

Rent Increases After the Emergency Period

This fact sheet contains general information about the residential rent relief grant scheme

'Lessor' is a term for your landlord.

What are residential rent relief grants?

A rent relief grant is a sum of money that tenants may apply to the WA State Government for in some circumstances. If the State Government approves an application by a tenant for a rent relief grant, the State Government would pay the rent relief grant to the tenant's lessor.

Rent relief grants can assist tenants to pay their rent if they are having difficulty paying rent. Rent relief grants can assist lessors to receive rent if their tenants are having difficulty paying rent.

If you receive a rent relief grant, you are **not** required to pay the grant back to the State Government or to your lessor.

There are two types of rent relief grants currently being offered: 'rent arrears assistance' grants, and 'future rent support' grants.

What is the purpose of a rent relief grant?

Rent relief grants are being offered in three main circumstances.

1. If you were unable to pay your rent in full at any point between 20 March 2020 and 1 December 2020, you may be eligible for a 'rent arrears assistance' grant.
2. If your lessor agreed to reduce the rent, or agreed that you could pay your rent at a later date at any point between 20 March 2020 and 1 December 2020, you may be eligible for a 'rent arrears assistance' grant.
3. If your rent is set to increase, so that your rent will have increased by a total of more than 5% in the last year, you may be eligible for a 'future rent support' grant.

The grant would be used to either:

1. pay your lessor back for rent that you owe, or
2. pay your lessor back for rent that they agreed for you not to pay, or
3. pay your lessor some of your rent in advance.

Why should I get a rent relief grant?

You might want to get a rent relief grant to reduce the amount of rent that you currently owe, or reduce the amount of rent that you will owe in the future.

Your lessor might want you to get a rent relief grant so that your lessor can receive rent that you would not otherwise be able to pay.

In some cases, if you owe rent or cannot afford a rent increase, your lease will become unsustainable for both you and your lessor. As a result, your lessor might want to evict you. However, your lessor cannot receive the benefit of a rent relief grant unless they have agreed to a fixed term tenancy agreement with you that continues for at least six months after 29 March 2021. In other words, if you are eligible for a rent relief grant, your lessor has an incentive to allow you to stay in the premises for at least six months after 29 March 2021.

If your lessor wants to evict you because you are having trouble paying the rent, you should consider discussing the possibility of a rent relief grant with your lessor. Your lessor may be willing to agree to a new lease so that they can obtain a rent relief grant. For more information on negotiating to stay at your premises for longer, see our [negotiation](#) fact sheet.

What is a 'rent arrears assistance' rent relief grant?

A 'rent arrears assistance' grant can be paid to your lessor if between 20 March 2020 and 1 December 2020:

- you did not pay all of your normal rent; or
- your landlord agreed that you did not have to pay all of your normal rent.

The grant would be equivalent to:

- 75% of the rent that you owe, or;
- 75% of the rent that the landlord agreed to you not paying.

A 'rent arrears assistance' grant cannot exceed \$4000. If 75% of the rent that you owe or that your lessor agreed to you not paying exceeds \$4000, the grant will only be given to a maximum of \$4000.

Am I eligible for a 'rent arrears assistance' grant?

To be eligible for a 'rent arrears assistance' grant, you must meet the following criteria.

1. You must be a tenant or a sub-tenant in a private residential property, or a resident in a rooming house, or a resident in a residential park.
2. You must live in WA, and you must be permitted to live and work in Australia.
3. You must have lost at least 50 per cent of your income on or after 20 March 2020 due to COVID-19, or you must have received a Centrelink payment (excluding JobKeeper) between 20 March 2020 and 28 March 2021.
4. You must have less than \$10,000 in savings.
5. You must pay more than 25% of your income in rent per week.
6. You must have had a residential tenancy agreement in place as at 1 December 2020.
7. You must have owed your lessor rent as at 1 December 2020, or your lessor must have agreed to you not paying all or a part of your rent as at 1 December 2020.
8. If you paid a bond, then generally your bond must have been lodged with the Bond Administrator. There are some exceptions to this rule. You may want to seek legal advice if your bond was not lodged with the Bond Administrator.

9. You and your current lessor must have entered into a fixed-term tenancy agreement that continues for six months or longer beyond 29 March 2021.

What is a 'future rent support' rent relief grant?

'Future rent support' grants are aimed at assisting tenants who receive a Centrelink payment and who are facing a rent increase of more than 5% per year to pay the rent.

A 'future rent support' grant can be used to pay your lessor rent in advance. A 'future rent support' grant can be given to a maximum of \$2,000.

If you are unsure about whether your rent can increase or how much your rent will increase, see our [Rent Increases](#) fact sheet.

Am I eligible for a 'future rent support' grant?

To be eligible for a 'future rent support' grant, you must meet the following criteria.

1. You must receive a Centrelink payment (excluding JobKeeper).
2. You must have less than \$10,000 in savings.
3. You must pay more than 25 per cent of your income in rent per week.
4. You must be a tenant or sub-tenant in a private residential property, or a resident in a rooming house, or a resident in a residential park.
5. You must have had a tenancy agreement in place as at 1 December 2020.
6. If you paid a bond, your bond must have been lodged with the Bond Administrator. There are some exceptions to this rule. You may want to seek legal advice if your bond was not lodged with the bond administrator.
7. You and your current lessor must have entered into a fixed-term tenancy agreement that continues for six months or longer beyond 29 March 2021.

Useful contacts and resources

For more information and to apply for a residential rent relief grant, visit Consumer Protection's [website](#).

If you are not eligible for a rent relief grant or your application is otherwise refused, you could consider seeking other assistance to assist if you are having difficulty paying your rent.

You can call the Financial Counsellors Helpline on 1800 007 007 for financial support and financial advice.

If you are having difficulty negotiating with your lessor, see our negotiation fact sheet. At any stage, if you are unsure of your rights, see our other fact sheets or consider seeking legal advice.

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