

<i>Act/Regulations</i> <i>Social Assistance Reg. 19(18)(b)</i> <i>Supports for Persons with</i> <i>Disabilities Act Gen. Reg. 32(2)(a)</i>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Social Assistance, AccessAbility Supports</b>	
	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Vision and Eye Care</b>	<b>Policy #</b> SA 6.7 AAS 3.8.1
<b>Effective Date: SA January 1, 1992</b> <b>AAS March 26, 2019</b>		<b>Authorized by:</b>	
<b>Revised Date: December 1, 2022</b>		<b>Deputy Minister Jamie MacDonald</b>	

## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide applicants of Social Assistance (SA) and Assured Income (AI) financial support to ensure essential visual and eye care needs are met.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Applicant:** a person who applies for or on whose behalf an application is made for SA or AI.
- 2.2 **Assured Income:** a component of AccessAbility Supports (AAS) that provides monthly financial benefits to eligible applicants with disabilities to use towards securing basic needs.
- 2.3 **Credit Service Authorization (CSA):** a promissory note issued to vendors for goods purchased or services rendered on an applicant's behalf.
- 2.4 **Intake Screener:** a staff member responsible to provide intake assessment and service for all programs within Social Programs.
- 2.5 **Recipient:** a person who is provided SA or AI and includes a person whose SA or AI has been suspended but not cancelled.
- 2.6 **Supports Coordinator:** a staff member that provides direction and case management support in delivering a range of social benefits and services to applicants eligible for Social Programs.

## 3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy use of the word applicant is inclusive of recipient.
- 3.2 Applicants are eligible for essential vision and eye care, including:
- Eye examination fees;
  - Basic frames and lenses when prescribed;
  - Repair or replacement of basic frames and lenses when necessary.

- 3.3 Applicants are eligible for an eye examination once every 2 years. Consideration for more frequent eye examinations may be given to dependents aged 14 years or younger and adults aged 50 years or older if recommended by an optometrist or physician. Please refer to the *Eye Examination Schedule* (attached) for a guide to the recommended frequency of examinations.
- 3.4 For applicants with diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, macular degeneration, or other eye conditions, more frequent and comprehensive eye examinations may be authorized, including ophthalmoscopic examinations through dilated pupils, when recommended.
- 3.5 Eye examination fees will be reimbursed to a maximum of \$114 per basic assessment. Additional fees may be paid for dilation or cycloplegia where warranted and recommended by an optometrist.
- 3.6 Basic frames and lenses or contact lenses purchases may be approved to a maximum cost of \$200 with single vision lenses and \$245 with bifocal lenses. Consideration may be given to estimates above the established rates with written explanation from the dispenser provided to the appropriate authority prior to approval.
- 3.7 Tinted lenses or oversized frames and lenses may be approved when supported by an optometrist's written recommendation.
- 3.8 Applicants are expected to utilize available public health programs for vision and eye care when possible (e.g. Eye See...Eye Learn Program).

#### **4.0 PROCEDURE STATEMENT**

- 4.1 Applicants are responsible to schedule an appointment for eye examinations. A Supports Coordinator or an Intake Screener will authorize the eye examination fee by providing a CSA number or other approved authorization method to the optometrist. A second authorization may be issued where the purchase of lenses and frames is required.
- 4.2 Where an applicant is experiencing medical issues with their eyes, such as infection, swelling, or pain, the Supports Coordinator will refer the applicant to a physician for a referral to an optometrist or ophthalmologist, as Medicare covers fees associated with eye examinations related to medical issues.
- 4.3 Where an applicant has severe vision loss, the Supports Coordinator will ensure applicants are aware of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) services, and additional supports available in the community.

#### **5.0 ATTACHMENTS**

- 5.1 Eye Examination Schedule

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**HISTORY:**

**October 1, 2021** – Editorial, content, and format changes. Now applies to Social Assistance and AccessAbility Supports. Replaces AccessAbility Supports Policy 3.8 – Medical Supports, section 4.4. The eye examination rate has increased from \$54 to \$114 per basic assessment. Intake Screeners are now authorized to approve vision and eye care procedures.

**December 1, 2022:** Basic frames and lenses rates have increased from \$115 to \$200 for single vision lenses and \$145 to \$245 for bifocal vision lenses.

### **Eye Examination Schedule**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 24 months)	By age 6 months
Preschool (2 to 5 years)	At age 3 and prior to school entry
School Age (6 to 19 years)	Annually
Adult (20 to 64 years)	Bi-Annually
Senior (65 years and older)	Annually