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# Caregiver Affordability Payments

Basic Information on Payments

January 17, 2023



# Affordability Payments Announcement



- The Alberta government is delivering immediate cost of living and inflation relief while also working to support long-term affordability.
- From **January 2023 until June 2023**, foster and kinship caregivers will automatically receive a monthly affordability payment for each child or youth placed in your care by the GoA. The January 9, 2023 Alberta Government News Release highlighted:

“Alberta’s government refuses to allow children to pay the price of inflation. The inflation relief payment will help reduce some of the financial pressures on Alberta families so that all parents, including foster and kinship caregivers, will not have to choose between buying food and paying bills. We are hoping that this additional support will allow kids to be kids and enjoy the fun activities they love.”

*Mickey Amery, Minister of Children’s Services*

# Affordability Payments for Kinship and Foster Caregivers



Kinship and Foster caregivers in Alberta who care for children in government care will receive payments from Children's Services.

- Ministry Caregivers
- Contracted Agency Caregivers
- DFNA Caregivers

\*\*\* There is no need to apply \*\*\*

# Ministry Kinship and Foster Caregivers

- Ministry Caregivers will receive the payments through their regular payment process.
- There is no income testing or application process for kinship and foster caregivers.
- As with Basic Maintenance payments, the affordability payment is based on pro-rated daily rate (\$3.30/day)
- The amount received is pro-rated for each of the days during that month the child is in the caregiver's care, to a maximum of \$100/child/month.

# What if a child moves?



- **From one eligible caregiver to another eligible caregiver**- the pro-rated rates apply and the benefit is split between both eligible caregivers.
- **From one eligible caregiver to an ineligible placement** - caregivers should only receive the benefit for the days they provided care.
- **Child returns home** - If a child returns home during a month and the child is no longer in care, ministry caregivers should only receive the benefit for the days you provided care.

# Affordability Payments Process for Ministry Caregivers

- Ministry caregivers (foster care and kinship care) will automatically receive a monthly Affordability Payment for each child placed in their care by the GoA.
- From January 2023 to June 2023.
- Ministry caregivers will receive their Affordability Payment with their regular benefits.
- Payment will be automatically generated through CYFS

# Payment Process



## Monthly Statement

- Ministry caregivers' monthly statement will include this new amount and be labelled "Alberta Affordability Action Plan Payment".

## Respite Section

- Although it will be listed under the Respite section of the statement, the payment is not part of Respite.
- Respite rates have not changed.

**Note:** The extra amount included on the statement each month is the temporary Affordability Payment as labelled on the statement of child maintenance.

# Delegated First Nation Agency (DFNA) Kinship and Foster Caregivers

- DFNA kinship and foster caregivers will receive payment and will not need to access the online portal to make an application.
- Children's Services will advance funds to DFNAs for their eligible foster and kinship caregivers, then DFNAs will provide those monies to their eligible foster and kinship caregivers.



# Contracted Agency Caregivers

- Agency kinship and foster caregivers will not have to access the government online portal to make an application.
- Children's Services will provide the funding to contracted agencies, who will then provide the funding to their kinship and foster caregivers.
- Their payments are based on the calendar month (differs from Ministry caregivers)
- Pro-rated daily rate is \$3.32
- Regional Contract Teams are leading the process with contracted agencies.

# Group and Campus-based Care Settings

- Children and youth living in group homes or other group care settings will not receive the payment.
- The Alberta government already pays for all of their living expenses.

# SIL and Independent Living

- Youth living independently will not receive these payments.
- The Government of Alberta pays their daily living costs, including room and board, groceries and household incidentals, clothing allowance, spending money and personal incidentals.

# Foster and Kinship Caregivers with their own children

- Kinship and foster caregivers will need to apply and be eligible for the payment for their biological or adopted children.
- Families with adjusted total household incomes below \$180,000 per year will be eligible for a total of \$600 for each dependant child under 18.



# Caregivers with their own children

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All eligible parents will need to follow a 2-step process:

1. **Register** - Register for a verified account as soon as possible at [account.alberta.ca](https://account.alberta.ca)
  2. **Apply** - Apply when the online portal opens starting January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- The primary form of payment will be via direct deposit. Cheques will be available for those without a bank account.

# Family Eligibility



Parents and guardians are eligible if they:

- have dependant children under the age of 18
- have been Alberta residents as of November 30, 2022 and are residents the first day of each month of the payment period, and
- their adjusted\* total household income was less than \$180,000 in the 2021 tax year
- \* *‘adjusted’ is the family’s gross household income minus applicable medical, education and split pension deductions*

# Important

- The monthly payment for children is not taxable income, will not impact the childcare subsidy, and will not affect entitlements to other federal or provincial benefits.
- If you receive other provincial government benefits, (AISH, PDD, ASB, IS, or the Alberta Child and Family Benefit) and you have children under the age of 18, you will still need to apply for your children through the online portal starting January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

# Affordability Payments

- The Affordability Action Plan is extending broad-based supports while targeting additional relief to families, seniors, and our most vulnerable.
- You can learn more about current and future affordability relief programs and supports at the Affordability Action Plan at alberta.ca.

<https://www.alberta.ca/affordability-action-plan.aspx>

# Next Steps



1. **Inform** - Caregivers should be informed about the Affordability Payments announcement.
2. **Ensure CICIO is accurate** - Ministry caregivers will be paid as part of their regular payment process. Ensure CICIO is current.
3. **Finance will connect with regional Admin** – Finance teams will be connecting with regional Admin to ensure they have necessary information for any manual CYFS payments.
4. **CICIO data pull for DFNA Caregivers** - DFNAs will be provided with a list of their caregivers (based on CICIO); list will be updated monthly.
5. **Validation of agency invoices** - Agencies will invoice for an ‘advance’ and this invoice will be validated using nominal rolls, FFS invoices, CICIO information. Agencies will submit monthly invoices.



# Questions?

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[CS.CI-Caregiversupports@gov.ab.ca](mailto:CS.CI-Caregiversupports@gov.ab.ca)