



## Benefits for Seniors

**May 13, 2020**

### Background

On May 12, the government announced additional financial support for seniors to help cover additional costs resulting from COVID-19.

Full Release: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/05/12/prime-minister-announces-additional-support-canadian-seniors>

### Key-Points

- The government is providing financial support in the form of a one-time tax-free payment of \$300 for seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension.
- Seniors who also currently receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) will receive an additional one-time payment of \$200 (for a total of \$500.)
- The government is also expanding the New Horizons for Seniors Program with an additional investment of \$20 million to support organizations that offer community-based projects that reduce isolation, improve the quality of life of seniors, and help them maintain a social support network.
- The government is also temporarily extending GIS and Allowance payments if seniors' 2019 income information has not been assessed. To avoid an interruption in benefits, seniors are encouraged to submit their 2019 income information as soon as possible and no later than by October 1, 2020.

### HOW TO APPLY

#### One-time OAS/GIS Payment

If the individual is already receiving OAS (and GIS if eligible,) there is no need to apply for the one-time top up. The payment will automatically be issued. While no specific timeframe was given, it is expected to happen shortly especially since this measure is not dependent on any legislation.



## New Horizons for Seniors Program

Though it is not entirely clear in the announcement, it doesn't appear that new proposals are being accepted under this program but instead is expanding the list of eligible activities for existing recipients:

### **Expansion of eligible activities for 2019-2020 community-based recipients**

Effective immediately, Service Canada is offering 2019-2020 NHSP community-based recipients the flexibility to use their approved funding for activity expenditures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, regardless of the nature of the originally-approved project. Examples could include (but are not limited to) those that:

- prevent seniors' social isolation in a time of recommended social distancing / self-quarantine by promoting computer literacy and virtual activities among seniors;
- support seniors who are self-isolating at home, including the delivery of food and medication or personalized monitoring of seniors to ensure their needs are met and to provide moral support (by phone and via online apps such as FaceTime and Zoom);
- assist seniors to undertake essential activities, such as visits to the doctor;
- assist community organizations to provide the types of support listed above, including hiring staff to replace a loss of volunteerism capacity due to the outbreak (many volunteers are seniors that need to self-isolate);
- provide information to seniors regarding how to care for themselves during the pandemic; or
- support the ability of seniors to stay connected with their community and their family, including through smart phones and tablets (for example iPhone and iPads) and remote tutorials by community organizations.

**Complete information on the program can be found [here](#).**

