
Low Income Energy Conservation & Financial Support Programs

June 2017

Purpose

- To provide information on energy conservation and support programs available to low income residential customers and social housing providers in Ontario.

Context

- The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) estimates that there are 713,000 low-income households in Ontario*. This statistic includes both single family homes and multi-residential buildings. According to Statistics Canada, of these households:
 - About half reside in single family homes, and half in multi-residential dwellings
 - About 40% own and 60% rent**
- Low income households often face financial hardship, which can lead to service disconnections, bill arrears or households having to choose between paying their energy bill or for other basic needs.
- Ontario offers conservation and energy efficiency programs which provide low income customers with energy efficiency upgrades and education at no cost to help improve the energy efficiency and comfort of their homes.
 - Programs can help customers get on a more sustainable path with their energy bills
- Ontario also has in place financial assistance (“energy support”) programs for low-income electricity and natural gas customers who are having trouble paying their bills. These programs provide emergency financial relief or ongoing reduction on the electricity bill to qualifying customers, to help avoid having their service disconnected.
- Both conservation and support programs use income eligibility criteria to identify and verify that they are reaching customers who are in need.

* OEB, “Report of the Board, Developing an Ontario Electricity Support Program,” December 2014.

** Statistics Canada, 2006.

Overview of Low-Income Programs

Conservation and Energy Efficiency Programs

Energy Support Programs

Future Programs

Program Governance & Delivery

Conservation and Energy Efficiency Programs:

- The 2015-2020 Conservation First Framework (CFF) is overseen by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO). The CFF governs the delivery of electricity efficiency programs and provides the funding, guidelines and certainty for local distribution companies (LDCs) to deliver programs to their customers.
 - All LDCs are required to deliver programs to each of their customer segments.
 - LDCs have flexibility to design and deliver local programs tailored to their customers' needs.
 - To ensure all electricity ratepayers have access to a core set of programs, the Minister of Energy issued a Direction to the IESO on December 16, 2016 that requires that province-wide programs, including the Home Assistance Program for low income residential customers, in all LDC service territories.
- The 2015-2020 Demand Side Management (DSM) Framework is overseen by the OEB and governs the delivery of natural gas conservation and energy efficiency programs. The DSM Framework provides the funding, guidelines and certainty needed for natural gas distributors to deliver programs to their customers including low income households.
- On March 2, 2017, the government announced the establishment of an Affordability Fund as part of its Fair Hydro Plan, funded from the tax base.

Energy Support Programs:

- Energy support programs are delivered by natural gas and electricity distributors with OEB oversight.
- Amendments to the *OEB Act* provide the necessary authority to allow the OEB and MCSS to share customer data, to increase uptake of the Ontario Electricity Support Program (see later slides).

Climate Change Action Plan/Green Ontario Fund Programs:

- The Ministry of Energy is working with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to develop new Climate Change Action Plan programs, and ensure that new programs are complementary and leverage existing infrastructure where possible.

Conservation and Energy Efficiency Programs

- Conservation programs for low-income consumers are offered under the 2015-2020 CFF and the DSM Framework, funded through electricity and natural gas rates.
- These programs require participants to meet a mandated definition of low-income.



For Single Family Homes

- The Save on Energy Home Assistance Program (HAP)**, delivered by LDCs and the IESO helps qualified homeowners, tenants and social housing providers improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
- HAP provides a free home energy audit, and wide range of free energy efficient measures, such as lighting, household appliances, and weatherization (if electrically-heated).
- Eligible customers can also receive additional free energy efficient measures for health and safety upgrades.
- Eligible dwellings include detached or semi-detached houses, townhouses, mobile homes
- For more information:
<https://saveonenergy.ca/Consumer/Programs/Home-Assistance-Program.aspx>

HAP Eligibility:

- Residents of an eligible non-profit housing property; or
- Owns, rents or leases the residence and is the primary or secondary utility account holder listed on the bill; and
- Annual household income for the previous year (after tax income of all household members aged 18 or older) that meets the criteria:

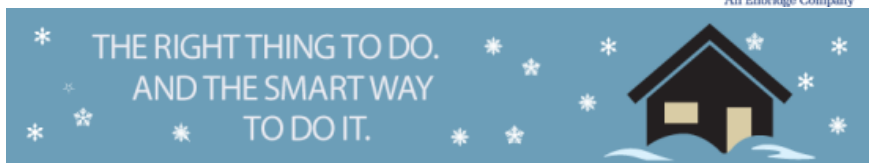
Number of people living in home	After-tax annual household income
1 person	\$21,773
2 people	\$30,792
3 people	\$37,712
4 people	\$43,546
5 people	\$48,686
6 people	\$53,333
7 people	\$57,606
8 people	\$61,583
9 people	\$65,319
10 people	\$68,852

Or, the individual has received a social program benefit from a list of Ontario programs, for example, National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS), Allowance for Seniors, Ontario Works. There is inter-program coordination in that if an individual is eligible for LEAP EFA or OESP they are also eligible for the Home Assistance Program.¹

Conservation and Energy Efficiency Programs (cont'd)

For Single Family Homes

- The Enbridge Gas Distribution **Home Winterproofing Program** and the Union Gas **Home Weatherization Program** offer eligible low-income customers free home energy assessment, weatherization services like insulation and air sealing, water conservation measures like showerheads and aerators, programmable thermostat, and a carbon monoxide monitor when one is not present.
- All energy efficiency measures are directly installed by delivery agents for the customer, so there is no cost to a participant.
- For more information:
 - <http://energy-savings-programs.ca/winterproofing-program/>
 - <https://www.uniongas.com/residential/save-money-energy/rebates-promotions/weatherization>



Home Winterproofing and Home Weatherization Program Eligibility

- Home is heated by natural gas.
- Customer of Enbridge Gas Distribution or Union Gas
- Pay your own natural gas bill
- Have eligible income level OR have qualified for another government assistance program, including OESP and HAP.



Conservation and Energy Efficiency Programs (cont'd)

For Multi-Residential Buildings

- The **Home Assistance Program** is also available to duplexes, triplexes or other multi-residential buildings less than three storeys high.
- The **Save on Energy Retrofit Program**, delivered by LDCs and the IESO, offers up to 50% of equipment and efficiency upgrades to the social and assisted housing provider.
- Social housing providers are eligible for advance funding of as much as 50% of the estimated participant incentives for equipment replacement projects.
- For more information:
<https://saveonenergy.ca/Business/Program-Overviews/Social-Housing.aspx>
- Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas offer **Affordable Housing Programs** to low-income multi-residential buildings, providing incentives for up to 50% or \$100,000 of the project costs for energy efficiency measures and equipment, as well as offering buildings assessment walkthroughs and subsidized energy audits.
- Enbridge Gas Distribution offers a **Low-Income New Construction** program that offers incentives up to 25% and tools to help builders and project managers on designing and building energy efficient low-income multi-residential buildings.
- For more information: <http://www.uniongas.com/business> and <https://enbridgegas.com/business>

Social and Assisted Housing



Making Social and Assisted Housing More Energy-Efficient

Get Started

Energy Support Programs

A number of support programs are delivered by natural gas and electricity distributors with OEB oversight :

- The **Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)** provides low-income consumers with a fixed monthly on-bill credit to reduce their electricity bill.
 - Customers with unique electricity needs, such as customers using electric heating, customers relying on certain electricity intensive medical devices, are eligible for an enhanced credit amount.
- The **Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)** provides emergency financial assistance through a one-time grant towards the electricity or natural gas bill to help in an emergency situation. Funding is available in these amounts:
 - Up to \$500 for electricity bills (\$600 if the customer has electric heating), and
 - Up to \$500 for natural gas bills
- **Special Rules** are in place, whereby utilities have to follow these when dealing with customers with limited finances, for example waiving security deposits, allowing longer payment times, a longer grace period if facing disconnection, and more.

OESP and LEAP Eligibility

		Household Size						
		1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 or More Persons
Household After Tax Income	≤ \$28,000	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	\$28,001- \$39,000	-	-	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	\$39,001- \$48,000	-	-	-	-	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	\$48,001- \$52,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	Eligible

Energy Support Programs (cont'd)

OESP & the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan:

- On March 2, 2017, the Government announced the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan (OFHP). Starting this summer, the OFHP will provide households with an average 25% reduction on their electricity bills and shift the OESP program from the ratepayer to the tax-base.
- In addition to this reduction, effective May 1, 2017, OESP credit amounts increased by 50% across the board, and new eligibility categories were introduced.

For more information:

- Ontario Electricity Support Program (<https://ontarioelectricitysupport.ca/>)
- LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance (<https://www.oeb.ca/rates-and-your-bill/help-low-income-consumers>)



Ontario Energy Board
Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario

Alert

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There's help for lower-income households. Get help. Start now.

Ready to start your application?
Click the "New Application" button below.

NEW APPLICATION

Welcome to the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP). If you are a customer of an electricity utility and in a lower-income home, you may qualify for a reduction on your electricity bill. [Click here](#) to learn more about it. The OESP will reduce the cost of your household electricity by applying a monthly credit directly to your bill. The credit amount will depend on how many people live in your home and your combined household income.

Do you have a previous application with OESP?
Click the "Renew Application" button below.

RENEW APPLICATION



Do you want to check the status of your application?
If so, you can log into your account or check your status using your application reference number.

Programs under Development

Affordability Fund (Ontario Fair Hydro Plan)

- Announced March 2, 2017 and under development, the Affordability Fund is intended to assist electricity customers who cannot qualify for the Home Assistance Program and need financial assistance to undertake energy efficiency improvements.

Climate Change Action Plan/Green Ontario Fund Programs

- In June 2016, Ontario Government released the province's **Climate Change Action Plan**. The areas of action in this plan cross a wide spectrum, and include proposed initiatives to help homeowners and businesses access and finance energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies to reduce greenhouse gas pollution from buildings.
- For more information, please visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/climate-change-action-plan>.
- As part of the Climate Change Action Plan Ontario has made a commitment to:
 - Boost low-carbon technologies in homes, including providing an increased benefit for low-income households and vulnerable communities.
 - Invest up to \$500 million to retrofit social housing apartments with energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies.
 - As early action, through the Green Investment Fund, in 2016-2017 the Ministry of Housing is investing \$82 million in energy retrofits for social housing apartment buildings and \$10 million in retrofits for single social housing homes (often in smaller and rural communities).



Ministry of Energy Contacts

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