

"To support and champion Independent Living for persons with disabilities through self-directed services and programs."

Independent Living Waterloo Region Access Fund

Eligibility and Process FAQ

What is the Access Fund?

The Independent Living Waterloo Region (ILWR) Access Fund helps individuals with disabilities purchase assistive devices, adapted technology, and medical equipment that helps them live independently.

What does the Access Fund cover?

The Access Fund covers 100% of the purchase cost of an item up to a maximum of \$7500. Please note that the fund **does not** typically cover partial or a percentage of purchases in partnership with other funders except for the client portion of a purchase through the Assistive Devices Program (ADP). There are exceptions, please read "[Partial costs and joint funding](#)" for more information.

For example:

Will fund - Susie wishes to purchase voice dictation software and a quality microphone so that she can interact with her computer to send email to family and friends. The total cost of the purchase is \$500.

Will fund - Johnny's family wishes to modify the ground level of their home to include an accessible bathroom and they need to purchase a special piece of equipment, e.g. a ceiling track lift, that would be a part of the renovation.

Will Not fund - Johnny's family wishes to modify the ground level of their home to include an accessible bathroom. The total cost for the renovation is \$27,000, some of which is being covered by personal credit and other community service agencies. They are asking for \$7500 to go towards overall costs.

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The Access Fund will pay for many different types of devices and equipment, including items such as chair lifts, portable ramps, specialized beds, computer equipment and software, and wheelchairs/mobility aids.

Note: Each applicant may apply for one item only.

Partial costs and joint funding.

Typically, the Access Fund acts as the sole funder of the purchase except for ADP funded equipment, in which case the Access Fund could cover the client portion 25%. The exception to this rule would be if the client has already secured other sources of funding and the Access Fund is the "final piece of the puzzle".

For example, a piece of equipment costs \$5000, and the applicant has already secured funding from a variety of sources, with a balance owing of \$1000; this amount would qualify for the Access Fund. In another example, a piece of equipment is going to cost \$15,000 and the applicant is applying to the Access Fund for \$7500, but the remaining balance has not yet been funded. This item **would not** qualify for application because there is still an amount owing.

What doesn't the Access Fund cover?

The Fund does not cover:

- Home renovations or permanent structures such as wooden or concrete ramps.
- Regular maintenance of devices
- Any partial cost that is contingent on the approval of other sources of funding. Please read "[Partial costs and joint funding](#)" for more information
- vehicle purchases
- reimbursements to vendors for purchases already made.

Note: Payments are made to the vendor only (payments cannot be paid directly to the recipient)

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Who can be a recipient of the Access Fund?

The Access Fund is available to anyone with a disability who lives in the Waterloo Region that needs equipment and financial support. Proof of eligibility may be required.

How do I apply for funding?

The application process is online and the link to the online application form will become available prior to the opening of the application window.

The funding application window will open on **Monday, January 26, 2026, at 9 a.m.** and will close on **Friday, February 6, 2026, at 4 p.m.**

If you need any support completing the online form or require the form in an alternative format, please contact the Program Manager, Dan Lajoie (dan.lajoie@ilwr.ca).

Important: all applications must be submitted by a professional (e.g. Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, or other primary care provider), or have a professional listed as secondary contact on the form. Applications submitted by individuals, family members, or friends, that are not accompanied by a professional contact will not be eligible.

What is needed to apply?

The preliminary application will be available online. The short form consists of applicant's information, questions about the item needed, item's cost, and a declaration that financial support is required.

ILWR does not require a vendor quote at the time of application, but the specific device and its cost must be provided. If approved, you may not change the item or dollar amount requested, i.e the cost listed on the application must be identical to the cost provided in the vendor quote including sales tax, delivery fees, and other fees.

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How much funding can be requested?

The Access Fund can provide **up to \$7,500** to purchase an approved item.

Only one applicant for the maximum request will be selected each round; the remainder of the available funds will be awarded to smaller requests.

How are recipients selected?

The Access Fund receives a great number of requests from applicants in need and not all applications will be successful.

Each year, a committee reviews all applications and selects one or two primary recipients to be featured throughout the year. Once these recipients have been selected, we utilize a lottery system to determine the remaining recipients at random.

Only one application is accepted per individual and each application must be for one item. Therapists or other medical professionals may submit applications on behalf of multiple individuals.

What is a Featured Recipient?

A Featured Recipient is selected by the committee to act as an example of how the Access Fund successfully supports people to live independently. Typically, two recipients are selected each year by the selection committee to be featured: a youth, and an adult, and the item being funded is usually higher in cost. The selection committee reserves the right to modify these criteria.

Featured Recipients allow the Access Fund to showcase its benefits to donors and funders. Featured Recipients are typically asked to be included in marketing materials for the year and are invited to join us at a reception dinner following our annual golf tournament: the Tournament of Hope. If an applicant is not willing or able to serve as a Featured Recipient, their application will be entered into the lottery selection process.

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What happens after recipients are selected?

Once recipients are selected, the applicant (professional) will be notified, and they will have **30 days** to produce the following three documents:

1. **Professional assessment:** This document declares the necessity of the device for the applicant. Ideally, this assessment comes from the professional submitting the application.
2. **Vendor quote:** One quote from a qualified vendor.
3. **An applicant letter/testimonial:** Explaining the need for the equipment and how it will help them to live more independently. The referring professional may assist the individual to prepare this letter.

How long does it take to receive the device?

Once the above documents have been received, the purchase of the item will be arranged with the vendor by ILWR. The amount of time the device or equipment takes to arrive will vary by vendor.

Note: Access Fund pays the vendor directly for new purchases. The recipient **will not** receive direct payment. Reimbursements to recipients or vendors will not be provided.

How frequently can a recipient receive funding?

Due to the volume of requests and our desire to help as many people as possible, recipients are only eligible every other year. If an individual received funding in **2025**, they are not eligible this year.

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Where does the money come from?

The Access Fund receives money through a variety of sources, including fundraisers such as the ILWR Tournament of Hope and Deer Ridge Charity Golf Tournament. Additionally, the Access Fund receives donations from donors.

If you or someone you know is interested in donating to the Access Fund, please visit:
<https://ilwr.ca/donate/>

Will you require anything else from recipients?

Feedback from our recipients is very important. It tells our donors how important this fund is and motivates them to give again. Individuals selected as our Featured Recipients will be invited to join us a reception dinner following our annual golf tournament: the Tournament of Hope and will be asked to agree to be used in promotional materials.

Still have questions?

If you would like more information about the Access Fund, the Tournament of Hope, making a donation, or ILWR, please contact Dan Lajoie, Manager of Independent Living Resources, at dan.lajoie@ilwr.ca, or 519-571-6788 ext. 7497.

Thank you.