

Department of Social and Health Services

Olympia, Washington

EAZ Manual

Revision

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Category

Additional Requirements for Emergent Needs (AREN)

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Summary

Updated section to define landlord and clarify why we must send payments to vendors

See below for edited text:

**Emergency Assistance Programs - Additional Requirements
for Emergent Needs (AREN)**

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Worker Responsibilities - WAC 388-436-0002

Application Process

1. Clients may request AREN as follows:

- a. A client who **currently gets** TANF, SFA, or RCA, may request AREN by:
 - i. Completing the Emergency Assistance Request, DSHS 14-337(X), **or**

- ii. Requesting the assistance over the phone, and we will complete form DSHS 14-337(X).
 - b. A client who **doesn't get** TANF, SFA, or RCA must complete all of the following:
 - i. Cash assistance application as required in [WAC 388-406-0010, and](#)
 - ii. Emergency Assistance Request, DSHS 14-337(X).
2. Determine if AU is eligible for AREN per Clarifying Information #1 or WAC 388-436-0002
 - (1).
 - a. Obtain proof of the client's need and the cost it would take to end the emergency.
 - b. Determine if the assistance unit still has AREN funds available to resolve the emergent need. If not, the AU isn't eligible for AREN unless they meet ETR criteria.
 - c. Decide if AREN will meet the client's emergency housing or utility need. We can only use AREN to help a client get or keep housing and utility services. Use the AREN Emergency Needs Table to determine what needs are allowable through AREN. If not, the AU isn't eligible for AREN.
 - d. Decide if the client has good reason for why the AU doesn't have enough money to pay for the expense. If the client has good reason, continue to the next step. If not, the AU isn't eligible for AREN. Some questions to look at when you decide if a client has good reason include:
 - Did the client spend their money in a reasonable manner under the circumstances?
 - Was the client's choice of how they spent their funds reasonable at that time?
 - Did the client spend their money on necessary expenses?
 - Do the client's circumstances, such as mental or physical disability, explain why they used their money in a way that would not typically be looked at as a reasonable? If so, discuss Equal Access (EA) services available to the client.
 - Will paying the request meet the client's short-term emergency need, or will the client continue to need additional assistance? Will the action just delay what will happen anyway? If the request will just delay the emergency need, you may want to discuss other options with the client.
 - Is the client in non-compliance WorkFirst sanction with a reduced grant? If so they are not eligible for AREN.

Determine if an adult in the AU received AREN within the past twelve months.

- i. If so, they may receive the unused amount from the \$750 as applicable (this includes adults who left an AU that received AREN and reapply for AREN in a new AU), or submit Exception to Rule (ETR) request for payments that exceed the \$750 twelve-month limit using the ETR process. Headquarters will only approve AREN ETRs relating to health and safety. Some examples of ETR situations are:
 - A. Elderly or disabled clients.

- B. Clients who need access to emergency services. (e.g., a parent of a child who is on a ventilator would need a phone to contact an ambulance in an emergency).
 - C. Domestic violence victims or others who are likely to need police protection.
 - ii. If not, they may receive up to \$750.
- b. Determine the lowest amount that will end the client's emergency housing or utility need up to the twelve-month maximum of \$750, and issue the lowest amount needed to resolve the emergency completely, not just for a few months. Use the following steps to decide on the lowest amount:
- i. Contact the organization/person the client owes the payment to (e.g., landlord, utility company, etc.) and determine:
 - A. How to prevent eviction or utility shut-off.
 - B. Whether the ~~vendor~~organization/person will set up a reasonable payment plan or partial for the debt. **Don't provide legal advice or attempt to settle a client's legal claims.**
 - B.C. The landlord can be the owner, lessor, or sublessor of the home, unit or the property. Landlord can also mean any person designated as representative of the owner including, an agent, a resident manager, or a designated property manager.**
 - ii. Determine client's **available** resources to meet the need (e.g. cash, checking, savings) and reach an agreement with the client on how much of the need they can cover. Clients don't have to use all of their resources to meet the emergency need. Look at what other expenses the client may need to pay. The following are examples of possible resources:
 - A. Money on hand in the form of cash, checking or savings.
 - B. Income the AU has that isn't excluded for cash assistance. (income of an SSI child, earnings of an ineligible AU member, etc.)
 - C. Money voluntarily provided by other individuals such as family or friends.
 - D. Money from a non-needy relative caretaker living in the home.
 - iii. Check other resources that may be able to meet the client's needs.
 - iv. Look at what community resources are available to the client to meet the emergency need and refer as applicable (e.g. Catholic Charities, LIHEAP, Millionaire's Club, Multi-Service Center, Salvation Army, St. Luke's, St. Vincent DePaul, etc.).
- c. Refer all AREN requests for assistance beyond five hundred dollars and up to the seven hundred fifty dollar program limit to a supervisor or designee for approval of payment.
- d. Issue AREN for the approved needs by vendor payment after you determine the least amount necessary to meet a client's emergency housing or utility need. **You must issue AREN payments directly to a registered vendor to meet IRS guidelines.**

- e. Give or send the ACES letter 0075-02 AREN Status to the client.
- f. Review the circumstances that led to the client requesting AREN and decide if the client should have a protective payee under WAC 388-460-0020 and WAC 388-460-0035.
Refer the client to social services to get a payee if necessary.
- g. Document the following in the remarks of the AREN screen for the AU:
 - i. Date and amount of request,
 - ii. Eligibility for TANF/SFA or RCA,
 - iii. The type of housing/utility emergency the client has,
 - iv. The good reason for not having funds to meet their expenses,
 - v. The lowest amount needed to end the emergency need and how this amount (include the name, title, and phone number of the person you spoke with if you used a collateral contact),
 - vi. Whether or not you approved AREN,
 - vii. The vendor/landlord name and vendor ID number, and
 - viii. Amount approved (if any).