



# Senior Home Heating Subsidy Policy Manual

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## ***Purpose***

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The Northwest Territories (NWT) Senior Home Heating Subsidy (SHHS) provides financial assistance to NWT seniors who are 60 years of age or older, own their own home or are renting a self-contained unit in the NWT and meet a financial income test. It is intended to help low to modest income seniors offset the costs of heating their homes/units.

## ***Definitions***

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***Fiscal year*** – A fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31.

***Primary residence*** – The place which is considered to be the main living location; where the individual spends the majority of their time.

***Resident*** – A person lawfully entitled to be, or to remain in Canada, who makes his or her home and is ordinarily present in the NWT, but does not include a tourist, transient or visitor to the NWT.

***Residential lease*** – A lease to use land for primary residence purposes. Does not include recreational leases.

***Self-contained unit*** (unit) – It can either be a house, an apartment, or a living unit with its own access that contains a kitchen, bathroom and sleeping facilities.

## ***Delegation of Authority***

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The Deputy Minister has delegated all decision and policy making authority for the SHHS to the Director, Income Security Programs.



## ***Eligibility***

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In order to be eligible, the applicant must:

1. Be 60 years of age or older;
2. Own and occupy the home as his/her primary residence OR if renting, be the leasee of a self-contained unit where heating costs are not included in the rent;
3. Be a resident of the NWT;
4. Meet an approved household income test;
5. Substantiate household income;
6. Not be receiving Income Assistance;
7. Complete an approved application anytime during the fiscal year.

The SHHS can be accessed by **only one person** living in the same unit for the same period.

Fuel benefits may only be accessed through one income security program per household in an assessment month.

*For example – A homeowner is accessing SHHS and there is an Income Assistance (IA) client residing with the homeowner. The IA client is not eligible for fuel benefits until such time as the SHHS has been fully used.*

Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) may discontinue the subsidy if the applicant does not use it for the purpose intended.

The subsidy can continue for a maximum of three months when the senior is temporarily away from their unit. Absences of more than three months must be approved by the Director. These absences may result in an invoice.

### ***Application Period***

Applications will be accepted any time during the fiscal year, which runs from April 1 to March 31 annually.

Applications will not be accepted for prior fiscal years.



## ***Applying***

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1. Applicants are required to submit a completed Application for SHHS to the local ECE Service Centre.
2. Applicants must submit documentation confirming:
  - Age
  - If the Applicant owns their home, confirmation of home ownership, which consists of **one** of the following:
    - Certificate of Title
    - Mortgage documents
    - Notice of Assessment Municipal Taxation Area
    - Confirmation of homeownership from First Nation Band
    - Confirmation of homeownership from the NWT Housing Corporation
    - Residential lease (cannot be a Recreational Lease) for Territorial or Commissioner's land from the Department of Lands
  - If the Applicant is renting, confirmation of rental accommodation requiring payment of additional heating costs, which consists of the following:
    - Lease/Rental agreement of a self-contained unit in the Applicant's name **and**
    - Verification that heating costs are not included in the rent
  - Net household income of the applicant and his/her spouse for the previous calendar year
    - The following calculation is used to determine net income:  
Line 236 of the federal income tax Notice of Assessment (NOA) received from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)  
Less: Amount received for SHHS in the previous calendar year  
Less: Amount received for Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits  
Total: Net income for SHHS purposes
    - If the NOA is not available for the applicant and/or spouse, income can be obtained from the GST rebate cheque stub.

### ***Joint homeownership/ Joint Tenancy Agreements***

In cases where a unit is owned or leased by more than one person all income of those named on the homeownership documents and/or lease will be considered for the purposes of calculating eligibility for the SHHS.



### ***Income Information***

Income from other adults residing in the unit is not considered in the household income test, unless they are co-owners or joint lease holders.

The Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit shall be exempt from the calculation of household income test. The amount may need to be verified by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

### ***Current Year Reassessment***

If an applicant's subsidy has been denied or reduced as a result of their prior year income being too high, they may request a reassessment based on their income for the current calendar year. The applicant and his/her spouse must submit the following:

- NOA for the **previous** calendar year from CRA
- Verification of income for the **current** year, which may include, but is not limited to the following:
  - Pay stubs
  - Pension statements
  - RRSP statements
  - Bank Statements

A current year assessment is based on the current calendar year (January to December). A Client Services Officer (CSO) will use the actual income received to date and estimate for the remainder of the year based on declared monthly income.

Should an overpayment occur as a result of the current year assessment, the applicant will be invoiced, or the subsidy received in the subsequent year will be reduced by the same amount, in accordance with Income Security Programs policies.

### ***SHHS and Income Taxes***

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Although not taxable, benefits paid under the SHHS are reportable to the CRA. Recipients will be issued a T5007 tax slip. The T5007 slips are issued and mailed at the end of February each year.



## ***Communication***

Applicants will receive a verbal or written response to their application within 2 business days of verifying all required documentation.

Applicants must notify their CSO immediately of any changes that may affect their application, which includes but is not limited to, any change in income, sale of their home, or change of residence.

## ***Benefits***

The amount of SHHS an applicant is eligible for is based on:

- The zone in which they live; and
- Net income of the applicant and spouse, co-owner and/or joint lease holder if applicable.

## ***Zones***

<b>Zone 1</b>	<b>Zone 2</b>	<b>Zone 3</b>
Behchokò	Fort Liard	Aklavik
Dettah	Fort Resolution	Colville Lake
Enterprise	Gamètì	Délìne
Fort Providence	Inuvik	Fort McPherson
Fort Simpson	Jean Marie River	K'ásho Got'iné
Fort Smith	Nahanni Butte	Łutselk'e
Hay River	Wekweètì	Norman Wells
K'at'l'odeeche	Whatì	Paulatuk
Kakisa	Wrigley	Sachs Harbour
Ndilo		Trout Lake
Yellowknife		Tsiigehtchic
		Tuktoyaktuk
		Tulita
		Ulukhaktok

## ***Benefit Amounts***

	<b>Zone 1</b>	<b>Zone 2</b>	<b>Zone 3</b>
Amount	\$2,700	\$3,600	\$4,200



***Net Income Threshold***

Subsidy %	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
100%	\$56,000	\$64,000	\$73,000
0%	\$56,001	\$64,001	\$73,001

Applicants may request that payment be issued to one or more supplier(s) for more than one type of heating source; however, the maximum allowable percentage of subsidy cannot be exceeded. For example, a senior who qualifies for 100% subsidy in Zone 2, and requests to have payments made for wood pellets and oil may be entitled to have \$1,800 paid to each supplier (or any combination to the maximum allowable amount).

Under the SHHS available fuel types, “Electricity” is only for hard-wired electric heat sources. Portable, plug-in type heating units are not considered a ‘heat source’ in this program.

***Payments***

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***Payments to Suppliers***

Direct payments will be made to the applicant’s fuel supplier(s) or fuel supplier(s) selected by the GNWT.

Suppliers must be set up in the GNWT payment system in order to receive payment.

There is no requirement for a reconciliation to occur at the end of the fiscal year between the supplier and ECE.

Payments will not be issued for prior fiscal years.

The supplier(s) cannot be changed once payments have been issued.

If the CSO learns that an applicant has passed away after the Subsidy has been paid out to the fuel supplier, no action is required of ECE. Any remaining credit with the fuel supplier vests to the applicant’s estate, and is not to be recovered by ECE.

***Payments to Applicants***

Payments will only be made to applicants who are requesting reimbursement of fuel expenses they paid within the current fiscal year. Any subsidy amount above the incurred fuel expenses will be paid directly to the supplier.





Payments will not be made for prior fiscal years.

### ***Applicant's Responsibility***

The applicant is responsible to pay any arrears/additional charges with their supplier(s) not covered through the SHHS.

### ***Compliance/Recovery***

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ECE will conduct periodic compliance reviews to ensure compliance with the terms of these Policies.

Non-compliance may result in applicants being denied subsidy payments, and/or the recovery of any overpayments, and possible legal action.

If there is a change during the fiscal year that eliminates the applicants' requirement for the subsidy it may be recovered from the applicant.

### ***Appeals***

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Applicants who believe their assessment is incorrect can appeal the decision through an appeal process.

Appeals must be made in writing within 30 days of the date of the denial letter. Appeals may be submitted to the Registrar of Appeals or to the local ECE Service Centre.

Appeals must include the following information:

- Name, address and phone number of the appellant and representative, if applicable
- Decision of the CSO/Director/First Level Appeal Committee, whichever is applicable for the appeal
- Grounds for the appeal
- All other relevant information

The first level of appeal is heard through an internal appeal committee comprised of two or more Regional Managers neither of whom are from the appellant's region.



The Regional Manager in the appellant's region will prepare the decision and send to the Registrar.

The second level of appeal is heard through the Social Assistance Appeal Committee.

The appellant and/or a representative may be present at any appeal hearing.

Appeals are heard within 30 days of receiving the appeal. Appeal decisions are provided to the appellant in writing within one week of the decision date.

If an appellant chooses to withdraw their appeal, they must do so in writing.

### ***Contact Information***

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**Beaufort Delta ECE Service Centre**  
GNWT Multi-Use Building  
106 Veterans Way

Phone: 1-867-777-7365  
Toll Free: 1-855-283-9311  
Fax: 1-867-777-7218

Department of Education, Culture and Employment  
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INUVIK NT X0E 0T0

**Dehcho ECE Service Centre**  
Dehcho Regional Education Centre  
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**Sahtu ECE Service Centre**  
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**Appeals Office – ECE Programs and Services**  
Registrar of Appeals  
Department of Education, Culture and Employment  
P.O BOX 4215  
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