

Home Heating Oil Benefit 2005

Q & A's

1. How does this new program apply to residential non-owner occupied and/or non-residential properties?

This program is only available for residential properties. To qualify, you may rent or own your home, but it must be your principal place of residence (e.g. not a cottage or second home).

2. Is this rebate the same as the Low-Income Seniors' Benefit? If I receive the Low-Income Seniors' Benefit or another provincial/federal program, am I eligible? Do I need to apply for the home heating oil rebate?

This program is separate from the Low-Income Seniors' Benefit or any other benefit program. You must apply for each program separately.

3. Who is eligible to apply for this refund?

If you lived in New Brunswick as of December 31, 2004, had a total family income of under \$45,000 in 2004, heat your home (owned or rented) with home heating oil and **do not** receive regular, monthly social assistance payments you may be eligible.

4. How much will my refund be if I am eligible?

If you qualify, the amount of your refund will depend on your total family income. If your total family income is less than \$25,000 you may receive \$200. If your total family income is \$25,000 or more, but less than \$30,000, you may receive \$150, and if your total family income is \$30,000 or more, but less than \$45,000, you may receive \$100.

5. How can I apply?

Application forms for the refund are available at all Service New Brunswick centres, online at www.snb.ca or www.gnb.ca Keyword: Finance. Individuals can also call at 1-800-669-7070, Monday to Friday , 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

6. Can I apply on-line?

No. You can find an application form on-line at www.snb.ca or www.gnb.ca (keyword Finance) but, you must print it and mail it to the:

Department of Finance
Revenue and Taxation Division
P.O. Box 3000,
Fredericton, NB E3B 5G5

You can also drop off your completed application at the nearest Service New Brunswick office.

7. How long will it take to get my refund?

It will take approximately 2-4 weeks for approved applicants to receive his or her refund.

8. Do I have to have filed a 2004 New Brunswick income tax return?

Yes. You must have been a resident of New Brunswick on December 31, 2004 and filed a New Brunswick income tax return.

9. What is total family income?

Total family income is your total yearly income (found on Line 150 of your 2004 income tax return or Notice of Assessment) plus your spouse's or common law partner's total yearly income (also found on Line 150 of his or her 2004 income tax return or Notice of Assessment).

10. What do I include when calculating my total family income (e.g. wages, employment insurance, child tax benefit, GST refund)?

Your total income is the amount found on Line 150 of your 2004 income tax return (or Notice of Assessment).

Your total family income can be calculated by adding the amount found on Line 150 of your 2004 income tax return (or Notice of Assessment) with the amount found on Line 150 of your spouse's or common-law partner's 2004 tax return (or Notice of Assessment). To be eligible, the total family income must be under \$45,000.

11. My family income for 2004 was \$45,000. I had \$7,800 in child care expenses for 2004. Can I deduct this from my family income to calculate the total family income eligible for the program?

No. Please see question #10 for instructions on how to calculate your total family income.

12. My income is a lot less than last year; will I be eligible?

In special circumstances, where your total family income in 2004 was over \$45,000, but you anticipate that your total family income for 2005 will be less than \$45,000, you may be eligible.

You will be required to declare what you anticipate your income will be in 2005 and provide reasons for the decline (i.e. loss of job, retirement, etc). You must meet all other eligibility requirements to qualify and you may be asked to provide proof of income for 2005 after you have filed your 2005 income tax return.

13. My family income for 2004 was \$60,000. My spouse and I have recently separated. My income for 2005 is under \$45,000. Am I eligible for the program?

If you and your spouse live in two separate residences, and you are both otherwise eligible for the program, each of you may apply for the refund.

14. Besides completing the application form, is there any other documentation required?

Yes. A copy of a delivery slip for the delivery of home heating oil to your home on or after July 31, 2005 must be provided and the delivery address must be your principal place of residence.

15. Does the heating oil delivery slip have to be in the name of the applicant?

No. However, the address on the delivery slip must match the address of the applicant's principal place of residence.

16. My spouse or common-law partner is in a nursing home. Are we eligible?

If your spouse or common-law partner lives in a nursing home, and if you meet the other eligibility requirements, you may be eligible.

17. My spouse or common-law partner and I are separated? Are we eligible?

If you and your spouse or common-law partner are separated, live at separate addresses (i.e. maintain separate households) and meet the other eligibility requirements, each of you may apply for the refund.

18. I live with roommates that are not related to me? Are we eligible?

If you share a residence with roommates, only one of you may receive the refund.

19. I am a student, do I qualify for this benefit?

There are no special requirements for students. If you meet the income criteria and pay for home heating oil for your principal place of residence you should qualify as long as no other occupant of that residence has applied for and received the benefit.

20. In November my roommate received a refund. It is now January and we recently had to refill our oil tank. Can I now apply for the refund?

No. Only one refund per household address will be provided.

21. Why am I signing a declaration on the application form?

The purpose of the applicant signing the declaration is to allow the Department of Finance to verify the information you have provided with the appropriate organizations. The information will not be shared with anyone else. The form will not be considered complete if the declaration is not signed.

22. Can someone else sign for me?

If for some reason, due to health or physical impairment you are not able to sign on your own, someone may be designated your representative and sign on your behalf. Both you and your representative will be responsible for the information provided. You should be aware it is an offence to make a false statement.

23. Can I apply next year?

You may apply for this refund between November 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006. This is a one-time only refund to help New Brunswickers cope with the exceptionally high cost of home heating oil. You may only apply once for the benefit.

24. I heat my home with wood, electricity, natural gas or propane... am I eligible for the refund?

No. Only New Brunswickers that use home heating oil to heat their homes will be eligible.

25. What is home heating oil?

Home heating oil is furnace or stove oil that is delivered to your principal place of residence and used to heat that residence.

26. Why do you include only home heating oil in the program? Why not other forms of heating?

This program is designed to help deal with the recent dramatic increases in the cost of oil world-wide that has led to rising prices for home heating oil.

27. I am a regular, monthly social assistance recipient; am I eligible for this program?

No. If you or your spouse or common-law partner is a recipient of regular, monthly social assistance, you are not eligible for this program.

28. If I receive any other form of social assistance, does that disqualify me?

If you are currently receiving benefits, other than regular monthly social assistance benefits from Family & Community Services, but are not sure if you might be eligible for the Home Heating Oil Benefit, contact your Family and Community Services Case Manager to determine if you can apply.

29. What if I have received regular monthly social assistance in the past? Would that disqualify me?

No. An applicant would only be disqualified if he or she were receiving regular, monthly social assistance at the time of the application for the benefit.

30. If there is more than one application from a household, how will you determine eligibility?

The first application that qualifies will receive the benefit. Only one refund per household will be issued. The administration system will track which households have received a refund and alert administrators if more than one application has the same address.

31. I rent a house (or apartment) and use oil to heat my home. The rent that I pay includes the cost for the heat. Am I eligible for this program?

No. If the cost of heating your residence is included with your rent, you are not eligible for this program. You must pay directly for your home heating oil (and provide a copy of a delivery slip) to be eligible.

32. Where can I call for information?

You can call 1-800-669-7070, Monday to Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., for information or to request an application form for the refund.