

SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS



Special Needs Assistance for Seniors

INFORMATION BOOKLET

If you have any questions or require additional information, please call the **Alberta Supports Contact Centre** toll-free 1-877-644-9992 or 780-644-9992 in Edmonton

**Government
of Alberta ■**

Special Needs Assistance for Seniors

INFORMATION BOOKLET

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Special Needs Assistance for Seniors

The **Special Needs Assistance for Seniors** program is available to help seniors with the cost of appliances, minor home repairs and some medical costs. The program provides a lump-sum payment to eligible low-income seniors. The maximum assistance available is \$5,000 in a benefit year.

You are eligible to submit a request to the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program if you:

1. are eligible to apply for and have submitted an application for Seniors Financial Assistance, and
2. have an income within the income thresholds listed below.

Benefit Year

The current benefit year is from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012. The date your claim is received in an Alberta Seniors and Community Supports' office determines the benefit year.

Income

Income information

Your 2010 income information is used to assess your claim. We get this information from the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. Total income (line 150 of your tax return) is used to assess your eligibility for benefits.

Income thresholds

Single Seniors	
Annual Income	Funding Level
Less than \$20,200	Primary and Secondary items
\$20,201—\$24,600	Primary items only
Over \$24,600	No funding

Senior Couples	
Annual Income	Funding Level
Less than \$31,800	Primary and Secondary items
\$31,801—\$40,000	Primary items only
Over \$40,000	No funding

How it Works

Request form

A Special Needs Assistance for Seniors Request Form needs to be submitted only once during the benefit year. If you have more expenses in the same benefit year, just send a receipt or estimate to the program and your original claim will be reassessed. If you have a spouse, please fill in all their information even if your spouse is not yet 65 years old.

(Spouse also refers to adults living common-law or in an adult interdependent relationship.)

Authorization

On the request form, you can list an individual who has helped you complete the form. If you want, the program will contact this person if we have any questions or need more information. This individual may also contact the program to obtain information about the request on your behalf.

Supporting documentation

Please send all supporting information for each item you need help with, so your request can be assessed in a timely manner. **You must send a receipt or estimate for all items requested.**

The program can accept a receipt for an item that was bought up to 12 months ago. The date of the receipt is compared to the date we receive your claim. You must have been eligible to make a claim when the item was bought.

General Information for Specific Expenses

Appliances/furniture

Only one of each allowed appliance/furniture type is considered in a lifetime (i.e., you can only receive funding for a fridge one time from this program).

Only **one** appliance/furniture item will be considered in a benefit year (e.g., you can only receive funding for either a fridge OR a stove in **one** benefit year, not both).

Where you live determines which appliances/furniture items you can claim:

- Homeowners and mobile homeowners — all appliances/furniture
- Renters — bed, microwave, television and vacuum
- Applicants living with and/or renting from family/friends — bed
- Long-term care residents — television
- Lodge and designated supportive living residents — bed and television

Home repair

Maximum of \$15,000 in a lifetime

Homeowners or mobile homeowners are eligible to receive assistance for home repairs. The following information will help you in making your request.

Land Title: A copy of your current land title will be obtained by the program to verify that you are the homeowner or have a legal life estate interest in your residence. Mobile homeowners must submit a copy of the **bill of sale** the first time they make a claim for home repairs.

Length of Ownership: You must have owned and lived in the home for three consecutive years immediately prior to claiming assistance with home repairs. You are expected to live in the home for three years after obtaining assistance for home repairs. However, replacement of a critical item (e.g. furnace, hot water tank) may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Once in a Lifetime: Assistance is provided once in a lifetime for many of the home repairs (e.g. furnace, roof, hot water tank, well, and pressure tank).

Estimate/Receipt: Please submit an estimate or receipt, so we know what work needs to be done and how much it will cost. The estimate/receipt should be from a contractor and include the contractor's name, address, phone number and a breakdown of the repairs and their individual costs. If you or family/friends do the work, assistance cannot be provided for the cost of labour.

Primary Expenses

Appliances

The following are maximum amounts. **Please submit a receipt or estimate with your request for assistance.**

Appliance	Maximum	Notes
Bed	\$500	Includes mattress and frame
Dryer	\$400	Washer & dryer may be applied for together
Refrigerator	\$700	
Stove	\$700	
Washer	\$500	

The maximum amounts include GST, delivery, and installation/hook-up.

Home repairs

- **Cistern**
- **Electrical repairs**
- **Furnace repair/replacement** — maximum amount \$3,000
- **Hot water tank** — maximum amount \$700
- **Mobile home skirting** — maximum amount \$1,600
- **Plumbing repairs**
- **House roof repair** — maximum amount \$2,900
- **Sewer/septic tank** repair/replacement
- **Step** — entrance repair/replacement maximum amount \$900
- **Well** — repair/replacement

Medical expenses

- **Celiac diet** — provide a note from a doctor confirming that you have celiac disease.
- **Diabetic supplies** — a doctor's note indicating how you control your diabetes and how many times you test your blood is needed when you apply. Maximums are applied. Periodically you will be asked to submit receipts.

Primary Expenses

- **Lift chair** — one in a lifetime, maximum \$800 (not funded when senior lives in a long-term care facility).
- **Medication dispensing fee** in lodges and designated supportive living facilities — need documentation from the facility stating the monthly dispensing fee and the effective date.
- **Nutritional beverage** — provide a doctor's note stating how many cans of Boost, Ensure, or equivalent nutritional beverage are needed on a daily basis and the period of time. You may be asked to submit your receipts after three months of use. The funding may be adjusted based on your level of use.
- **Personal response service** (e.g. Lifecall, Lifeline, TeleCare) — estimate or receipt needed for installation and/or monthly monitoring fee. Assistance is not provided for internal facility response services. If you received assistance last year, please submit receipts for the last 12 months.
- **Podiatrist** — a maximum of \$25 per month is considered for regular maintenance (nail trimming and callous removal). Please submit receipts for the last 12 months.
- **Prescription medications** — assistance is provided for a portion of the co-payment amount for prescription medications only (over-the-counter medications and medications that are not covered by Alberta Blue Cross are not considered). Funding is provided for the amount you pay above \$45 per month (\$90 if a couple). Benefits are provided for the current benefit year only. **Your previous 12-month prescription printout from your pharmacist is needed to determine your anticipated prescription costs during this benefit year.**

Medical trips: Assistance is provided for medical trips greater than 100 kilometers (round trip) for a serious medical condition that requires numerous trips, such as cancer or dialysis treatments or heart condition. Include a report from the specialist stating the dates of the appointments.

Medical trips are funded based on a per diem amount, taking into consideration distance travelled, transportation costs, meals and parking. It is not necessary to submit receipts for these items. However, you will need to send us your receipt if you stayed overnight and paid for accommodations. A maximum amount of \$75 per night is allowed.

Funeral service expenses

Maximum \$1,200

Assistance with funeral service expenses is limited to the funeral of a spouse. The surviving spouse must be over 65 years at the time of the death. The claim must be made within 12 months of the date of death.

Secondary Expenses

Appliances

The following are maximum amounts. **Please submit a receipt or estimate with your request for assistance.**

Appliance	Maximum
Microwave	\$100
Television	\$300
Vacuum	\$150

The maximum amounts include GST, delivery, and installation/hook-up.

Home repairs

- **Eaves, soffit and fascia** — maximum amount \$1,000
- **Exterior doors** — maximum amount \$500 for each door (maximum 2)
- **Roof repair** — **garage** only (house funded under Primary). Maximum amount \$1,200

Housekeeping/yard maintenance

Maximum \$1,200 annually

Assistance is provided for light housekeeping/yard maintenance for the current benefit year (e.g. basic, regular house cleaning, grass cutting, and snow shoveling).

Please submit a doctor's note the first time you apply specifying the mobility/health condition that does not allow you (and your spouse) to do your own housekeeping/yardwork.

Applicants living with, renting from, or paying family members are not eligible for assistance under this category. Seniors residing in a lodge or designated assisted living facility are not eligible for assistance with this expense.

Example of an Acceptable Housekeeping/Yard Maintenance Receipt

Service Provider/Company Name Address Telephone number
Sold to: Senior's name and address
Breakdown of service provided (housekeeping, grass cutting, etc.) Date of service and hours — cost per hour — total cost
Signature and printed name of service provider

Laundry costs

Seniors living in a lodge, designated supportive living or long-term care facility may receive assistance with laundry costs. A senior is funded up to a maximum of \$40 per month. Receipts or a letter from the facility confirming the charge for laundry and the effective date are required.

Medical expenses

- **Ambulance** — funding provided for the amount above Blue Cross coverage.
- **Orthotics** — maximum two pairs of orthotics in a lifetime. Maximum \$400 each.

Respite care

Respite care (relief for a caregiver) is provided to a senior who lives with a caregiver (spouse or family member) who provides daily care to the senior. A maximum of four weeks will be considered and daily maximums apply.

Special Circumstances

The following are special circumstances that may affect the assessment of your claim.

Estates

Estates of a deceased senior are not eligible to receive reimbursement for expenses that a senior incurred prior to his or her death.

Seniors in a long-term care facility

If you are a senior couple and have been involuntarily separated because one of you is residing in a long-term care facility, ensure that you let Alberta Seniors and Community Supports know that you are involuntarily separated. Depending on your specific situation, Alberta Seniors Benefit may provide additional support. Special Needs Assistance for Seniors may also take into consideration that you are maintaining two residences.

If you live in long-term care or designated supportive living, the Supplementary Accommodation Benefit you receive from Alberta Seniors Benefit will be deducted before calculating your eligibility for assistance from the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors programs.

Expenses prior to 65 years of age

The program is for seniors over the age of 65 years. Any expenses prior to your 65th birthday are not eligible for funding. Assistance is not provided for spouses under 65 years of age nor dependant children or grandchildren.

Travel out of the province

If you travelled out of the province or expect to travel out of the province during the benefit year, you are generally not eligible for assistance.

Accounting

If you provide an estimate rather than a receipt with your request form, you may be asked to send in receipts showing that you bought the items for which you received funding. Receipts should be mailed to the program within three months of receiving the payment. If receipts have not been received, a reminder letter will be sent.

You may, at a later date, be asked to send in receipts, so keep all receipts for funded items. If you do not spend the money on the items that are funded, you may be asked to return the money. A senior who does not send a receipt or return the money may not be eligible for assistance from the program in the future.

Appeal Process

If your request for assistance is denied or if you disagree with the amount of assistance you receive, you can appeal the decision. Before you decide to appeal a decision, you should first contact the program to provide any new related information and to obtain a complete explanation from the assessor.

You can contact the program by phoning the Alberta Supports Contact Centre toll-free at 1-877-644-9992 or 780-644-9992 in Edmonton.

Step	Action	Special Needs Assistance for Seniors
1	Telephone	Assessor
2	Write	Director
3	Write	Assistant Deputy Minister
4	Submit <i>Notice of Appeal Form</i>	Citizens' Appeal Panel

Collection of Personal Information

The personal information provided to Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, including information provided by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), is collected under the authority of the *Seniors Benefit Act* (RSA 2000) and the *Seniors Benefit Act General Regulation* and managed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (RSA 2000). The personal information you provide will be used to determine your eligibility for the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program and for other related administrative and processing purposes.

If you have any questions about the collection of your personal information, please contact:

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports Seniors Services Division

By Mail

P.O. Box 3100
Edmonton, AB T5J 4W3

By Phone

Alberta Supports Contact Centre
Toll-free: 1-877-644-9992
Edmonton and area: 780-644-9992

TDD/TTY

Toll-free: 1-800-232-7215
Edmonton and area: 780-427-9999

By Fax

780-422-5954

Office hours are 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please have your Personal Health Number (PHN) ready before calling.

www.seniors.alberta.ca

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Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
PO Box 3100
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4W3

Alberta Supports Contact Centre
Toll-free: 1-877-644-9992
Edmonton area: 780-644-9992

Deaf or hard of hearing with TDD/TTY units
please call 1-800-232-7215 or
780-427-9999 in Edmonton and area.

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