

Advance Payments



What is an Advance Payment?

If you receive a social security payment or Family Tax Benefit Part A, you may be eligible to receive part of your fortnightly payment in advance as a lump sum. **You do not need to tell Centrelink why you need the Advance Payment.** Advance Payments must be repaid and the rules about receiving an Advance Payment depend on the type and rate of payment that you receive.

There are several types of Advance Payments, the two most common being an advance of your:

- social security payment, **and**
- Family Tax Benefit Part A.

Other types of Advance Payments

- Special Employment Advance—assists you to pay for things you must have when starting a job or if you have just started working and have not yet been paid
- Mobility Allowance Advance, **and**
- Pharmaceutical Allowance Advance.

To find out more information about these payments, please contact Centrelink.

To receive an Advance Payment of your social security payment you must be receiving one of the following payments

- ABSTUDY
- Parenting Payment (Partnered)
- Age Pension
- Parenting Payment (Single)
- Austudy Payment
- Widow Allowance
- Carer Payment
- Widow B Pension
- Disability Support Pension
- Wife Pension
- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance.

To qualify for an Advance Payment of your social security pension or benefit you must:

- have been receiving a pension or benefit for at least 3 months
- not owe a debt to the Commonwealth (this does not include a Family Tax Benefit Advance)
- be able to afford the repayments of the Advance Payment and still have enough money for your regular fortnightly expenses.

When working out your regular expenses consider the following:

- rent or mortgage payments
- groceries
- loan repayments
- home/contents/car insurance premiums
- electricity/gas
- telephone
- fares
- petrol
- medicines
- child care
- school fees
- credit cards
- rates (land, water and sewerage)
- clothing, **and**
- entertainment.

To qualify for an Advance Payment of your Family Tax Benefit you must:

- be entitled to Family Tax Benefit Part A fortnightly, at a rate equal to or more than twice the Family Tax Benefit Advance rate
- not owe a debt to the Commonwealth (this does not include a social security Advance Payment).

How much and how often can you receive an Advance Payment?

The amount of the Advance Payment is limited by maximum and minimum amounts which are determined by the type and rate of payment you receive from Centrelink. Contact Centrelink to find out how much you can receive.

An Advance Payment is a lump sum paid from your future entitlement and is repaid from your fortnightly payments.

The number of Advance Payments you can receive over a 12 month period will depend on the type of payment you receive and whether you have received previous advance payments.

Payment Type	How often can you be paid an Advance Payment?	What are the limits on how much you can receive?
Family Tax Benefit Part A	You can only receive one Advance Payment in the standard Advance Payment Period. There are two advance periods; 1 January to 30 June and 1 July to 31 December.	<p>The amount of the Advance Payment is based on half the base Family Tax Benefit child rate for a child under 18 years of age.</p> <p>The amount you receive will depend on the number of days left in the Advance Payment period.</p>
Age Pension Disability Support Pension Carer Payment Widow B Pension Wife Pension	The amounts can be taken as one advance, or drawn down by two or three advances in the 13 fortnight period (six months).	<p>The maximum amount is set at three weeks worth of the maximum basic pension plus part of the Pension Supplement amount.</p> <p>The minimum amount is set at one weeks worth of the maximum basic pension plus part of the Pension Supplement amount.</p> <p>These amounts will be linked to increases in adult pension payments, so that the minimum and maximum advance payment amounts will keep pace with increases in pension payments each March and September.</p>
ABSTUDY Austudy Payment Newstart Allowance Parenting Payment (Partnered) Parenting Payment (Single) Widow Allowance Youth Allowance	One in a 12 month period.	<p>The maximum amount is \$500.</p> <p>The minimum amount is \$250.</p>

How is the Advance Payment paid?

The Advance Payment is paid directly into the same account as your regular Centrelink payment.

You can ask for the social security Advance Payment to be split and paid in 2 installments.

You can ask for the Family Tax Benefit Advance as a one off payment or you can ask for this to be paid automatically at the beginning of each Family Tax Benefit Advance Period; every January and July as long as you remain entitled to the payment.

How is the Advance Payment repaid?

The amount paid to you as an Advance Payment has to be repaid. An amount will be deducted from your fortnightly payments until the amount is recovered.

Social security Advance Payments are repaid over 13 fortnights and Family Tax Benefit Advance Payments are repaid over the Family Tax Benefit Advance Payment period in which you received the advance. If your payment stops the outstanding balance will be recovered from you as a debt.

Applying for an Advance Payment

You can apply online by visiting the Centrelink website www.centrelink.gov.au or call the Centrelink self service phone line on **13 6240**. You can also call Centrelink on one of the phone numbers listed below or visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

Other assistance if you are in financial difficulty or a crisis situation

When unexpected expenses arise or a crisis occurs, Centrelink may be able to help you find assistance within the community for emergency relief, budgeting advice or provide an Urgent Payment or Crisis Payment. Talk to Centrelink about your situation to find out what assistance is available.

How to find out more

Employment Services **13 2850**

Youth and Student Services **13 2490**

ABSTUDY **13 2317**

Parent or Guardian **13 6150**

Disabilities, Sickness and Carers **13 2717**

Seniors **13 2300**

Indigenous Call Centre **13 6380**

(available only in NT, North QLD and WA)

Customer Relations **Freecall™ 1800 050 004**

For information in languages other than English **13 1202**

Australian Government Services

Fraud Tip-off Line **13 1524**

TTY* payment enquiries **Freecall™ 1800 810 586**

*TTY is only for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.

To make an appointment **13 1021**

Important: calls to '13' numbers from a standard telephone service can be made from anywhere within Australia for not more than the cost of a local call (call charges may vary depending upon the telephone service provider). Calls to '1800' numbers are free of charge. Calls from public and mobile telephones may be charged at a higher rate.

Disclaimer

The information in this brochure is accurate as at July 2010, but may of course change. If you use this publication after that date, please check with Centrelink that the details are up to date.