

NSW Spectacles Program – Information Sheet

The NSW Spectacles Program funds free glasses and optical aids to financially disadvantaged residents of NSW. Funded by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services and administered by Vision Australia, the Program provides funding to participating optometrists and optical dispensers (providers) to supply optical aids to eligible applicants free of charge. The Program's aim is to improve vision and avoid preventable decline in eye health.

Who is eligible for this Program?

The Program is available to people who meet the following requirements:

Residency	Are an Australian resident living permanently in NSW
Assets	Have less than \$500 of total assets (if single) OR Have less than \$1,000 in total family assets (if partnered or a single parent) Household and motor vehicle are not included in these asset restrictions
Income	Receive a full (non-reduced) Commonwealth pension or income support payment <u>AND</u> receive no additional income (other than Centrelink payments) OR Are a low income earner with net income no greater than the full Newstart allowance (if under retirement age) or the full aged pension (if over retirement age)
Other schemes	Are ineligible to receive free optical appliances under any other program (e.g. Department of Veterans' Affairs)
Time period	Have not received spectacles or other optical appliances under the Program within the past two years.

Special conditions exist to provide for single parents receiving maintenance, residents of remote areas, or return applicants experiencing a significant change in vision within two years. Contact our office for more information.

What does the Program provide?

If you meet the Program's eligibility requirements, you are entitled, in any two-year period, to receive:

- One pair of single vision spectacles; or
- One pair of bifocal spectacles.

The Program may fund other items including contact lenses, tinted lenses or low vision aids, depending on individual clinical needs.

These items are provided free of charge to eligible applicants. When accessing this service, you can choose to pay an additional fee for items that the Program does not fund. Common items that attract a cost include:

- Multifocal or progressive lenses
- Transition or photochromatic coatings
- Non-standard frames

If you choose to pay a co-contribution toward items not available through the Program, you should enquire with your provider about the cost before your order is placed.

How to apply

As part of your application, you will need to provide:

- Personal details, including contact details and Medicare card number
- A Centrelink Income Statement that is no more than three months old, if receiving Centrelink payments;
OR
- A payslip and a bank statement that are no more than three months old, if a low income earner.

Centrelink Income Statements can be obtained by phoning or visiting a Centrelink branch, or logging on to Centrelink online.

Once you have obtained the relevant documents, you can lodge an application with a registered Program Provider. First, make an appointment with your chosen provider. When booking an appointment, check whether the provider will need to examine your eyes, or whether you should bring a prescription with you. You should also check whether or not any eye examination can be billed through Medicare. Prescriptions filled through the Program must be no more than three months old. Most providers participating in the Program are optometrists who can conduct your eye examination and provide you with a current prescription.

At your appointment, your provider will supply the terms and conditions for participating in the Program. This will explain privacy conditions for the protection of your personal information and any action Vision Australia or the NSW government may take to verify information provided in your application.

You will be asked to provide verbal consent to the terms and conditions, and a verbal declaration that the information you have provided is true and correct. The provider will enter your details into the NSW Spectacles Program online portal and lodge your application using the documentation you supply. Once your application has been approved, the Provider will order your spectacles or optical aids and let you know when they are ready to collect.

To find your nearest Program Provider, or if you have any queries, you can contact us by:

Phone: 1300 84 74 66 and ask for the Spectacles Program
E-mail: info@visionaustralia.org
Online: <http://www.visionaustralia.org/spectacles>