services@msd.govt.nz**

**For more information visit:**  
Work and Income website  
**[www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz)**