

Utility Relief Grant Scheme (URGS) application form guide

Simply Energy understands energy is an essential service for our customers and we are here to help. There are many forms of assistance that we can offer you, ranging from payment arrangements, energy efficiency options, concessions and/or grants.

This web page provides instructions on how you can complete and lodge the Utility Relief Grant Scheme application form.

If you require additional assistance with completing and lodging the application form, or you would like to know more about how else we can assist you, please contact us on **1800 065 475**, or via our webchat.

You can also find out more about our hardship program on our website; <https://www.simplyenergy.com.au/help-centre/billing-and-payment/financial-support>

What is the Utility Relief Grant Scheme?

The grant provides help to pay a utility bill (electricity, gas, or water) that is overdue due to a temporary financial crisis. If you are eligible for the grant, the amount you can receive will depend on how much you owe when you apply. Potentially, you could receive up to \$650 on each utility type in a two-year period, or \$1,300 if you have a single source of energy (for example, electricity only).

Background information on the grant is available on the website of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing; <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/utility-relief-grant-scheme>. Note that this Department was previously known as the Department of Health and Human Services, and the acronym DHHS may still be used on some forms and webpages.

Where to find the grant application form

The grant application can be completed online on the 'URGS hardship application' webpage, available at; <https://urgsmailbox.com/urgsapplication>. If we have helped you to start an online application form, you should have access to your 'account number' and 'submission number'. If you do not have this information, please contact us on **1800 065 475** and we can assist you with accessing the online application form and completing and lodging the form.

If you have requested that we send you a paper form to complete, please allow ten business days for it to arrive by post.

Regardless of whether you are completing an online or paper form, you can have a family member, friend, support worker, or financial counsellor help you to complete the application form.

The information you will need to fill in the application form

You may be required to provide supporting documentation with your application form, depending on the category you are applying under.

You can also provide the details of any support worker or representative and you can authorise that person to act on your behalf. If you do not fill out that section of the application form, your support worker or representative will not be able to act on your behalf when progressing the application form.

If you are applying due to decreased income or unexpected expenses, with a concession card

- You will need the card number and expiration date for your concession card.

If you are applying due to decreased income or unexpected expenses, without a concession card

- If you do not have a concession card, you will be asked to supply one of the following:
 - Three most recent payslips;
 - Three most recent bank statements; or
 - A letter from an employer.

If you are applying due to family violence

- You will be asked to supply one of the following:
 - A signed statutory declaration (you will not be asked to provide details about your circumstances – it is sufficient for the declaration to say, for example, ‘experience of financial hardship due to family violence’); or
 - A document issued by:
 - A court (for example, a Family Violence Intervention Order or Family Violence Safety Notice); or
 - A family violence or other support service (for example, a specialist family violence service, financial counsellor, housing or mental health service); or
 - A registered health practitioner (including maternal and child health nurses); or
 - A lawyer or the police service.
 - A referral from a community organisation (for example, specialist family violence service, financial counsellor, housing or mental health service). The referral can be an email or any other written communication.

Please note; if you are applying due to family violence you will not be asked to fill out the sections of the application form that require information on your household, citizenship, and income. If you are unsure of the sections of the application form you should fill out, please contact us and we can assist you with your application form.

How to fill in the application form

You should read this guide alongside your Utility Relief Grant Scheme application form.

Sign and date if you have read and understood the eligibility criteria and use of Services Australia

Please make sure that you read the eligibility criteria and understand that by progressing with your application form that you are consenting for your details to be checked by Services Australia.

You will be asked to provide a signature and provide the date of your signature.

Select which utility you are seeking the grant for

You must complete a separate application form for each utility. If you have both an electricity and gas account with Simply Energy, you will need to fill out two application forms.

You will be asked to provide your Simply Energy account number, which you will find on the first page of your Simply Energy bill. Please do not provide your Simply Energy customer number.

Fill out your personal details

You must provide the name of the account holder, as it appears on your Simply Energy bill. If you have two account holders on your bill, please include the name and date of birth of both account holders.

You will also be asked to provide your address, postal address (if different from your address), phone number and email address.

Select the reason for your application

This section requires you to choose the criteria that you meet for the grant.

If you claim that you had unexpected expenses for essential items, the Department may ask you to verify this with receipts.

You will also be asked how much you pay in private rent or mortgage each fortnight. The Department will use this information to calculate whether you spend more than 30 per cent of your combined household income on housing.

Select your type of housing

This section provides several housing types to choose from. If none of these housing types are relevant to you, please select 'other' and provide details of your housing situation.

Provide details on your household and citizenship

This section asks for the number of adults and children that live in your house.

This section also asks whether you are Australian citizen. If you are not a citizen, you will be asked to state the name of the VISA you are using to live in Australia.

If relevant, provide your concession card details

This section asks you to select the type of concession card you hold and provide the cardholder's name, the card number, and the expiry date of the concession card.

Please only fill out this section if the cardholder is the person who is responsible for paying the household's utility bill.

Provide your income details

This section asks you to select the type of household (either a single-adult household or a household of two or more adults) and the fortnightly income of the household. You will also be asked whether you have sufficient savings to pay your bill or not.

If relevant, provide contact details of your support worker or representative

This section asks you whether you have a support worker or other representative. If you do, you can also authorise your support worker or representative to act on your behalf when progressing the application form.

If you do not have all the requested details of your support worker or representative, please contact them and have them provide you that information. Please remember, if you do not provide this information in the application form, your support worker or representative will not be able to act on your behalf.

Reminder to provide the required supporting information

Please read this section and confirm the supporting information that you will provide with your application form.

Please note that you can remove any personal information to protect your safety and privacy.

How to lodge the application form

If you have completed an online application form, you can lodge the form online on the <https://urgsmailbox.com/urgsapplication> webpage.

If you have completed a paper application form, you can either:

- return it by post to: **Utility Relief Grant Scheme, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Reply Paid 4057, Melbourne VIC 8060**; or
- email it to urgis.applications@health.vic.gov.au

If you have completed a paper application form, please make sure you also include all the required supporting information.

How long your application will take to be assessed

The Department will assess your application and will write directly to you once it has completed its assessment. The Department says that applications take approximately four to six weeks to process, from the time that a completed form has been received.

If you are approved for the grant, it will be paid directly to Simply Energy and we will credit the grant against the amount you owe on your account.