

COVID19 Information Sheet - Western Australia (WA)

Disclaimer: The information below should not be considered an exhaustive list. Please contact organisations 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.

Western Australia Government Announcements

- [Government of Western Australia COVID19 Webpage](#)
- **Residential Rent Relief Grant Scheme:** The State Government is making available \$30 million for grants of up to \$2,000 for Western Australian private residential tenants who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic on or after 20 March 2020, and are facing financial hardship. This scheme is open to all temporary visa holders who have work rights.
- [New \\$154.5 million relief package to support tenants, landlords and construction industry](#)
Thursday, 23 April 2020. The WA State Government announced support for tenants facing financial difficulty due to COVID-19, including: \$30 million for grants of up to \$2,000 for residential tenants who have lost their job and face financial hardship due to COVID-19 (See Rent/Utilities section below for information on how to apply).

Food /Emergency Relief

ER Connect – An online directory for services provided in WA. Please type in your location and/or suburb. It has everything from accommodation to financial assistance, emergency relief, food, toiletries, legal support, counselling, health, showers, employment, furniture, Centrelink and car repair.

Organisation	Service	Contact	Hours/Location
St Vincent De Paul	ER/Food	1300 794 054	Call prior to 1pm Monday - Friday
Salvation Army	ER/Food	9305 2131	Merriwa 8am Wednesdays
Salvation Army	ER/Food	9401 3408	Heathridge Monday – Friday
Salvation Army	ER/Food	9260 9500	City Monday – Friday 9.00 – 14.00
Duncraig Information and Care Centre	ER/Food	9448 5111	Stirling Tues, Thur and Fri morning
Anglicare	ER/Food	9247 9705	Joondalup and Wanneroo Monday and Friday morning
Spiers Centre	ER/Food	9401 2699	Joondalup and Wanneroo Monday – Friday 9.00 – 15.00
Uniting Aid	ER	9344 3840	Stirling Tuesday and Friday 9.00 – 14.00
Country Women's Association	ER	9321 6041	
Uniting Care West	ER	9206 6200	Merriwa Monday – Thursday 9.00 – 14.00. Call Wednesday at 10.00 am.
Uniting Care West	ER	9220 1288	City Mon And Tue 8.30 -14.00
True North	Food	9403 1800	Mon – Fri 9.00 – 16.00 Closed Thursday
i60	Food	9562 3002	

Victory Life	Food	5 Niel Street Osborne Park	Tuesday- Friday
Financial Counselling Hotline	Financial Counselling	1800 889 364	All suburbs

Housing / Homelessness

- [Entry Point Perth](#) - Phone: 6496 0001 or 1800 124 684
Entrypoint Perth is a free assessment and referral service assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Western Australia to access accommodation and support options.
- [Homeless Advisory Service](#) - provides information to primary and secondary homeless people that will assist them to seek their own accommodation. Telephone: 1800 065 892.
- **Crisis Care** is a telephone information and counselling service for people in crisis needing urgent help. To call Crisis Care, please call 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008.
- [WA Housing Hub](#) includes a range of resources on crisis accommodation in WA.
- [Multicultural Service Centre of WA - Multicultural Housing Services Program](#)
Assists migrants and refugees experiencing difficulties in maintaining private rental tenancies.
Phone: 9328 1544

Rent and Utilities

Residential Rent Relief Grant Scheme:

- The State Government is making available \$30 million for grants of up to \$2,000 for Western Australian private residential tenants who lost their jobs on or after 20 March 2020 and are facing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.
 - [Eligibility](#)
 - [Receiving the grant](#)
 - [How to apply](#)
 - [More information](#)

Tenancy Western Australia (TWA)

- [Request for Rent Reduction](#) –Template Letter
- If you are a tenant and you need advice - please book your own appointment online under the **Get Help** Section. You can look [fact sheets](#) on various topics too.
- If you are unable to book online, please contact TWA on [\(08\) 9221 0088](#) or for country callers [1800 621 888](#), and leave a message with your name, and best contact details.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while Tenancy WA will still be operating, the office is closed and the advice line team will be working remotely from home. Your message will then be sent to a staff member, who will then call you back to arrange an appointment.
- **Advice line:** 9:00am-4:30pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays) [\(08\) 9221 0088](#) (Metropolitan) [1800 621 888](#) (Country Free Call)

- **Interpreting:** TWA uses interpreters to provide telephone advice in languages other than English. Please phone the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) (TIS) on [131 450](#) then ask to speak to Tenancy WA.

Eviction Moratorium.

- The Western Australian Government introduced legislation which places [a six-month moratorium on residential tenancy evictions](#).
 - The new legislation prevents people from being evicted from a residential tenancy, but they must continue to pay rent. If tenants cannot afford to pay rent they should let their landlord or property manager know as soon as possible. If they cannot afford to pay rent they can stay in the property but will accumulate the unpaid rent as debt which has to be paid eventually. Rent is not being waived.
 - Tenants can still have their leases terminated and be evicted if they are causing damage to the property, posing a threat to the landlord or neighbours, not paying rent, refusing to make a rent payment agreement or if they abandon the property. Provisions supporting victims of family violence continue to apply.
 - The Commissioner for Consumer Protection has issued some advice about renting during COVID-19. The frequently asked questions [here](#) address residential tenancy issues and how they are covered by legislation.

[Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia](#)

- Information sheets available in [community languages here](#).

[Hardship Utilities Grants Scheme](#)

- The Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS) assists Western Australian utility customers who are in financial hardship and are unable to pay their utility bills. The purpose of HUGS is to assist customers in financial hardship with their connection to essential services.
- *You need to contact your provider to determine if you are eligible.*
- **Eligibility:** You may be eligible if your utility provider assesses you as being in the following situation:
 - you contact your utility provider to discuss your outstanding debt and you are assessed by your utility provider as being in financial hardship and not in payment difficulty;
 - you have exhausted all your options with the utility provider and enter into a payment arrangement for at least 180 days to address the outstanding debt; and
 - after completion of the payment arrangement, if your outstanding bill is still more than \$300.
- You are not eligible for HUGS if:
 - You do not reside at the supply address;
 - You have used all your grant limit for the financial year;
 - You are assessed as not being in financial hardship;
 - You are a customer with bottled gas;
 - For Water Corporation, Busselton Water and Aquest customers, HUGS is only available for the owner-occupiers of residential properties; or
 - You live in an Aboriginal community and have your water managed by the Water Corporation.

Health and Medical Care

- For up-to-date COVID-19 coronavirus health and information and advice visit the Department of Health's [Healthy WA](#) website or call 13 COVID ([13 26843](#)).
- **Mental Health Emergency Line** - 1300 555 788 (Available 24/7)
- **Crisis Care** is a telephone information and counselling service for people in crisis needing urgent help. To call Crisis Care, please call 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008.
- [What if I don't have Medicare?](#)
 - Most travellers to WA will have travel insurance. To support the WA Health response to COVID- 19, the Minister for Health has confirmed that those people who are **not eligible for Medicare AND who present to WA Health facilities for assessment in relation to COVID-19 infection, will not be charged out of pocket expenses**
- 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 Western Australia 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 cover 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 WA

- [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
 - 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 COVID-19 crisis. More information is available on the [ATO website here](#).
 - The Australian government announced on 4 April that international students who have been in Australia longer than 12 months who find themselves in financial hardship will be able to [access their Australian superannuation](#). Students will need to use [MyGov](#) for this process.
- **Study Perth** has established [StudyPerth Crisis Relief \(SPCR\)](#) to address the acute needs of international students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. The SPCR is accessible, via application, to provide support services to international students in acute need with regard to:
 - Food
 - Shelter
 - Rights and Support
 - Health and Wellbeing
- The WA Office of Multicultural Interests also provides information to multicultural communities - www.omi.wa.gov.au
- The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation has provided the following information for students who may be having trouble paying their accommodation as a result of COVID-19 and loss of jobs:
 - Department of Communities: Crisis Care - Phone 1800 199 008 / Translating Service Phone 13 14 50
 - Entrypoint Perth - a free assessment and referral service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Western Australia
<http://www.entrypointperth.com.au>
 - Study Perth - www.studyperth.com.au and [COVID-19 Information for Students](#)
- **University of Western Australia** has also developed a [financial hardship grant](#), providing immediate assistance to students who demonstrate significant financial hardship. This is in addition to arranging emergency food assistance with the support of Foodbank Australia and support to find housing.
- **Curtin University** is offering an \$8 million worth of assistance package to its students. Housing support and financial bursary is available for students who are facing difficulties at the moment. It is a need-based scholarship, available to domestic and international students, enrolled in a minimum 25 credit points in semester 1 of 2020.
- **Edith Cowan University** has announced various support mechanisms for students, including a reduction of the Student Services and Amenities Fee. It has also established a Support Grant of \$2,000 for eligible students. University's Student Guild is providing \$50 grocery e-vouchers also.

- **Murdoch University** has a \$2 million assistance fund for students severely affected financially by COVID-19 and a bursary worth \$25 a week to reduce food bills for international students. The university has announced a student assistance fund aiming to safeguard physical and mental health and well being of the students. It has a study support fund for part-time students amounting to \$500 each and, and full time students can apply for up to \$1,000. For those students facing more struggle, additional financial support is also available, which will be decided on a case by case basis.
- **Southern Cross University** has established an [Emergency Relief Fund](#) to support students who are experiencing financial distress because of COVID-19. Eligible students may apply for payments of up to \$500. Repeat applications are permitted no less than fortnightly in exceptional circumstances, with a total limit of \$1,500 paid to qualifying individuals. Email SCUassist@scu.edu.au for direction and support with the application process. (Southern Cross University has three campuses located at the Gold Coast, Coffs Harbour and Lismore, with branch campuses in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth).

Additional Information 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 Western Australia, the SRSS Program is delivered by:
 - [MercyCare](#) (Phone: (08) 6298 9800)
- [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).
 - SIS is a component of the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) available to humanitarian entrants and other eligible visa holders who have complex needs:
 - [HSP Service Provider Locations](#)

- [The Humanitarian Group](#)
 - The Humanitarian Group provides professional migration assistance, legal advice and education for people new to Australia who are disadvantaged in their access to legal services, including people seeking asylum.
 - Outreach Support Service: 9am to 3.30pm, Mondays only at Red Cross' Migration Support Programs Hub, 110 Goderich Street, East Perth (for Family Reunion visa options and General Legal Assistance). Clients must first attend our office at 445 Hay Street during our usual opening hours to be booked in for appointments at the Outreach Support Service.
 - TPV / SHEV Drop In Day: 2pm to 5pm, Tuesdays only at the Asylum Seeker Hub, Riverview Church, 1 Thorogood Street, Burswood.
 - Detention Advice Line: 08 6148 3650, from 1pm to 3pm, Thursdays only.