

Comparing responses in 2006 and 2022 for people with children

Accommodation Supplement

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Introduction

Some questions about Accommodation Supplement in the 2022 New Zealand Income Support Survey were asked in the same or similar form in a survey of parents and caregivers run in 2006. The 2006 Communications Survey was part of the evaluation of the Working for Families Reform. This allows some responses to be compared over time for respondents with children.

This findings pack compares selected findings relating to awareness, self-reported receipt, and reasons for non-receipt.

What is the Accommodation Supplement?

The Accommodation Supplement provides help with housing costs.

The Accommodation Supplement is a weekly payment that helps people with their rent, board, or mortgage costs if they own a home.¹ As part of the Families Package changes introduced in 2018, the payment rates for the Accommodation Supplement were changed, and the Accommodation Supplement payment “areas” were also changed.² The 2018 rates are still the current rates for the Accommodation Supplement and are shown in the table below. Rates as they were in 2006, are included in brackets.

	\$ 2022 amount (\$ 1 April 2006 amount)			
Family type	Area 1 (high-rent areas)	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
Single with no children	\$165 (\$145)	\$105 (\$100)	\$80 (\$65)	\$70 (\$45)
Couple without children, sole parent with 1 child	\$235 (\$160)	\$155 (\$125)	\$105 (\$75)	\$80 (\$55)
Couple with children, sole parents with two or more children	\$305 (\$225)	\$220 (\$165)	\$160 (\$120)	\$120 (\$75)

The cash asset limits above which people have no entitlement to Accommodation Supplement have remained the same since the introduction of the Accommodation Supplement in 1993. They are \$8,100 for a single person without children, and \$16,200 for couples and sole parents.³

People receiving a main benefit, as well as low- and middle-income people not receiving main benefits, can receive Accommodation Supplement payments if their circumstances allow it. The income thresholds and cut-out points for the payment are regularly adjusted in line with benefit rates.⁴

¹ For more information about the Accommodation Supplement, see: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/accommodation-supplement.html>

² For more information about the area changes made to the Accommodation Supplement as part of the Families Package, see: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2017/budget-2017.html>

³ For cash asset limits: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/accommodation-supplement-tables/cash-asset-limit.html>

⁴ For income thresholds and cut-out points as at the 2022 survey: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/extra-help-information/accommodation-supplement-tables/at-1-april-2022-11.html>

For income thresholds and cut-out points as at the 2006 survey: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/historical-rates/extra-help-historical-information/accommodation-supplement-historical-tables/at-1-april-2006-01.html>

About the surveys

2006 Communications Survey

Population

Included parents and caregivers potentially eligible for Working for Families payments based on 1 April 2006 cut-out points.

Timeframe

Interviewed May to June 2006.

Recruitment method

Recruited via a national household survey of people living in private dwellings within most major towns and cities, but little rural representation.

Total respondents and response rate

988 respondents, 77 percent response rate.

Margin of errors/confidence intervals

The maximum margin of error on the total sample size of 988 is ± 3.1 percent, though this is assuming that the sample collected was a simple random sample of the eligible population which it was not. Confidence intervals for individual responses were not calculated. Results discussed here were not weighted to ensure representativeness at a population level, and therefore may contain bias based on the characteristics of those who responded.

2022 New Zealand Income Support Survey

Population

Included parents and caregivers potentially eligible for Working for Families tax credits or Accommodation Supplement, as well as people without children potentially eligible for Accommodation Supplement, based on 1 April 2022 cut-out points.

Timeframe

Interviewed June to December 2022.

Recruitment method

Recruited via a national household survey of people living in private dwellings. Included a mix of urban and rural locations.

Total respondents and response rate

1,852 respondents, 1,018 of whom were parents or caregivers, 50 percent response rate overall (including families without children).

Margin of errors/confidence intervals

Results were weighted to reduce bias based on the characteristics of those who responded. Confidence intervals for individual responses are reported using this weighted data. Estimates with a high margin of error and/or a high relative sampling error are marked with a hash (#).

Approach to reporting results

Weighting

Results from the 2022 survey are weighted to ensure that the findings are representative of the New Zealand population of working-age families on low- and middle-incomes. The data presented here from the 2006 survey was not weighted.

Comparisons between 2006 and 2022

While some observed differences between 2006 and 2022 findings could show changes between the years, it is possible that factors like question wording, screening questions, survey routing, and biases from differences in sample design, also have an impact on the results.

Timing

One key difference between survey years was the timeframe being asked about. In 2006, respondents were asked about the previous tax year (2005/2006) in respect of their receipt of the Accommodation Supplement, with subsequent routing being based off this, while in 2022, respondents were asked about their receipt as at the time of their interview.

Differences based on this are noted where appropriate.

Potential eligibility

There are also differences in how potential eligibility for Accommodation Supplement was defined for analysis in 2006 and 2022. This impacts on comparability of the results.

In 2006, respondents were asked to identify their income and family type based on a shaded grid, with the shading designating the “eligible” combinations of family type and family income based on 2006/2007 tax year income cut-out points for the Accommodation Supplement (which were generally a few hundred dollars higher than the income cut-out points for Accommodation Supplement in the 2005/2006 tax year that was asked about). This potentially meant that a small number of respondents who were asked questions in the Accommodation Supplement section were not eligible for the Accommodation Supplement in the 2005/2006 tax year due to their incomes being too high.

In 2022, in addition to the detailed income criteria for the Accommodation Supplement (questions about which were customised for respondents depending on their family structure and location in New Zealand), respondents were filtered out of the analysis if they did not meet the residency criteria for receiving a main benefit.

As a result of the differences between the surveys and reporting approaches, we recommend caution when drawing strong conclusions from the comparisons in this findings pack.

Rounding of percentages and weighted figures

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 percent, and weighted figures may not add up to weighted totals.

Awareness of the payments for respondents who were potentially eligible

What were respondents to the 2006 survey asked?

- Another part of Working for Families is the Accommodation Supplement which is a type of government payment to help with the costs of rent, board or owning a home. Before today, had you heard of this type of government payment?

What did we ask respondents in 2022?

- Before today, were you aware of the Accommodation Supplement?

If respondents said they were unaware of the payment but appeared potentially eligible, they were asked this question later in the survey:

- Earlier, you said that before today you weren't aware of this payment (the Accommodation Supplement). Now that we have talked about it a bit more, does it sound familiar to you?

Awareness of the Accommodation Supplement was similar in 2006 and 2022

In 2006, 86.5 percent of respondents with children who were potentially eligible for Accommodation Supplement said that they **were aware** of the payment.

In 2022, 89.3 percent of respondents with children who were potentially eligible for the payment said that they **were aware** of it.



Note: Total asked in 2022 = 448, weighted total asked in 2022 = 152,076, total asked in 2006 = 347

Self-reported receipt by those with potential eligibility

What were respondents to the 2006 survey asked?

- Some people get it as part of a benefit while others receive it as a separate payment. Have you received the Accommodation Supplement at any time in the last tax year, that is, between April 2005 and March 2006?

What did we ask respondents in 2022?

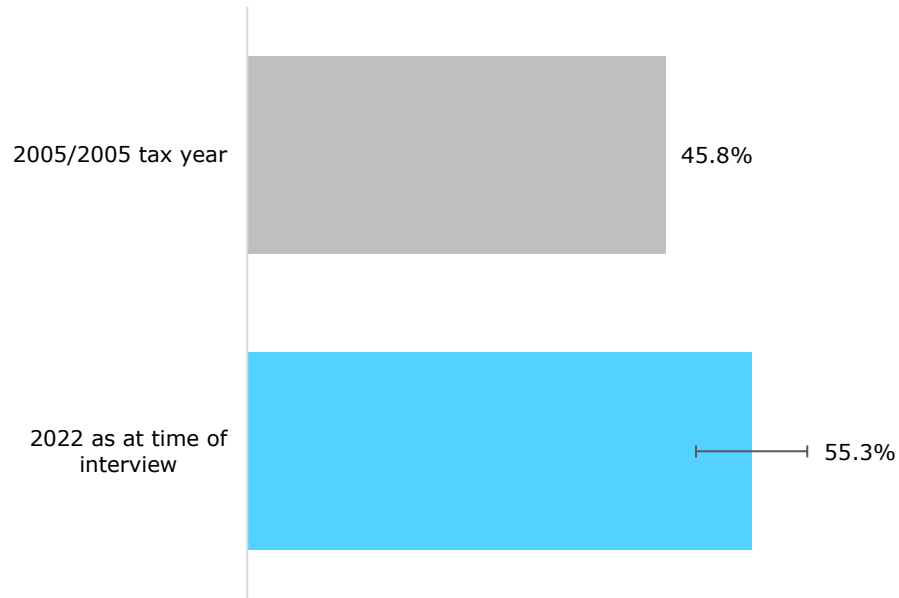
- Are you currently receiving the Accommodation Supplement? Some people receive this as part of a benefit, while others receive it as a separate payment.

Note: Care should be taken in interpreting the findings in this section due to the variation in how the questions were asked and the timeframes which were asked about.

Similar rates of receipt of the Accommodation Supplement by those with potential eligibility were reported in the 2006 and 2022 surveys

In 2006, 45.8 percent of potentially eligible respondents with children reported receiving an Accommodation Supplement payment during the 2005/2006 tax year.

In 2022, 55.3 percent of potentially eligible respondents with children reported being current recipients of an Accommodation Supplement payment at the time of their interview.



Note: Total asked in 2022 = 448, weighted total asked in 2022 = 152,076, total asked in 2006 = 347

Reasons for not receiving payments among potentially eligible respondents

What were respondents to the 2006 survey asked?

In addition to the earlier questions about awareness, people were asked the following questions:

- Do you think you are eligible for the Accommodation Supplement?

If they thought they were eligible, or were not sure, and had not applied or reapplied in the last 12 months:

- Do you intend to apply for the Accommodation Supplement over the next few months?

What did we ask respondents in 2022?

In addition to the earlier questions about awareness, people were asked the following questions:

- Do you think you are eligible for the Accommodation Supplement?

If they thought they were eligible, or were not sure, and had not applied or reapplied in the last 12 months:

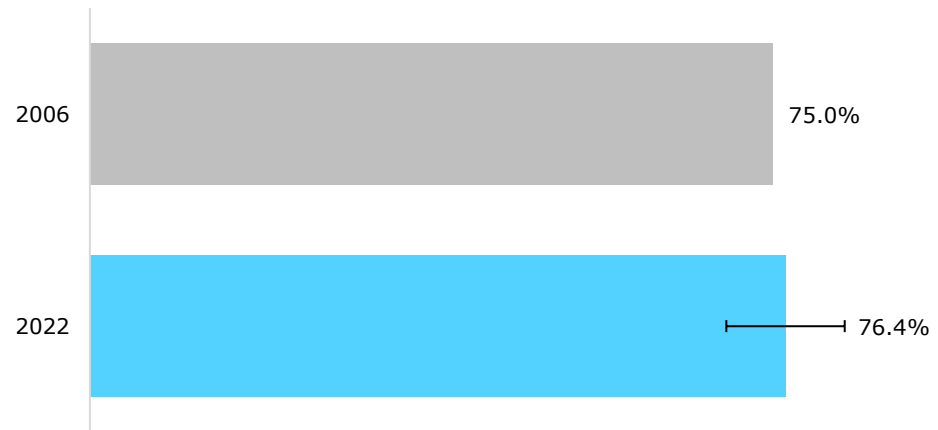
- Do you intend to apply for the Accommodation Supplement over the next few months?

Note: While the questions are asked in present tense, care should be taken in interpreting the findings in this section as the reference timeframe used to route respondents to these questions differed between 2022 (receipt as at the time of interview) and 2006 (the prior tax year).

Among potentially eligible non-recipients, awareness of the payments was similar in 2006 and 2022

In 2006, 75 percent of potentially eligible non-recipients with children in the 2005/2006 tax year said they **were aware** of the payment.

In 2022, 76.4 percent of potentially eligible non-recipients with children said they **were aware** of the payment.



Note: Total asked in 2022 = 239, weighted total asked in 2022 = 67,954, total asked in 2006 = 188

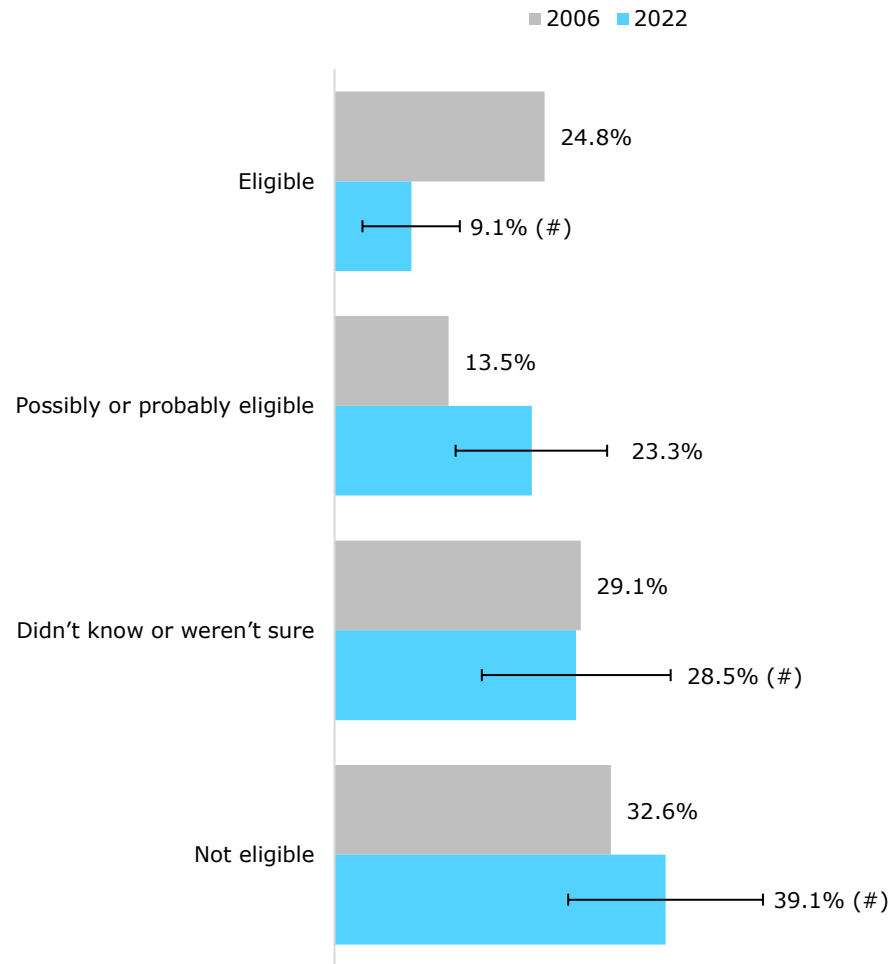
Non-recipients in 2022 were slightly less likely to believe they were eligible for the Accommodation Supplement compared to 2006

In 2006, 24.8 percent of potentially eligible non-recipients with children in the 2005/2006 tax year who were aware of the Accommodation Supplement, said they **were eligible** for the payment.

This is higher than the **9.1 (± 5.8) percent** in the **2022** survey who said they **were eligible**.

These findings were somewhat balanced by the proportion of potentially eligible non-recipients saying they were possibly or probably eligible. This figure was 13.5 percent in 2006, compared to 23.3 percent in 2022.

Similar proportions reported being unsure of potential eligibility or reported being not eligible in both survey years.



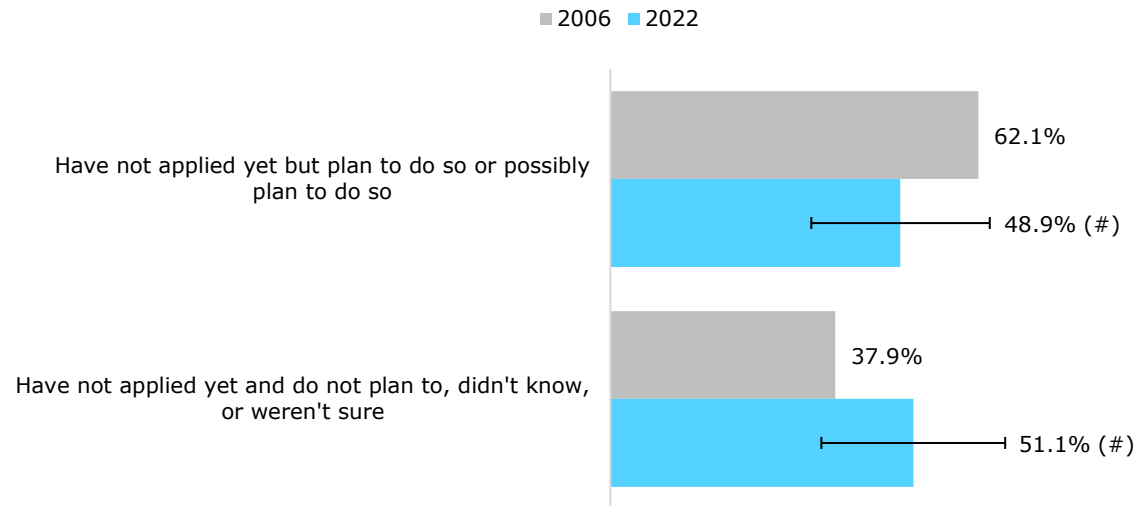
Note 1: Total asked in 2022 = 181, weighted total asked in 2022 = 51,901, total asked in 2006 = 141.

Note 2: Flagged estimates for 2022 (marked here with a hash) should be interpreted with caution and reported with additional context (for example including the margin of error within text).

For non-recipients who were aware of the Accommodation Supplement, and who thought they had some eligibility, a larger proportion planned to apply in the 2006 survey

A slightly higher proportion of respondents in **2006 (62.1 percent)** said they planned to apply for the Accommodation Supplement compared to **2022 (48.9 ± 15 percent)**.

These figures excluded respondents who had applied for the payments within the last 12 months.



Note 1: Total asked in 2022 = 109, weighted total asked in 2022 = 27,216, total asked in 2006 = 87

Note 2: Flagged estimates for 2022 marked with a hash (#) should be interpreted with caution and reported with additional context (for example including the margin of error within text).