



ACT
Government

ACT Revenue Office
ABN: 45 096 207 205

ACT Spectacles Subsidy Scheme & Seniors Spectacles Scheme Policy Paper

Contents

Overview	2
Entitlement	2
Spectacles Subsidy Scheme	2
Seniors Spectacles Scheme	2
Both Schemes.....	2
Eligibility.....	3
Spectacles Subsidy Scheme	3
Seniors Spectacles Scheme	3
Mutual Exclusivity	4
Ineligible Cards.....	4
Power of Attorney.....	4
Privacy	4
Administration	4
Registration	4
Eligibility Verification	4
Special Consideration.....	5
Reimbursement	5
[Rejected Claims]	6
[Claims Returned for Resubmission]	6
Auditing.....	6

OVERVIEW

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (the Directorate) administers various concessions under the ACT Government's Concessions Program (the Program). The Program aims to improve the affordability of essential services for residents of the ACT in need of assistance. The Spectacles Subsidy Scheme and the Seniors Spectacles Scheme (the Schemes) contribute to the aims of the Program by providing subsidised access to prescribed spectacles and contact lenses for eligible Applicants.

This Policy Paper provides vital information for both Schemes regarding the:

- eligibility of Applicants;
- entitlements available to Applicants;
- privacy requirements of Optical Providers; and
- various administrative procedures to be followed by Optical Providers.

This Policy Paper does not cover the Low Vision Aids Support Scheme, which is also operated by the ACT Government.

ENTITLEMENT

Spectacles Subsidy Scheme

The Spectacles Subsidy Scheme (Spectacles Scheme) provides a subsidy of up to \$200 (GST inclusive) to eligible Applicants on the purchase of prescribed spectacles and/or contact lenses from a participating Optical Provider.

Seniors Spectacles Scheme

The Seniors Spectacles Scheme (Seniors Scheme) provides a subsidy of up to \$35 (GST inclusive) to eligible Applicants on the purchase of prescribed and non-prescribed spectacles and/or contact lenses from a participating Optical Provider. This includes the purchase of sunglasses.

Both Schemes

From 1 July 2014, neither scheme provides replacement spectacles and/or contact lenses if they are lost, stolen or damaged. The Schemes no longer provide for complex-need lenses and/or frames.

The balance on purchases of spectacles and/or contact lenses under the maximum subsidy (\$200 for the Spectacles Scheme and \$35 for the Seniors Scheme) will be forfeited. It cannot be used to reduce the cost of any subsequent pair of prescribed spectacles and/or contact lenses within the following 2 year period, nor will it be rolled over.

The Schemes cannot be accessed at the same time by an eligible Applicant. If eligible for both schemes, the Applicant must nominate which scheme he or she wishes to obtain a concession under when completing the Application Form provided by the Optical Provider.

An Applicant is ineligible for both schemes if he or she has received a concession under either scheme in the preceding 24 month period. For example, if an applicant receives a subsidy under either scheme on 30 June 2014, he or she will be ineligible to receive another concession (under both schemes) until 1 July 2016.

The 24 month period for prior successful Applicants was not reset on 1 July 2014 when the new policy came into effect. The 24 month period will be calculated from when the Applicant last accessed either scheme. This is regardless of whether the Applicant previously accessed a scheme for a frame only, a single lens, a statutory declaration, medical certification or special consideration.

The cost of optometric assessment is not covered by either scheme.

ELIGIBILITY

Spectacles Subsidy Scheme

Applicants applying for a subsidy under the Spectacles Scheme must permanently reside in the ACT and hold a current:

- Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs issued Pensioner Concession Card (PCC); or
- Centrelink issued Health Care Card (HCC) for which the applicant has been entitled to for a continuous period for at least three calendar months.

The three calendar month waiting period is waived for Applicants who hold a current HCC and who are clients of Companion House. Such Applicants must provide a reference letter from Companion House's practice nurse. The reference letter must be included with an Applicant's Application Form. It is no longer faxed, posted or emailed directly to the Administrator by Companion House.

Dependents listed on an eligible Applicant's concession card are also eligible and will have their own eligibility period.

If a person has a post office box listed as their mailing address or an interstate address on their concession card, they must provide the participating Optical Provider current documentary evidence verifying their ACT residential address, such as an electricity account, rates notice, drivers licence or telephone account.

Seniors Spectacles Scheme

Applicants seeking a concession under the Seniors Scheme must hold a current ACT Seniors Card. To be eligible for an ACT Seniors Card, a person must be over 60 years of age and a permanent resident in the ACT. Applications for such cards are available from ACT Government shopfronts, ACT public libraries, Council on the Ageing, and the Hughes Community Centre.

Further information is available at: <http://www.actseniorscard.org.au>

Mutual Exclusivity

The Schemes are mutually exclusive and the Applicant must indicate on his or her Application Form which scheme he or she is applying for.

If the Applicant has accessed either scheme in the preceding two year period, the Applicant is ineligible for a concession under both schemes.

Ineligible Cards

Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Cards, Veteran Affairs Gold Cards, Veteran Affairs White Cards are not eligible cards under either scheme.

Power of Attorney

In a situation where an Applicant is unable to complete or sign an application form, a carer, guardian or power of attorney may do so on his or her behalf provided the appropriate certified documentation is presented.

Privacy

All participating Optical Providers must comply with their obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2014* (ACT).

ADMINISTRATION

Registration

Potential providers can contact the Scheme's Administrator via email at concessions@act.gov.au to discuss the possibility of joining the Scheme.

Eligibility Verification

The Scheme requires the Optical Provider to ensure an applicant is eligible. The following procedure is to be followed each time an Applicant requests a concession under either of the Schemes.

[Both Schemes]

- The Optical Provider must ensure that the Applicant has completed the Application Form available in-store, and signed and dated it.
- The Optical Provider must retain the original Application Form for submission to the Administrator.
- The Optical Provider must check whether the Applicant has accessed the Schemes in the preceding two year period by contacting the Administrator via email at concessions@act.gov.au.
 - If the Administrator states that the Applicant has accessed either scheme in the preceding two year period, the Applicant is not eligible. In such a case, the Administrator will advise by return email the date on which the Applicant's 2 year period is completed.

- The Administrator will respond to one email per Optical Provider per day. Additional emails received from an Optical Provider each day will not be processed. In either case, a response will be provided within 2 business days.

[Spectacles Scheme]

- The Optical Provider must check whether the Applicant has a current Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card with an ACT address on it.
- If the Applicant has a Health Care Card, the Optical Provider must check whether the Applicant has held the card for at least the preceding 3 month period. This can be determined by referring to the concession card's Start Date.
 - This step is not required if the Applicant is a client of Companion House and provides a reference letter from Companion House's practice nurse.
- The Optical Provider must check whether the Applicant's address listed on the Application Form is located within the ACT, and that it matches the address stated on the concession card.

[Seniors Scheme]

- The Optical Provider must check whether the Applicant has an ACT Seniors Card.

Special Consideration

The Administrator may give special consideration to an Applicant who requires replacement spectacles within the 2 year eligibility period. Approval may be given where a diagnosed medical and/or restorative condition results in a significant change in the Applicant's prescription and vision requiring the replacement of spectacles. The Applicant must provide a current letter from their Medical Practitioner or Specialist outlining the medical and/or restorative condition and the need for replacement. Authorisation is to be obtained by contacting the Administrator.

Reimbursement

Reimbursement will be in accordance with this Policy Paper and will not exceed \$200 per eligible Applicant for the Spectacles Scheme, and \$35 per eligible Applicant for the Seniors Scheme. The ACT Government shall not be liable to make any payment under the Schemes to the Optical Provider unless the Administrator is satisfied that the prescribed spectacles or contact lenses have been dispensed in accordance with procedures in this Policy Paper.

The Tax Invoice must include the following information:

- The words "Tax Invoice" stated prominently;
- Date of issue of the Tax Invoice;
- Name of the supplier and the supplier's ABN;
- Name of the recipient;
- Amount, excluding GST, payable for the taxable supply;
- Amount of GST payable on the taxable supply; and

- A description of the goods.

The Administrator processes claims for payment upon presentation of a correctly rendered Invoice. Claims are to be forwarded to:

ACT Spectacles Subsidy Schemes
ACT Revenue Office
PO Box 293
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

[Rejected Claims]

Claims will be rejected when the Applicant:

- has accessed either Scheme in the last two years;
- does not hold a valid concession card; or
- is not an ACT resident.

In these instances, the Optical Provider will bear the cost of the claim.

[Claims Returned for Resubmission]

The Administrator will ask a claim to be resubmitted when:

- the Applicant has not signed the Application Form;
- the Application Form is not fully completed; or
- the incorrect Tax Invoice was provided.

Returned claims can be amended by the Optical Provider and resubmitted during the next round of claims.

Auditing

The Optical Provider must retain relevant information regarding each Applicant for provision to the Administrator if, and when, requested. This is for auditing and accountability requirements under the Schemes.