

Vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons

6.8.3

All provinces and territories except Quebec have specific programs for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for physically or mentally disabled persons for which costs are shared with the federal government. These services are provided to enable the individual to become capable of pursuing a gainful occupation. The services are co-ordinated and administered by provincial departments but may be provided either directly by central or regional provincial offices or purchased from voluntary organizations. Vocational rehabilitation services include medical, social and vocational assessment to determine the individual's residual capacities. A suitable vocational plan is determined jointly by the individual and counselling staff.

Prosthetic and corrective appliances, wheelchairs and other mobility aids are provided so that the individual may participate in a vocational training program or undertake employment. Other remedial and restorative treatment is provided as necessary. Any vocational training is made available in regular municipal or provincial vocational schools, private trade schools or business colleges, special training centres such as rehabilitation workshops, universities, or through training on the job in business or industry. The provision of all equipment necessary for training is also covered, as well as any travel cost. Maintenance allowances are usually provided for the individuals and their dependents while participating in the program. Where employment placement outside the competitive labour market is indicated, such placement is arranged by the province. Provincial authorities also assist in regular employment placement when special problems arise and their help is required.

In Quebec, assistance of various types and rehabilitation services for disabled persons are provided through a variety of departments and agencies. Because Quebec does not participate in the particular cost-sharing program with the federal government for the provision of all these services, the province would receive some cost-shared benefits for persons in need under the Canada Assistance Plan while other costs are borne fully by the province.

Programs for Indians

6.9

As with other Canadians, Indians are entitled to the benefits of universal federal welfare schemes such as Family Allowances, Old Age Security pensions, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Subject to the standard qualifying conditions, Indians also receive Canada or Quebec Pension Plan payments, unemployment insurance, worker compensation and veterans benefits.

However, the extent to which provincial welfare benefits and services are available to Indians living on reserves and Crown land varies according to province. Similarly, the acceptance of financial responsibility for welfare assistance to Indians who do not live on reserves can vary. Most provinces seek recovery of the costs of assistance and services which are provided to such Indians if they have not acquired residence off a reserve in accordance with provincial requirements.

Federal-provincial arrangements. A number of individual arrangements have been worked out between the federal government and authorities at other levels. Under a 1965 agreement with Ontario, all provincial welfare programs are available to Indians living there, either on or off reserves. In Quebec, the federal government has contracts with eight private social agencies to furnish welfare service to Indians in their geographic jurisdictions. An agreement in 1973 between the federal and Alberta governments and the Blackfoot band permits the band to administer two programs offered by the province's health and social development department to members on the reserve. Similar agreements continue to be developed through federal-provincial negotiation and consultation with representatives of bands and associations. There are also the social assistance and other programs of the federal Indian affairs and northern development department aimed directly at assisting the Indian people.

Role of Indian and northern affairs. The department has four main objectives in the operation of welfare programs: to ensure that services available are comparable to those