

PWA Financial Assistance Guidelines: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

PWA's Financial Assistance program helps to support the health and wellness of people living with HIV/AIDS and aims to alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with living with HIV/AIDS.

PWA strives to provide equitable programming for all PWA community members within limited resources. To this end, all requests for Financial Assistance must fall within the stated guidelines. Requests that do not meet these guidelines will not be considered. These guidelines reflect anticipated revenues and are subject to change without notice. In order to access this program, community members must provide written verification of their HIV status, live in the City of Toronto and have a postal code that starts with the letter M. Requests that cannot be granted in full will not be considered for future reimbursement.

Children's Holiday Gift Certificate Program

Purpose: The Children's Holiday Gift Certificate Program helps HIV+ families with dependent children participate in the Holiday season.

Amount: \$40 gift certificate per eligible child.

Eligible community members must be:

- HIV positive;
- Registered community members of PWA;
- Have dependent children 17 years of age and younger.

Access by: Contacting your Case Worker when you see your Case Worker.

Gift certificates are distributed through the Holiday Bag program ++ thereafter through your Case Worker.

Positive Children's Fund

Purpose: The Positive Children's Fund helps HIV+ children and their families manage some of the financial burdens they face with daily living, including such items as outgrown clothes, school activities, diapers, and formula.

Amount: \$200 between April 1st – March 31st

Eligible children must be:

- HIV positive;
- Registered community members of PWA;
- 17 years old and younger.

Access by: Contacting your Case Worker. **Cheques are processed weekly.**

Positive Seniors' Fund

Purpose: The Positive Senior's Fund helps HIV+ seniors manage some of the financial burdens they face when they receive OAS (Old Age Security), including a reduced monthly income and reduced insurance coverage.

Amount: \$200 between April 1st – March 31st

Eligible community members must be:

- HIV positive;
- Registered community members of PWA;

- 64 years old and older.

Access by: Contacting your Case Worker. **Cheques are processed weekly.**

Health and Wellness Fund

Purpose: The Health and Wellness Fund helps people living with HIV/AIDS manage some of the financial burdens they face when improving and maintaining their health and wellness.

Amount: \$300 between April 1st and March 31st

- Community members can receive a maximum of \$300 during the fiscal year for eligible expenses.
- PWA pays 50% of the total cost of the expense within the maximum \$300. For example, if someone submits a \$100 receipt for supplements, they will receive \$50.
- Once a community member has received \$300 they must wait until the following April 1st to begin receiving financial assistance again.
- Funds not used during any year cannot be carried over to the next or transferred to another community member.

Eligible community members must be:

- HIV positive;
- Registered community members of PWA;

Eligible expenses:

- **Prescription Medication**
 - Includes: items with a Drug Identification Number (D.I.N.), Trillium Drug Program deductible (those submitting to private insurance first then to Trillium must provide their quarterly Trillium statement within 30 days of it being issued);
- **Traditional Medicine**
 - Accessed by community members identifying as Indigenous;
- **Dental**
 - Teeth cleaning, **preventive services, including scaling (cleaning), polishing, sealants, and fluoride.**
- **Veterinary**
 - Includes: emergency veterinary expenses, routine checkups, spaying or neutering, vaccinations, exams;
- **Immigration application/legal fees**
 - Includes: fees for citizenship, humanitarian and compassion, permanent residence, and sponsorship applications; Legal fees associated with immigration.
- **Optical**
 - Includes: prescription eye wear including contact lenses. Eye exams are covered by O.H.I.P for HIV+ people and are not eligible;
- **Complimentary Therapies**

- Includes: complementary therapies from practitioners registered with a professional association such as massage, acupuncture, naturopathy, chiropractic, osteopathy, etc.;
- **Counseling**
 - Includes: therapy from practitioners registered with a professional association such as psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and social workers;
- **Education**
 - Includes: tuition, course fees and verified books and supplies at an accredited school/institute for professional and personal learning;
- **Exercise**
 - Includes: gym membership and fitness courses;
- **Foot care**
 - Includes: services from a registered podiatrist or chiropodist;
- **Hearing**
 - Includes: devices and exams;
- **Medical devices**
 - Includes: items with a prescription such as glucose monitoring machine, colostomy bags, SAD lamp, etc;
- **Medicinal marijuana**
 - Includes: purchases made only from the government or medicinal marijuana clinics and buyers' clubs;
 - Receipts must include quantity, cost, and date;
- **Medical tests & procedures**
 - Includes: PSA test (prostate specific antigen), anal/vaginal PAP smear, fertility procedures, etc;
- **Transportation Allowance**
 - Includes: 2 tokens provided for medical appointments with an official appointment card;
 - Volunteers: 2 tokens are provided when needed;
- **Mobility devices**
 - Includes: items with a prescription such as crutches, scooters, wheelchairs, etc;
- **Occupational Therapy**
 - Occupational therapy is a healthcare profession that focuses on enabling people to do the things they want and need to do in their everyday lives. OTs work with people who are experiencing illness or disability or are recovering from a medical event, such as a stroke or an operation.
- **Orthopedic devices**
 - Includes: items with a prescription such as braces, orthotics, etc.;
- **Physiotherapy**

is a healthcare profession, as well as the care provided by physical therapists who promote, maintain, or restore health through patient education, physical intervention, disease prevention, and health promotion.

- **Supplements**
 - Includes: vitamins, minerals, Ensure, Boost, protein powders and other supplements;
- **Winter wear**
 - Boots, coats, gloves, hats, scarves and snow pants.

Access the Health & Wellness Fund by:

- Contact your Case Worker prior to purchase to ensure expense eligibility;
- Submit your receipts (clear copies accepted) within 30 calendar days of the date on the receipt. If you experience challenges submitting your receipts on-time, contact your Case Worker for assistance;
- If your receipt cannot be reimbursed, you will be contacted if you have provided an active phone number or email address;
- Approved receipts will be processed, and your cheque will be available on the following week depending on when you submitted your receipts;
- Cheques must be picked up and deposited within 6 months from date of issued otherwise they will be voided and cannot be reissued;
- You can cash your cheque free of charge at Alterna Savings located at 800 Bay Street (corner of Bay/College) if you request a letter from PWA stating you are a PWA community member. You can request this letter when you pick-up your cheque;

Possible Financial Assistance Budget Restrictions

- PWA will strive to keep the Financial Assistance Program operating for the full fiscal year or for as long as the budget will allow.
- PWA established an Advisory Committee in 2024 to review the Financial Assistance program. The committee was made up of community members, service access volunteers and staff members. In addition. The recommendation is that should PWA experience budget restrictions the following steps should be taken:
 - PWA should inform community members on April 1st, that funds are limited and keep program open until the funds are exhausted.
 - If such closures need to happen, PWA will strive to communicate this with as much advanced notice as possible by posting in the Newsletter, bulletin board around PWA, through the Case Worker, Twitter, and Facebook.

Answers to Common Questions

- PWA accepts both original and copies of receipts. You are welcome to fax or email your receipts to your Case Worker;
- In emergency situations, PWA will consider paying expenses in advance of purchase directly to the payee instead of the community member.
- Prescription medication includes anything with a D.I.N. (drug identification number);
- Those on Private Insurance & Trillium must submit their quarterly Trillium statement within 30 days of it being issued;
- We do not cover eye exams as they are covered by O.H.I.P. Your eye doctor needs to complete a "Request for Major Eye Exam". Please see your Case Worker for more information;

- Complimentary Therapies must be provided by someone with a professional association registration number and your receipt should include their G.S.T. registration number;
- Receipts cannot be submitted twice;
- Cheques must be picked up and deposited within 6 months from date of issued otherwise they will be voided and cannot be reissued;
- You can cash your cheque free of charge at Alterna Savings located at 800 Bay Street (corner of Bay/College) if you request a “Bank Letter” from PWA. You can request this letter when you pick-up your cheque;