

Bahamas

Exchange rate: U.S.\$1.00 equals
1 Bahamian dollar (B\$).

Old Age, Disability, and Survivors

Regulatory Framework

First laws: 1956 (old-age noncontributory pensions) and 1967 (public assistance for disability).

Current law: 1972 (national insurance), with 1999 amendment.

Type of program: Dual social insurance and social assistance system.

Coverage

Social insurance: Employed persons, self-employed persons, and the voluntarily insured.

Social assistance: Residents who do not qualify under the National Insurance Act.

Source of Funds

Social insurance

Insured person: 1.7% of earnings, if weekly insurable earnings are under B\$60; 3.4% for earnings above B\$60. The self-employed contribute 8.8% of earnings if eligible for the work injury program; 6.8% if not eligible.

Employer: 7.1% of payroll, for weekly insurable wages under B\$60, 5.4% for wages above B\$60. (0.75% of the employer's contribution is earmarked for work injury benefits.)

Government: None.

Maximum earnings for contribution and benefit purposes are B\$20,800 a year.

All of the above contributions also finance cash sickness, maternity, and work injury benefits (except for certain categories of self-employed persons).

Social assistance

Insured person: None.

Employer: None.

Government: Total cost of all income-tested allowances in force prior to October 1974.

Qualifying Conditions

Social insurance

Retirement pension: Age 65 with 150 weeks of paid contributions. Employees who were over age 35 in 1974 (self-employed over age 35 in 1976) receive a 25-week credit for each year that they were over age 35, up to a maximum of 600 weeks, provided that contributions were paid for 150 weeks during the first 3 years that the program was in operation.

Entitlement ceases if the insured person earns B\$200 or more a week.

Benefit is paid locally for insured persons who live abroad.

Disability pension: Under age 65 and permanently incapable of any work. Employees who were over age 35 in 1974 (self-employed over age 35 in 1976) receive a 25-week credit for each year that they were over age 35, up to a maximum of 600 weeks, provided that contributions were paid for 150 weeks during the first 3 years that the program was in operation.

Survivor pension: The insured person was a pensioner or had made 150 contributions at the time of death.

Funeral grant: For the death of an insured person or the spouse of an insured person. The insured must have at least 50 paid contributions.

Social assistance

Noncontributory old-age pension (income-tested): For resident retired workers aged 65 or older who do not qualify under the National Insurance Act.

Disability assistance (income-tested): For residents who are assessed as disabled and who do not qualify under the National Insurance Act.

Survivor assistance (income-tested): If the deceased did not qualify under the National Insurance Act.

Old-Age Benefits

Social insurance

Retirement pension: 40% of the covered wage with 750 weeks of paid or credited contributions; 15% to 38% of the covered wage for between 150 and 749 weeks of paid or credited contributions. The pension is increased by 1% of the covered wage for every 50-week period of paid or credited contributions above 750, up to a maximum of 60%.

The minimum benefit is B\$53.07 a week.

Social assistance

Noncontributory old-age pension (income-tested): B\$46.15 a week.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Social insurance

Disability pension: 40% of the covered wage, according to wage class, with 750 weeks of paid or credited contributions; 15% to 38% of covered wage for between 150 and 749 weeks of paid or credited contributions. The pension is increased by 1% of the covered wage for every 50-week period of paid or credited contributions paid above 750, up to a maximum of 60%.

The minimum benefit is B\$53.07 a week.

Social assistance

Disability assistance (income-tested): B\$46.15 a week.

Survivor Benefits

Social insurance

Survivor pension: 50% of the insured's pension, payable to a widow aged 40 or older who is incapable of gainful employment or is caring for a child eligible for survivor's benefits. The pension is also payable to a dependent disabled widower with weekly income less than B\$46.15.

The full pension is awarded to a dependent mother over age 40 or a disabled father with income under B\$46.15 a week on the condition that no other survivor has prior entitlement.

The minimum survivor pension is B\$53.07 a week.

Orphan's pension: 10% of the insured's pension for each dependent child under age 16 (age 21 if a full-time student) up to a family maximum of 100%.

Full orphans receive B\$21.92 a week each; up to B\$25.50 a week each if over age 12, a student, or disabled.

The minimum orphan's pension is B\$21.92.

Funeral grant: A lump sum of B\$1,500 is payable to the person paying for the funeral expenses. If the funeral costs less than B\$1,500, the remaining balance is payable at the discretion of the National Insurance Board.

Social assistance

Survivor assistance (income-tested): Adults receive B\$46.15 a week; children receive B\$18.46 a week each.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Housing and National Insurance provides general supervision.

National Insurance Board administers the program.

Sickness and Maternity

Regulatory Framework

First and current law: 1972 (national insurance), with 1999 amendment.

Type of program: Social insurance system. Cash benefits only.

Coverage

Employed persons and the self-employed.

Source of Funds

Insured person: See contributions under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.

Employer: See contributions under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.

Government: None.

Qualifying Conditions

Cash sickness benefits: Forty weeks of paid contributions with 26 weeks paid or credited contributions in the year preceding the onset of illness, or in the last contribution year, or 13 weeks paid or credited contributions in the 26 weeks preceding the onset of illness.

Cash maternity benefits: Fifty weeks of contributions since entry into the system with 26 weeks of paid or credited contributions in the preceding contribution year, or 26 weeks of contributions in the 40 weeks before benefit is due.

Maternity grant: At least 50 paid contributions.

Funeral benefit: The death of an insured person or the spouse of an insured person. The insured person must have at least 50 paid contributions.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Sickness benefit: 60% of average weekly insurable earnings. The benefit is payable after a 3-day waiting period for up to 26 weeks (may be extended to 40 weeks in certain circumstances).

The minimum benefit is B\$53.07 a week.

Sickness allowance (means-tested): B\$46.15 a week for an insured person who does not meet the qualifying conditions for sickness benefit.

Maternity benefit: 60% of average weekly insurable earnings. The benefit is payable for 13 weeks (may be extended to 15 weeks) beginning not earlier than 6 weeks before the expected date of childbirth.

The minimum benefit is B\$43.85 a week.

Maternity grant: A lump sum of B\$400 for each live birth.

Funeral benefit: A lump sum of B\$1,500.

Workers' Medical Benefits

No statutory benefits are provided.

Public and private medical care is available at public hospitals and clinics. Government subsidizes the cost for public patients, children, the elderly, and indigent persons.

Dependents' Medical Benefits

No statutory benefits are provided.

Administrative Organization

Prime Minister's Office provides general supervision.

National Insurance Board administers the program.

Work Injury

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1943 (workmen's compensation).

Current law: 1972 (national insurance).

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employed persons and certain categories of the self-employed.

Exclusions: Family labor.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None, except for some categories of the self-employed. (See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.)

Employer: Total cost. (See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.)

Government: None.

Qualifying Conditions

Work injury benefits: There is no minimum qualifying period.

Temporary Disability Benefits

Temporary disability pension: 66.6% of average weekly covered earnings, payable after a 3-day waiting period for up to 40 weeks.

The minimum benefit is B\$53.07 a week.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension: 66.6% of average weekly covered earnings, if the assessed degree of permanent disability is 100%.

The minimum benefit is B\$53.07 a week for total disability.

Partial disability: The pension is proportionately reduced for an assessed degree of disability of 25% or more.

The minimum benefit is B\$36.92 a week for partial disability.

Lump-sum grant: A lump sum of between B\$100 and B\$2,400 is also payable, depending on the assessed degree of disability.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Benefits include hospitalization, general and specialist care, medicines, and transportation.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: 50% of the insured's temporary disability pension.

Orphan's pension: 10% of the insured's temporary disability pension for each dependent child under age 16 (age 21 if a full-time student) up to a family maximum of 100%.

Industrial death benefit: A lump sum equal to the monthly value of the survivor pension or orphan's pension.

Industrial funeral benefit: A lump sum of B\$1,500.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Housing and National Insurance provides general supervision.

National Insurance Board administers the program.