

Consolidated Emergency Assistance (CEAP): Extra Money for Needy Families

What is CEAP? – [WAC 388-436-0015](#)

This welfare (DSHS) program provides money to needy families, children, and pregnant women facing an emergency. You can get a CEAP grant only if you are not eligible for any other DSHS financial or emergency assistance program.

Who is eligible? - [WAC 388-436-0015\(1\)](#); [WAC 388-436-0020](#)

- families with needy children 17 years of age or younger
- children 17 and under not living with a parent or relative now but who did within the past six months
- children at risk of foster care placement
- pregnant women

How do I qualify?

- You need money to take care of a basic need, such as food, shelter or utilities. - [WAC 388-436-0015\(3\)](#)
- You live in Washington State. - [WAC 388-436-0015\(2\)](#)
- You have not gotten CEAP in the past twelve months. - [WAC 388-436-0015\(4\)](#)
- Your take-home income this month is less than 90% of the TANF (cash welfare) payment standard, OR it is over this amount but you spent it to meet family needs on medical bills,

emergency childcare to avoid abuse, dental care to address pain, or getting a job. [Welfare Benefits: TANF Rules and Eligibility](#) has the TANF payment amount standards.

- No one in your household is eligible for TANF, State-funded Assistance (SFA), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), ABD, SSI, or other ongoing needs-based cash assistance. [WAC 388-436-0030](#).

I cannot get TANF because of a Workfirst sanction. Can we still get a CEAP grant? -

Yes. [WAC 388-436-0015\(1\)\(b\)](#).

What emergency needs does CEAP cover? - [WAC 388-436-0015\(3\)](#)

- Food
- Shelter
- Clothing
- Minor medical needs
- Utilities
- Household maintenance
- Transportation to get a child to a home where she can be cared for
- Job-related transportation or clothing

How much can I get?

You can get up to the TANF payment standard for your household size, depending on your emergency needs. [WAC 388-478-0020](#). DSHS has maximums for different needs. [WAC 388-436-0050](#).

❖ **Example:** A family of four could get up to \$497 for shelter, \$408 for food, and \$166 for utilities, but only up to \$670 total, the payment standard for a four-person household.

Does DSHS count my income or cash on hand in deciding how much my CEAP grant will be? - [WAC 388-436-0050\(3\)](#)

Yes. They deduct any cash on hand or income you got this month from the amount for your emergency needs. If you feel DSHS has unfairly counted money that is unavailable to meet your need, ask for an administrative hearing.

How do I apply?

Re-read “Who is Eligible” and “How Do I Qualify,” above. If you meet those requirements, go to the local DSHS office.

- Fill out an application.
- Ask for emergency assistance.

You have the right to a written response to your application. You must have bills or other proof for unpaid medical bills and shelter costs.

What if DSHS denies my request for help?

You can appeal. You must ask for an “administrative hearing” your hearing within ninety days of the denial.

How do I ask for an administrative hearing?

1. Call your worker or the administrative hearing coordinator at your welfare office to ask for it.
2. **Put your hearing request in writing.** Drop it off at the DSHS office or mail to Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 42489, Olympia, WA 98504.

What if I need a hearing right away?

If it is an emergency, call the Office of Administrative Hearings at (360) 664-8717 or 1-800-583-8271. Ask them to schedule your hearing as soon as possible (an “expedited” hearing).

Would DSHS reconsider its decision without us having to go to a hearing?

Maybe. You can speak to a supervisor or the administrator of the DSHS office if your worker says DSHS cannot help you. They might change the caseworker's decision. Do not withdraw (take back) your administrative hearing request until you get written notice of the award.

Do I have to represent myself at the hearing?

Maybe not. You can have someone represent you. Your local legal aid office or welfare rights organization might be able to advise or represent you. [Representing Yourself at an Administrative Hearing](#) has more info. Call CLEAR at 1-888-201-1014.

Are there any other programs for emergency cash assistance?

Yes. There are two:

1. **Additional Requirements for Emergent Needs (AR)** - extra emergency money for families already getting TANF or who have applied and are eligible.

2. **Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA) is emergency money** - for families eligible for TANF but do not apply for it.

Our publications on [AR](#) and [DCA](#) have more info. Get them from WashingtonLawHelp.org or by calling CLEAR.

This publication provides general information concerning your rights and responsibilities. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.

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