

This brochure tells you about the factors we may use to decide if you are in a relationship when you're applying for or getting income assistance.

It's a guide only – so if you're unsure about whether we would consider you to be in a relationship, or how a relationship may affect your income assistance, you can call us on **0800 559 009** and we'll be happy to help you figure it out.

If you have any questions

call us on **0800 559 009** from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and Saturday 8am to 1pm, or talk to 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 **0800 621 621**.



Work and Income
Te Hiranga Tangata

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

ALLA0011 – MAY 2007

Relationships and income assistance

Things you need to know
about relationships when
getting income assistance



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The amount of income assistance you get depends on a number of things, including whether you're single or in a relationship. So, if you get married or separate, or enter or end a civil union or a de facto relationship, you need to tell us straight away.

If you are in a relationship that you haven't told us about before, you should also contact us straight away. That way, we can make sure you're paid the right amount, and don't miss out on any extra payments or get into debt.

Are you in a relationship?

Whether people are single or a couple affects eligibility for certain income assistance and the rate at which we can pay that assistance.

When we determine your entitlement to income assistance, we will consider you to be in a relationship if you:

- are married *or*
- are in a civil union with someone of the same or opposite sex *or*
- are in a de facto relationship with someone of the same or opposite sex

There also needs to be a degree of companionship in which two people:

- are committed to each other emotionally for the foreseeable future *and*
- are financially interdependent on each other.

To give you a better idea of what we mean by this, think about whether:

- You live together at the same address most of the time
- You live separately but stay overnight at each other's place a few nights a week
- You share responsibilities, for example bringing up children (if any)
- You socialise and holiday together
- You share money, bank accounts or credit cards
- You share household bills
- You have a sexual relationship
- People think of you as a couple
- You give each other emotional support and companionship
- Your partner would be willing to financially support you if you couldn't support yourself

We know it can be difficult to determine whether you're in a relationship for income assistance purposes. If you're unsure about whether we would consider you to be in a relationship, please give us a call. We will be happy to discuss this with you.

Are you in a violent relationship?

If you are in a violent relationship, or thinking of leaving one, we may be able to give you extra financial help and advise you where you can go for other support. Please talk with us about it. The Police can also help you get protection, shelter and support.

Have you told us everything?

When you receive income assistance, it is very important you tell us everything about your personal situation that might affect your entitlement, for instance if you're working or in a relationship. It is also important that you answer questions we may ask about your personal situation honestly.

If your situation changes in any way that may affect your entitlement, you must tell us straight away. If you don't tell us about these changes, you could be breaking the law. This could result in a debt which you have to pay back, a fine, prosecution, or imprisonment.

Call us if there's anything you are uncertain about – we are always happy to answer your questions.

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

It's always best to ask
if you're unsure about
what you need to tell us –
we can help you avoid
problems later.
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