



## **Key Messages for Passport Recipients, Transfer Payment Agencies and Service Providers**

**May 11, 2020**

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) has issued Temporary Changes to Eligible Expenses:

<https://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/developmental/serviceSupport/passport.aspx>

The Temporary Changes to Eligible Expenses came into effect April 1, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges people were having in securing services and supports. These changes are temporary and allow for the purchase of some items that were not considered eligible in the past.

*NOTE: Expenses purchased prior to April 1, 2020 do not qualify under the Temporary Changes, and must meet the MCCSS Passport Program Guidelines that were created in 2014.*

### **New Temporary Eligible Expenses**

The list of temporary eligible expenses that follows is consistent with the MCCSS Temporary Changes to Eligible Expenses found on their website. It also includes any other confirmed eligible purchases not originally identified on the list. Please review our website routinely for any additions over time.

- a) Sensory Items: To support people who rely on sensory items to reduce anxiety, stress and/or to support any clinical behavior plans:
- Multi-sensory related products and technologies
  - NOTE: does not include the purchase of clothing



- b) Technology: technology approvals will allow for the virtual support of Passport funding recipients while maintaining connections and providing some caregiver respite:
- Laptops, tablets, iPad, desktop computers, software and applications
  - On-line educational and e-learning activities and resources
  - Video games and videogame systems
  - Webcams and microphones
  - Media service subscriptions (Netflix, Xbox Live, etc.)
    - NOTE: can purchase a yearly subscription to Netflix
  - E-Readers (Kindle, kobo)
  - Remote monitoring devices and medical alert services to support people living independently
  - Month by month data or internet plans ONLY while Temporary Changes to Eligible Expenses are in place.
- c) Activities and Items to Support Home-based Recreation and Fitness Activities, homebased hobbies (previously accessed through Community based programs):
- Supplies to support home-based hobbies and activities; such as:
    - Arts and Crafts supplies
    - Hobby Supplies
    - Puzzles and games
    - Books for leisure/learning
  - Indoor fitness items (yoga mat, exercise bike, skipping rope)
  - Fitness and sports equipment for use on the individual's property (basketball net, trampoline, Frisbee, badminton set)
  - Bicycles
- d) Personal Protective Equipment: This is intended to keep both the individual, their family and support staff safe in the home or in the community.
- Gloves
  - Masks
  - Gowns
  - Cleaning supplies (disinfectant wipes, sprays, hand sanitizer)
  - Goggles and face shields were required



- e) Essential Service Delivery Fees: This is meant to support people and families who are unable to leave their homes because of the vulnerability of family members and other care requirements.
- Eligible expenses include service delivery charges for groceries or pharmaceutical supplies.
    - NOTE: The cost of food and medication are NOT eligible expenses.
- f) Behavioural Support Plans and Related Interventions:
- Development of behavior support plans and recommended interventions (in person or virtual) and/or strategies to reduce challenging behaviours or crisis situations, in order to help the Caregiver to support their family member at home

### **Ineligible Expenses**

- Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy
- Take-out delivery fees for meals
- Support Workers under the age of 18
- Unpaid Primary Caregivers • Clothing as a sensory item (this may be considered as an Extenuating Circumstance request – call your Passport Agency to explore)
- Gift Cards are not eligible, however, receipts for eligible expenses purchased with gift cards can be submitted for reimbursement
- Any type of home renovation, such as ramps, fences, furniture
- Yearly data or internet plans. NOTE: Monthly plans are eligible while Temporary Changes to Eligible Expenses are in place
- Fitbit, Apple Watch

**Please note that we are awaiting further direction from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services regarding approval for other types of expenses. As these answers are provided, we will update this information and our website.**



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### **Passport Funding Advances**

Due to COVID-19, Passport Funding recipients who have chosen to self-direct their funds, and who submitted Passport claims in 2019-2020, will receive a 25% advance on their annual Passport Funding allocation for 2020-21. This will occur sometime in May 2020. The 25% advance equals 3 months of funding. PassportONE will deposit the advance into the Payee's

bank account, or will send a cheque by mail for those who do not have direct deposit. This advance is for individuals that have chosen to self-direct their Passport funds, or on the portion of the funds that are self-directed. **If your funding is not self-directed, please reach out to your Agency or Service Provider to discuss your needs.**

**IMPORTANT:** This advance is **NOT** additional Passport Funding. Receipts must be submitted for eligible expenses against this advance. Each Passport funding recipient is responsible for budgeting their Passport allocation for this 2020-2021 fiscal year, ending March 31, 2021.

PassportONE will notify the Payee by email/text, voicemail, or paper insert with cheque, when the 25% advance deposit is made.

If the Passport funding recipient has already submitted and been reimbursed for expenses in April and/or May 2020, the advance deposit will be 25% of their annual allocation, minus the amount of funds reimbursed.

Claims and receipts must be submitted (to PassportONE) against the advance prior to any further reimbursements. The regular process for submitting expenses for reimbursement remains the same both for the advance and after the advance is used. For example, expense forms including support worker hours need to be completed.

Once the advance has been used and the Passport funding recipient has submitted all receipts, they will continue to be reimbursed for eligible expenses as per the usual process.

All expenses must meet the intent of the MCCSS Passport Program, inclusive of the MCCSS Temporary Changes to Eligible Expenses.

The MCCSS will advise when these Temporary Changes to the Passport Guidelines will cease. They will give us notice so that we have time to prepare for change.