



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Review of the Pioneer Utility Grant Act and regulation**

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon proposes to modernize the *Pioneer Utility Grant Act* and regulation to ensure Yukon seniors will continue benefiting from the grant in the future.

The Pioneer Utility Grant is a subsidy program for all Yukoners 65 and older who rent or own their own home. It is designed to assist seniors with paying the high cost of utilities.

"The number of Yukon seniors is anticipated to increase significantly in the near future, placing an increasing strain on the Pioneer Utility Grant," Minister of Health and Social Services Doug Graham said. "As a result, we need to update the legislation and regulations to ensure the program remains flexible and sustainable to meet the needs of Yukon seniors."

The current act allows the Department of Health and Social Services to consider increasing differential costs of fuel for those living in rural Yukon, when prescribing the pioneer grant amount.

"To ensure that the grant continues to meet the growing needs of the senior population in the long run, we also propose adopting an income testing model," Graham added.

Proposed changes to the act would include:

- moving the initial application date from October 1 to July 1;
- detailing what is required to apply for the grant;
- establishing an income testing model to determine grant amounts;
- expanding eligibility requirements; and
- expanding regulation making powers to support implementing the act.

Earlier this month, the Health and Social Services minister and departmental officials met with representatives of seniors groups who voiced support about the suggested changes, as they will help ensure long-term sustainability and availability of the program to seniors who need it most.

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