



Senior Home Heating Subsidy Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Northwest Territories (NWT) Senior Home Heating Subsidy Program provides financial assistance to NWT seniors who are 60 years of age or older, own their own home in the NWT and meet a financial income test. It is intended for low-income seniors to help them with the cost of heating their homes during the winter months.

ELIGIBILITY

1. In order to be eligible, applicants must:
 - Be 60 years of age or older;
 - Own and occupy the home as their permanent residence;
 - Be a resident of the NWT;
 - Meet an approved household income test;
 - Substantiate their household income;
 - Not be receiving income assistance;
 - Apply each year, on the approved application, anytime during the year; and,
 - Sign a statement of authorization.
2. Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) may discontinue the subsidy if the applicant does not use it for the purpose intended.
3. Applicants may be eligible for the full subsidy if they meet the eligibility criteria for the entire subsidy period.
4. The subsidy can continue for a maximum of three months when the senior is temporarily away from the home for medical reasons. The Officer must obtain a document signed by a medical professional (defined in the Income Assistance Regulations) that outlines the reason(s) for the length of time the senior(s) will be absent from their home. If a senior will be away for longer than a three month period, due to those medical reasons, the Director must be advised and will review the situation and determine what other supports could be provided and may grant approval to continue or discontinue the subsidy.

APPLYING

1. Applicants must submit a completed application form and statement and authorization form to the appropriate regional or community office of ECE.

2. Applicants must submit documentation confirming their:
 - Age;
 - Home ownership; and
 - Net household income from all household members.
 - (Net household income refers to the net income amount listed on line 236 of the federal income tax return of each household member who is at least 19 years of age).
3. Applicants using the prior year income assessment must submit their prior year federal income tax return Notice of Assessment (NOA) from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for all adult household members;
 - If for some reason they do not have their NOA, their net income as stated on their GST rebate cheque stub may be used in the assessment.
4. Only if an applicant's subsidy has been denied or reduced because their prior year income was too high, they may apply for it using the current calendar year income assessment.
 - For this assessment, they must submit their NOA for the previous year from CRA, as well as a copy of the Income Tax Return they submitted. In addition, documentation such as pay stubs, pension and RRSP statements, and other income slips from the current year, as well as their bank statements must be submitted to verify current year income.
 - ECE will verify the income of applicants, who had their current year income assessed, and had used their NOA from the previous year to substantiate annual income, when the applicant re-applies the following year. They must bring in their NOA. If, as a result of this verification, it is clear that an overpayment had been made, the applicant will be invoiced, or the subsidy reduced by the same amount, following established GNWT policy guidelines.
5. Applicants must include the income from all adults presently residing in the house. Residents include all those who occupy the dwelling as their fixed, permanent, or primary home for legal purposes, and the residents are known by the community to live in that dwelling at the time of the application. Residents include family members, such as spouse, sons and daughters, or any renter who is at least 19 years of age.
6. The applicant and all residents living in the household must use their net income from the same year for the purposes of the income test.
7. The Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit shall be exempt from the calculation of Household Income test. The amount may need to be verified by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).

8. Although not taxable, benefits paid under the Senior Home Heating Subsidy are reportable to the CRA. T5007 information slips will be distributed to seniors for reporting on income tax returns.
9. Applicants will be informed in writing if further documentation is required. Once the application has been assessed, the applicant will be notified of either the amount of the subsidy, or the reason for ineligibility.
10. Applications can be submitted, and will be processed, at any time within a fiscal year.
11. Applications will not be accepted for prior fiscal years – a fiscal year runs from April 1st to March 31st.
12. Applicants must notify their Client Services Officer of any changes that affect the application; including any change to the number of members in the household, income, sale of the home or change of residence.

BENEFITS

1. Applicants will be eligible depending on:
 - The zone in which they live;
 - The type of fuel they require; and
 - Their net household income level.

Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Zone 1 Dettah Enterprise Fort Liard Fort Smith Fort Providence Hay River Kakisa Behchoko Yellowknife N'dilo	Zone 2 Deline Fort McPherson Fort Simpson Fort Resolution Inuvik Jean Marie River Nahanni Butte Norman Wells Gameti Tulita	Zone 3 Aklavik Colville Lake Fort Good Hope Ulukhaktok Lutsel K'e Paulatuk Sachs Harbour Trout Lake Tsiigehtchic Tuktoyaktuk Wekweeti Wha Ti Wrigley

Type of fuel

Fuel	Maximum Fuel Zone 1	Maximum Fuel Zone 2	Maximum Fuel Zone 3
Cut Wood (cords)	5	6	7
Wood Pellets (1 Skid = 2,000 Pounds)	5 Skids	6 Skids	7 Skids
Fuel Oil (litres)	2,400	2,800	3,200
Propane (litres)	3,200	3,600	4,000
Natural Gas (gigajoules)	90	100	110
Electricity (KWH)	6,000	7,000	8,000

Net household income

% of Subsidy	Maximum Income Zone 1	Maximum Income Zone 2	Maximum Income Zone 3
100%	\$46,249	\$51,249	\$56,249
75%	\$47,499	\$52,499	\$57,499
50%	\$48,749	\$53,749	\$58,749
25%	\$49,999	\$54,999	\$59,999
0%	\$50,000+	\$55,000+	\$60,000+

2. Applicants may choose more than one fuel type. However the maximum allowable percent of subsidy can not be exceeded. For example a senior who qualifies for 100% subsidy in zone 2, and requests to have wood pellets and oil in may be entitled to 3 skids of pellets and 1400 litres of oil (or any combination to the maximum allowable amount).

PAYMENT

1. Continuing applicants may receive their subsidy as a:
 - Direct payment to their supplier; or,
 - Reimbursement of expenses they paid during the year.
2. Seniors requesting direct payment by invoice to the fuel supplier may have the GNWT pay it directly:
 - To their fuel supplier; or
 - Directly to a fuel supplier selected by the GNWT.
3. Seniors requesting reimbursement of fuel bills paid will be reimbursed within 30 days after submitting paid fuel bills.
4. Payments will not be made for past fiscal years.
5. Any funds that were provided for a period of time when the applicant was not eligible may be recovered following established GNWT procedures.

COMPLIANCE

1. ECE will conduct periodic compliance reviews to ensure compliance with the terms of these Guidelines.
2. Non-compliance may result in seniors being denied subsidy payments, and/or the recovery of any overpayments, and possible legal action. The Department will provide the subsidy up to the date the senior is denied assistance.

APPEALS

1. Applicants who believe they have been denied benefits or are eligible for a benefit that is higher than the one calculated can appeal through an appeal process.
2. Appeals must be made in writing to the ECE Regional Manager/Superintendent within 30 days of receiving a denial letter.
3. At the first level of appeal, the Manager/Superintendent will arrange for a teleconference with one or more Regional Managers/Superintendents to review the appeal.
4. Seniors who are dissatisfied with decisions made by the first level, Manager/Regional Superintendents, may make a second level, or final appeal to the Administrative Review Group, located at ECE's Headquarters' office in Yellowknife, NT.
5. The senior, or a representative/advocate, may be present at either the first or second level of appeal. Both the first and second level appeals are heard within 30 days of receiving the appeal. Both first and second level appeal decisions are provided to the senior within one week of the decision date.

APPROVAL



Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment

03/09/09

Date