

## Utility Relief Grant Scheme (mains)

<p><b>What is the grant?</b></p>	<p>The grant provides help to pay a mains electricity, gas or water bill that is overdue due to a temporary financial crisis.</p>
<p><b>Who can apply for the grant?</b></p>	<p>An account holder who has one of the following eligible concession cards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>● Health Care Card</li> <li>● Veterans' Affairs Gold Card.</li> </ul> <p>If you don't have one of these cards but are part of a low-income household, you may also be able to apply. Your retailer will ask you some questions to check if you are eligible before issuing a form.</p> <p>The grant is available to renters and homeowners.</p>
<p><b>What are the criteria for the grant?</b></p>	<p>You must show that you have no way of paying the account without assistance, <b>and</b></p> <p>You must meet <b>one</b> of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You or someone in your house has experienced family violence.</li> <li>● You have had a recent decrease in income, for example, lost your job.</li> <li>● You have had high unexpected costs for essential items.</li> <li>● The cost of shelter is more than 30% of your household income.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How much is the grant?</b></p>	<p>The amount of the grant is based on the amount you owe at the time of application. It is also based on the reasons you have given for applying in your application form.</p> <p>You can receive a maximum of \$650 on each utility type in a two-year period (or \$1,300 for households with a single source of energy (e.g. electricity only).</p> <p>You can apply for separate grants for each utility (electricity, gas and water).</p>
<p><b>How do I apply for the grant?</b></p>	<p>Phone your electricity, gas or water retailer to request an application. Your retailer will ask you some preliminary questions before starting your application.</p> <p>The application can be completed online, or your retailer will post you a paper form to complete. A friend, support worker or financial counsellor can help you complete the application.</p>
<p><b>More information</b></p>	<p>Phone your electricity, gas or water retailer or the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521.</p>

## Further information

<p><b>How is the grant paid?</b></p>	<p>The grant is paid to your electricity, gas or water retailer. Your retailer will credit the grant against your outstanding debt.</p>
<p><b>How long will my application take?</b></p>	<p>Applications take approximately four to six weeks to process, from the time that a completed form is received by the department. We will write to you once your application has been considered.</p>
<p><b>What information do I need to include with my application?</b></p>	<p>Depending on your circumstances, you may need to include supporting documents with your application. Check your application carefully to make sure you have included everything needed. For example, you may need to include copies of your payslips, receipts or a statutory declaration.</p>
<p><b>Why do I have to request this form from my utility company?</b></p>	<p>When you request an application for the grant from your utility retailer, they will put a hold on your account so that no disconnection action is taken by them while your grant is being considered. Your retailer will provide the Department of Health and Human Services with your billing information and the current amount owing on your account.</p>
<p><b>I received a grant for my electricity bill – can I apply for help on my gas or water bill?</b></p>	<p>Yes. You can receive a separate grant on each utility - electricity, gas and water. You need to complete a separate application form for each utility – contact the relevant retailer to get each form. You can receive a maximum of \$650 on each utility type in a two-year period (\$1,300 for households with a single source of energy (e.g. electricity only)).</p>
<p><b>I received a grant of less than \$650 – can I receive more?</b></p>	<p>You are not guaranteed to receive a grant of \$650. The amount of the grant is based on the amount you owe at the time of application and the reasons you have given for applying in your application form. You can receive a maximum of \$650 on each utility type in a two-year period (or \$1,300 for households with a single source of energy (e.g. electricity only). If you received less than the maximum, you are eligible to apply again for another grant without waiting for two years. If you wish to discuss the amount of your grant, call the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521.</p>
<p><b>What does it mean when a household has a single source of energy?</b></p>	<p>Some households use both gas and electric appliances, and others have all electric appliances. Houses that only have electric appliances and are not connected to gas at all are considered to have a single source of energy.</p>

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1800 658 521 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email [concessions@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:concessions@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

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