
March 6, 2023

Dear Passport recipient,

I am writing to share some important information with you about changes to the Passport Program guidelines that will come into effect on April 1, 2023.

What is happening?

The Passport Program guidelines are being updated to address the temporary list of eligible expenses that was introduced in April 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The temporary list of eligible expenses will no longer be in effect as of April 1, 2023.

These changes are intended to give you more clarity, choice and flexibility with how you spend your funding. By permanently adding some of the temporary eligible expenses to the Passport program guidelines you will be able to participate in services and receive supports that are meaningful to you.

When is this happening?

The updated Passport Program guidelines will come into effect on **April 1, 2023**.

What does this mean for you?

You can review a summary of the key changes to the Passport Program guidelines in **Appendix A** attached to this letter. You can also read/review the updated Passport Program guidelines at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/passport-program-guidelines>. Additional resources, including additional tip sheets and videos, are available on the Passport website at <https://passportfunding.ca/>. Website updates will be added through the month of March 2023.

It is important to note that some expenses that were temporarily admissible due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will no longer be eligible as of April 1, 2023.

Some technology expenses introduced temporarily to assist recipients during the COVID-19 pandemic will return to pre-COVID rules and will no longer be admissible under Passport as of April 1, 2023. These include:

- Gaming related items, including:
 - Gaming consoles
 - Video games
 - Software
 - Hardware
 - Accessories
 - Virtual reality systems

- Gaming apps and gaming related subscription services (Xbox Live, PlayStation Plus, etc.) and in-game/in-app purchases
- Television/cable, streaming and subscription services (Netflix, Disney+, Roku, Spotify, etc.)

You should review your Passport expenses to identify any recurring expenses (e.g. streaming and subscription services) that will no longer be reimbursed as of April 1, 2023. Cancellation fees for these types of expenses are not admissible under Passport

Grace Period for Streaming and Subscription Services

To allow for adequate time to cancel streaming and subscription services (Netflix, Disney+, Roku, Spotify, etc.), the ministry has put in place a grace period for the reimbursement of these types of services. The program will reimburse you for subscription services received up to May 31, 2023.

What do I need to do?

1. You can check out the updated guidelines and resources on the Passport website www.passportfunding.ca and sign up to receive email updates.
2. You can submit your 2022-2023 claims now as we are approaching the end of the fiscal year. An easy way to submit your claims is through one of the free electronic platforms. If you are not set up yet, you can find out how to do so at <https://passportfunding.ca/i-have-passport-funding>.
3. With the introduction of the April 2023 Passport guidelines, the Passport claim form is being updated. You should use the updated Passport claim for any expenses that take place after April 1, 2023. If you file your claim electronically, the electronic platforms are updated automatically so you do not need to do anything extra.

If you cannot submit claims electronically, please contact your Passport coordinator to request an updated Passport claim form. The updated Passport claim form should be used for any expenses that take place after April 1, 2023.

Your new, personalized claim form will include your name and personal barcode and is for your use only. Do not share your personalized claim form with another Passport recipient. The new claim form must be used starting April 1, 2023, to avoid processing delays.

If you have any questions about the changes outlined in this letter or within the guidelines, please contact your Passport Coordinator or Program Lead

Sincerely,
Hamilton-Niagara Passport Team

Appendix A: Updates to Passport Guidelines (April 2023)

1. Changes related to the Temporary Expansion

The following table identifies the changes as of April 1, 2023.

Area	Summary of Changes
<p>Home-based supplies and equipment</p>	<p>Supplies and equipment will now be admissible expenses under the April 2023 Passport Program guidelines under a <u>new</u> Community Participation Support supplies and equipment category. A <u>maximum annual reimbursement amount of \$2,000 per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31 the following year)</u> will be applied to the overall category.</p> <p>This category will include supplies and equipment to support both organized and general social and cultural activities, such as sports, leisure, recreation, fitness, arts and crafts, learning and skills development. Activity fees will remain a separate category and <u>not</u> be subject to the maximum annual amount.</p> <p>The Community Participation Support supplies and equipment category will also include sensory items and personal protective equipment and supplies (see below).</p>
<p>Sensory items</p>	<p>Sensory items will be admissible expenses under the April 2023 Passport Program guidelines under the new Community Participation Support supplies and equipment category and will be included within the maximum annual reimbursement amount of \$2,000 per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31 the following year) for the overall category.</p> <p>Items that may provide a sensory element but are inadmissible under the Passport Program guidelines will continue to be inadmissible, for example: furniture, swings, permanent and semi-permanent structures, and household items.</p>

Area	Summary of Changes
<p>Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies (PPE)</p>	<p>PPE consumable supplies will be admissible expenses under the April 2023 Passport Program guidelines under the <u>new</u> Community Participation Support supplies and equipment category and will be included within the <u>maximum annual reimbursement amount of \$2,000 per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31 the following year)</u> for the overall category.</p> <p>General household cleaning supplies continue to be inadmissible.</p>
<p>Technology</p>	<p>Technology related goods and services will be admissible expenses under the April 2023 Passport Program guidelines under its own new category. A <u>maximum annual reimbursement amount of \$3,000 per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31 the following year)</u> will be applied to this category.</p> <p>Some technology items and services will no longer be admissible when the updated guidelines come into effect on April 1, 2023. The following will be inadmissible under the April 2023 Passport guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaming related items, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gaming consoles ○ Video games ○ Software ○ Hardware ○ Accessories ○ Virtual reality systems • Gaming apps and gaming related subscription services (Xbox Live, PlayStation Plus, etc.) and in-game/in-app purchases • Television/cable, streaming and subscription services (Netflix, Disney+, Roku, Spotify, etc.) <p>You should review your Passport expenses to identify any recurring expenses (e.g. streaming and subscription services) that will no longer be reimbursed as of April 1, 2023. Cancellation fees for these types of expenses are not admissible under Passport.</p>

Area	Summary of Changes
<p>Behavioural Interventions</p>	<p>Costs associated with behavioural interventions will no longer be admissible. This temporary enhancement due to the COVID-19 pandemic will end as of April 1, 2023.</p> <p>Behaviour Support Plans continue to be admissible through the pre-approval process managed by local Passport agencies. You can contact your local Passport agency for more information.</p>
<p>Essential Service Delivery Fees</p>	<p>Costs associated with essential service delivery fees will no longer be admissible. This temporary enhancement due to the COVID-19 pandemic will end as of April 1, 2023.</p>

2. Additional Changes

Area	Summary of Changes
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>The transportation category introduced in April 2022 was to support you with participating in local social engagements, including visiting family or friends in your home community. The description is being updated to clarify what is an admissible expense. The description is being revised to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transportation to/from local social engagements and recreational activities in your home community, which may include those with family and friends (excluding personal holiday travel, vacations to visit family/friends and family visits related to custody arrangements). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The program recognizes that your community may be in a rural, remote, or northern location and may require you to travel longer distances.

Area	Summary of Changes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The program recognizes that your community may include Indigenous communities which are on or off reserve. - Reimbursement for airfare to and from admissible Community Participation Support activities requires pre-approval prior to booking travel. You can contact your local Passport agency to make a pre-approval request for reimbursement of airfare costs.
<p>Enhanced Accountability</p>	<p>It is important that you understand what you are accountable for, which means you understand what you can be reimbursed for and other rules of the program.</p> <p>The Passport guidelines have been updated to help explain these changes. The language in the guidelines has been updated to explain these rules and responsibilities more clearly to you and to your Person Managing Funds (PMF). If you do not understand, or have questions, please contact your local Passport agency.</p>
<p>Updated Passport Claim Form</p>	<p>With the introduction of the April 2023 Passport guidelines, the Passport claim form is being updated. The updated Passport claim form should be used for any expenses that take place after March 31, 2023.</p> <p>If you file your claim electronically, the electronic platforms are updated automatically so you do not need to do anything extra.</p> <p>If you cannot submit claims electronically, please contact your Passport coordinator to request an updated Passport claim form. Your new, personalized claim form will include your name and personal barcode and is for your use only.</p> <p>Do not share your personalized claim form with another Passport recipient. The new claim form must be used starting April 1, 2023, to avoid processing delays.</p>