



# Senior BENEFITS PROGRAM

Information & Fact Sheet  
Updated January 2022

## 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 - 2022.

## 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 4/1/2022

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.

<b>Senior Household Size</b>	<b>\$250 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$175 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$76 monthly payment</b>
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.

<b>Senior Household Size</b>	<b>\$250 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$175 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$76 monthly payment</b>
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.

<b>Senior Household Size</b>	<b>\$250 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$175 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$76 monthly payment</b>
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 Program Gross Annual Income Limit  
Effective 4/1/2018 – 3/31/2019**

The income limit changed April 1, 2018, due to a change in the Federal Poverty Limit.

<b>Senior Household Size</b>	<b>\$250 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$175 monthly payment</b>	<b>\$76 monthly payment</b>
Individual	\$11,385 (\$949 per month)	\$15,180 (\$1,265 per month)	\$26,565 (\$2,214 per month)
Married Couple	\$15,435 (\$1,287 per month)	\$20,580 (\$1,715 per month)	\$36,015 (\$3,002 per month)

**Senior Benefits recipients as of December 2021:**

- 11,553 recipients. Number and percent of seniors at each payment level:
  - ✓ \$250 – 2,053 (17.8%)      ✓ \$175 – 5,288 (45.8%)      ✓ \$76 – 4,240 (36.5%)
- As of December 2021, the average age of recipients is 75 and the maximum age is 107
- The number of Senior Benefits cases in December of each year:
  - ✓ 2021 – 11,533      ✓ 2019 – 10,784      ✓ 2017 – 11,322
  - ✓ 2020 – 10,173      ✓ 2018 – 11,599      ✓ 2016 – 11,632

**Recipients statewide as of December 2021:**

Census Area	Number of Recipients	Census Area	Number of Recipients
Aleutians East	15	Lake and Peninsula	27
Aleutians West	19	Mat-Su	1622
Anchorage	4385	Nome	214
Bethel	480	North Slope	26
Bristol Bay	7	NW Arctic	124
Denali	79	Petersburg	76
Dillingham	97	Prince of Wales	195
Fairbanks N Star	17	SE Fairbanks	194
Haines	88	Sitka	103
Hoonah-Angoon	945	Skagway	7
Juneau	97	Valdez / Cordova	70
Kenai	94	Wrangell	13
Ketchikan Gateway	360	Yakutat	217
Kodiak	1302	Yukon / Koyukuk	27
Kusilvak	289	GRAND TOTAL	11,553

**History of the Senior Benefits Program:**

1972 - 2003	<b>Alaska Longevity Bonus Program.</b> 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	<b>Senior Assistance Program.</b> 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	<b>SeniorCare Program.</b> 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	<b>Senior Benefits Program.</b> 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 – 2022 allowed for a monthly payment of \$76 to recipients in the highest income level.