



Senior BENEFITS PROGRAM

Information & Fact Sheet
Updated January 2023

Overview

The Alaska Senior Benefits Program pays monthly cash benefits to Alaskans who are age 65 or older and have low to moderate income. Payment levels depend on available state funding and how many people apply and qualify for the program. If the state budget cannot support the original amounts of \$125, \$175, and \$250, regulations allow for changes to be made for all eligible program participants. Cuts come from the highest income tier first, then the second, then the third.

The monthly payment for the highest income level was reduced to \$47 from \$125 on March 1, 2016, due to the state's limited budget for state fiscal year 2016. The budget for state fiscal year 2017 allowed full monthly payments of \$175 and \$250 to recipients with the lowest income. Those income payment levels continued through the end of that fiscal year. Funding reductions in this program must be applied to individuals in the highest income bracket first. They received \$47 for July because the budget was not finalized in time to make changes for July benefits. Beginning August 1, 2016, individuals in that highest income bracket received \$76 per month based on available funding at that income bracket. These income payment levels continued for state fiscal years 2018 - 2023.

Eligibility and Payment:

- Eligibility and payment amount are based on gross annual income (before any deductions are taken for taxes, Medicare premiums, etc.)
- Assets, such as savings, are not counted
- Income limits may change yearly along with Alaska's federal poverty level. The \$250, \$175, and \$76 monthly payments correspond to 75 percent, 100 percent, and 175 percent of the federal poverty level for Alaska, respectively
- Payments are not available to seniors living in the following institutions:
 - ✓ Prison or jail
 - ✓ Alaska Pioneers' Home or Alaska Veterans' Home
 - ✓ A nursing home
 - ✓ Public or private institution for mental disease

Senior Benefits Program Gross Annual Income Limit Effective 4/1/2023

The income limit changed April 1, 2023, due to a change in the Federal Poverty Limit.

Senior Household Size	\$250 monthly payment	\$175 monthly payment	\$76 monthly payment
Individual	\$13,658 (\$1,139 per month)	\$18,210 (\$1,518 per month)	\$31,868 (\$2,656 per month)
Married Couple	\$18,480 (\$1,540 per month)	\$24,640 (\$2,054 per month)	\$43,120 (\$3,594 per month)

Senior Benefits Program Gross Annual Income Limit
Effective 4/1/2022

The income limit changed April 1, 2022, due to a change in the Federal Poverty Limit.

Senior Household Size	\$250 monthly payment	\$175 monthly payment	\$76 monthly payment
Individual	\$12,743 (\$1,062 per month)	\$16,990 (\$1,416 per month)	\$29,733 (\$2,478 per month)
Married Couple	\$17,168 (\$1,431 per month)	\$22,890 (\$1,908 per month)	\$40,058 (\$3,339 per month)

Senior Benefits Program Gross Annual Income Limit
Effective 4/1/2021

The income limit changed April 1, 2021, due to a change in the Federal Poverty Limit.

Senior Household Size	\$250 monthly payment	\$175 monthly payment	\$76 monthly payment
Individual	\$12,068 (\$1,006 per month)	\$16,090 (\$1,341 per month)	\$28,158 (\$2,347 per month)
Married Couple	\$16,328 (\$1,361 per month)	\$21,770 (\$1,815 per month)	\$38,098 (\$3,175 per month)

Senior Benefits Program Gross Annual Income Limit
Effective 4/1/2020

The income limit changed April 1, 2020, due to a change in the Federal Poverty Limit.

Senior Household Size	\$250 monthly payment	\$175 monthly payment	\$76 monthly payment
Individual	\$11,963 (\$997 per month)	\$15,950 (\$1,330 per month)	\$27,913 (\$2,327 per month)
Married Couple	\$16,163 (\$1,347 per month)	\$21,550 (\$1,796 per month)	\$37,713 (\$3,143 per month)

Senior Benefits Program Gross Annual Income Limit
Effective 4/1/2019

The income limit changed April 1, 2019, due to a change in the Federal Poverty Limit.

Senior Household Size	\$250 monthly payment	\$175 monthly payment	\$76 monthly payment
Individual	\$11,700 (\$975 per month)	\$15,600 (\$1,300 per month)	\$27,300 (\$2,275 per month)
Married Couple	\$15,848 (\$1,321 per month)	\$21,130 (\$1,761 per month)	\$36,978 (\$3,082 per month)

Senior Benefits recipients as of December 2022:

- 8,988 recipients. Number and percent of seniors at each payment level:
 ✓ \$250 – 1,707 (19.0%) ✓ \$175 – 4,288 (47.7%) ✓ \$76 – 2,933 (33.3%)
- As of December 2022, the average age of recipients is 75 and the maximum age is 104
- The number of Senior Benefits cases in December of each year:
 ✓ 2022 – 8,988 ✓ 2020 – 10,173 ✓ 2018 – 11,599
 ✓ 2021 – 11,533 ✓ 2019 – 10,784 ✓ 2017 – 11,322

Recipients statewide as of December 2022:

Census Area	Number of Recipients	Census Area	Number of Recipients
Aleutians East	10	Kodiak	169
Aleutians West	16	Kusilvak	123
Anchorage	3,481	Lake and Peninsula	15
Bethel	334	Mat-Su	1,317
Bristol Bay	8	Nome	147
Chugach	48	North Slope	17
Copper River	76	NW Arctic	82
Denali	11	Petersburg	56
Dillingham	70	Prince of Wales	118
Fairbanks N Star	753	SE Fairbanks	149
Haines	75	Sitka	68
Hoonah-Angoon	68	Skagway	6
Juneau	277	Wrangell	56
Kenai	1,060	Yakutat	8
Ketchikan Gateway	223	Yukon / Koyukuk	147
		GRAND TOTAL	8,988

History of the Senior Benefits Program:

1972 - 2003	Alaska Longevity Bonus Program. Established in 1972. Alaska residents became eligible at age 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. Established to replace the SeniorCare Program. Began August 2007; up for reauthorization in June 2018. Provides three payment levels 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. Due to caseload increase, the highest income level that normally receives a \$125 benefit had the benefit reduced to \$47 effective March 1, 2016. The budgets for state fiscal years 2018 – 2023 allowed for a monthly payment of \$76 to recipients in the highest income level.