



**Ministerial Statement**  
The House of Assembly

**The Hon. Jason P. Hayward, JP, MP**  
Minister of Economy and Labour

**Department of Financial Assistance**  
**Annual Report 2020 - 2021**

**Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

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**Mr. Speaker,**

This morning I rise to lay the 2020 - 2021 Annual Report of the Department of Financial Assistance as prescribed by the Financial Assistance Act 2001, section 3(4) which states: “the Director shall as soon as practicable after the end of the Government’s financial year make to the Minister and publish in such manner as he thinks appropriate a report of his activities under this Act for that year.”

The Annual Report highlights some significant results achieved during this reporting period, which include:

- i.** reduction in the number of client complaints;
- ii.** reduction in the number of complaints to the Ombudsman’s Office;
- iii.** reduction in the number of appeals to the Department of Financial Assistance Review Board;
- iv.** enhanced monitoring and control of expenditure;
- v.** implementation of new internal policies and procedures;
- vi.** improved governance and management of client case files;
- vii.** continued activities to advance Financial Assistance Reform initiatives; and

**viii.** administration of the Supplementary Unemployment Benefit Fund.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Work continues in earnest to improve good governance by advancing monthly compliance activities. This minimizes risks and promotes consistency when carrying out operational activities. The team is working on transforming the service delivery to ensure the customer experience is professional and demonstrates a high level of customer service delivery. During this reporting period the team participated in the International Leadership Management Customer Service Programme to improve their skills in this area. This has led to a decrease in the number of complaints logged with the Ombudsman's Office and reduced the number of appeals referred to the Advisory Board.

The Supplementary Unemployment Benefit Fund was introduced in September 2020. This funding was created to provide assistance to Bermudians who continued to struggle with unemployment as a direct result of the pandemic. With the implementation of this funding the department was appointed to carry out a rigorous vetting process to minimize fraud and to deter dishonesty. Additional resources were recruited to assist with the volume of additional duties associated with the application process. The Ministry of Finance was responsible for the issuance of payments after receipt of the recommended listing from the Financial Assistance Department.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The report provides information that demonstrates ongoing work being performed to maintain fiscal responsibility by enhancing the monitoring of expenditures and reducing the risk of fraud. Stringent procedures are constantly reviewed to ensure

the Investigative Officers utilize compliance guidelines as well as the services of the Attorney-General’s Chambers to standardize Payment Agreements to reduce receivables (overpayment of funds) and discourage fraud. During the fiscal year there were a number of cases referred to the Attorney-General’s Office for opinion and subsequent legal proceedings where it was deemed prudent. At the end of this fiscal period, the total amount of recoverable debt recorded was approximately four hundred and sixty-nine thousand, six hundred and twenty-seven dollars (\$469,627).

The Report illustrates a five (5) year performance trend for the Department.

<b>FA Client Categories</b>	<b>Total Client Payments FY 2020/2021</b>	<b>Number of Persons FY 2020/2021 (average/mth)</b>
Pensioners	\$ 25,374,708	1024
Disabled	\$ 15,281,697	782
Employed with Insufficient Earnings	\$ 3,974,558	220
Abled-bodied Unemployed	\$ 2,880,036	158
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$47,511,000</b>	<b>2184</b>

It remains that the categories from highest participants to lowest remains pensioners, disabled, earnings low and abled-bodied unemployed year on year. The highest expenditures are rent, nursing homes, food and insurance. There is little change in these categories from period to period. Similarly, the Child Day Care programme trend does not show any significant changes throughout these years.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Phase One of Financial Assistance Reform began in earnest during this period. Drafting Instructions were completed and submitted in accordance with the

legislative process. By the end of the reporting period, it was anticipated that amendments would be approved in the months that followed.

The Ministry would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Financial Assistance team and all partners who collaborated to support the work that is being carried out. These efforts will ensure that Bermudians gain access to services that will assist them in their efforts to maintain a respectable level of living.

It is the goal of this Ministry to go a step further by positioning Bermudians to achieve gainful and respectful employment opportunities in the local workforce, and to provide the required social support services.

Thank you **Mr. Speaker**

**FA Programme Expenditure 2016 - 2020**  
(excludes Child Day Care Allowance and Administrative Costs)

