



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Extreme Hardship Support Program

Factsheet for community services providers

Updated 1 October

What is the Extreme Hardship Support Program?

The Extreme Hardship Support Program is emergency financial relief to help people pay for food, medicine or bills during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It is provided by the Victorian Government, with Red Cross. The program also provides information and referrals to those in need.

Who is this program for?

This program provides support to people living in Victoria who are experiencing significant hardship as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and are unable to access Commonwealth Government income support and the International Student Emergency Relief Fund (ISERF). Please note that if people have already received support through the ISERF then they will not be eligible for support through this program.

The program is targeted to support the most vulnerable in our community – including temporary and provisional visa holders and undocumented migrants with little or no income, savings or community support.

What support is being provided?

- Assistance provided will primarily be in the form of cash payments into bank accounts.
- From 1 October 2020 a single person can receive up to \$800 for their first application and may be able to apply for another payment after two months if they are still experiencing financial hardship. Families may receive more, based on the number of people in the family and individual circumstances.
- People who have already received \$400 as at 1 October 2020 can apply straight away for another payment of \$400. They will then be eligible for a further \$800 in two months time if they are still experiencing financial hardship
- Currently, this program is expected to be open until December 2020.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible, applicants must:

- live in Victoria, and
- not be eligible to receive income from the Commonwealth Government (such as JobKeeper or JobSeeker), and

- not have received a payment from the International Student Emergency Relief Fund, and
- have zero or very limited income, savings or community support, and
- be a temporary or provisional visa holder, or an undocumented migrant.

How do people apply?

To apply for emergency financial assistance people should go to the [Red Cross website](http://www.redcross.org.au/vicrelief) at www.redcross.org.au/vicrelief or call Red Cross on 1800 855 240. Interpreters are available to assist in any language.

What information do people need to apply?

- An email address.
- Evidence of financial hardship (including recent one month bank statement).
- Evidence of their current or most recent visa status, such as a passport number or Immi card number.
- Bank account details (BSB and account number).

If applicants do not have a bank account or any of the other details listed above, please call Red Cross on 1800 855 240 to talk about alternatives. Red Cross will not report personal or visa information to the government.

What is the role of community organisations?

Brotherhood of St Laurence has been engaged by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Red Cross to lead a network of community implementation partners.

Community organisations already providing assistance to people ineligible for Victorian or Commonwealth Government income support are invited to join the network.

Community organisations who opt into the network can receive training and tools from the Brotherhood of St Laurence so that they can identify and assist eligible people to apply for this financial assistance.

It is anticipated that this network will help to develop collaborative links and strengthen sector capability to further support vulnerable Victorians.

Where do we find out more?

For more information about joining the network, please contact the Brotherhood of St Laurence on (03) 9422 5650 or by email at mct.reception@bsl.org.au.

For more information about the payments, please visit the [Red Cross website](http://www.redcross.org.au/vicrelief) at www.redcross.org.au/vicrelief, call 1800 855 240 or refer to the [Questions and Answers](#) factsheet.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email COVID-19 Communications <COVID-19@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

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Available at Victoria's coronavirus website <www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>