

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Maryland RELIEF Act Grants: Frequently Asked Questions

In February, the Maryland General Assembly passed a law, signed by Governor Larry Hogan, called the RELIEF Act (Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act). Part of this law provides \$83 million to reduce or pay off the past due charges, or arrearages, of some utility customers statewide.

As a result, some Pepco customers in Maryland will receive, or have received, a bill payment grant from the state. Customers who are eligible for these grants do not need to take any action to receive them. We encourage customers to review these frequently asked questions to learn more about the RELIEF Act grants.

Why did I receive a grant if I didn't apply for one?

The RELIEF Act provides \$83 million to reduce or pay off the past due charges, or arrearages, of some utility customers statewide. The law defined the types of customers eligible for these grants, and the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) was directed to determine exactly who would receive the funds and how much. The PSC is instructing the state's gas and electric utilities on how to apply these funds to eligible customers' accounts. Customers who are eligible for these grants do not need to take any action to receive them.

Other than having a past-due amount, why did I qualify?

The first, and largest, group of customers to receive this help are customers with arrearages who received utility bill assistance from the Maryland Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) anytime since February 2017. The second category is customers who have notified their utility either that their household has someone with a serious medical illness or lifesaving equipment or someone aged 67 or older. Finally, the law states that if any funds are remaining after those two groups, they should be used to retire remaining customers' oldest arrearages.

Does my bill provide information about this grant?

Yes. If you receive a RELIEF Act grant it will be reflected on page one of your bill in the Change to Your Electric Balance line, along with any other payments you have made, and as a Payment to Your Account in the Electric Summary section on page two.

Why is my grant amount different than my neighbor's/relative's?

The PSC was directed to determine exactly who would receive the funds and how much. Each grant was calculated based on eligibility and on the customer's outstanding balance. Sometimes other grants are provided that are the same for every customer. See the question below about supplemental grants from OHEP.

Do I have to pay back this money?

No. This is not a loan and you do not have to pay it back. Pepco will apply it to your account. You do not need to take any action.

Will Pepco refund me any grant funds that may be greater than what I currently owe on my bill?

No. Any excess grant funds will be held in your account to offset future electric charges.

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Will I receive this grant next year, too?

No. This is a one-time grant that resulted from the legislation noted above. Please see the question below about supplemental grants from OHEP.

Are there other grants supplemental grants available?

Yes. OHEP also is planning – or may have already paid – what’s known as “supplemental grants” to customers who already applied for and received assistance from OHEP in their current program year, which ran from July 1, 2020, through June 3, 2021.

One of these grants is intended to reduce or eliminate these customers’ arrearages, to the extent possible. Another grant is expected in June, and it will provide the same amount – in the range of \$100 – to all OHEP recipients from this program year. Again, if you received help from OHEP this program year, you do not need to apply for these supplemental grants.

Why are all these unusual grants being made?

As the name of the RELIEF Act suggests, these are extraordinary efforts the state and federal governments are making to help families recover from the economic downturn during the COVID pandemic. For that reason there is no guarantee that these types of grants will happen again.

How will this grant impact any existing payment arrangement I may have?

The grant will first be applied to any outstanding current charges you owe. Next, it will apply to any remaining balance you have in an existing payment arrangement. If the grant is not enough to fully pay off your payment arrangement, the remainder will continue to be billed in the same installment amounts on your bill each month until it is paid off. Thus, you will pay it off sooner than you otherwise would have.

Do I need to pay my current or next bill?

Yes. Most of these grants are intended to address past-due charges. With rare exceptions, they are not likely to reduce or eliminate any current or future billed amounts from Pepco and you are obligated to pay those. Pepco offers customers a number of options to pay their bills, including ways to get help from resources like OHEP. Visit [pepco.com/Help](https://www.pepco.com/Help) for more information about these programs, including payment arrangements that allow you to pay off your balance over time in installments.

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