

January 25, 2024

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA
Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts
c/o Legislative Committees Office
1700 Granville Street
One Government Place, 2nd Floor
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1X5

Received LCO
January 25, 2024

Dear MLA Regan,

RE: Heating Assistance Rebate Program, Information Requested by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

In response to your request for more information on the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) sent through Kim Langille, Committee Clerk of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I am happy to enclose documentation on the following:

1. The percentage of HARP 2023-24 applications outside of the service standard, and what outliers have been in terms of some of the longest waits.
2. Standardized communication provided to citizens at the onset of the HARP 2023-24 program.
3. Standardization communication which stated the HARP 2022-23 increases were a one-time change.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the delivery of this important program.

Yours truly,



Joanne Munro
Deputy Minister
Department of Service Nova Scotia

Heating Assistance Report Program (HARP)

Supplemental Information to the Standing
Committee on Public Accounts

Service Nova Scotia
January 23, 2024

Table of Contents

Request Letter	3
Introduction	5
HARP 2023-24 Turnaround Times	6
HARP 2023-24 Communication to Applicants	7
Contextual Note	7
News Release	8
FAQ for Public-facing Team Members	9
2023-24 Social Media Posts at Launch	11
HARP Application.pdf	13
HARP website content on October 16, 2023	15
Email Reminders	18
Consumer Protection Blog Post	23
Communication of One Time Payment	30
for HARP 2022-23	
Contextual Note	30
HARP website content on January 30, 2023	31
FAQ for Public-facing Team Members	34
Consumer Protection Blog Post	36
January 30, 2023 Twitter post	38



**Legislative
Committees Office**
House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

1700 Granville Street
One Government Place
2nd Floor
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1X5

PO Box 2630, Station M
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3P7

Telephone: (902) 424-4432
Toll Free: 1-888-388-6489
Fax: (902) 424-0513

January 12, 2024

Joanne Munro, Deputy Minister
Department of Service Nova Scotia
PO Box 2734
Halifax NS B3J 3K5

Dear Deputy Munro:

RE: Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts would like to thank you, Gary O'Toole, Rodger Gregg and Adam Rainforth for meeting with them on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, with respect to the 2023 Financial Report of the Auditor General.

The following was requested/offered during the meeting:

1. The percentage of applications outside of your service standard – what outliers were in terms of some of the longest waits. (see page 12 of transcript)
2. The communication that was provided back and forth to folks in anticipation of launching the program, and also during the program - the standardized communication. (see page 12 of transcript)
3. Table the communications where it stated: This is a one-time payment. (see page 14 of transcript)

Please forward this information to the Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA, Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, C/O Legislative Committees Office by January 26, 2024.

The meeting transcript is attached and can also be found online at the following address:

https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/committees/pa/pa_20240110.pdf

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Langille'.

Kim Langille

Committee Clerk

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

(902) 424-5247

kim.langille@novascotia.ca

Attachment

Introduction

The following documents provide additional information on the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) as requested by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on January 10, 2024.

The **first section** displays approved 2023-24 applications and the percentage processed within and beyond the program's 8-week turnaround, as of January 12, 2024. Applications which have required clarification or additional information are not included.

The **second section** contains communications and public messaging from the start of the 2023-24 program.

The **third section** collects references to the one-time nature of the in-program changes made during the 2022-23 program year, which were announced on December 14, 2022 and took effect on January 30, 2023.

Request 1:
HARP 2023-24 Turnaround Times,
as of January 12, 2024

From Application to Approval*	Percentage of Approvals	Approvals
Under 8 weeks (56 days)	74.8%	80,322
8-9 weeks	14.7%	15,746
9-10 weeks	4.8%	5,181
10-11 weeks	4.9%	5,306
11-12 weeks	0.7%	805

*Applications not requiring follow-up information

Request 2: Communication to 2023-24 Applicants

Contextual Note

For HARP 2023-24, the rebate amount and eligibility criteria were formally announced at the launch of the program on October 16, 2023 through a news release, webpage content, social media posts and FAQ resources for client-facing staff.

Consumer Protection publishes a collection of related programs available to Nova Scotians on its Medium blog and posted an update on October 16, 2023.

During the week of October 16 – 20, the previous year's applicants were notified via email or mailed an application indicating that the program was open and accepting applications. Email reminders are generally evergreen by design. However, applicants were further informed of heating proof requirements and the new eligibility criteria.

Though eligibility for 2023-24 differed from that of 2022-23, HARP did not wish to presume ineligibility for any applicant—all 2022-23 rebate recipients received a reminder that the program was opening.

Annual digital and radio advertising began on October 23, 2023 as recommended by Communications Nova Scotia, to promote the program and the online application.



News release

Province Opens Heating Assistance Rebate Program

16 October 2023 | 9:46 AM

Service Nova Scotia

Nova Scotians can now apply for a \$600 rebate on their heating bills this year through the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP).

"The cost of living continues to be a challenge across the province and across the country," said Colton LeBlanc, Minister of Service Nova Scotia. "Nova Scotians rely on HARP to help with their heating costs and we'll be there to help even more people keep the heat on this winter."

Families earning up to \$75,000 or single-person households earning up to \$55,000 are eligible, whether they rent or own.

Since 2009, the program has offered a rebate of up to a \$200 to single-person households earning \$29,000, and families earning \$44,000. Last year, the rebate was temporarily increased to \$1,000.

Nova Scotians applying for the HARP rebate may also be eligible for the newly expanded \$750 Seniors Care Grant, the Property Tax Rebate for Seniors, and the Home Energy Assistance Top-up Fund administered by The Salvation Army, and may also benefit from the long-running Your Energy Rebate Program.

For information on HARP or to apply online, visit: <https://beta.novascotia.ca/programs-and-services/heating-assistance-rebate-program-harp>.

Application forms are also available at Access Nova Scotia, Community Services and MLA offices.

Quick Facts:

- for the 2022-23 season, 155,800 applicants got the rebate for a total of nearly \$156 million
- households receiving support from the Department of Community Services, the Guaranteed Income Supplement or the Allowance from Service Canada also qualify for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program
- improvements like the addition of direct deposit, expansion of eligibility criteria and ability to opt in through the Property Tax Rebate for Seniors have made it easier for more people to apply for and receive their rebate faster
- last year, over 80 per cent of applicants received their rebate through direct deposit; to sign up for Canada Revenue Agency direct deposit, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/about-canada-revenue-agency-cra/direct-deposit.html>
- the Province also helps with the cost of home energy with the Your Energy Rebate program, which will provide Nova Scotians with a total of \$131.2 million in rebates this year

Additional Resources:

Seniors Care Grant application: <https://beta.novascotia.ca/apply-help-household-healthcare-and-home-heating-costs-seniors-care-grant>

Information about the Home Energy Assistance Top-up Fund: <https://salvationarmy.ca/maritime/home/programs/heat/>

Property Tax Rebate for Seniors: <https://beta.novascotia.ca/apply-property-tax-rebate-property-tax-rebate-seniors>

Your Energy Rebate Program: <https://beta.novascotia.ca/programs-and-services/your-energy-rebate-program-yerp>

Efficiency Nova Scotia programs: <https://www.energycyns.ca/residential/>

1. HARP 2023-24

How is HARP changing?

For 2023-24, the HARP rebate will be \$600, and eligibility has been adjusted.

Who is eligible to receive the rebate?

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program is open to all modest income Nova Scotian households who are responsible for heating costs.

- If you are single and live alone, your net income must be \$55,000 or less.
- If you are applying as a household of two or more, your combined annual net income must be \$75,000 or less.
- You are eligible if you receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada, or Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services.
- You must apply for the program using this year's application form, or online at www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp.
- You need to be responsible for your home heat. You may be asked to provide a receipt showing that you pay for heat (oil, electricity, coal, wood, wood pellets, propane, natural gas, etc.).
- You may only get the rebate for one residential address. If you are a landlord or own a seasonal property, you may not claim for those addresses.

The program is available to individuals and families. Businesses and charitable organizations do not qualify.

Why was eligibility changed from last year?

The changes made to the 2022-23 program were one-time changes unique to that year. This year's program changes triple the regular rebate amount of \$200 and still greatly expand eligibility compared to previous years.

I don't understand the different household types. Which should I choose?

Income amounts are based on your **2022** net income ([Line 23600](#)) as assessed by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

Single household: To qualify as a single household you must live alone, or with children aged 17 or younger, and with no other roommates. Your net income must be less than \$55,000 to qualify.

Single parent household: To qualify as a single parent household you must be the only adult living in your home and live with one or more children under the age of 18. Your net income must be less than \$75,000 to qualify. You must also be receiving the [Canada Child Benefit](#).

If a child is aged 18 or over, you must apply as a *household of two or more people*. To apply, you must send your adult child's name, date of birth, Social Insurance Number, and have your child sign the application.

Household of two or more people (with or without children): If you live with other adults (18 years or older), you must apply as a household of two or more people. The total 2022 net income for your household must be less than \$75,000 to qualify. For households with three or more adults, the first two adults may sign the application and their income will be verified with CRA; however, any additional adults after the first two must provide a Notice of Assessment.

Do I need to include a fuel bill?

If you receive a request from the program to provide proof of heating for this year, you will need to submit a fuel bill before we can complete your application this year.

Otherwise, fully completing and signing the application is good for now. However, we may ask you later to provide a heating bill to verify that you are responsible for heating your home.

Can I receive the rebate for previous years?

No. HARP is not awarded retroactively. Last year's rebate of \$1000 was a one-time change for that program year only and is no longer available.

Is the rebate taxable?

No. Any rebates granted do not affect your taxable income.

When does the program start?

The 2023-24 Heating Assistance Rebate Program will launch on Monday, October 16, 2023. Please refer to the website www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp for program information and updates.

Is there a deadline to apply for the rebate?

Yes. You must submit your application by March 31, 2024.

2023-24 Social Media Posts





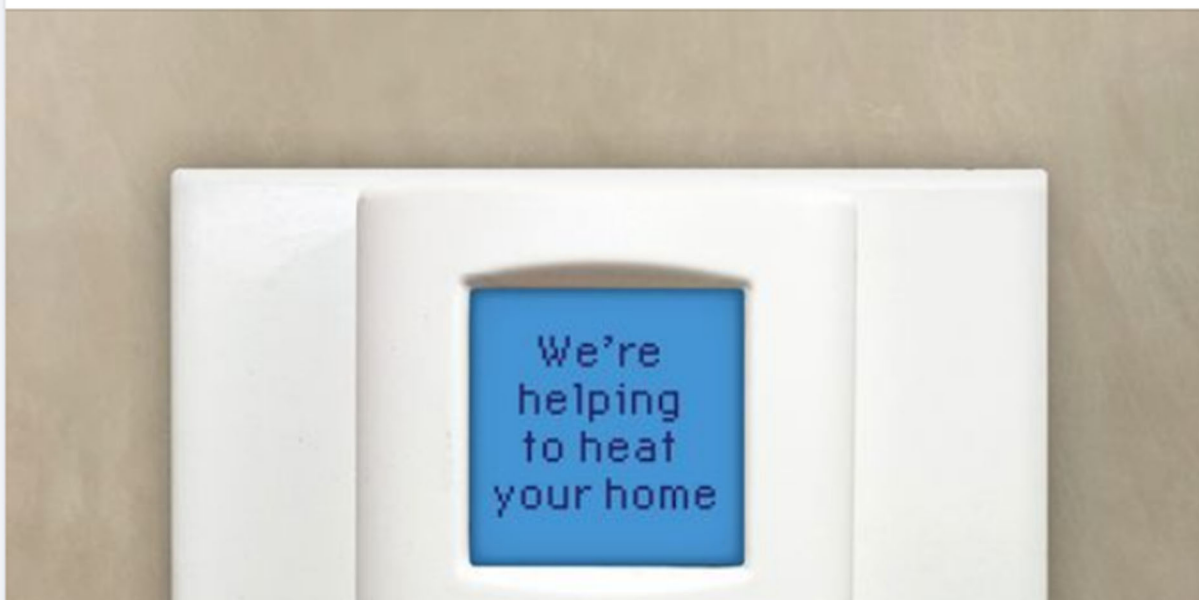
Nova Scotia Government

October 16, 2023 ·



Nova Scotians can now apply for a \$600 rebate on their heating bills this year through the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) at www.NovaScotia.ca/HeatingHelp

Families earning up to \$75,000 net income or single-income households earning up to \$55,000 net are eligible, whether they rent or own.



HEATING ASSISTANCE REBATE 2023-2024

Application Form – Apply by March 31, 2024

Please complete the application below. You may be eligible for the rebate if:

- you are responsible for your home heating costs, and
- you meet the household income requirements in Section 3, and
- you date and sign the back of the application.

1 GIVE YOUR DETAILS

Submit one application per household. *Please print clearly.*

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Civic Address: _____
City or Town: _____ Postal Code: _____
Mailing Address (if different than Civic): _____
Cell #: () - Email Address: _____
Home #: () - **Do you own or rent your home?** ☐ OWN ☐ RENT
Social Insurance Number (SIN): / / Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY):

Provide details if a second adult lives in the home (spouse, common-law partner, adult child, roommate)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Social Insurance Number (SIN): / / Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY):

2 HOW DO YOU PRIMARILY HEAT YOUR HOME?

☐ OIL ☐ ELECTRICITY ☐ WOOD ☐ OTHER: _____

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program may request proof of heat at a later time.

3 PICK YOUR HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND PROVE YOUR INCOME. (Select one)

<input type="radio"/> Receiving Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services. The applicant must be the recipient; no proof of income is required. Provide signature in section 4.
<input type="radio"/> Single, with net income of \$55,000 or less. You live alone, with no children or dependents. Provide signature in section 4.
<input type="radio"/> Single-parent household, with net income of \$75,000 or less. You are the sole adult residing with children aged 17 or younger, and you must be receiving the Canada Child Benefit. Provide signature in section 4.
<input type="radio"/> Household of 2 or more adults, with a combined net income of \$75,000 or less. You reside with a spouse or common-law partner, children 18 or older, roommates or other adults. Provide signatures in section 4. Any additional adults living in the household and <u>not already listed on this application</u> must provide a 2022 CRA Notice of Assessment.
<input type="radio"/> Receiving Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or The Allowance. You are currently receiving the GIS or Allowance; no proof is required. Provide signature(s) in section 4. To learn more about eligibility for the GIS or Allowance, call Service Canada at 1-800-277-9914.

SIGNATURE(S) REQUIRED ON REVERSE ↗

4 PROVIDE YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW.

I/we declare that the information provided on this application form is true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge. I/we hereby authorize the Canada Revenue Agency to release relevant information, including my/our income, from my/our personal income tax return(s) to verify my/our eligibility for the program, and to release my/our bank account information for the purpose of direct deposit of Service Nova Scotia rebate programs.

I/we understand that Service Nova Scotia will collect, use, and disclose my/our personal information only for the purpose of determining and verifying my/our eligibility for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program, or as authorized by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and will collect statistical information for program review purposes. If applying under the Income Assistance category, the Department of Community Services may verify my/our source of income to show that I/we qualify for the rebate.

If you filed your 2022 income tax return as married or common-law, you must supply BOTH signatures for processing.

Signature of applicant: **X**  **Date:** MM / DD / YYYY

**Signature of spouse,
partner or second adult:** **X**  **Date:** MM / DD / YYYY

☐ I/We would like to share my/our name, address, phone number and email address with Efficiency Nova Scotia, so they can see if I/we qualify for home energy efficiency programs (optional).

☐ Yes, you may contact me/us in the future for feedback on the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (optional).

5 SUBMIT YOUR SIGNED AND COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM.

Make sure to include any required income verification documents. Failure to do so may delay the processing of your application. We may contact you at a later time to request a heating bill.

All applications must be submitted by March 31, 2024.

☒ **Send by mail to:** HARP, Box 641, CRO, Halifax, NS, B3J 2T3

 **Send by fax to: 902-428-2164** *(Please make sure you send both sides of the application)*

 Apply online at: www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp


6 WAIT TO RECEIVE YOUR REBATE.

If you currently receive your personal income tax refund from the Canada Revenue Agency by direct deposit, **your rebate will be deposited into the same bank account you have registered with CRA** once it's approved.

If you do not receive your income tax refund by direct deposit, your cheque will be mailed within 8 weeks.

Please note that it can take up to 8 weeks to process your paper application.

Consider applying online if you can—
you could save on mailing time and get your rebate faster.

APPLY ONLINE at: www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp 

If you provided your email address, we will email you if we require any additional information. Keep an eye out for email notifications from HARP@novascotia.ca.

For more information call: 902-424-5200 or 1-800-670-4357 toll free in Nova Scotia.

www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp

Making life more affordable for families

Apply for a heating assistance rebate: Heating Assistance Rebate Program

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps low-and moderate-income Nova Scotians with the cost of home heating. Rebates are \$600 for each household. You can apply until 31 March 2024.

Apply to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program for help with the cost of home heating.

Rebate amount

You can receive \$600 if you qualify for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program.

Eligibility

To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home (residential) heat and meet 1 of the following criteria:

- have a 2022 net income of \$55,000 or less and live alone with no kids or dependents
- have a combined 2022 net household income of \$75,000 or less and live with kids, dependents or other adults
- receive Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services
- receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

If your personal or financial situation has changed since last year, you still may qualify. Examples of changes include becoming widowed, getting divorced or legally separated, losing your job, turning 18, recently arriving in Canada, or having the custody of your children change. Contact the Department of Service Nova Scotia to find out if you qualify.

You need to apply by 31 March 2024.

Seniors Care Grant

In addition to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program, you may apply for the Seniors Care Grant (https://beta.novascotia.ca/id/SNS_SCG_001) offered by the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care.

How to apply

1. Apply online for the rebate.
2. Check the application for details on all required supporting documents.
3. Submit your completed application and any supporting documents.
4. Check your application status online (https://beta.novascotia.ca/id/SNS_HARP_010) (if you apply online).

How long it takes

It should take 8 weeks to get your rebate. It can take longer if more information is needed or if your application hasn't been filled in correctly. If more information is required to process your rebate, we may contact you by email.

If your income tax refund is direct deposited (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/directdeposit/>), your heating assistance rebate is too. If not, your rebate is mailed to you.

Cost

There is no cost to apply for the rebate.

Before you start

Make sure you have:

- all adults on the application available to sign the form
- social insurance numbers and dates of birth of all adults in your home

You may need to provide additional supporting documents including:

- **2022** Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment (<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue/agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/a-copy-your-notice-assessment-reassessment.htm>) for you and any other adults in your home
- proof of change in marital status
- Canada Child Benefit Form
- citizenship application
- GST/HST payment information form

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program may contact you and ask you to provide a heating bill or receipt for oil, electricity, natural gas, wood, wood

pellets, coal or other heating source before your application can be approved.

Apply online

Add: [Link to online application](#)

Add: [Other ways to apply](#)

“You can use the Heating Assistance Rebate Program Application Form if you’re unable to apply online. Send your completed application (both sides of the application) and any supporting documents by mail or fax. If you want to receive a paper application by mail, contact us.

Heat Bill Requested (Online Applicants). Sent October 16, 2023

From	Heating Assistance Rebate Program
To	email address
Subject	Heating Assistance Rebate Program – Apply Online



Service Nova Scotia and
Internal Services

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program is now open.

You have been randomly selected to provide a heating bill in support of your 2023-24 Heating Assistance Rebate application.

Please provide a **heating bill/invoice, receipt or delivery slip** containing your name and civic address with your online application. If you don't have a digital copy of your bill, you can take a picture with your phone. Please make sure the bill is readable.

Apply online today at: novascotia.ca/heatinghelp

Note: We cannot receive applications or privacy-protected information like Social Insurance Numbers (SINs), credit card numbers, or banking details via email.

If you have any questions, you may call our Contact Centre at 902-424-5200 or toll-free (in Nova Scotia) at 1-800-670-4357.

Heating Assistance Rebate Program
Service Nova Scotia
novascotia.ca/sns

Notice of Confidentiality: This email and any attachments may be confidential or legally privileged. If you received this message in error or are not the intended recipient, you should destroy the email message and any attachments or copies, and you are prohibited from retaining, distributing, disclosing, or using any information contained herein. Please inform us of the erroneous delivery by return email.

Heat Bill Requested (Mail Applicants). Sent October 16, 2023

From	Heating Assistance Rebate Program
To	email address
Subject	Heating Assistance Rebate Program – Apply Online



Service Nova Scotia and
Internal Services

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program is now open.

You have been randomly selected to provide a heating bill in support of your 2023-24 Heating Assistance Rebate application.

Please provide a **heating bill/invoice, receipt or delivery slip** containing your name and civic address with your online application. If you don't have a digital copy of your bill, you can take a picture with your phone. Please make sure the bill is readable.

Apply online today at: novascotia.ca/heatinghelp

Note: We cannot receive applications or privacy-protected information like Social Insurance Numbers (SINs), credit card numbers, or banking details via email.

A paper application is being sent to your home address if you still prefer to apply by mail.

If you have any questions, you may call our Contact Centre at 902-424-5200 or toll-free (in Nova Scotia) at 1-800-670-4357.

Heating Assistance Rebate Program
Service Nova Scotia
novascotia.ca/sns

Notice of Confidentiality: This email and any attachments may be confidential or legally privileged. If you received this message in error or are not the intended recipient, you should destroy the email message and any attachments or copies, and you are prohibited from retaining, distributing, disclosing, or using any information contained herein. Please inform us of the erroneous delivery by return email.

General Reminder (Online Applicants). Sent October 16-20, 2023

From	Heating Assistance Rebate Program
To	email address
Subject	Heating Assistance Rebate Program – Apply Online



Service Nova Scotia and
Internal Services

The Nova Scotia Heating Assistance Rebate Program is now accepting online applications. We sent this email to you because you applied for the rebate online last year and provided this email address.

Applying online is safe, secure and the FASTEST way to receive your rebate. You can apply on your mobile or computer in minutes.

To apply online please visit: novascotia.ca/heatinghelp

If you already applied for the rebate earlier this week, you do not need to apply again.

Heating Assistance Rebate Program
Service Nova Scotia
novascotia.ca/sns

Notice of Confidentiality: This email and any attachments may be confidential or legally privileged. If you received this message in error or are not the intended recipient, you should destroy the email message and any attachments or copies, and you are prohibited from retaining, distributing, disclosing, or using any information contained herein. Please inform us of the erroneous delivery by return email.

General Reminder (Mail Applicants). Sent October 16-20, 2023

From	Heating Assistance Rebate Program
To	email address
Subject	Heating Assistance Rebate Program – Apply Online



Service Nova Scotia and
Internal Services

The Nova Scotia Heating Assistance Rebate Program is now accepting online applications. We sent this email to you because you applied for the rebate online last year and provided this email address.

Applying online is safe, secure and the FASTEST way to receive your rebate. You can apply on your mobile or computer in minutes.

To apply online please visit: novascotia.ca/heatinghelp

A paper application will be sent to your home address if you still prefer to apply by mail.

If you already applied for the rebate earlier this week, you do not need to apply again.

Heating Assistance Rebate Program
Service Nova Scotia
novascotia.ca/sns

Notice of Confidentiality: This email and any attachments may be confidential or legally privileged. If you received this message in error or are not the intended recipient, you should destroy the email message and any attachments or copies, and you are prohibited from retaining, distributing, disclosing, or using any information contained herein. Please inform us of the erroneous delivery by return email.

Eligibility Criteria Reminder. Sent October 20, 2023

From	Heating Assistance Rebate Program
To	email address
Subject	Heating Assistance Rebate Program – New Eligibility Criteria



Service Nova Scotia and
Internal Services

You recently received an email from the Heating Assistance Rebate Program, inviting you to apply for the 2023-24 program. **Please be aware that eligibility criteria have changed.**

You can qualify for the rebate if you pay for your own heat, and

- Live alone and earned up to **\$55,000** in 2022.
- Live with other people and earned a combined income up to **\$75,000** in 2022.
- Receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement, or
- Receive Income Assistance.

Please apply if you meet the new eligibility criteria.

If you have any questions, you may call our Contact Centre at 902-424-5200 or toll-free (in Nova Scotia) at 1-800-670-4357.

Heating Assistance Rebate Program
Service Nova Scotia
novascotia.ca/sns

Note: We cannot receive applications or privacy-protected information like Social Insurance Numbers (SINs), credit card numbers, or banking details via email.

Notice of Confidentiality: This email and any attachments may be confidential or legally privileged. If you received this message in error or are not the intended recipient, you should destroy the email message and any attachments or copies, and you are prohibited from retaining, distributing, disclosing, or using any information contained herein. Please inform us of the erroneous delivery by return email.

Benefits Available to Nova Scotia Residents

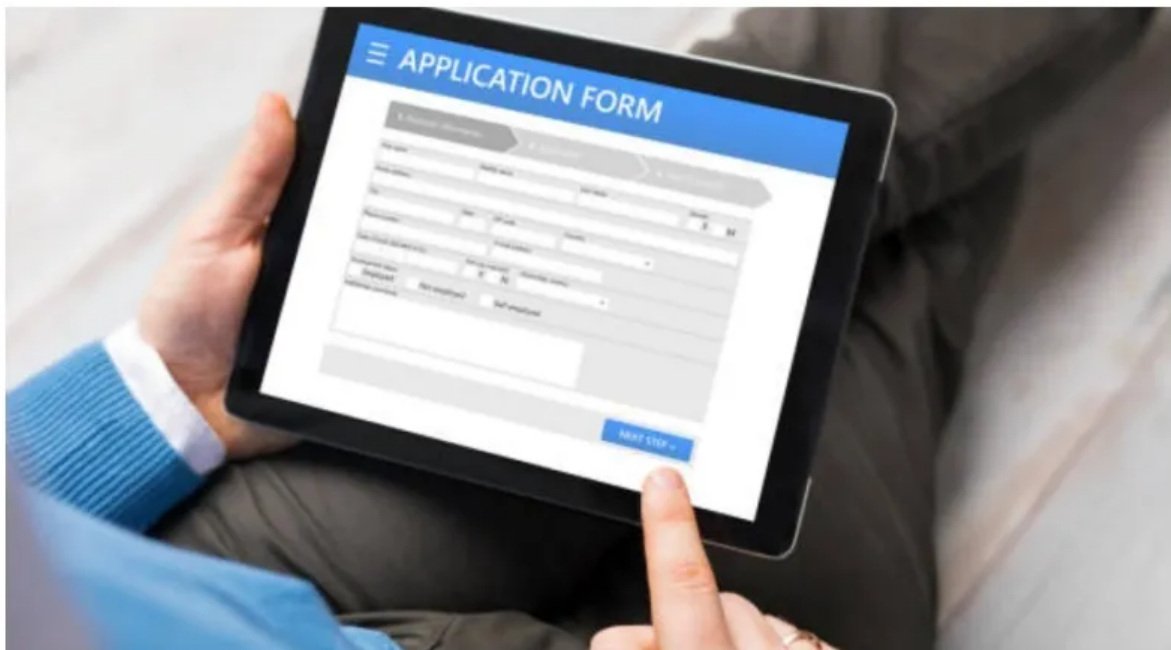


@NSConsumers

Published in Nova Scotia Consumer Protection · 5 min read ·



1



Last Updated: October 2023

The Province of Nova Scotia and its partners offer several programs to help you with your home expenses:

Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP)

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps lower-income Nova Scotians with the cost of home heating during the winter months.

Amount: This year the rebate is \$600.

Eligibility: To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home heat, and meet 1 of the following criteria:

- a household net income of up to \$75,000 for families or household of two or more people,
- a household net income of up to \$55,000 for single-person households earning up to \$55,000,
- receive Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services, or
- receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

The program runs until March 31st, 2024.

The 2023–24 program now OPEN.



**Apply for the
Heating Assistance
Rebate Program**

Property Tax Rebate for Seniors (PTRS)

The Property Tax Rebate for Seniors helps lower-income seniors with the cost of municipal residential property taxes.

Amount: The rebate is 50% of what you paid on the previous year's property taxes, up to a maximum of \$800. All of the amounts listed on your tax bill are eligible for the rebate calculation, except amounts for:

- commercial property
- resource property (non-residential land or forest)
- municipal exemptions or rebate

Eligibility: To qualify for the rebate, you need to be 60 or older at the time of application and meet all of the following criteria:

- your previous year's municipal residential property taxes are paid in full,
- you lived at the property as your primary residence for the previous year, and
- you receive or are eligible to receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

The program runs every year, from July 1st to December 31st.

You can download an application online while the program is active.



**Apply for the
Property Tax Rebate
for Seniors**

Seniors' Care Grant

The Seniors Care Grant is an annual grant program to help cover the costs of household services.

It can be used to reduce your costs for such things as lawn care, snow removal, grocery delivery, transportation, small home repairs, heating costs,

physiotherapy, mental health support, and more. It is available to homeowners and renters.

Amount: The grant is \$750.

Eligibility: To be eligible for this grant you must meet all of the following criteria:

- you are 65 years of age or over (or will be before the March 31st deadline)
- you have an household net income of \$37,500 or less.
- you reside in your own home or apartment,
- your name appears on the property title, residential lease agreement, Land Titles Initiative Certificate of Claim or band administration letter.
- you have paid (or will pay) for household or healthcare services between April 1st and March 31st.

The program runs from September 1st to March 31st of the following year.

You can apply online or with a paper application.



**Apply for the
Seniors' Care
Grant**

For information on the Caregiver Benefit or Home Care services such as nursing or home support, contact Continuing Care at 1-800-225-7225 or visit their [website](#).

The Your Energy Rebate Program (YERP) is a reimbursement of the provincial portion of HST paid on home energy products*

Amount: Rebate claims need to be for a total of \$30 or more, or span a period of 12 or more months. The provincial portion of the HST is currently 10%.

Eligibility: The rebate applies to all sources of residential use energy including home heating fuel, natural gas, propane, firewood, wood pellets, coal, kerosene and electricity*

- *Many providers provide the rebate automatically on your bill. If they do not, you may submit an application for the rebate.*

Make sure you have copies of all invoices and receipts for residential home energy purchases.

These need to include the supplier's HST number, amount of HST paid, date of purchase and the type of energy purchased. They must also be issued in your name; invoices and receipts issued in someone else's name will not be accepted.

You can download an application online at anytime.



**Apply for the
Your Energy
Rebate Program**

Doublecheck the application for more information on all required supporting documents.

For more information on other provincial HST rebates click [here](#).

The HEAT Fund

The Home Energy Assistance Top-up (HEAT) Fund helps Nova Scotians in emergency need with home heating cost during the winter months. The HEAT Fund is administered by The Salvation Army with funding from Nova Scotia Power and the provincial government.

Amount: The program can cover incurred costs or arrears up to a maximum of \$400.

Eligibility: You may apply every other year if you live in Nova Scotia, your household is experiencing an emergency heating situation, and you meet one of the following net income criteria:

- \$29,000 for one-person households,
- \$47,703 for two to four person households, or
- \$67,937 for households of five or more individuals.

The program runs every winter from mid-January to mid-April.



**Apply for the
HEAT Fund**

You can download an application online.

You may also want to look into other home-improvement programs:



The HomeWarming Program offers free home energy assessments and can provide free efficiency upgrades to eligible homeowners.

The program is administered in partnership with Efficiency Nova Scotia, with funding from Nova Scotia Power and the provincial government.



Efficiency Nova Scotia also offers other programs to make your home more energy efficient and carbon neutral.

Learn more about free products, solar energy, and heating equipment rebates on their [website](#).

Nova Scotia

Heat

Utility Assistance

Rebate

Tax Reimbursements

Request 3: One-time Nature of 2022-23 Changes

Contextual Note

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) is not a legislated program. It may change assistance amounts or eligibility criteria in any given year. References to future years are seldom, if ever, made during a given program year.

Communication in early 2022-23 therefore focused on HARP's increased availability and assistance to encourage applications.

However, updates to HARP's webpage and staff resources were made immediately upon the December 14, 2022 announcement. When the changes took effect on January 30, 2023 the webpage prominently displayed the one-time nature of the increases.

81.7% of the 171,772 total applicants applied online. 92.4% of the 79,090 first-time eligible applicants applied online.

The Consumer Protection unit updated its Medium blog accordingly, and posted on Twitter that the changes were for that winter.

Between the close of the program and early October, the 2022-23 program information remained online, including the one-time alert and a statement that the program was closed for the year. It contained no reference to the upcoming program year.

Apply for a heating assistance rebate:

Heating Assistance Rebate Program

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps low-and moderate-income Nova Scotians with the cost of home heating. Rebates are \$1,000 for each household. You can apply until 31 March 2023.

Apply to the Heating Assistance Rebate Program for help with the cost of home heating.

Rebate amount

You can receive \$1,000 (instead of \$100 to \$200) if you qualify for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. You don't need to apply for the rebate again if you already applied. All previous applications are reprocessed automatically.

If you already received a rebate of \$100 to \$200, the additional amount is processed automatically. If your application was previously denied based on your household income the rebate is processed automatically if you have a household income of \$85,000 or less.



One-time rebate change – Starting 30 January 2023, you can receive \$1,000 if you qualify for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home (residential) heat and have a household income of \$85,000 or less. You don't need to apply for the rebate again if you already applied.

Eligibility

To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home (residential) heat and meet 1 of the following criteria:

- have a net income of \$85,000 or less and live alone with no kids or dependents
- have a combined net household income of \$85,000 or less and live with kids, dependents or

other adults

- receive Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services
- receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

If your personal or financial situation has changed since last year, you still may qualify. Examples of changes include becoming widowed, getting divorced or legally separated, losing your job, turning 18, recently arriving in Canada, or having the custody of your children change. Contact the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services to find out if you qualify.

You need to apply by 31 March 2023.

How to apply

1. Apply online for the rebate.
2. Check the application for details on all required supporting documents.
3. Submit your completed application and any supporting documents.
4. Check your application status online (https://beta.novascotia.ca/id/SNS_HARP_010) (if you apply online).

How long it takes

It should take 8 weeks to get your rebate. It can take longer if more information is needed or if your application hasn't been filled in correctly. If more information is required to process your rebate, we may contact you by email.

If your income tax refund is direct deposited (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/directdeposit/>), your heating assistance rebate is too. If not, your rebate is mailed to you.

Cost

There is no cost to apply for the rebate.

Before you start

Make sure you have:

- all adults on the application available to sign the form
- social insurance numbers and dates of birth of all adults in your home

You may need to provide additional supporting documents including:

- 2021 [Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment \(https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/a-copy-your-notice-assessment-reassessment.html\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/about-your-tax-return/a-copy-your-notice-assessment-reassessment.html) for you and any other adults in your home
- proof of change in marital status
- Canada Child Benefit Form
- citizenship application
- GST/HST payment information form

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program may contact you and ask you to provide a heating bill or receipt for oil, electricity, natural gas, wood, wood pellets, coal or other heating source.

Apply online

When you apply online you need an email address. The Heating Assistance Rebate Program emails you if it needs more information to process your rebate. The program also emails you to let you know when your rebate is about to be direct deposited.

Start now  (<https://harp.novascotia.ca/harp/privacy.xhtml?lang=en>)

Related information

- [Check the status of your heating assistance rebate application: Heating Assistance Rebate Program \(https://beta.novascotia.ca/check-status-your-heating-assistance-rebate-application-heating-assistance-rebate-program\)](https://beta.novascotia.ca/check-status-your-heating-assistance-rebate-application-heating-assistance-rebate-program)

Heating Assistance Rebate Program

Changes for 2022/23

How is HARP changing?

As of January 30, 2023, a one-time increase to the rebate amount and eligibility criteria will be applied to the program.

What is the new eligibility?

If you are single and live alone, your net 2021 income must be \$85,000 or less to qualify for the new eligibility requirements. Families and households of two or more adults may qualify with a combined 2021 net income of \$85,000 or less.

You must also be responsible for your home heating costs.

How much will the rebate be?

The rebate will increase from \$200 to \$1,000 for all eligible applicants.

Why can't I apply now?

Updated applications are not available yet. If you apply prematurely your application will be denied and it could take longer to get your rebate.

It's best to wait until January 30, 2023 and apply online at www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp at that time. This will be the easiest and quickest way for you to get your rebate.

If you are currently eligible, feel free to apply as usual.

I already applied for and received the rebate. Do I need to re-apply to get the additional money?

No. Applicants who have already received the rebate will receive the extra amount by direct deposit or cheque, depending on how they received the initial amount.

I already applied this year and was denied. Should I apply again?

No. We will be reviewing denied applications and granting the full rebate to eligible applicants who qualify as of January 30, 2023.

I was already approved but received less than \$200. How much will I receive when the increase comes into effect?

If you already received	You can expect
\$200	\$800
\$175	\$825
\$150	\$850
\$125	\$875
\$100	\$900

Who is eligible to receive the rebate?

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program is open Nova Scotian households who are responsible for heating costs and meet the following criteria:

- If you are single and live alone, your net income must be \$85,000 or less. If you are applying as a household of two or more, your combined annual net income must be \$85,000 or less.
- You are eligible if you receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada, or Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services.
- You need to be responsible for your home heat. You may be asked to provide a receipt showing that you pay for heat (oil, electricity, coal, wood, wood pellets, propane, natural gas, etc.).
- You may only get the rebate for one residential address. If you are a landlord or own a seasonal property, you may not claim for those addresses.
- You must apply for the program using this year's application form, or online at www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp.

The program is available to individuals and families. Businesses and charitable organizations do not qualify.

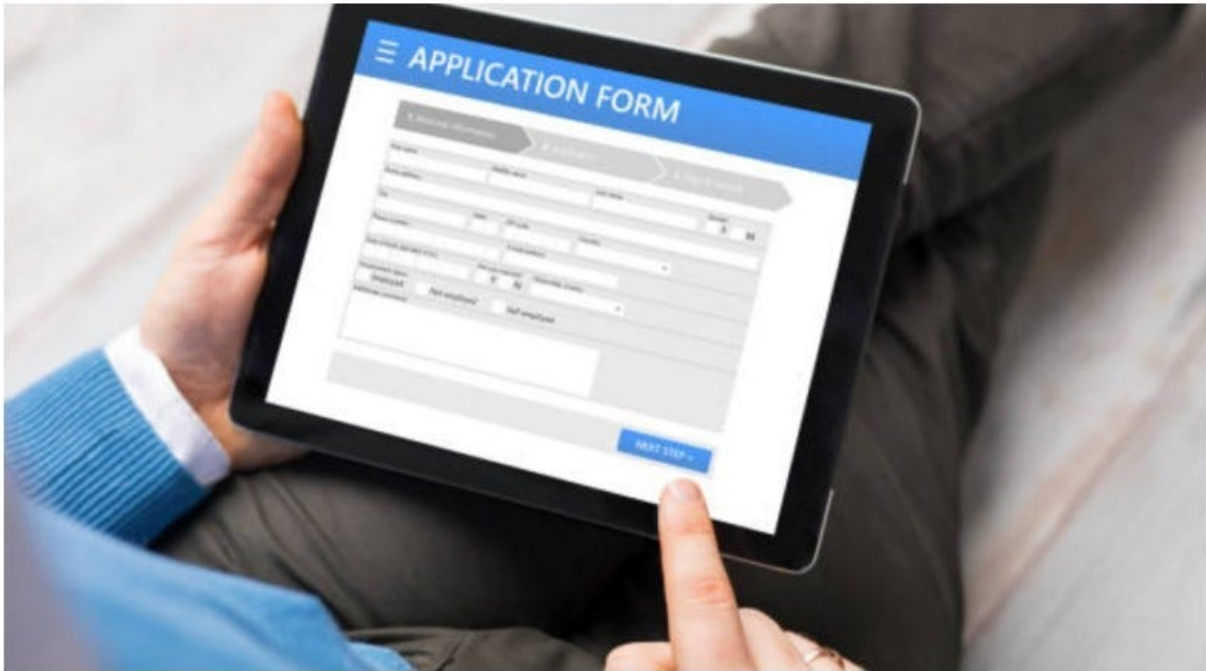
If these changes take effect in January 2023, why is eligibility based on 2021 income?

Canada Revenue Agency can only verify income through processed tax returns. If you don't qualify based on your 2021 net income but expect your 2022 net income to be different, you may be able to qualify for the rebate later in the program.

If you can get your 2022 income taxes submitted and processed and provide us with Notices of Assessment for each adult before the March 31, 2023 application deadline, we will be able to process your application.

Please note that your taxes must be processed; we cannot accept T4s or a copy of your tax return as proof of total household income.

Benefits Available to Nova Scotia Residents



Last Updated: July 2023

The Province of Nova Scotia and its partners offer several programs to help you with your home expenses:

Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP)

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps lower-income Nova Scotians with the cost of home heating during the winter months.

Amount: Rebates range up to \$200 per household, depending on your net income. *One-time change for 2022–23: On January 30, 2023 the rebate was increased to \$1000.*

Eligibility: To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home heat and meet 1 of the following criteria:

- *One-time Change for 2022–23: As of January 30, 2023 all households with combined net incomes of \$85,000 or less could qualify.*
- receive Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services, or
- receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

The program runs every winter, from the third Monday in October to March 31st of the following year.

The 2022–23 program is now closed.

Apply for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program

. . .

Property Tax Rebate for Seniors (PTRS)

The Property Tax Rebate for Seniors helps lower-income seniors with the cost of municipal residential property taxes.

Amount: The rebate is 50% of what you paid on the previous year's property taxes, up to a maximum of \$800. All of the amounts listed on your tax bill are eligible for the rebate calculation, except amounts for:

- commercial property
- resource property (non-residential land or forest)
- municipal exemptions or rebate

Eligibility: To qualify for the rebate, you need to be 60 or older at the time of application and meet all of the following criteria:

- your previous year's municipal residential property taxes are paid in full,
- you lived at the property as your primary residence for the previous year, and
- you receive or are eligible to receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

The program runs every year, from July 1st to December 31st.

You can download an application online.



NS Smart Consumers @NSConsumers · Jan 30, 2023



You can apply now for the expanded #NovaScotia Heating Assistance Rebate Program.

Eligibility has changed & the rebate has been increased to \$1000 for this winter.

Find out if you qualify & apply online at



beta.novascotia.ca

Apply for a heating assistance rebate: Heating Assist
The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps low-income Nova Scotians with the cost of home ...



2



278



NS Smart Consumers @NSConsumers · Jan 30, 2023



If you've already applied to HARP, you don't need to apply again:

✓ If you were approved, you'll get a top-up payment.

✓ If you were previously denied due to income, your application will be reviewed under the new amounts.



1



3



200



NS Smart Consumers @NSConsumers · Jan 30, 2023



If you have direct deposit set up with Canada Revenue Agency, that's how you'll get your HARP rebate. If not, you can expect a cheque in the mail.

You'll get an email when your rebate is about to be deposited, but it **WILL NOT** ask you to click, confirm or claim anything.



1



502

