

COVID19 Information Sheet - Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

Disclaimer: The information below should not be considered an exhaustive list. Please contact organizations and services directly for the most up to date information and to enquire further about eligibility. Red Cross does not make any determinations about eligibility for any of the third-party services listed.

ACT Government Updates

- [ACT COVID-19 Homepage](#).
- The ACT Government has established a helpline to assist the community through the challenges of COVID-19. The [Helpline](#) operates on 02 6207 7244 between 8am and 8pm daily.
- On 28 April 2020, the ACT Government announced **Temporary visa holders and international students** affected by COVID-19 who are ineligible for Commonwealth assistance programs, will be able to access more support through a [\\$450,000 ACT Government support package](#).
- On 20 April 2020, the ACT Government announced the details of [\\$3 million in funding to provide support for people facing homelessness or domestic and family violence arising from the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The funding will allow the specialist homelessness sector and domestic and family violence services to expand their operational capacity.
- [ACT Government COVID19 Resources in Community Languages](#).

Food and/or Emergency Relief

- [My Community ACT Directory](#) is a searchable database for community services in the ACT.
- [Anglicare](#):
 - [St John's Care](#), Reid ACT
Opening Hours:
9.30am-2.00pm Monday to Friday
45 Constitution Avenue, Reid, ACT 2612
(02) 6248 7771
 - [Gordon Community Centre](#), ACT
Opening Hours 10.00am-1.00pm – Monday (closed on public holidays)
10.00am-1.00pm and 2.00pm-4.00pm – Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
110 Lewis Luxton Ave,
Gordon, ACT 2906 (Opposite Gordon IGA)(02) 6284 7003
 - [Canberra City Care](#)
20 Cartwright Street
Charnwood ACT
Open Tuesday to Friday, 10 am – 12 noon & 1 pm – 4 pm
Phone 02 6196 8630

- [St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra-Goulburn](#) (Vinnies)
Phone (02) 6282 2722
15 Denison Street Deakin ACT 2600
info@svdp-cg.org.au
- Missionworx ACT
Griffin Centre,
20 Genge Street, Civic
Food assistance by appointment only
Phone (02) 6230 6601
- Uniting Church and Community Centre
108 The Valley Avenue, Gungahlin
Mustard Seed Food Pantry (\$1 membership)
- Capital Healing Rooms Inc ACT
Unit 1, 169 Newcastle Street, Fyshwick
Food assistance by appointment only.
Phone (02) 6162 1977
- High Street Church
49 High Street, Queanbeyan
Food parcels by appointment only.
(02) 6297 3472 on Tue, Wed or Fri between 9:30 and 14:30
- Uniting Care Kippax Corner
Luke Street & Hardwick Crescent, Holt
Food hampers
(02) 6254 1733
- Community Services
Number 1, 63 Boolimba Crescent, Narrabundah
Pantry on Southside - Food pantry by appointment only
- Church of Christ
2 Marrawah Street, Lyons
Lyons Food Corner - Food pantry \$2/year membership
Mon 13:30-14:30
- Woden Community Services
26 Corinna Street, Woden
The Little Pantry, *Thur 9:30-10:00*

Housing / Homelessness

- [Onelink](#) provides information about and connection to crisis accommodation and other support services for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
Call 1 800 176 468
- [Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services \(MARSS\) Australia Incorporated](#) is a homelessness service for people seeking asylum and families with uncertain immigration status.
Phone: (02) 6248 8577 / Email: info@marss.org.au
- [Supportive Tenancy Service](#) provides outreach support to people in housing stress, or who may be at risk of homelessness, regardless of the reason for their circumstances.
- [Catholic Care](#) Canberra & Goulburn provide specialist homelessness services in Canberra and surrounding regions.

Rent and Utilities

[Legal Aid ACT – Tenancy Advice Service ACT](#) (TAS):

- TAS ACT Tenancy Advice Line
 - The tenancy advice line is a free, confidential phone service that connects you to a paralegal who can offer legal advice and assistance on a range of tenancy matters.
 - **TAS phone number:** [1300 402 512](tel:1300402512)
 - **Email:** TAS@legalaidact.org.au
 - Tenancy Advice Live Chat - For those who are unable to contact us on our phone line service, but would still like to discuss their issue, we have an online live chat service that will connect you to our staff. <https://tawk.to/tasact>

[Residential Tenants Factsheet](#) from the SA Government.

ACT Civil & Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Resources:

- [Problems Paying Your Utility Bills?](#)
- [Pamphlet about Hardship Assistance](#)

Hardship programs and financial difficulties in ACT

- Find information from:
 - [Care Financial Counselling](#)
 - [Salvation Army Financial Counselling](#)
 - [No Interest Loan Scheme \(NILS\)](#)
 - [ACT Government Utilities Concession Information](#)
 - [Australian Energy Regulator](#)
- Find major retailer hardship program information at:
 - [ActewAGL Retail Staying Connected](#)
 - [Origin Energy Power On](#)
 - [Energy Australia EnergyAssist](#)

[COVID-19 Household utilities and concessions](#)

- Households already receiving the Utilities Concession will receive an additional \$200 rebate through their electricity bill. This will be automatically applied to the next electricity bill in June or July 2020. You do not need to contact your electricity supplier.
- **Eligibility:** Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card holders, Centrelink Low Income Health Care Card holders and Veteran's Affairs Pensioner Concession Card or Gold Card holders.
- The government will also contribute up to \$250,000 to a new fund to assist households severely impacted by COVID-19. Details on how the fund will operate will be determined in consultation with electricity retailers, who will be asked to make a co-contribution in order to access the fund.

[Care and Financial Counselling Service](#) provides financial counselling support which may be of assistance to individuals who are struggling to pay rent or utilities

Health and Medical Care

- [COVID-19 – access to medical care](#)
The ACT Government has announced that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicare ineligible people requiring testing, treatment or other public health supports related to COVID-19 will have free access to medical care. This includes pathology, diagnostic, pharmaceutical and outpatient care in the ACT public health system.
- People seeking asylum are entitled to full medical care including pathology, diagnostic, pharmaceutical, and outpatient services in the ACT's public hospitals without being billed. See: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/search?search=asylum%20seeker>
- People seeking asylum have the same access as Health Care Card holders, to public dental and community health services, with the possibility of incurring a cost. See: <https://www.companionhouse.org.au/asylum-seekers/>
- [Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma](#). In addition to torture and trauma counselling, Companion House provides general practice and primary health services for refugees usually for the first 12 months in Australia or longer if assessed as needing ongoing services from Companion House. The Medical service is also used by asylum seekers and people from refugee backgrounds with complex needs. Phone: 02 6251 4550
- The [Refugee Health Guide](#) includes Refugee Health Programs staffed by refugee nurses, doctors and other specialists that operate nationally - providing specialised mental and primary health care and service coordination to refugees and people seeking asylum. These services are familiar with working with people on uncertain immigration pathways and fluctuating Medicare status. Information on referral pathways in Australian Capital Territory can be found [here](#). Services are defined differently in each state and territory, so look for headings such as 'Refugee Health Program/ Service', 'Immigrant Health Clinic' or 'Community Health Service'.
- [Reciprocal Health Care Agreements](#): Agreements with 11 countries that covers the cost of medically necessary care when Australians visit certain countries and visitors from these countries visit Australia. Those visiting Australia from the following countries may be eligible for medical care under Medicare while in Australia, information for each country is available [here](#)

- [Temporary Visa Categories Covered by Ministerial Orders \(eligible for Medicare\)](#)

Information for International Students in ACT

- [Study Australia website - COVID-19 International Student Information](#) (*website includes a drop down box (top right) to translate pages into a range of languages*) and [the Department of Education, Skills and Employment \(DESE\)](#)
 - Advice only (no financial assistance) - International students hotline (1300 981 621) / international.students@dese.gov.au
- Working: (Info from [Home Affairs](#)):
 - Certain student visa holders can work for more than 40 hours per fortnight to support the supply of essential goods and services for Australians if they are:
 - Employed in the nursing sector
 - Employed by registered supermarkets (from 1 May 2020, this changes and students will only be able to work 40 hours per fortnight)
 - Employed in the aged care sector
 - See [Employers with access to these essential service arrangements](#).
- Accessing Superannuation
 - Temporary residents may be able to access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation in this financial year (until 30 June 2020) to assist in supporting themselves through the coronavirus crisis. More information is available on the [ATO website here](#).
 - Students will need to use [MyGov](#) for this process.
- On 28 April 2020, the ACT Government announced **temporary visa holders and international students** affected by COVID-19 who are ineligible for Commonwealth assistance programs, will be able to access more support through a [\\$450,000 ACT Government support package](#).
 - Under the new funding package, the RASH Coordination Committee – made up of groups working with asylum seekers including Companion House – will receive \$140,000 to provide urgent support to asylum seekers living in Canberra.
 - Australian Red Cross will also see an extension to their existing emergency support program, receiving \$160,000 to assist other temporary visa holders including people on temporary work visas and safe haven enterprise visas.
 - Red Cross will also work with tertiary institutions to provide \$150,000 in ACT Government support to international students who have been impacted by COVID-19 and fallen onto financial hardship
 - More information:
 - People seeking asylum can contact Companion House on 02 6251 4550 or via email : info@companionhouse.org.au
 - Temporary visa holders and international students can contact 02 6234 7695 or via email: hspcanberra@redcross.org.au.

- **Australian National University** has set up an [Emergency Grants for COVID-19](#) and committed additional \$1 million to provide emergency support to students. This is in addition to the \$20 million bursaries announced in early March to help students affected by the travel restrictions from mainland China. Students can apply for an emergency grant to cover accommodation, travel, grocery vouchers, textbooks, medical costs etc. Undergraduate students have to approach [ANUSA](#) and Postgraduate students to send an application to [PARSA](#) for assistance.
- **University of Canberra** has advised international students in hardship to send an email to welfare@canberra.edu.au detailing their hardship, so that the cases would be handled individually.
 - The UCX [Food](#) Pantry has partnered with Canberra Relief Network to provide relief hampers for students. Students [need](#) to register before 12pm on Mondays to avail themselves of this.
 - A dedicated email [address](mailto:address@internationalstudent@canberra.edu.au) [internationalstudent@canberra.edu.au](mailto:address@internationalstudent@canberra.edu.au) has also been established to provide assistance to international students who may be affected by travel restrictions.

Additional Support for People Seeking Asylum and Refugees

- If you have a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV), you are eligible to apply for the [Special Benefit payment through Centrelink](#). You will need to meet the other criteria for the payment. Click the link for more information.
- [Status Resolution Support Services](#) (SRSS)
 - The SRSS program supports vulnerable migrants who are waiting for the government's decision on a visa application, including people seeking asylum. It provides temporary needs-based support for people facing significant barriers and unable to support themselves while resolving their immigration status.
 - In New South Wales / Australian Capital Territory, the SRSS Program is delivered by:
 - [Life Without Barriers](#) Ph 02 9508 4100 (Rockdale) / 02 8830 7601 or 02 8830 7602 (Parramatta) / [1800 935 483](tel:1800935483) / info@lwb.org.au
 - [Settlement Services International](#). Contact information is [here](#).
- [Humanitarian Settlement Program](#) (HSP)
 - The HSP is a national program funded by the Australian Government to help refugees to establish themselves when they first arrive in Australia.
 - People granted the following visas are eligible to access the HSP on arrival:
 - Refugee (subclass 200, 201, 203 and 204) visa
 - Global Special Humanitarian (subclass 202) visa
 - Other visa holders are also eligible to access the HSP, but only to receive [Specialised and Intensive Services \(SIS\)](#). These include:
 - Refugee (subclass 200, 201, 203 and 204)
 - Global Special Humanitarian (subclass 202)
 - Protection (subclass 866)

- Temporary Protection (subclass 785), Temporary Humanitarian Stay (subclass 449), Temporary Humanitarian Concern (subclass 786) and Safe Haven Enterprise (subclass 790).
 - o SIS is a component of the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) available to humanitarian entrants and other eligible visa holders who have complex needs:
 - o [HSP Service Provider Locations](#)
- [Multicultural Hub Canberra](#) provides SETS Migrant Settlement Services for newly arrived (5 years) migrants & humanitarian entrants in the ACT & SE NSW. Migrant Settlement Services include information & referrals for Centrelink, employment, accommodation, education, health services and any other matters related to settlement.