The Pioneer Utility Grant Program (PUG)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The *Pioneer Utility Grant (PUG) Act* was passed in 1978 to help Yukon seniors with the cost of heating their homes in the winter. Since then, the population of seniors has grown substantially, pensions have increased and homes are better insulated.

The *PUG Act* was amended in 2014 and in 2015 regulations were created to address issues of fairness, flexibility and sustainability. Income testing was introduced and now seniors with lower incomes receive the full grant, but seniors who have more income may be required to pay some of their heating costs.

1. When can I apply for the grant?

We will accept *PUG* applications from July 1 to December 31. Only in exceptional medical circumstances will this date be extended to January 31.

2. What is required to apply?

You must submit:

- A *PUG* application form.
- If you are a **homeowner,** a **copy** of your 2024 Property Assessment Notice (either the **green** Yukon government form or a property assessment statement stamped by Community Services) or a municipal water and sewer bill if it shows your name and clearly identifies your physical address. Your Atco electric bill cannot be submitted as it does not prove that you own the house.
- If you own a home on First Nation Settlement Land you must submit a certificate of tenancy prepared by a representative of that First Nation.
- If you are renting or leasing, you must submit a Certificate of Tenancy form prepared and signed by your landlord. The signed Certificate of Tenancy must be attached to your application.
- Proof of annual income, which is based on your **2023 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Notice of Assessment.** We require a photocopy of the pages that show your name and line 236. Please black out your social insurance number (which is at the top of the notice) and all other lines, except for line 236.
- If you have a spouse, you will need to provide the Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment for **both** of you, even if your spouse is under age 65.

3. How is my *PUG* rate determined?

Your *PUG* rate is calculated based marital status, income and physical address. **The *PUG* rate for seniors can vary because everyone's situation is unique.**

4. Why is there a different *PUG* rate for rural applicants and what is considered rural residency?

In general, Yukon rural and remote households experience higher fuel and delivery costs for heating. Any residence located outside Whitehorse city limits will receive the rural rate.

5. How long do I have to live in the Yukon before I am eligible to apply?

If you are applying for the *PUG* for the first time, you must have lived in the Yukon for a minimum of 12 months (1 year) before you can apply. If you have applied for and received the *PUG* previously, you must live in the Yukon for a minimum of 183 days every year, and three months of the 183 days must be during the winter months (defined as January, February, March, October, November, December).

Please note: If you leave the Yukon on an extended vacation during the first six months of the year then you will have to delay submitting your application. For example, if you travel south on vacation for the entire month of February then you cannot apply until November 1, as you would need January, March and October to count as your winter months.

6. When can I expect to receive the *PUG* payment?

If your application package is complete, you can expect your *PUG* payment within 30 working days.

Please note: By law, we must return incomplete applications to you. If we receive an incomplete application by mail, we will mail it back to you within 10 working days with a letter detailing what is missing.

7. Why do I need to provide my income information?

Seniors with a low income will receive the full grant amount; those with higher income will receive less or may not be eligible.

To find out if you are eligible and to get an estimate of the amount you will receive, you can use the **PUG calculator** on our website at www.yukon.ca/PUG. You can also call the PUG information line, 867-667-5674 or toll free at 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5674.

8. What are some of the reasons the *PUG* might not be paid?

- The applicant's income is very high.
- The applicant does not meet the residency requirements.
- The applicant has been in receipt of social assistance in the grant year.
- The applicant did not provide all the required information by December 31, 2024.
- The applicant lives in a subsidized housing unit or is receiving a rent subsidy.

9. How will we protect your information?

All information you provide is required under the *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* for the purpose of determining program eligibility. Your information is protected under the *Yukon Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Information is also collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the Yukon's *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* and other applicable laws.

If you apply in person in Whitehorse, we will record line 236 on your Notice of Assessment and then hand it back to you. Please provide **copies** of all original documentation; we will not mail documents back to you.

10. If I receive the *PUG* this year, will I automatically qualify next year and receive the same amount?

No. You must apply every year. If your income increases or decreases your *PUG* will change. Some years the base *PUG* amount may increase slightly to respond to inflation rates.

11. I am a senior who is renting a room in a house with a roommate (not a spouse). Can I still apply for the *PUG*?

Yes. You will need to submit a Certificate of Tenancy, which your landlord will prepare for you, along with your application. Only those over age 65 can receive the grant and they may only receive a portion of the grant. For example:

Two roommates: One aged 49 and the other aged 68. While the 68-year-old can apply, he or she would still be income tested and only receive at most 50 per cent of the maximum *PUG* rate as the heating cost are being shared with a roommate.

Two roommates: Both are 65, so they would both be income tested and each would eligible to receive up to 50 per cent of the maximum *PUG* rate.

12. Why do couples receive a higher *PUG* than single applicants?

Everyone's cost of living is different. Generally, singles have lower overall living costs as compared to couples who usually incur higher expenses.

13. Who is considered a spouse?

Spouse means two people who are married to each other or who have lived together as a couple for at least 12 continuous months before applying for the *PUG*.

14. What is considered a principal residence?

The applicant declares the principal residence as the location in the Yukon where they reside for at least 183 days of the year, with at least 90 of those (three months) days occurring in the winter months.

15. What are considered utilities under the *Pioneer Utility Grant Act*?

Utilities mean any source of heating (oil, electricity, wood, propane or wood pellets) used for heating the principal residence. We do not require you to submit any heating receipts with your application.

16. Will I receive a T5007 slip to submit with next year's income tax return?

No. The *PUG* is tax exempt so you will not have to declare it.

17. Are there other jurisdictions that have a similar home heating grant for seniors?

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut are the only other Canadian jurisdictions with a heating grant program that is income-tested and based on every adult living in the house. The Northwest Territories and Nunavut only pay homeowners, not renters. Unlike the Yukon, fuel receipts must be submitted, and applications must be made in person and notarized.

18. What are the new enforcement and compliance powers? Why do we need them?

The Department of Health and Social Services needs to deliver the *PUG* program in a fair and transparent manner. To do that, we can request further information to confirm eligibility. If a *PUG* recipient was not eligible, we can recover this amount from the following year's *PUG* amount. If the department learns that a person knowingly provided false information, we can pursue court action and, if convicted, the person could be fined up to $5,000.

19. Where can I obtain an application package and get further information?

For more information visit our website at yukon.ca/PUG. You can also call the PUG information line, 867-667-5674 or toll free at 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5674 if you wish to receive an application or require additional information about the *PUG* program.

You can obtain application forms at the following location:
Income Support Unit
3168 – 3rd Ave. Whitehorse
In the communities, you can pick up a form at your regional Health and Social Services office.

To view the FAQ online, go to yukon.ca/pug. You'll also find links to the *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* and the *Pioneer Utility Grant Regulations*.

In June, we'll update the page with the application form, Certificate of Tenancy form and a PUG calculator to help you estimate your grant amount.

Yukon