



## HARDSHIP UTILITIES GRANT SCHEME (HUGS)

### Disclaimer:

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Hardship Utilities Grant Scheme (HUGS) is a State Government scheme that provides grants to assist people who find it difficult to pay their electricity, water or gas bills and who are at risk of having their supply disconnected or restricted.

### Am I eligible?

In order to be eligible for HUGS you must be:

- a residential customer;
- experiencing financial difficulties;
- unable to pay a current utilities bill and be at risk of these services being disconnected, or they are already disconnected;
- assessed by the utility provider according to their hardship policy as possibly experiencing utility hardship.

### Available grants

HUGS provide 3 types of grants for people in utility hardship: normal grants, exceptional circumstances grants and addition grants.

If you are eligible for HUGS, you are entitled to 1 **normal grant** in a 12-month period. If you continue to have difficulty paying your utility bills AND have demonstrated a genuine commitment to engage with a financial counsellor (see below) then you may be eligible for an **additional grant** within the same 12 months.

### Exceptional circumstances grants

If you experience unforeseen crisis situations and have incurred or will incur an unexpected expense which will severely impact on you or your family's social and emotional wellbeing, you may be eligible for an **exceptional circumstances grant**. Examples of such crisis situations include mental health issues, domestic violence, relationship breakdown and unexpected medical or funeral expenses.

## Grant amounts

The maximum value of each grant depends on the applicant's location. However, no particular grant can exceed 85% of the applicant's utility bill.

## How to apply

To apply for HUGS, first contact your utility provider to discuss the payment of your bill and the possibility of applying for a HUGS grant. The telephone numbers of all utilities participating in HUGS are listed below.

If your utility provider believes you are eligible, you will be referred to an independent financial counselling service registered with HUGS for an assessment and application.

## HUGS and financial counselling

Financial counsellors can help you apply for HUGS as well as help you manage your finances. Their services are free and confidential.

### For further information contact:

Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA) Inc.

Website: [www.cclswa.org.au](http://www.cclswa.org.au)

Telephone advice line: (08) 9221 7066

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Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia

Website: [www.financialcounsellors.org](http://www.financialcounsellors.org)

Telephone Number 1800 007 007

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HUGS Unit – Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

Website:

[http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/servicescommunity/Pages/HardshipUtilitiesGrantScheme\(HUGS\).aspx](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/servicescommunity/Pages/HardshipUtilitiesGrantScheme(HUGS).aspx)

Telephone: (08) 9222 2739 or (08) 9222 2657 or (08) 9222 2772

### Participating utility providers

Aqwest	(08) 9780 9500
Alinta	13 13 58
Busselton Water	(08) 9781 0500
Horizon Power	1800 267 926
Synergy	13 13 53
Water Corporation	13 13 85
WorleyParsons Asset Management Pty Ltd	(08) 9072 1422