

# SAFER

## Shelter Aid For Elderly Residents

### Financial Rental Subsidy Program for Low to Moderate Income Seniors

#### What is SAFER?

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) is a B.C. provincial program helps make rents affordable for BC seniors with low to moderate incomes.

SAFER provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for BC residents who are age 60 or over. It is run by BC Housing.

#### Does SAFER cover ALL people over 60 who pay more than 30% of their gross monthly income to rent?

**NO.** There are income ceilings to be eligible for SAFER. This means that if your monthly gross household income exceeds the ceiling amount you will not be eligible for SAFER. These income ceilings are dependent on where you live.

#### Is the SAFER payment amount the same for everyone?

**NO.** The SAFER payment is based on your income, your rent, and what zone you are in. There is a SAFER calculator on the BC Housing website. You can use that calculator to see if you are eligible. If you don't feel comfortable accessing that website your local seniors centre can help!

<https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance-programs/rap-safer-calculator>

#### Eligibility

You are eligible if you meet **ALL** of these requirements:

- You are age 60 or older.
- You lived in BC the full, 12-month period before submitting your application.
- You, and your spouse you share a home with, meet Canadian citizenship requirements:
- Individuals with private sponsorship that has broken down
- People who applied for refugee status
- Individuals legally in Canada as permanent residents, not under sponsorship
- Canadian citizens not under sponsorship
- You pay more than 30% of your gross, before tax, monthly household income towards rent for your home. If you live in a trailer, this includes pad rental (manufactured home) that you own and live in.

#### What are the income ceilings?

**There are 3 income ceilings.**

##### Zone 1

- Couples - \$2,750
- Singles - \$2,550

And includes the communities of: Aldergrove, Anmore, Belcarra, Bowen Island, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Delta, Langley, Lions Bay, North Vancouver, Maple Ridge, Milner, New Westminister, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Richmond, Surrey, Tsawwassen Vancouver, West Vancouver and White Rock

##### Zone 2 and 3

The income ceilings for these two zones are the same. This is for communities outside of Zone 1 (the rest of BC)

- Singles - \$2,446
- Couples - \$2,666



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#### Is there a cost to apply to SAFER?

**No.** It is free. If you think you are eligible you should apply.

#### What do I need for my application?

Your local seniors centre can help with the application. We will need the following to make the application:

- Banking information
- The name and contact information of your landlord
- A rent receipt or a rental lease(if you don't have one we can assist)
- Proof of current income
- Citizenship status
- Passport or birth certificate or Drivers License, or BC ID
- Information to show you have filed your income tax
- Your contact information

#### Is SAFER automatically renewed each year?

**NO.** You will get a renewal letter annually and you need to fill out and return the renewal letter.

#### What is the average amount of the SAFER subsidy?

SAFER amounts vary according to your income, the amount of your rent and where you live.

In 2020/2021 the average SAFER subsidy was \$199.00

#### How to apply

There are two ways to get an application form for SAFER:

1. Online: Download an Application Form, or
2. By mail: Request a paper copy of the application form by calling 604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756

Go to:

<https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance-programs/SAFER>

#### How long does the application take to be processed?

Applications may take up to **3 months** to be processed.

If your application is approved SAFER is retroactive to the date your application is received.

#### What if my finances change?

If your financial situation improves or worsens you need to contact B.C. Housing who operates SAFER.

You can do so by calling:  
604-433-2218 or 1-800-257-7756

#### What if I leave the country for more than 6 months?

You will lose your SAFER subsidy for that period. You will then need to reapply. SAFER will then determine eligibility at that time.

It is recommended to not leave the country for more than 5 months and 20 days (cumulative) in a calendar year.



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#### If I live in co-op housing\_ am I eligible for SAFER?

Generally you are not eligible to receive a SAFER subsidy if you live in co-operative housing and are a shareholder.

However, there are different types of housing co-ops and a few co-ops are eligible for SAFER. Speak to your co-op representatives or contact BC Housing. Your local seniors centre can help.

#### Do I have to file my income tax to be eligible for SAFER?

**Yes.** You will need to file your income tax for the previous year before applying to SAFER and will need to file it every year to maintain your SAFER eligibility.

#### If I live in subsidized housing\_ am I eligible for SAFER?

**No.** This is because rents in subsidized housing are supposed to be set to be at 30% of your income.

#### If I receive Social assistance or Persons with Disability Assistance from the Province of BC am I eligible for SAFER?

**No.** This is why it is so important to apply for SAFER if you are transitioning from Persons With Disability Assistance to Old Age Security. You may be eligible for SAFER once you start receiving Old Age Security. Your local seniors centre can help with your application to SAFER.

\*Dollar amounts accurate as of June 2022

