

# Benefit intermediaries promote access to income benefits by low-income Manitobans.

## Background

- Many low-income Manitobans face systemic barriers that inhibit the take-up of vital government benefits.
- Several nonprofit and public sector agencies offer free benefit intermediary programs that promote access to benefits.

## Key findings

Benefit intermediaries:

- Provide direct services that assist low-income Manitobans to learn about and claim benefits, and advocate for their rights.
- Collaborate to build cross-sectoral capacity to provide benefit assistance services to low-income Manitobans.
- Advocate for changes to welfare state policy and practice to reduce systemic barriers that inhibit benefit take-up.

This work is key to ensuring that low-income Manitobans can access their income benefits.

Benefit intermediaries are constrained by:

- Heavy reliance on government funding.
- Limited reach in comparison to the welfare state.
- Benefit levels that are too low to relieve poverty.

## Recommendations

- Benefit intermediaries can work for impacts at individual and systemic levels by connecting direct service delivery with systemic engagement. This work can enhance service users' quality of life and change welfare state policy and practice. Organizations should consider how frontline service delivery can inform and contribute to systemic engagement.
- Benefit intermediaries may have a greater impact in reducing poverty by partnering with organizations and networks that advocate to raise benefit rates. Combined efforts could work to increase the adequacy and accessibility of income benefits.
- Agencies may be better able to work for systemic changes by reducing reliance on government funding and seeking alternative funding to support public policy advocacy.

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## Methods

- Semi-structured interviews with six key informants who promote access to benefits in Winnipeg
- A literature and document review
- Analysis of Statistics Canada data

## For more information

Schachter, K. (2019). *Money for the marginalized: Promoting access to income benefits in Manitoba* (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba). [Thesis Commons](#).

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