



Overview

In March 2017, the Government of Ontario has established a \$100 million Affordability Fund as part of the Fair Hydro Plan to assist electricity customers who do not qualify for low-income conservation programs.

KEY MESSAGES

- The Affordability Fund helps families and individuals in Ontario having difficulty paying their electricity bills.
- The Fund will provide assistance to households who do not qualify for low-income conservation programs and are unable to make energy efficient improvements without financial assistance.
- This might be a family or individual who is just getting by or, in some cases, having to make difficult decisions in order to pay their bills. The conversation with the Affordability Fund starts with a yes; every family and individual who contacts the Affordability Fund will receive support to reduce their monthly electricity bills.
- The Affordability Fund is an easy-to-enroll program that helps families and individuals through upgrades to their home that will help make it more energy-efficient and in turn, will save them money. These upgrades could include, for example, block heater timers, efficient shower heads, LEDs and with further evaluations, appliances, programmable thermostat and insulation.
- The Affordability Fund is an additional tool to assist families and individuals in need of assistance.
- The Affordability Fund Trust is an independent Board of Trustees from the social service and utility sectors. Funding for the Affordability Fund is provided by the Province of Ontario.

FAQ

How does the Affordability Fund work?

The Affordability Fund is an easy-to-enroll program – affordabilityfund.org or 1-855-494-FUND (3863) - that helps families and individuals through upgrades to their home that will help make it more energy-efficient and in turn, will save them money. These upgrades could include, for example, block heater times, efficient shower heads, LEDs and with further evaluations, appliances, programmable thermostat and insulation.

Who qualifies for the Affordability Fund?

The Affordability Fund is an easy-to-enrol program that helps families and individuals through upgrades to their home that will help make it more energy-efficient and in turn, will save them money. To be eligible, individuals must own, rent, or lease a primary residence in Ontario and must be the utility account holder named in respect of the residence. The types of upgrades provided are relative to the support required by the customer; further evaluations may be required to access some supports. The benefits provided through the Affordability Fund are intended to provide lasting savings.

What type of energy efficient equipment will be provided?

The types of upgrades provided are relative to the support required by the customer; further evaluations may be required to access some supports. Upgrades include the provision of energy efficiency basics including power bars, block heater timers, efficient shower heads, LEDs or aerators.

With a further evaluation (in-home validation and home energy investment plan) performed, customers could qualify for new equipment such as a refrigerator, freezer, window air conditioner, dehumidifier, programmable thermostat, heat pump, comprehensive draft proofing, attic insulation, wall insulation and/or basement insulation.

How much support can I receive?

The types of upgrades provided are relative to the support required by the customer; further evaluations may be required to access some supports. The benefits provided through the Affordability Fund are intended to provide lasting savings.

If pressed:

The levels of support provided through the Affordability Fund are relative to the household's electricity bill and disposable income.

How many Ontarians will be helped by the Affordability Fund?

The Affordability Fund will help families and individuals through upgrades to their home that will help make it more energy-efficient and in turn, will save them money.

If pressed:

Local utilities are rolling out the Affordability Fund over the coming months but every Ontarian who is struggling with their electricity bill may contact the Affordability Fund **today** to determine what type of support they are eligible for.

Who is delivering the Affordability Fund?

Local utilities are delivering the Affordability Fund.

If pressed:

Local utilities are rolling out the Affordability Fund over the coming months but every Ontarian who is struggling with their electricity bill may contact the Affordability Fund **today** to determine what type of support they are eligible for.

Can individuals who live outside the service area of a participating utility apply to the Affordability Fund?

Families and individuals who reside within the service area of a non-participating utility will work with a neighbouring utility participating in the Affordability Fund. They may contact the Fund directly – affordabilityfund.org or 1-855-494-FUND (3863).

How is the Affordability Fund different from HAP, LEAP, and OESP?

The Affordability Fund is intended to help customers make their home more energy efficient, in situations where the customer could not afford to make energy efficiency improvements and who do not qualify for low-income support programs such as the Home Assistance Program, Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

Can people who qualify for HAP, LEAP and OESP qualify for the AFT?

Individuals who qualify for the Home Assistance Program, Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and the Ontario Electricity Support Program are not eligible for additional equipment offered under the Affordability Fund.

How long does the application process take?

The application process is straight-forward. Applicants can visit affordabilityfund.org or call 1-855-494-FUND (3863) and answer quick four questions to get families and individuals the support they need to reduce their electricity costs. Once this is complete, a representative from the Affordability Fund will contact the applicant within a week of applying and refer them to their utility to initiate next steps which could include an in-home visit.

If pressed:

Local utilities are rolling out the Affordability Fund over the coming months but every Ontarian who is struggling with their electricity bill may contact the Affordability Fund **today** to determine what type of support they are eligible for.

Will everyone who applies benefit?

For people having a problem paying their electricity bill, the Affordability Fund is going to help. Eligible customers must own, rent, or lease a primary residence in Ontario and be the utility account holder named in respect of the residence. They must self-identify as struggling with their electricity bill and not currently enrolled in the Ontario Electricity Support Program, Low-income Energy Assistance Program and/or the Home Assistance Program.

How will the Affordability Fund help customers save money, if it doesn't provide a credit on their bill?

Eligible customers will benefit from upgrades to their home that will help make it more energy-efficient and in turn, will reduce their electricity bills.

Who is administering the Affordability Fund?

The Affordability Fund is being administered by Hydro One on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Are administration fees capped?

Administrative fees for the \$100 Million Affordability Fund are capped at 10%.

Who is on the Board of Trustees for the Affordability Fund?

- The Board of Trustees for the Affordability Fund is comprised of members from both utility and social service agencies plus one non-voting member from the Government of Ontario. This includes:
 - Michael Allen, President & CEO, United Way Ottawa (Chair)
 - Warren Lister, VP Customer Service, Hydro One Networks Inc. (Vice-Chair)
 - Raegan Bond, VP Conservation Demand Management, Alectra Utilities
 - Tim Wilson, VP Customer & Information Services, Thunder Bay Hydro Electricity Distribution Inc.
 - Denise Arkell, Executive Director, Neighbour to Neighbour Centre
 - Kaili Sermat-Harding, Assistant Deputy Minister, Conservation and Renewable Energy Division, Ontario Ministry of Energy (non-voting member)