

# Billing and Payment Assistance User Guide

Telstra

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# Welcome to

# Telstra Billing and Payment Assistance

Telstra recognises the importance of staying connected, especially when times are tough. This guide will help you understand the Telstra Billing and Payment Assistance Program.

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## What is Telstra Billing and Payment Assistance?

Telstra's Billing and Payment Assistance Program provides short-term financial relief to customers in need of financial assistance to keep them connected to the essential connectivity needed to stay in touch with family and friends, access support services, and access employment opportunities.

## How does it work?

The program works by giving trusted community organisations in the Social Sector the ability to request financial assistance as a *credit* to a **Telstra Bill** or waiver of service charges and deferral of any device repayments for Telstra Upfront Plans paid via AutoPay on their client's behalf, without the client needing to contact Telstra.

The organisation refers the client for assistance from Telstra per the **Billing and Payment Assistance process**, and Telstra applies the financial assistance, trusting the judgement of the organisation on the client's eligibility.

## Who is eligible for Billing and Payment Assistance?

A client that is **experiencing a vulnerability** that places them at an increased risk of harm or disadvantage without financial assistance. This vulnerability may be impacted by circumstances such as:

- Homelessness
- Natural disaster
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Mental health
- Food insecurity
- Disability
- Women, Youth and Families
- Refugees
- First Nations communities

Telstra trusts that organisations use their best judgement to determine that the client is in need and that the system is not gamed or abused.

## Technical requirements

- A client must have an existing Telstra service on a plan (such as Post-Paid Mobile plan, Fixed or Broadband plan, or Entertainment plan).
- **It is important to understand that** if a client has a **Telstra Upfront Plan**, the Billing and Payment Assistance will *waive* upcoming service payments and *defer* any device repayments for up to 3 months, not apply credit to an outstanding amount.

- For **all other plans** the amount of Billing and Payment Assistance will appear as a *credit* on the Telstra Bill.
- There is a limit of \$500 per calendar year available in Billing and Payment Assistance per client. There are some instances where this may be increased, but this requires internal escalations. If referred by a community organisation, we provide a level of Billing and Payment Assistance.
- There is no limit on the number of clients you can refer to the team for Billing and Payment Assistance.
- The full amount of Billing and Payment Assistance may be determined on a case-by-case basis if activity on assistance provided to the customer has been unusual. In cases like these, the Specialised Assistance Team will provide reasoning to the community organisation.
- If your client needs further assistance, they can [get in touch](#).

## Billing and Payment Assistance Process

To refer the client for Billing and Payment Assistance you contact Telstra's Specialised Assistance Team by email.

1. Determine the client's eligibility per the [eligibility requirements](#).
2. Email the Specialised Assistance Team at: [specialassistance@online.telstra.com.au](mailto:specialassistance@online.telstra.com.au) with the details and they will process the Billing and Payment Assistance for the client.

*Subject: Billing and Payment Assistance Customer Name*

*To Specialised Assistance Team,*

*I am referring a client for Billing and Payment Assistance.*

*Client Full Name*

*Client DOB*

*Client Contact Number*

*Client Customer Account Number (if known)*

*Value of Billing and Payment Assistance (if blank the team will assess and provide).*

*Short description of reason for Billing and Payment Assistance.*

*Upload a copy of Bill (if known).*

3. The Specialised Assistance Team will process and confirm in response to the email when the Billing and Payment Assistance has been provided.

Billing and Payment Assistance may also be requested over the phone by contacting the Specialised Assistance Team at **1800 045 092** (please note this number is for community workers only). Over the phone requests may require additional follow-up by the team to validate third party authority.

For any questions contact [consumer.affairs@team.telstra.com](mailto:consumer.affairs@team.telstra.com).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Do I still need a voucher for Billing and Payment Assistance?**

Organisations no longer need physical vouchers to access the Billing and Payment Assistance Program for their clients. We are no longer accepting vouchers and we also will not be providing new physical vouchers at this time. However, **we are still providing Billing and Payment Assistance**.

If you have any remaining vouchers they may be destroyed and disposed of.

### **Do I have a limit of clients I can refer to Billing and Payment Assistance?**

There is no limit on the number of clients you can refer to the team for Billing and Payment Assistance.

Telstra trusts that organisations use their best judgement to determine that the client is in need and that the system is not gamed or abused.

### **Do I have a limit on the number of times a client can receive Billing and Payment Assistance?**

There is no limit on the number of times you can refer a client to the team for Billing and Payment Assistance.

Telstra's Billing and Payment Assistance Program provides **short-term financial relief** to customers in need of financial assistance. If your client is experiencing ongoing financial difficulties, they can [get in touch](#).

The full amount of Billing and Payment Assistance may be determined on a case-by-case basis if activity on assistance provided to the customer has been unusual. In cases like these, the Specialised Assistance Team will provide reasoning to the community organisation.

### **What is the maximum value of Billing and Payment Assistance I can provide?**

There is a limit of \$500 per calendar year available in Billing and Payment Assistance per client. There are some instances where this may be increased, but this requires internal escalations. The credit may be used in one instance, or over several requests depending on the individual circumstances of the client.

If your client is experiencing ongoing financial difficulties, they can [get in touch](#).

### **Can Billing and Payment Assistance be used to put a client's account in credit?**

No, the amount of credit applied to an account using Billing and Payment Assistance can only be used to cover existing outstanding amounts, not toward future usage costs.

### **Is Billing and Payment Assistance available for clients with other providers?**

No. Telstra Billing and Payment Assistance can only be used on Telstra services.

### **My client still needs assistance, who can I contact?**

[Click here](#) for more details on contacting the financial assistance team at Telstra or check the financial counsellor toolkit.

## Vulnerable Circumstance guidelines

Telstra trusts that our providers and organisations use their best judgement to determine that the client is in need and that the system is not gamed or abused.

A vulnerable circumstance can affect a customer's ability to pay for services. Customers in need of financial assistance may not be able to pay for a service without being placed at an increased risk of harm or disadvantage.

Vulnerable circumstances can impact anyone at any time. It may be permanent, long-term or transient. There are socio-demographic characteristics and personal situations which can increase the likelihood of vulnerability in some circumstances.

A customer may experience more than one vulnerability at a time. Vulnerability is situational, a customer can experience vulnerability in one situation but not in others, and some customers may be more vulnerable than others depending on the situation.

These circumstances do not always result in financial difficulty but may make someone more likely to find themselves in need of financial assistance.

Some of the life events or challenges that increase the likelihood of customer vulnerability include:

- Homelessness, or low income
- Natural disaster
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Mental health
- Food insecurity
- Refugees

Some of the personal, cultural or social characteristics that may lead to a higher likelihood of consumer vulnerability include:

- disability, accident, or illness
- age (very young or old)
- living in a regional or remote area or remote community
- having a first language other than English, diverse cultural backgrounds, assumptions or attitudes.

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