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Increase to Food Allowance for Social Assistance Recipients

WHITEHORSE – Effective early in the new year, Yukon residents receiving social assistance will see an increase in the food allowance portion of their benefits, announced Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart.

“We want to ensure that persons on social assistance have the necessary resources to meet their nutritional needs, and one step is to increase the amount of funding received,” Hart said. “We recognize that the nutritional needs of people change over time and that the cost of purchasing food items increases. We need to be responsive to those changes and ensure that we enable folks to meet their individual family needs based on size, sex and age of members.”

The plan is to increase the food allowance by 15 per cent for a single person, 10 per cent for a family of two and five per cent for a family of three in Whitehorse.

“The larger the family unit, the greater the buying power and ability to meet their nutritional needs,” Hart said. “It’s more expensive to shop for one person than a large family, which can buy in bulk and see some savings; this is why a larger increase is going to smaller families.”

In addition to the increase, the minister also announced that in order to adjust rates to increasing living costs, social assistance rates overall will be indexed to the consumer price index.

“The adjustment of rates ensures that recipients should receive an adequate amount for food. It also means that rates will increase on a regular basis. The Yukon government has increased rates which had not been increased in 15 years,” Hart said.

Next steps include consultation with First Nations and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada as both follow the social assistance rates set by the Yukon government.

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