

Affordability Payments to Address Rising Inflation: What You Need to Know

Rising inflation has been a pressing concern for all households trying to make ends meet. Increasing prices for food, fuel, utilities (e.g. heat, electricity), and other goods has been a stressor for many Albertans, especially those living in low-income and poverty as wages and income support programs have been stagnant. The latter income support programs also did not keep pace with inflation between 2019 and 2022 before being re-indexed for 2023.

To address these affordability pressures, the Government of Alberta will be distributing temporary relief payments of \$600 to eligible households. These payments will be tax-free.

The following is a breakdown of the known details (as of January 9, 2022) of these affordability payments and what people need to know to apply. More information can be found on the [Government of Alberta website](#).

Who is eligible for these affordability payments?

Parents with children under 18, seniors aged 65 years of age or older, and anyone receiving monthly payments through Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), Income Support, or services through Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) are

eligible to receive these \$600 payments, which will be distributed in monthly installments of \$100 over a period of six months. The first payment is expected to reach recipients by January 31, 2023 at the earliest. For parents with children under 18 this equates to \$100 per child, per month.

To be eligible, the income threshold for anyone within the previous categories is \$180,000 per year or less per household. Those households with annual incomes higher than \$180,000 are not eligible for these payments.

The Government of Alberta is in the process of setting up a web portal to receive applications from eligible households and it is expected to go live on January 18, 2023. Albertans have until June 30, 2023 to submit an application. Applications received during the months of February to June will still receive the full amount and will be retroactive to the January start date.

What do parents with children under 18 years old need to know?

Families with an adjusted household income below \$180,000 can apply to get \$600 for each dependent child under the age of 18. For example, a hypothetical family with three children under 18 living

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at home would get a total of \$1,800 over a six month period (\$300 per month).

Foster and kinship caregivers with children under 18 will be automatically enrolled to receive payments for each child under 18 in their care, so they will not need to apply.

For children of parents in shared custody 40 to 60% of the time, both parents can apply to get \$50 each per month for each child.

What do seniors aged 65 or older need to know?

Any older Albertan aged 65 or older with an adjusted household income below \$180,000 is eligible to receive these payments.

Any older adult who already receives the Alberta Seniors Benefit does not need to apply as they will automatically receive these payments.

Seniors over the age of 65 who are parents or guardians of children under 18 would also need to apply to receive additional payments for each dependent child.

What do AISH, PDD, and Income Support clients need to know?

Albertans who are clients of these various income support programs are automatically enrolled to receive these affordability payments and there is no need to apply for the program. Their first payment of \$100 will be received on January 31.

Clients of these support programs with children under the age of 18 do need to apply to receive additional \$600 payments for each child when the web portal opens on January 18, 2023.

What do people need to know about the application process?

As the web application portal is being set up for those who need to apply for these payments, eligible Albertans are being instructed to set up a verified [Alberta.ca Account](https://www.alberta.ca) if they do not already have one set up. A verified account is needed in order to complete the application. In order for the account to be verified, a confidential pin number will be mailed and that can take up to 10 business days to receive.

Anticipated barriers and challenges with the application process

The ability to fill out an application for these affordability payments is contingent upon a person's access to technology and the Internet. There is also the option to apply in-person at any Alberta registry agent or Alberta Supports office across the province, but the ability to visit these locations will depend on the convenience of the location and a person's availability of transportation options.

Also, the need to have a verified Alberta.ca Account and the potential delays to getting one set up will also be a barrier to accessing these necessary payments in a timely manner since the wait time to receive a pin number would hold up one's ability to submit an application and get processed by government agents. Placing the responsibility on the general public to manually apply for these payments opens up the possibility that some people who are eligible to receive these payments will not get them because they did not apply in a timely manner. If they miss the application deadline of June 30, 2023, they will not receive the payments.

Qualifying for these payments is also contingent upon a household filing a tax return for 2021 to verify their income level.

It is common for those living on low-income to not file a tax return and this will hamper their ability to receive these relief payments. Not all people who are living on low-income receive social supports.

In addition, we do not know if the upcoming web portal will be user-friendly or if the website will crash due to high volumes of website visitors. This was seen in the rollout of [Alberta's emergency isolation payments](#) in March 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the [booking website for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines](#) to the general public in February 2021. We hope those sorts of technical difficulties are a thing of the past this time around.

While we monitor the rollout of these affordability payments, we encourage those to set up their verified Alberta.ca Account as soon as possible and to file tax returns for any outstanding years. Not only does it make you eligible for these payments, but also eligible for various tax credits on a federal or provincial level such as the Canada Child Benefit, GST rebates, Climate Action Incentive, Old Age Security, Alberta Child and Family Benefit, and others. To find a free tax clinic from a community organization that can assist with filing tax returns, please consult the [Government of Canada's tool](#) to find one in your area.

fACT Sheet

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#200, 10544 - 106 Street,

Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 1C5 www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca @edmontonspc

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