



## **Process for Declaration of Financial Distress**

Financial Distress (FD) is a short-term option (maximum of two years) that is provided to OIA members in good-standing who are faced with unforeseen financial issues such as job loss associated with an economic downturn. Financial Distress can also be encountered when faced with a medical condition requiring a leave from the workplace. As a result, an OIA member is not able to meet their financial obligation to their professional regulatory body.

The OIA has established a fund from general membership fees in order to temporarily assist those members in good-standing that meet eligibility criteria for a Financial Distress subsidy. It is recognized that an individual in Financial Distress as an Articling Agrologist will not be recommended to the Board of Directors to be granted Professional or Technical Agrologist status (P.Ag. or T.Ag.) given their non-practicing status.

Further, this policy does not apply to new applicants. There are community agencies, including Ontario Works, that may be in a position to provide financial assistance to new applicants who desire to achieve their Articling Agrologist (A.Ag.) status.

### **Criteria for Financial Distress Consideration:**

- submit a letter or email request to the Registrar outlining the circumstances associated with the request
- provide a valid statement of earnings for the previous year as proof of previous income
- submit a detailed plan to regain financial stability – include any continuing education program, competence enhancement, retraining that is planned
- submit a “non-practicing” declaration with full understanding of the implications of filing a false document with the OIA
- demonstrate that all community and government options have been exhausted which could have provided professional fee payment assistance

### **Process:**

The final decision for determination of a Financial Distress Subsidy rests with the OIA Registrar. Based on substantiation and verification of the material received, the Registrar will determine what is most appropriate from the options below:

- require the individual to pay a nominal professional fee
- require the individual to pay an amount less than the full professional fee
- determine with the individual an appropriate schedule to pay all or part of any outstanding professional fee

-determine that there is no basis for a Financial Distress Subsidy

The Registrar will contact the applicant in writing or via email to communicate the final decision.

### **On-Going Qualification for Financial Distress:**

As the maximum time that an Agrologist can be declared non-practicing and in Financial Distress is two years, based on the circumstances, the Registrar will also outline the time period in which Financial Distress has been approved. Further, the Registrar will document any updated submissions necessary that must be received to maintain Financial Distress status.

While receiving a Financial Distress subsidy from the OIA the Agrologist will be placed on the Registrant Database and in any publication utilized as a non-practicing Agrologist. An Agrologist on Financial Distress who meets continuing qualification requirements for both their designation and for FD subsidy will remain in good-standing.

It is the responsibility of the Agrologist to submit all required documentation by the timelines indicated. Further, it is the responsibility of the Agrologist in Financial Distress to notify the Registrar immediately if financial circumstances change. Failure to notify the Registrar of changed circumstances or make required submissions that will determine continued eligibility will lead to immediate withdrawal of subsidy, the generation of an invoice which may include a required payment for the time in which subsidy should have ceased, disciplinary action, and may include suspension and deactivation.

### **Process for Those Under Previous Financial Distress Policy**

Those members who are under the former OIA Financial Distress Policy will not be required to reapply for consideration in 2008. However, individuals seeking approval for Financial Distress in 2009 must follow the procedures and meet the criteria outlined above to be considered for continued financial subsidy. For those who have been receiving a Financial Distress Subsidy and wish to be considered for 2009, additional criteria will be assessed including the length of time subsidy has been received. As a result, individuals already receiving a Financial Distress Subsidy may only have one year remaining to receive financial assistance.

For more information on the OIA Financial Distress policy or procedures please contact:

Mr. Terry Kingsmill, P.Ag.  
Registrar (Acting)  
Ontario Institute of Agrologists  
100 Stone Road West, Suite 108  
Guelph, ON N1G 5L3  
519.826.4226 ext. 230