

Consolidated Emergency Assistance (CEAP) Extra Money for Needy Families

◆ **Note:** Beginning in 2011, DSHS has limited funds to grant assistance under this program. DSHS has permission to stop granting CEAP benefits when funds run out. Check with your local DSHS office to find out if they're currently accepting CEAP applications.

Introduction

CEAP is a Social and Health Services (DSHS) program which provides money to needy families, children and pregnant women facing an emergency. You may qualify for a CEAP emergency grant only if you're ineligible for any other DSHS financial or emergency assistance program.

Who's eligible?

- families with needy children 17 years of age or younger;
- children 17 and under not living with a parent or relative who within the past six months lived with such a person;
- children at risk of foster care placement; and
- pregnant women.

How do I qualify?

- You need money to take care of a basic need, such as food, shelter or utilities.
- You're a resident of Washington State or you've been detained in the state for reasons beyond your household's control.
- You don't have to be a U.S. citizen or have been legally admitted. However, aliens who have been granted temporary

resident status are ineligible for five years from date of entry.

- You haven't previously received CEAP within the past twelve months.
- Your net family income this month is less than 90% of the TANF (cash welfare) payment standard, or net income is over this amount but you spent the money which is no longer available to meet family need on medical bills, emergent child care to avoid abuse, dental care to alleviate pain, or on obtaining employment. Please see our publication [Welfare Benefits: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families](#). It includes the standards for the TANF payment amounts.
- no one in your household is eligible for TANF, State-funded Assistance or Refugee Cash Assistance.
- You haven't refused a bona fide job offer or training for employment opportunity without good cause within thirty days of your application.
- No one in your household is under grant penalty for failure to comply with the program requirements of a DSHS financial assistance program.

What emergency needs does CEAP cover?

- Food
- shelter
- clothing
- minor medical
- utilities
- household maintenance

- transportation to get a child to a home where s/he can be cared for, and
- money for job-related transportation or clothing.

How much money can I get?

You may be able to receive up to the TANF payment standard for your household size, depending on how much you need for different emergency needs. DSHS has set payment maximums, according to household size, for each of the emergent needs.

◆ **Example:** A family of four could receive up to \$476 for shelter, up to \$391 for food, and up to \$332 for utilities, but only up to \$642 total, the payment standard for a four-person household.

DSHS will count any cash on hand or income you've received this month and deduct it from the amount you need to meet your emergent needs. If you feel that DSHS has unfairly counted money that's not available to meet your need, you can request a fair hearing.

How do I apply?

Re-read the sections "Who's Eligible?" and "How Do I Qualify" above. If you meet the requirements listed there, go to the local DSHS office and fill out an application. Ask for emergency assistance. If you receive TANF, call your worker. Tell him/her that you need extra

money. Make sure that you also apply in writing. You have the right to a written response to your application. You'll need to verify (have bills for) unpaid medical bills and shelter costs. You don't have to verify requests for other items.

What if DSHS denies my request for help?

You may appeal by requesting a "fair hearing." You must request your hearing within ninety days of the denial. Call your worker or the fair hearing coordinator at your welfare office and ask for the hearing. And put your request for a hearing in writing. Drop it off at the DSHS office or mail to Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 42489, Olympia, WA 98504. If it's an emergency, you may ask to have your hearing held as soon as possible by calling the Office of Administrative Hearings at (360) 664-8717 or 1-800-583-8271. This is called an "expedited" hearing.

You may speak to a supervisor or the administrator of the DSHS office if your worker says DSHS cannot help you. A supervisor or administrator may change the caseworker's decision, and allow your request. However, don't withdraw your fair hearing request until you receive written notice of the award.

You may have someone represent you at the hearing. Your local legal aid office or welfare rights organization may be able to provide you with advice or representation. For more information, ask for our publication [*Representing Yourself at a Fair Hearing*](#).

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