

WAC 388-436-0002 If my family has an emergency, can I get help from DSHS to get or keep our housing or utilities? DSHS has a program called additional requirements for emergent needs (AREN). If your family has an emergency and you need assistance to get or keep safe housing or utilities, you may be eligible. The special AREN payment is in addition to the regular monthly cash grant your family may already get.

(1) To get AREN, you must:

(a) Be eligible for temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), state family assistance (SFA), or refugee cash assistance (RCA);

(b) Have an emergency housing or utility need;

(c) Have a good reason that you do not have enough money to pay your housing or utility costs; and

(d) Have not previously received the AREN maximum limit of seven hundred fifty dollars in a 12-month period. We will count all AREN payments received in a 12-month period by any adult in your TANF assistance unit, for any assistance unit, when we calculate your AREN limit.

(2) To get AREN, you must be eligible for TANF, SFA, or RCA. This means you must:

(a) Get benefits through TANF, SFA, or RCA. For RCA you must also be pregnant or have an eligible child; or

(b) Apply for TANF, SFA, and RCA, and meet all eligibility criteria including:

(i) The maximum earned income limit under WAC 388-478-0035;

(ii) The requirement that your unearned income not exceed the grant payment standard;

(iii) The requirement that your countable income as defined under WAC 388-450-0162 must be below the payment standard in WAC 388-478-0020 when you have both earned income and unearned income;

(iv) The resource limits under chapter 388-470 WAC;

(v) The program summary rules for either TANF (WAC 388-400-0005); SFA (WAC 388-400-0010); or RCA (WAC 388-400-0030); and

(vi) The requirement that you must be pregnant or have an eligible child.

(3) If you do not get or do not want to get TANF, SFA or RCA, you cannot get AREN to help with housing or utility costs. We will look to see if you are eligible for diversion cash assistance (DCA) under WAC 388-432-0005.

(4) To get AREN, you must have an emergency housing or utility need. You may get AREN to help pay to:

(a) Prevent eviction or foreclosure;

(b) Get housing if you are homeless or need to leave your home because of domestic violence;

(c) Hook up or prevent a shut off of utilities related to your health and safety. We consider the following utilities to be needed for health and safety:

(i) Electricity or fuel for heating, lighting, or cooking;

(ii) Water;

(iii) Sewer; and

(iv) Basic local telephone service if it is necessary for your basic health and safety. If you receive TANF or SFA, the Washington telephone assistance program (WTAP) may be used to help you pay for basic local telephone service.

(d) Repair damage or defect to your home when it causes a risk to your health or safety:

- (i) If you own the home, we may approve AREN for the least expensive method of ending the risk to your health or safety;
 - (ii) If you do not own the home, you must ask the landlord in writing to fix the damage according to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act at chapter 59.18 RCW. If the landlord refuses to fix the damage or defect, we may pay for the repair or pay to move you to a different place whichever cost is lower.
 - (e) If you receive TANF or SFA, WorkFirst support services under WAC 388-310-0800 may be used to help you relocate to new housing to get a job, keep a job, or participate in WorkFirst activities. Non-housing expenses that are not covered under AREN may be paid under WorkFirst support services. This includes expenses such as car repair, diapers, or clothing.
- (5) To get AREN, you must have a good reason for not having enough money to pay for your housing or utility costs. You must prove that you:
- (a) Did not have money available that you normally use to pay your rent and utilities due to an emergency situation that reduced your income (such as a long-term illness or injury);
 - (b) Had to use your money to pay for necessary or emergency expenses. Examples of necessary or emergency expenses include:
 - (i) Basic health and safety needs for shelter, food and clothing;
 - (ii) Medical care;
 - (iii) Dental care needed to get a job or because of pain;
 - (iv) Emergency child care;
 - (v) Emergency expenses due to a natural disaster, accident, or injury; and
 - (vi) Other reasonable and necessary expenses.
 - (c) Are currently homeless; or
 - (d) Had your family's cash grant reduced or suspended when we budgeted your expected income for the month, but the income will not be available to pay for the need when the payment is due. You must make attempts to negotiate later payments with your landlord or utility company before you can get AREN.
- (6) In addition to having a good reason for not having enough money to pay for your costs, you must also explain how you will afford to pay for the on-going need in the future. We may deny AREN if your expenses exceed your income (if you are living beyond your means). We may approve AREN to help you get into housing you can afford.
- (7) If you meet the above requirements, we decide the amount we will pay based on the following criteria.
- (a) AREN payments may be made up to a maximum of seven hundred fifty dollars in a in a 12-month period.
 - (b) The number of AREN payments you can receive is not limited, as long as the total amount received by all adults in the assistance unit for any assistance unit, does not exceed the seven hundred fifty dollar limit in a 12-month period. If you or another adult in your assistance unit have already received the limit, you may not be eligible to receive additional payments.
 - (c) We will determine if any adult TANF/SFA recipient living in your household has already received the AREN limit.
 - (d) We have the discretion to approve an AREN payment above the seven hundred fifty dollar limit when your health and safety are in imminent danger.
 - (e) The amount of AREN is in addition to the amount of your monthly TANF, SFA, or RCA cash grant.

(f) We will decide the lowest amount we must pay to end your housing or utility emergency. We will contact your landlord, utility company, or other vendor for information to make this decision. We may take any of the following steps when deciding the lowest amount to pay:

(i) We may ask you to arrange a payment plan with your landlord or utility company. This could include us making a partial payment, and you setting up a plan for you to repay the remaining amount you owe over a period of time.

(ii) We may have you use some of the money you have available in cash, checking, or savings to help pay for the expense. We will look at the money you have available as well as your bills when we decide how much we will pay.

(iii) We may consider income that is excluded or disregarded for cash assistance benefit calculations, such as SSI, as available to meet your emergency housing need.

(iv) We may consider money other individuals such as family or friends voluntarily give you. We will not count loans of money that you must repay to friends or family members.

(v) We may consider money from a nonneedy caretaker relative that lives in the home.

(vi) We may look at what other community resources you currently have to help you with your need.

(g) The seven hundred fifty dollar limit applies to the following people even if they leave the assistance unit:

(i) Adults; and

(ii) Minor parents that get AREN when no adults are in the assistance unit.

(8) We pay AREN directly to the landlord, mortgage company, utility, or other vendor.

(9) We may assign you a protective payee for your monthly grant under WAC 388-460-0020.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, and 74.08.090. WSR 14-19-027, § 388-436-0002, filed 9/8/14, effective 10/9/14. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, and 74.08A.250. WSR 12-02-047, § 388-436-0002, filed 12/30/11, effective 2/1/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.08.090, 74.04.050 and 74.08A.340. WSR 04-07-023, § 388-436-0002, filed 3/8/04, effective 4/8/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.08.090, 74.04.050. WSR 00-22-064, § 388-436-0002, filed 10/27/00, effective 12/1/00. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, and 74.08.090. WSR 99-14-046, § 388-436-0002, filed 6/30/99, effective 8/1/99.]