

# Utility Relief Grant Scheme (mains)

## Fact sheet

### Utility Relief Grant Scheme (mains)

<b>What is the grant?</b>	The grant provides help to pay a mains electricity, gas or water bill that is overdue due to a temporary financial crisis.
<b>Who can apply for the grant?</b>	<p>An account holder who has one of the following eligible concession card:</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 registered with your utility company's hardship program and part of a low-income household you may also apply.</p> <p>The grant is available to renters and homeowners.</p>
<b>What are the criteria for the grant?</b>	<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 five following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• you have had a substantial increase in utility use</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><li>• the cost of utility use is more than 10% of your household income.</li></ul>
<b>How much is the grant?</b>	<p>The amount of the grant is based on the amount you owe at the time of application. It is capped at six months' worth of utility use up to a maximum of \$500.</p> <p>You can apply for separate grants for each utility (electricity, gas and water).</p>
<b>How often can I claim a grant?</b>	A grant can only be given once every two years per utility type.
<b>How do I apply for the grant?</b>	Phone your electricity, gas or water retailer to request an application form. Your retailer will check your eligibility before sending out a form.
<b>More information</b>	Phone your electricity, gas or water retailer or the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521.



## 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. 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>You do not need to attach any information with your initial application, however our assessors may contact you to ask for copies of any supporting documents.</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 are able to receive a separate grant on each utility (electricity, gas and water) once in a two year period (if eligible at the time of application). You need to complete a separate application form for each utility – contact the relevant retailer to get each form.</p>
<p><b>I received a grant of less than \$500 – can I receive more?</b></p>	<p>You are not guaranteed to receive a grant of \$500. The grant is capped at six months of usage, up to a maximum of \$500. We can never pay more than the amount owing on your bill. The amount granted is also based on the reasons you have given for applying in your application form. If you wish to discuss the amount of your grant, call the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521.</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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