# Re: MPP request: Home Assistance Program

**From:** "Imbrogno, Serge (ENERGY)" <"/o=govon/ou=ontario public sector - iserv ems/cn=recipients/cn=imbrognose">
**To:** "Berg, Denna (ENERGY)" <denna.berg@ontario.ca>
**Cc:** "Katona, Keley (ENERGY)" <keley.katona@ontario.ca>
**Date:** Wed, 12 Oct 2016 10:24:28 -0400

Looks ok. Thanks

Sent from my iPad

On Oct 12, 2016, at 10:20 AM, Berg, Denna (ENERGY) <Denna.Berg@ontario.ca> wrote:

Hi Deputy,

Below is an MPP request re: Save on Energy program, please confirm comfort for sharing with the MO.

Thanks,

Denna

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## Request

With regards to Save On Energy Home Assistance Program, would the income limits be set by the government, one of our agencies or the utility?

## Suggested Response

The Save On Energy Home Assistance Program helps qualified Ontario homeowners, tenants and social and/or assisted housing providers improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Eligibility is based on the dwelling type and the electricity customer's income level. In 2016, to align the program with new energy support programs in Ontario, the income thresholds were adjusted. The current after-tax annual household income threshold for one person living in a home is $21,773. The person can also qualify if they live in social housing or have received social benefits from Ontario Works or the Ontario Electricity Support Program, for example.

## Additional Background

HAP was designed by the Ontario Power Authority (now part of the Independent Electricity System Operator or IESO) in collaboration with Ontario's local distribution companies. The levels determining income-eligibility for HAP were set by the OPA in consultation with the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and low income advocates like the Low Income Energy Network.

There are two poverty measures used by Statistics Canada, the Low Income Cut Offs (LICOs) and Low Income Measures (LIMs).

- LICOs are estimated thresholds below which a family is likely to spend significantly more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family. The measure considers both family and community size.
- LIMs measure low-income from a distributional perspective - defined as half of the median adjusted economic family income. "Adjusted" indicates that family size has been factored in since, for example, the shelter costs for two persons living together may be higher than that for one person living alone. For this reason, LIM's is considered a more accurate measure by low income advocates.

From 2011-2014, the Home Assistance Program used the LICO to determine income-eligibility. In an effort to align eligibility criteria and ease qualification and intake efforts for partnering social service organizations, Ontario's two largest gas utilities, Enbridge Gas and Union Gas, also applied LICO to their low income natural gas conservation programs.

In January 2016, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), under directive from the Ministry of Energy, launched the Ontario Electricity Support Program to provide low-income electricity consumers with ongoing financial support. The program uses the LIM.

To remain aligned, the IESO updated the income-eligibility criteria of the Home Assistance Program to LIM, and expanded eligibility criteria to electricity customers who qualify for the OESP, which is the reason for the change in the program's income limits.

The OEB intends to take further steps to amend their Low Income Energy Assistance Program emergency funding assistance criteria to use LIM instead of LICO, which would be consistent with OESP and conservation programs.

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