

This article is about what social services are available to those who live with epilepsy. There are systems out there that can help with supporting those with epilepsy and their families, you have to explore every avenue to get what you need.

Work and Income Support

Disability Allowance

Work and Income can pay up to a maximum of \$61.69 a week for Disability Allowance and it isn't taxed. How much you get depends on the extra costs you have because of your disability.

The Disability Allowance is usually paid straight into your bank account with your main benefit or pension (or weekly if you don't get any other assistance).

The Disability Allowance can help pay for a number of things - as long as your doctor tells Work and Income you need them because of your disability.

Here are some of the things Work and Income may be able to help with, and the sorts of proof Work and Income will need to see - so keep all your receipts.

Some of the extra costs Work and Income may be able to help with...	They will need to see...
Doctor's, specialist's and hospital fees that aren't already subsidised	Receipts or invoices showing the date, cost and reason for your visit
Prescription fees	Receipts or print-outs from your chemist showing the date, cost, the item you received and whether it's subsidised
Travel to your doctor, specialist, hospital or counsellor	Tickets or receipts showing the date, cost and how you travelled (if you travelled in your own car, we need to know the cc rating of your car and how far you travelled)

Heating	Your summer and winter electricity bills
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Medical alarm rental and monitoring	The Disability Allowance - Medical Assessment for Medical Alarm form completed by a doctor, and the contract or receipt for the installation/rental of the medical alarm.
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When your Disability Allowance is reviewed, they will need to see proof of any costs that have increased or are new. Request a Disability Allowance file to keep your receipts in.

Jobseeker Support

Jobseeker Support helps people find work and provides them with a weekly payment.

Important information

You may qualify for this benefit if you either:

- can work full time and you're taking steps to look for work
- have a health condition or disability which affects your ability to work.

Child Disability Allowance

Child Disability Allowance is a fortnightly payment made to the main carer of a child or young person with a serious disability. It is paid in recognition of the extra care and attention needed for that child.

You may get a Child Disability Allowance if:

- you are the main carer of the child (or if there is no main carer, you have care of the child for the time being)
- you are a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident
- the child has been assessed as needing constant care and attention for at least 12 months because of a serious disability
- the child or young person is under 18.

Both you and the child should also normally live in New Zealand and intend to stay here.

You may be able to get both the Disability Allowance and the Child Disability Allowance for the same child. But you can't get this allowance if the child already

gets a benefit (except for the Orphan's or Unsupported Child's Benefit). If the child is 16 or over, they may be able to get Supported Living Payment.

You can't get a Child Disability Allowance if you get Board Payments from Child, Youth and Family for the child.

Special Disability Allowance

Special Disability Allowance is a weekly payment for people who have a spouse or partner who is in residential care, or has been in a public hospital for over 13 weeks. It's paid to the spouse or partner who is not in care to help with the extra costs of having their spouse or partner in care.

Community Services Card

Work and Income give out the Community Services Card on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

It can reduce the cost of:

- prescription fees if you don't belong to a Primary Health Organisation
- fees for after hours doctor visits
- visits to a doctor who is not your regular doctor
- glasses for children under 16
- emergency dental care provided by hospitals and approved dental contractors (ask the dental provider if they are an approved contractor)
- travel and accommodation for treatment at a public hospital outside your area when you have been referred (at least 80km away for adults and 25km for children)
- home help.

You may get the Community Services Card if you are:

- 18 years old or over
- on a low to middle-income
- a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident
- normally live in New Zealand and intend to stay here.

If you're 16-17, you may be able to get a card if you're either:

- studying full-time at a university or polytechnic
- working and supporting yourself.

You may also get the card if you have refugee or protection status or have applied for refugee or protection status.

If you cannot get the Community Services Card, you may be able to get some other type of help for your health costs. Ask your pharmacist about the Prescription Subsidy Card or your doctor about a High Use Health Card.

If you have a Community Services Card and are transferring to NZ Super, then your current card can be used to its expiry date, but you will need to reapply when it expires. NZ Super is counted as income and you need to update your income details.

You can get an application form in any of these ways:

- download the application form from <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/forms/community-services-card-application.pdf>
- ring Work and Income on [0800 999 999](tel:0800999999) and ask for one
- fax us on their DeafLink free-fax 0800 621 621
- call into a [Work and Income service centre](#)
- ask your family doctor or pharmacy.

You need to provide 3 documents as proof of identity when you apply for a Community Services Card.

Accommodation Supplement

Accommodation Supplement is a weekly payment which helps people with their rent, board or the cost of owning a home.

You may get an Accommodation Supplement if you:

- have accommodation costs
- are aged 16 years or more
- are a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident
- normally live in New Zealand and intend to stay here
- are not paying rent for a social housing property. (Social housing properties are provided by Housing New Zealand and approved community housing providers.)

It also depends on:

- how much you and your spouse or partner earn
- any money or assets you and your spouse or partner have.

Supported Living Payment

Supported Living Payment is assistance for people who have, or are caring for someone with a health condition, injury or disability.

You may be able to get the Supported Living Payment if you are either:

- permanently and severely restricted in your ability to work because of a health condition, injury or disability
- totally blind
- caring full-time for someone at home who would otherwise need hospital-level or residential care (or equivalent) who is not your husband, wife or partner.

You must also be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident who normally lives here, and who has lived here for at least two years at one time since becoming a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident.

Modification Grant

Modification Grant is a payment which helps people with disabilities pay for workplace changes or equipment that makes it easier for them to stay in or get work.

Note that this is a guide and it is strongly recommended that you speak to a Work and Income support worker for more comprehensive and personalised information that best suits you and your family's needs.

Total Mobility

Total Mobility is a plan set to reduce the costs of transport for those whom transport is an issue.

First, an assessor will determine eligibility for Total Mobility services, then, depending on your region, either a set of vouchers or a swipe card will be given to you for a small fee (between \$8-\$10). These vouchers/card reduce costs by up to 50% for taxis, buses, trains and ferries.

Maximum subsidised fare

Each voucher entitles you to a 50 per cent discount on your taxi fare, up to a maximum fare amount. The maximum subsidised fare varies throughout the region:

- In Hamilton it is \$30 per trip (\$15 discount)

- In Taupo it is \$25 (\$12.50 discount)
- In Tokoroa it is \$15 (\$7.50 discount)

For example in Hamilton, this means that if the fare is \$35, the voucher can be used for \$15, and the user will need to pay the taxi driver \$20. If the total fare is less than the maximum subsidised fare the 50 per cent discount applies.

Total Mobility Agencies

Total Mobility operates in all of the following areas

- Whangarei
- Auckland
- Hamilton
- Tokoroa
- Taupō
- Bay of Plenty, including Tauranga, Mount Maunganui, Te Puke, Whakatane and Rotorua
- Gisborne
- Napier and Hastings
- Palmerston North
- New Plymouth
- Wellington
- Nelson
- Blenheim
- Greymouth
- Christchurch
- Dunedin
- Invercargill
- Christchurch

Calling Epilepsy New Zealand's freephone 0800 37 45 37 will guide you to your nearest ENZ Total Mobility agency.

WorkBridge

Workbridge is a specialist employment service that works with people with all types of disability, injury or illness. We are about recognising and strengthening ability rather than focusing on disability. This means the people we promote for a vacancy will have the necessary skills and attitudes for the job.

Job Support Fund

Job Support provides financial assistance to cover additional costs related to an employee's disability. Job Support may apply to full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary work. The Job Support Fund targets people with disabilities who are seeking work or those already in employment who want to retain their employment.

Support Funds can also be used when a person is in danger of losing their job because of the sudden onset of a disability or the worsening of an existing condition.

The Job Support funding limit for each individual is \$16,900 in any 12 month period. The \$16,900 limit is inclusive of any other Work and Income grants and subsidies that are received for similar purposes, e.g. Work and Income Skills Investment Subsidies or Ministry of Social Development Modification Grants.

Job Support funding is available for, but not limited to:

- Workplace assessments to establish the level of workplace support required
- Modifications to a workplace
- Job coaching (generally short-term) to assist the disabled person learn a new job, if their disability means they require extra assistance or a different format for learning the role
- Purchase of additional physical support necessitated by the demands of the job (including on-the-job physiotherapy or attendant care)
- NZ Sign Language interpreter services - for Deaf or hearing impaired people
- Special equipment to accommodate a person's disability
- Additional costs of transport and parking, over and above the costs that a person without a disability would have
- A support person to provide on-the-job guidance and instruction to the employee
- Productivity Allowances that can cover any shortfalls in productivity related to a disabled person's disability. Each Productivity Allowance is tailored to the individual's needs
- Induction training that is required because of the person's disability, or assistance with your standard induction programme to make it accessible to a new disabled employee
- Disability awareness training for colleagues to promote a smooth entry into the workplace for both the disabled employee and other employees.

The scheme is very flexible and there will be many other support services which may be funded.

Applications for Job Support funding must be made by the person with the disability on an application form. Forms are available from Workbridge centres or you can download one at:

http://workbridgeincorporated.virtuozzo.co.nz/supportfunds/JobSupport_Application_Jul08.pdf

Making Claims with ACC

ACC is a government agency designed to assist people who have been injured due to an accident or situation out of their control get whatever help is required to get well again.

Injuries as a result of epileptic seizures come under this category, and with the necessary paperwork filled out (with a medical certificate attached) a claim can be lodged and ACC will begin the process of considering your request for assistance. It is best to be aware that there is no guarantee of a claim being fulfilled by ACC, but if you do not ask, you are guaranteed not to receive assistance.

To make claims with ACC, your healthcare professional will be able to help you with the forms and the medical certificates to help your claim. It is also advised that you contact ACC to get more information on the best way to lodge a claim and what to expect in your case. Their claims department phone number is **0800 101 996**, and their email is claims@acc.co.nz

Disclaimer:

This information is given to provide general information about epilepsy. It is not legal advice and no warranties or representations are given in relation to any legal information provided. Epilepsy Association of New Zealand, its employees and Trustees exclude any liabilities that may arise out of the use or misuse of any information provided. It is recommended that you consult independent legal advice from your lawyer. Medical information and knowledge changes rapidly and you should consult your doctor for more detailed information. This is not medical advice and you should not make any medication or treatment changes without consulting your doctor.

The information in this factsheet is a general guide only. It is not the source of the law and should not be used in place of authoritative legal documents.

Contact your local ENZ Educator who may be able to help 0800 37 45 37 with further information.