

Senior BENEFITS PROGRAM



Fact Sheet January 31, 2014

The Alaska Senior Benefits Payment Program was established on August 1, 2007 and is currently set to end on June 30, 2015. It pays cash benefits to Alaskans who are age 65 or older and have low to moderate income. Cash payments are \$125, \$175, or \$250 each month depending on income.

Recipients

- There were 10,954 Senior Benefits recipients as of December 2013.
 - ✓ Number and percent of seniors at each payment level in December 2013.
 - ✓ \$250 – 1,288 (11.8%)
 - ✓ \$175 – 4,594 (41.9%)
 - ✓ \$125 - 5,072 (46.3%)
- Average age of recipients is 75. The maximum age is 103.

Program Expenditures

| FY 2007 | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 | FY 2011 | FY 2012 | FY 2013 |
|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| \$9,777.3 | \$15,220.0 | \$18,232.8 | \$19,147.9 | \$20,609.5 | \$20,893.7 | \$21,128.6 |

- Projected program expenditures for FY 2014 are \$23.3 million. Projected expenditures for FY 2015 are \$23.6 million.

Eligibility and Payment

- Eligibility and payment amount is based on gross annual income (before any deductions are taken for taxes, Medicare premiums, etc.).

| Senior Household Size | Senior Benefits Program Gross Annual Income Limit (Effective 3/1/2014) | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | \$250 monthly payment | \$175 monthly payment | \$125 monthly payment |
| Individual | \$10,935 (\$912 per month) | \$14,580 (\$1,215 per month) | \$25,515 (\$2,127 per month) |
| Married Couple | \$14,745 (\$1,229 per month) | \$19,660 (\$1,639 per month) | \$34,405 (\$2,868 per month) |

- Income limits may change yearly along with Alaska's federal poverty level. The \$250, \$175, and \$125 monthly payments correspond to 75 percent, 100 percent, and 175 percent of the federal poverty level for Alaska, respectively.
- Assets, such as savings, are not counted for eligibility.

- Payments are not available to seniors living in the following institutions:
 - ✓ Prison or jail,
 - ✓ Nursing home,
 - ✓ Alaska Pioneers' Home or Alaska Veterans' Home, or
 - ✓ Public or private institution for mental disease

Geographic Distribution by Census Area, December 2013

| Census Area | Number of Recipients | Census Area | Number of Recipients |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ALEUTIANS EAST | 26 | MAT-SU | 1,416 |
| ALEUTIANS WEST | 33 | NOME | 243 |
| ANCHORAGE | 4,001 | NORTH SLOPE | 40 |
| BETHEL | 546 | NW ARCTIC | 153 |
| BRISTOL BAY | 11 | PETERSBURG | 85 |
| DENALI | 15 | PRINCE OF WALES | 210 |
| DILLINGHAM | 147 | SE FAIRBANKS | 193 |
| FAIRBANKS N STAR | 825 | SITKA | 110 |
| HAINES | 85 | SKAGWAY | 4 |
| HOONAH-ANGOON | 84 | VALDEZ/CORDOVA | 160 |
| JUNEAU | 360 | WADE HAMPTON | 235 |
| KENAI | 1,063 | WRANGELL | 86 |
| KETCHIKAN GATEWAY | 273 | YAKUTAT | 17 |
| KODIAK | 230 | YUKON KOYUKUK | 258 |
| LAKE AND PENINSULA | 44 | Grand Total | 10,954 |

| Evolution of the Senior Benefits Program | |
|---|---|
| 1972 - 2003 | Alaska Longevity Bonus Program. The Alaska Longevity Bonus Program was established in 1972. Alaska residents became eligible upon reaching the age of 65. \$250/month was issued to seniors who applied before 1994, \$200 to those applying in 1994, \$150 to those applying in 1995, and \$100 to those applying in 1996. Payments were not available to seniors who applied after 1996. The program was subsequently defunded in 2003, and final benefits were issued for the month of August 2003. |
| 2003 - 2004 | Senior Assistance Program. Beginning September 2003, the Governor's office used its executive authority to establish the needs-based Senior Assistance program in response to the needs of low-income Alaskans aged 65 and older who were financially impacted by the elimination of the Alaska Longevity Bonus. Payments were limited to \$120/month. The program ended March 2004. |
| 2004 - 2007 | SeniorCare Program. Beginning April 2004, the SeniorCare Program was established to replace the former Senior Assistance Program. The new program was expanded to include a prescription drug benefit. Low-income seniors that passed the program's income and resource limits could choose to receive either a \$120/month payment or a prescription drug benefit. The program ended July 2007. |
| 2007 - Present | Senior Benefits Program. Beginning August 2007, the Senior Benefits Program was established to replace the SeniorCare Program. The program provides three payment levels that are based on the senior's gross annual income. Income limits are tied to the Federal Poverty Guidelines for Alaska and change each year as the poverty level changes. There is no asset test. The program is currently set to expire on June 30, 2015. |