

NOVEMBER 24, 2025



**NV GEBE & SOCIAL SERVICES UTILITY RELIEF PROGRAM**

## **GEBE & Social Services Utility Relief Program**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Program Period:** December 1, 2025 - November 30, 2026 (1-year pilot)

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#### **GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION**

##### **What is this program?**

This is a one-year pilot program that provides utility bill relief to vulnerable members of the Sint Maarten community. It's a partnership between NV GEBE and the Government of Sint Maarten through the Division of Labor Affairs & Social Services.

##### **How does the program work?**

Eligible individuals receive monthly vouchers (worth XCG 50.00 each) that can be used to reduce their GEBE utility bills. These vouchers are distributed by Social Services and redeemed at GEBE offices when making payments.

##### **How long will this program run?**

The pilot program runs for 12 months, from December 1, 2025, through November 30, 2026. After this period, the program will be evaluated for possible extension.

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#### **ELIGIBILITY**

##### **Who can apply for this program?**

You may qualify if you meet ALL of the following requirements:

- You are a private individual (not a business or legal entity)
- You have a GEBE utility account in your name
- You are a legal resident of Sint Maarten with valid registration at the Civil Registry
- You are either already receiving financial aid from Social Services OR can demonstrate vulnerability and need for financial relief
- You can provide all required documentation

## **Who is NOT eligible?**

You cannot participate if you:

- Are a business, vendor, tradesman, or sole proprietor
- Do not have utilities registered in your name
- Are not approved by Social Services as a vulnerable member of society

## **I already receive financial aid from Social Services. Am I automatically enrolled?**

Not automatically, but you may be eligible. Contact Social Services to confirm your enrollment in the utility relief program.

## **I don't currently receive financial aid. Can I still apply?**

Yes! New applicants who can demonstrate vulnerability and need may apply directly to Social Services.

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## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **How do I apply?**

1. Contact Social Services in person or via email [reliefprogram@sintmaartengov.org](mailto:reliefprogram@sintmaartengov.org)
2. Request an application form and list of required documents
3. Submit your completed application with all supporting documentation
4. Wait for Social Services to assess your application
5. If approved, you'll be notified and enrolled for the next voucher distribution cycle

### **What documents do I need to apply?**

Required documents include:

- Valid government-issued photo ID (driver's license, passport, or national ID)
- Immigration/residence permit (if applicable)
- Proof of address (recent utility bill, lease agreement, or official mail)
- Last 3 months of GEBE utility bills in your name
- Proof of income:
  - If employed: Last 3 months of pay slips OR employment letter

- If self-employed: Business registration and recent financial records
- If unemployed: Termination letter or proof of job loss
- If a pensioner : AOV / Pension statements
- Proof of other household income (if applicable)
- Medical documentation (if claiming medical hardship)

**Note:** Applications without complete documentation will not be processed.

### **How long does the application process take?**

Processing times vary depending on application volume and completeness of your documentation. Contact Social Services for current processing timeframes.

### **What happens if my application is denied?**

You will receive written notification explaining the reason for denial. You may reapply if your circumstances change. You may also object to the decision.

## **VOUCHERS**

### **How much assistance can I receive?**

You can receive up to XCG 250.00 per month (5 vouchers × XCG 50.00 each). The exact amount depends on your household size and income level:

#### **Income 0-50% of minimum wage:**

- Household 1-2 people: Up to XCG 150/month
- Household 3-4 people: Up to XCG 200/month
- Household 5+ people: Up to XCG 250/month

#### **Income 51-150% of minimum wage:**

- Household 1-2 people: Up to XCG 100/month
- Household 3-4 people: Up to XCG 150/month
- Household 5+ people: Up to XCG 200/month

#### **Income 151-185% of minimum wage:**

- All household sizes: Up to XCG 100/month

**When will I receive my vouchers?**

Vouchers are distributed monthly by Social Services. Once approved, you'll receive your vouchers according to Social Services' distribution schedule.

**How long are vouchers valid?**

Each voucher is valid for 3 months from the date of issue. Check the date on your voucher and use it before it expires.

**Can I give my vouchers to someone else?**

No. Vouchers are non-transferable and can only be used by the person whose name appears on the voucher.

**Can I exchange vouchers for cash?**

No. Vouchers cannot be exchanged for cash and can only be used to pay your GEBE utility bill.

**What if I lose my vouchers?**

Report lost vouchers to Social Services immediately. You may receive replacement vouchers if:

- The vouchers haven't been redeemed
- The vouchers haven't expired
- You report the loss promptly

**Important:** You can only request lost voucher replacements twice during the program year. After two occurrences, additional requests require special approval.

**What if my voucher has a printing error?**

Vouchers with production errors (wrong name, incorrect amount, missing signatures, etc.) will be replaced immediately. Return the defective voucher to Social Services or GEBE, and you'll receive a replacement within 2 business days.

**What happens if my vouchers expire?**

Expired vouchers generally cannot be replaced or extended. Exceptions may be made only for:

- Hospitalization or medical incapacity during the validity period (requires medical documentation)
- Program administrative errors
- Natural disasters or emergencies that prevented redemption

Contact Social Services with documentation if you believe an exception applies to your situation.

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## **USING YOUR VOUCHERS**

### **How do I use my vouchers?**

1. Visit a GEBE office to pay your utility bill
2. Present your voucher(s) with valid government-issued ID
3. GEBE will verify your vouchers and identity
4. Pay any remaining balance after the voucher deduction, or arrange a payment plan
5. Receive a receipt showing the applied voucher amount

### **Do the vouchers pay my entire bill?**

Not necessarily. Vouchers reduce your bill amount, but you must pay any remaining balance or arrange a payment plan with GEBE. If you cannot pay the remaining balance or set up a payment plan, the voucher will not be accepted.

### **Can I use vouchers at any GEBE office?**

Yes, you can redeem vouchers at any GEBE office location during business hours.

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## **ONGOING PARTICIPATION**

### **How long will I receive assistance?**

As long as you remain eligible, you can receive assistance throughout the one-year pilot program. Your eligibility will be reviewed every two months.

### **What is the bimonthly eligibility review?**

Every two months, Social Services reviews all participants to ensure they still meet eligibility criteria. You may be asked to provide updated documentation to confirm your continued need for assistance.

### **What if my situation changes?**

Notify Social Services immediately if:

- Your income increases significantly
- You move or change addresses
- Your household size changes
- You no longer need assistance
- Your GEBE account information changes

### **Can I be removed from the program?**

Yes. You may be removed if:

- You no longer meet eligibility criteria
- You fail to provide required documentation during bimonthly reviews
- You commit fraud or misuse the program
- You request to leave the program

You'll receive written notification if you're removed from the program.

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## **PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **Is my information confidential?**

Yes. Your personal information is protected under Sint Maarten's Data Protection Ordinance. Both Social Services and GEBE are committed to keeping your information secure and confidential.

### **How is my information used?**

Your information is used only for:

- Determining and verifying eligibility
- Issuing and tracking vouchers
- Program administration and evaluation

### **Who can see my information?**

Only authorized staff at Social Services and GEBE who need the information to administer the program. Your information will not be shared with third parties except as required by law.

### **What are my privacy rights?**

You have the right to:

- Know what information is collected and how it's used
- Access your personal information
- Request corrections to inaccurate information
- Object to certain uses of your information
- Request deletion of your information when you leave the program

Contact Social Services to exercise these rights.

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## **COMPLAINTS & QUESTIONS**

### **What if I have a problem or complaint?**

1. Submit your complaint in writing to Social Services
2. Social Services will investigate within 15 business days
3. You'll receive a written response
4. If unresolved, you may escalate to the Minister of Public Health, Social Development & Labor

### **Who do I contact with questions?**

#### **Social Services:**

- Email: [reliefprogram@sintmaartengov.org](mailto:reliefprogram@sintmaartengov.org)

#### **GEBE:**

- Contact information available at GEBE offices

## **Where can I get help with my application?**

Contact Social Services directly for application assistance, document requirements, and eligibility questions.

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### **IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

- ✓ Keep your vouchers in a safe place
  - ✓ Use vouchers before they expire (3-month validity)
  - ✓ Bring valid ID when redeeming vouchers
  - ✓ Pay or arrange payment plans for remaining balances
  - ✓ Report changes in your circumstances to Social Services
  - ✓ Respond promptly to bimonthly review requests
  - ✓ Keep copies of all documentation submitted
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**This is a pilot program designed to help vulnerable members of our community. Please use the program responsibly and notify Social Services if you no longer need assistance so resources can help others in need.**

*Last Updated: November 2025*