

Guide to applying for rental rebate

The **Application for rental rebate** is used to apply for a rental rebate and when we are reviewing the amount you pay. All public housing tenants are eligible to apply.

We will work out how much rental rebate you get based on the information you give us about the people living in your household and all the income your household receives.

You can find out how we do this by reading the last part of this guide, *How is my rent calculated?*

This guide tells you about filling out the **Application for rental rebate**. Please read the guide carefully all the way through before you begin.

If you need help

If you need help to fill in the application, you could ask a community service organisation, family member or friend to help you.

Your local officer can tell you about community service organisations that can help, or arrange an interpreter to help you. Department staff are not permitted to enter information on the application for a tenant.

Your new weekly payment amount

When you have completed all sections of the application and attached all the documents we need, send or deliver your application to your local office.

We will write to you within 28 days from the date we receive your completed application to tell you what your new weekly payment amount will be and when it will start. We will also tell you if you have any arrears or credit as a result of your application.

Your local officer will contact you by letter within 14 days if we need more information from you.

Please contact your local officer for information about your application.

If you do not agree with the assessment, you can:

- discuss this with your local officer
- seek a review through your local office
- appeal the decision.

You can contact an appeals information officer on **(03) 9096 7426** or **1800 807 702** or email **housingappeals@dhhs.vic.gov.au**

When your new weekly payment amount will start

If your weekly payment amount goes down because your household income changes between fixed rent periods, the new amount will start from one of the following dates:

- the Sunday before the date your household income went down
- the date the number of people living in your household changed
- the start of the current fixed rent period if the changes happened before this.

If your income goes up between fixed rent periods, your weekly payment amount will generally not increase until the start of the next fixed rent period.

However, an increase in the amount you pay may apply immediately (or be backdated), if any of the following occurs:

- you do not tell us about changes to your household and household income when they happen
- you returned from department-granted temporary absence of your rental property
- you received a lump sum payment
- you live in a Neighbourhood Renewal area and your rent 'grace' period has expired
- you resume employment after a temporary break from an ongoing contract.

Your privacy

The Department of Health and Human Services collects information from you to work out if you are eligible for a rental rebate.

All the information you provide will be treated in accordance with the *Health Records Act 2001* and the *Information Privacy Act 2000*.

The department is committed to providing coordinated care. If you are a client of another department program, limited identifying information may be disclosed to that program to assist in the delivery of services to you.

You can access your information held by the department by speaking to your local officer or contacting the Freedom of Information Unit on **(03) 9096 8449**. More information is available on our website at www.dhhs.vic.gov.au

You can choose not to give us some or all of the information we ask for, however we may not be able to help you with a rental rebate.

You can withdraw your application at any time by notifying your local office in writing.

Collection of information necessary to assess your application will then cease and we will charge you the market rent for your property from the start of the applicable fixed rent period.

Your rental rebate can be cancelled

If you do not return the application and the documents we need when we ask them, for example, when the amount you pay is being reviewed, your rental rebate can be cancelled from the start of the next fixed rent cycle and you will be charged the market rent for your property.

A tenant or their representative must fill out the ***Application for rental rebate***. Please note the following:

Write in CAPITAL letters.

Give us all the documents we ask for.

Generally, these must be original documents (not photocopies). Staff at your local office can photocopy documents for you where allowed.

Make sure that **all** tenants sign a statutory declaration.

Complete the checklist in Section H to make sure you have included all the information and documents we need.

There are eight sections (A to H) to the ***Application for rental rebate***.

Section A: Details of property

This section asks for your tenancy account number, the address of your rental property, your contact details, your preferred language and whether you need an interpreter.

You can find your tenancy account number on your rent payment card or on any letter we have sent you.

Please give us all this information.

Section B: General information

This section asks why you are applying for a rental rebate, and whether someone other than a tenant has filled in the form. Please answer Question 1.

Who can fill in the ***Application for rental rebate***?

A tenant must fill in the ***Application for rental rebate*** unless one of the following applies:

- the tenant is unable to read or write English
- the tenant has a disability that makes it difficult for them to fill in the application
- the tenant's financial and legal affairs are administered by State Trustees or an appointed guardian.

A person other than a tenant who fills in the application should answer Question 2 and fully explain to the tenant:

- all sections of the ***Application for rental rebate***
- the information and documents that we need
- the information and documents that have been provided on behalf of the tenant.

Section C: Household and income information

This section asks about who is living at your rental property and about their incomes.

Please answer the questions as follows:

Answer Question 3 to tell us about who is living in your rental property now.

Answer Question 3a if someone has moved into or out of your rental property.

Also answer Question 3b if someone has moved out of your rental property.

This is the information we need:

Name	The full name of all household members (including children) living in your rental property. If any household member has changed their name, please give us proof of their change of name.
Date of birth	The date of birth for each household member.
Date moved into property	The date any new household members or dependants moved into your rental property. This includes the birth of a child.
Date moved out of property	The date any household members or dependants moved out of your rental property.
Relationship to tenant	The relationship of each household member to you, the tenant who is filling in the application, for example, son, spouse, cousin, etc. If you are the tenant, write 'TENANT'.
Type of income	<p>The type of income received by each household member.</p> <p>This could be wages, Centrelink payments, Austudy payments, Veterans' Affairs pensions, child maintenance payments, income from self-employment or a business, overseas pensions, WorkCover, superannuation, incomes from mobile homes, compensation payments.</p> <p>Include income from any other source, for example, rental income if you or a household member own/s a tenanted property.</p> <p>If the household member does not receive an income, write 'NIL'.</p>
Gross weekly income	<p>The amount of gross weekly income before tax or any other deductions received by each household member.</p> <p>If the household member does not receive an income, write 'NIL'.</p>
Centrelink reference number	The Centrelink reference number (CRN) for each household member. If the household member does not have a CRN, write 'NIL'.

Please give us documents to confirm the income you and other household members receive. These documents must be no older than two weeks (See Section D). Do this for each household member who receives an independent income.

You may be able to get the documents we need by contacting the organisation or agency who paid you the income.

These are the documents we need for each type of income you may receive:

Centrelink pension, benefit, allowance and Family Tax Benefit	<p>A statement from Centrelink showing the income received and when payments started.</p> <p>Centrelink Confirmation eServices (CCeS) is an online service that allows us to obtain information directly from Centrelink, to confirm your eligibility for housing services.</p> <p>We recommend that you use CCeS if you are a Centrelink customer as we periodically require up-to-date information about your income and assets to confirm your eligibility for rental rebate or public housing after your application is approved.</p> <p>CCeS has strict privacy and security standards, and we must have your consent before we can obtain information about you from Centrelink.</p> <p>You and up to three household members can provide consent by signing the <i>Consent to use Centrelink Confirmation eServices</i> in section F of the Application for rental rebate and ticking the <i>Income confirmation and/or Contact and address verification</i> check boxes.</p> <p>Once you have signed the consent form and ticked <i>Income confirmation</i>, we can use CCeS to obtain information about your income and assets directly from Centrelink. This means you will not need to tell us about your income or assets (apart from lump sum payments). This will make it easier for you and quicker for us, to assess your eligibility for housing services.</p> <p>Once you have signed the consent form and ticked <i>Contact and address verification</i>, we can use CCeS to obtain your contact and address details directly from Centrelink. We know that applicants waiting for public housing can often move from one housing situation to another and forget to tell us their new address. If we are unable to contact you about your application, your name may be removed from the public housing waiting list. By providing the CCeS consent to Contact and address verification, we can update your contact details and still contact you about your housing application, even if you forget to tell us that you have changed address.</p>
Wages	<p>A statement from your employer showing your gross weekly or fortnightly earnings before tax or any other deductions for the last 13 weeks, the name of the employer or company, address, contact details and the date you began working with them.</p> <p>If you have started working since your last rebate assessment, please provide a statement of gross wages from the date you started work. This includes overtime, allowances, loadings, bonuses, salary sacrifice and fringe benefits.</p> <p>You may also give us wage statements — consecutive payslips and a letter from your employer stating your gross income for the period and the date you began working with them.</p> <p>Your wage statement should be date-stamped and signed by your employer.</p> <p>If there is more than one employer, the date you began work must be confirmed by each employer.</p> <p>If you stopped working since your last application, give us a separation certificate or letter from your former employer confirming the date you stopped working with them.</p>

Austudy, Abstudy	A letter from the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations showing the income received and when payments started.
University bursaries and grants	A letter from the institution or school body providing the funds showing the income received and when payments started.
Veterans' Affairs pension	A letter from the Department of Veterans' Affairs showing the income received and when payments started.
Child maintenance payments	<p>A letter from the child support agency, a Centrelink income statement or Family Court order showing the weekly payments received and when the payments started for each child and paternal parent.</p> <p>If your child maintenance payments are not regular or change from time to time, please give us a letter from the child support agency showing all payments received for the period since your last application.</p> <p>If you have a private maintenance arrangement, give us a letter from the person making the payments showing the payments being made.</p>
Self-employment	<p>A copy of the latest 13-week minimum profit and loss statement from your accountant. If you do not have an accountant, you will have to give us a copy of the profit and loss statement that you have prepared and a statutory declaration. Details of all other income over the same period are also required.</p> <p>We carry out random audits to cross check Australian Taxation Office notices of assessment with profit and loss statements.</p>
Income from any business, partnership or company	A copy of the latest 13-week minimum profit and loss statement with a statutory declaration from your accountant or prepared by you if you do not use an accountant. Details of all other incomes received over the same period are also required.
Overseas pension or income	A letter from Centrelink, overseas pension organisation, bank account statements or copy of bankbooks showing details of regular payments (at least three consecutive payments) received over the last 13 weeks.
WorkCover payments	A letter from WorkCover showing the date the payments started and the amount received over the last 13 weeks.
Superannuation investments or payments	A letter from your superannuation fund showing the payments received over the last 13 weeks and the total amount invested.
Income from mobile homes	A letter from the caravan park or your copies of the receipts showing the rental payments received.
Compensation payments due to loss of income	Legal documents showing the dates when income was lost, the date of settlement, the Centrelink preclusion period (if applicable) and the payments received.
Rental income from real estate	A copy of the most recent lease agreement and evidence of gross rental income received over the last 13 weeks.
Income from any other source	<p>Documents showing income from any other source.</p> <p>Please speak to your local officer about the type of documents we need, depending on the source of this income.</p>

New household members

To add household members, include their information in the tables in Question 3. Identity is established through the provision of original documents or certified photocopies. See the Proof of identity fact sheet for the type of identity documents that the department will accept. If the new household member is a dependent child, give us a Medicare card, or Health Care card, and a birth certificate or extract.

We must see original documents. We will make copies of them and give the originals back to you.

Someone moving out of your household

When a tenant has moved out of the property, a statutory declaration from the tenant who has left the property stating that they wish to relinquish their tenancy rights or a VCAT determination must be provided. They should also provide a forwarding address.

When a resident has moved out of the property, the tenant must provide the former resident's new address in the **Application for rental rebate**, and the date they moved into the new property. The tenant must also provide documentation to conclusively confirm these details. Examples of acceptable documentation include an initial utility bill or copy of a new lease agreement in the former resident's name.

Where this information is provided, the department will adjust the rental rebate from the date the resident moved out. If the tenant is not able to provide this documentation, a statutory declaration confirming the resident's new address and the date they moved out can be accepted. However, in the absence of conclusive documentation such as an initial utility bill or a copy of the new lease agreement, the department will only adjust the rental rebate from the date the tenant informed the department of the change, not from the date the tenant claims the resident moved out. Contact your local officer for more information.

Always tell us when your household or household income changes.

You must fill out a new **Application for rental rebate** when one of the following occurs:

- your household income goes up or goes down
- someone joins your household, including the birth of a child, or leaves your household
- the relationship between household members changes in any way
- when a household member receives an income other than or in addition to Centrelink income.

These changes will affect the amount of rent you pay.

Section D: Other household income, assets and bank details

This section asks about each household member's bank account, if they have any investments, and if they own any land or property.

Please answer all questions.

Bank accounts

Tell us about each household member's bank accounts.

This is the information we need:

- the name of each bank account holder
- the amount of money in the account
- the date the account was opened (if it is a new account since your last application).

Also give us:

- the most recent original account statements covering at least eight weeks for all bank accounts
- the most recent original or clear photocopies of bankbooks covering at least eight weeks, clearly showing the name of the account holder.

These documents are not to be older than two weeks. Balance receipts from automatic teller machines (ATMs) cannot be used.

We can make copies of original documents and give the originals back to you.

Investments

Tell us about any investments, for example, bonds, shares, superannuation funds, debentures or annuities, that earn interest or dividends for any household member.

This is the information we need:

- the name of each account holder or investor
- the amount of money invested
- the date the account was opened (if it is a new account since your last application).

Also give us a letter from your bank or financial institution showing the amount invested.

Land and property

Tell us about any vacant or occupied land or property owned by any household member. This includes houses, units, flats and commercial properties.

This is the information we need:

- the name of the property owner/s
- the address of the property
- the current market value of the property
- your equity in the property
- the date of settlement of the property.

Also give us:

- the most recent valuation notice from your local council giving the current market value
- evidence from your financial institution showing your equity in the property.

If you are receiving rental income from this property, include the gross weekly rent as income in Question 3 (Section C).

Sale of property

Tell us about any land or property that you have owned and recently sold.

This is the information we need:

- the name/s of the property seller/s (vendor/s)
- the address of the property
- the total sale value of the property
- your equity from the sale of the property
- the date of settlement of the property.

Also give us:

- a copy of the contract of sale
- evidence from your financial institution, for example, if you had to repay a home loan or invested the money you got from the sale.

Section E: Statutory declaration

Each tenant living in the rental property must complete a statutory declaration.

All tenants must fill in their name, address and occupation. Each tenant must sign the declaration in the presence of an authorised witness.

A tenant is any person who has signed the tenancy agreement.

Only tenants can sign the declaration.

If there are more than four tenants who need to sign the declaration, please ask your local office for another copy of the declaration.

Authorised witnesses

An authorised witness is a person who is authorised under section 107A of the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958* (VIC) (as of 1 January 2010), previously the *Evidence Act 1958* (VIC), to witness the signing of a declaration.

These include:

- a Justice of the Peace
- a member of the Victoria Police
- a dentist, a pharmacist, or a manager of a bank
- a minister of religion
- a minister of religion authorised to celebrate marriages
- a legally-qualified medical practitioner
- a member or former member of either House of Parliament of Victoria or the Commonwealth
- a person who holds an office in the public service that is prescribed as an office to which s.107A of the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958* (VIC) applies. This includes housing services officers.

As well as signing their name, the authorised witness must print or stamp their name, address and title under section 107A of the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958* (VIC).

Section F: Centrelink Confirmation eServices

Centrelink Confirmation eServices (CCeS) is an online service that allows us to obtain information directly from Centrelink, to confirm your eligibility for a rental rebate.

We recommend that you use CCeS if you are a Centrelink customer as we periodically require up-to-date information about your income and assets to confirm your eligibility for a public housing rental rebate.

CCeS has strict privacy and security standards, and we must have your consent before we can obtain information about you from Centrelink.

You and up to three household members who will live with you can provide consent by signing the *Consent to use Centrelink Confirmation eServices* in Section F of this application and ticking the *Income confirmation* and/or *Contact and address verification* check boxes.

Once you have signed the consent form and ticked *Income confirmation*, we can use CCeS to obtain information about your income and assets directly from Centrelink. This means you will not need to tell us about your income or assets (apart from lump sum payments). This will make it easier for you and quicker for us to assess your eligibility for a rental rebate.

You are not required to sign the *Contact and address verification* to obtain your contact and address details directly from Centrelink. This service is provided for applicants waiting for public housing.

More information about CCeS is available from Centrelink and from Centrelink's website: www.humanservices.gov.au

Section G: Form of authority

We may need to speak with your employer, accountant, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, child support agency, State Trustees or other Department of Health and Human Services programs but we need your permission before we can do this.

To give your permission, please fill in this section. You do not have to sign this part of the form but it may help us if you do.

Only details that directly relate to this application for rental rebate will be discussed.

If you have recently completed this form, you do not need to do so again for this application unless there is a change in the contact person or agency.

If there is more than one household member who wants to use this form, you can either photocopy this page or get another form from your local office.

You can withdraw your consent at any time by writing to your local office.

Section H: Checklist

When you have filled in all other sections of the form, please tick each box in the checklist to make sure that you have:

- completed all sections of the application
- attached all copies of bank books and original account statements from your bank or financial institution (no older than two weeks; ATM receipts are not acceptable)
- attached original copies of all income statements for the last 13 weeks
- attached all other documents we need
- signed the statutory declarations in Section E for all tenants
- signed the consent form and ticked *Income confirmation* in Section F, for all tenants wishing to use Centrelink Confirmation eServices
- completed the Form of authority in Section G (optional).

When you have completed the form and attached all the documents we need, send or deliver your application to your local office.

How is my rent calculated?

Introduction to public housing rent

Every public housing property has a market rent that is related to the value of the property. The initial market rent of your property is detailed in your tenancy agreement, and is based on the private rental market in the same location.

As a tenant, you pay the amount under your tenancy agreement. This will increase in line with the notice requirements that are outlined in *Division 3 – Rents of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.

The amount you pay

You may be eligible for a Victorian Government subsidy known as a rental rebate. This can reduce your weekly cost for public housing, to no more than 25% of your household income. An additional service charge may be payable where water, heating, laundry or other services are made available to you.

When the amount you pay changes

The market rent of your property is reviewed once a year in August and you will be notified of the outcome of this review. The amount paid by tenants who get a rental rebate is reviewed twice a year (February and August). The time between these reviews is referred to as a 'fixed rent period', and you will be notified before the start of each fixed rent period to tell you about any changes to your weekly payment amount.

It is important you notify your local office about any changes to your household or your household's income as soon as possible so that the amount you pay can be reviewed. We may request that you verify your household income to ensure your changes are assessed consistently with other households.

If you are receiving a rental rebate and your household income increases in between the review dates, a higher weekly payment amount may apply from the commencement of the next fixed rent period.

If your household income goes down however, the amount you pay could be reduced once you notify the local office about the change.

Ways to pay your rent

There are three ways you can pay your rent:

1. Direct debit from your Centrelink payments

This is known as the 'Rent Deduction Service' which is free, and your rent is paid automatically. Payments for maintenance charges or rent arrears can also be made in this way.

2. Direct debit through your bank

3. At the post office.

Language Link

English

This publication is about housing. If you have difficulty reading English, you can get help with this publication. Please contact your local office or call Language Link on (03) 9280 0799 for an interpreter.

Arabic العربية

هذه النشرة هي عن الإسكان. إذا كان لديكم صعوبة في قراءة اللغة الإنكليزية، نتم تلتقي المساعدة لفهم هذه النشرة. رجاء اتصلوا بالمكتب المحلي في لغتكم أو اتصلوا برابط اللغة Language Link على الرقم (03) 9280 0799 لطلب مترجم شفهي.

Simplified Chinese 中文

这是一份关于住房的出版物。如果你英语阅读有困难，可以获得帮助。请联系本地办事处或拨打 (03) 9280 0791 联系 Language Link 要求口译员协助。

Traditional Chinese 繁體中文

本刊物有關住房資訊。假如您閱讀英語有困難，您可以尋求瞭解本刊物內容的幫助，請聯絡本地公房辦事處或撥打翻譯熱綫 (03) 9280 0789。

Croatian Hrvatski

Ova publikacija sadrži informacije o stambenom smještaju. Ako ovu brošuru ne razumijete zato što je pisana na engleskom, imate pravo na pomoć. Molimo vas, kontaktirajte svoj mjesni ured ili nazovite Language Link na broj (03) 9280 0792 i spojiti će vas s sa tumačem.

Polish Polski

Niniejsza informacja dotyczy kwestii mieszkaniowych. Jeśli masz trudności z czytaniem po angielsku, możesz otrzymać pomoc w zrozumieniu tej publikacji. Prosimy zwrócić się do swojego lokalnego biura lub zadzwonić do Language Link pod numer (03) 9280 0793 i poprosić o ustnego tłumacza.

Russian Русский

Эта публикация касается жилищных вопросов. Если вам трудно прочитать ее по-английски, то вам может быть предоставлена помощь. Вы можете обратиться в свой местный жилищный отдел или связаться с переводчиком, позвонив на Языковую линию (Language Link) по номеру (03) 9280 0794.

Somali Somali

Daabacaadan waxay ku saabsan tahay gurisiinta. Haddii aad qabto dhibaato xaga aqariska Ingiriisiga, waxaad caawimaad ka helayaa daabacaan. Fadlan la xiriir xafiiska degaankaaga ama ka wac Language Link taleefanka (03) 9280 0795 wixii la xiriira turjumaanka.

Spanish Español

Esta publicación es sobre vivienda. Si tiene dificultad para leer inglés, se le puede ayudar con esta publicación. Por favor póngase en contacto con su oficina local o llame a Language Link en el (03) 9280 0796.

Turkish Türkçe

Bu yayın konutlar hakkındadır. İngilizce okumakta güçlük çekiyorsanız, bu yayınlı ilgili yardım alabilirsiniz. Lütfen yerel ofisinizle ilişkiye geçin veya bir tercüman için (03) 9280 0797'den Dil Bağlantısı'nı arayın.

Vietnamese Việt

Ấn phẩm này nói về vấn đề nhà ở. Nếu quý vị gặp khó khăn đọc tiếng Anh, quý vị có thể được giúp đỡ để hiểu ấn phẩm này. Xin hãy liên lạc với văn phòng địa phương hoặc gọi cho Language Link theo số (03) 9280 0798 để có thông dịch giúp đỡ.

For other languages, an interpreter is available through your local office.

Accessible format

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please contact your local office, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required.

This document is also available on our website at <www.housing.vic.gov.au>

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