

The WA Government provides concessions and rebates to eligible electricity customers supplied by Synergy or Horizon Power.

| Eligible customers | Subsidy/rebate |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centrelink Health Care Card Pensioner Concession Card (issued by Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs) Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card (War Widow, Dependant, Totally and Permanently Incapacitated) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Account establishment fee rebate Reduced meter test fee Dependent child rebate Energy assistance payment |

Other concessions and rebates available are:

- Air Conditioner Rebate:** assists eligible seniors and customers receiving the dependent child rebate with the cost of using air conditioners in the hottest parts of WA.
- Life Support Equipment Electricity Subsidy:** assists eligible customers with the cost of using life support equipment at home.
- Thermoregulatory Dysfunction Energy Subsidy:** assists eligible customers with the energy costs of using heating and/or cooling equipment at home.

The Energy Concession Extension Scheme provides annual payments to some customers who are not directly supplied by Synergy or Horizon Power. These include eligible permanent caravan and park home residents, and residents of retirement villages and apartment buildings. The payments include the Energy Assistance Payment, the Dependent Child Rebate and the Air Conditioning Rebate. For more information about the Energy Concession Extension Scheme contact the Office of State Revenue.

For more information about concessions and rebates, contact your retailer or the Public Utilities Office.

IMPORTANT!

If you are having difficulties paying a bill, contact your retailer as soon as possible to seek assistance. Your retailer may be able to help.

Payment difficulties and financial hardship

If you are a residential customer having trouble paying your energy bills, your retailer must provide certain assistance. This assistance is only available if you tell your retailer of your situation.

When you tell your retailer that you are having trouble paying a bill, the retailer will decide whether you:

1. Have the ability to pay.
2. Cannot pay due to payment difficulties: you are experiencing short-term disadvantage, such as an unexpected event or crisis.
3. Cannot pay because of financial hardship: you are experiencing more than short-term disadvantage and cannot pay without affecting your ability to meet basic living needs, such as rent and food.

In assessing your situation, the retailer must consider information provided by yourself or a relevant consumer representative.

If your retailer agrees that you are having *payment difficulties*, it must offer you more time to pay your bill or, upon your request, an instalment plan. If you request an instalment plan, your retailer must consider your ability to pay when deciding the terms of the plan.

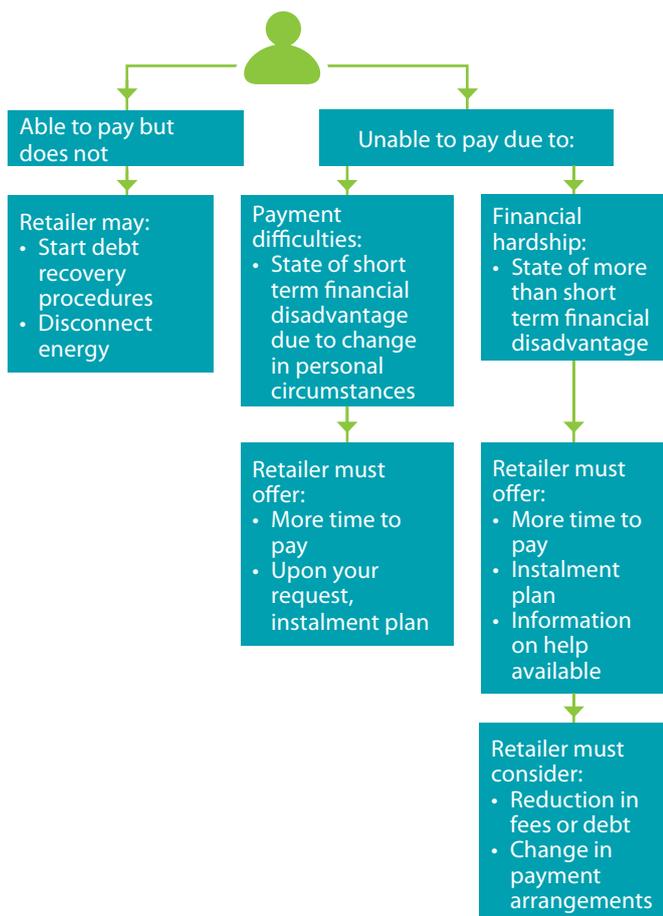


concessions and assistance

If your retailer determines you are experiencing *financial hardship*, it must:

- offer you more time to pay your bill and an instalment plan. You can choose your preferred option. If you choose an instalment plan, your retailer must consider your ability to pay when deciding the terms of the plan;
- provide you with information on help available (e.g. subsidies); and
- consider any request from you for a reduction in fees, charges or debt and a change in the payment arrangements (e.g. more time to pay, or changes to the instalment plan).

If you are found not to have any payment difficulties or financial hardship, you will not be entitled to any of the assistance measures that the retailer is required to offer. The retailer's normal disconnection and debt recovery procedures will apply.



A business customer can ask for alternative payment arrangements (e.g. an instalment plan) if having payment difficulties.

Financial counsellors and consumer advocates

Financial counsellors and consumer advocates can help you negotiate with your electricity or gas retailer. They can also contact your retailer to discuss your situation, if you give your consent.

If you have arranged to see a financial counsellor or consumer advocate to get help with your bill, the retailer must give you at least 15 business days to attend the appointment before taking any further action against you.

Financial counsellors and consumer advocates are often employed by local community organisations and sometimes by local councils. To find one close to where you live, contact your local community legal centre or phone the Financial Counsellors' Association of WA on 1800 007 007.

Assistance for paying energy bills

If you are at risk of disconnection due to financial hardship, you may be eligible for assistance under the WA Government's Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS).

A grant can be provided for up to 85% of the outstanding amount. The maximum amount that you can receive in a calendar year is \$538 (if you live south of Carnarvon) or \$891 (if you live in Carnarvon or north of Carnarvon). Higher amounts apply if you are assessed as experiencing 'exceptional circumstances of hardship'.

To apply you must contact your retailer.

Who does this fact sheet apply to?

This fact sheet applies to small use customers. You are a small use customer if you use less than 160 MWh (about \$56,000) of electricity per year or up to 1TJ of gas per year (between \$28,500 and \$43,000, depending on where you live).

TIP!

All retailers who supply residential customers must have a financial hardship policy. This policy sets out in detail how the retailer will deal with issues of financial hardship. You can contact your retailer for a copy of their policy.