

OESP & LEAP Program Manual

Effective: October 2015

PURPOSE

The OESP & LEAP Program Manual (the Manual) is intended to guide the delivery of the Ontario Energy Board's (the OEB) Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) and Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP).

This Manual will serve as a program guide for the agencies performing intake for OESP and/or LEAP (intake agencies). It describes the eligibility criteria, the roles of the intake agencies, and the application processes involved in delivering each program.

The intake process for OESP must be performed in accordance with this Manual. The eligibility criteria for the OESP must be strictly applied in all cases.

With respect to LEAP, in order to accommodate the unique needs of intake agencies and service providers, some aspects of the administration of LEAP emergency financial assistance (LEAP EFA) have been left to the discretion of those agencies and service providers. This Manual clearly indicates when such discretion is allowed and when it is not.

The OEB believes that assistance for low-income energy customers should be offered on a consistent basis across the province. In particular, low-income energy customers should have access to similar services irrespective of where they live and the utility that serves them. Adherence to the Manual will help ensure such consistency.

More information about the development and design of the OESP and LEAP can be found in:

- ❖ *Report of the Board: Developing an Ontario Electricity Support Program* (December 2014); and
- ❖ *Report of the Board: Low Income Energy Assistance Program* (March 2009) ¹

¹ Note that some elements of OESP and LEAP EFA differ slightly from what was recommended in the respective OEB reports. This is primarily due to design changes that were made as each program was implemented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *OESP & LEAP Programs Manual* was developed by the OEB with the valued assistance of the Financial Assistance Working Group (FAWG).

This Manual was adapted from the *LEAP EFA Manual* that was developed by the FAWG in 2009. The Manual was revised to reflect the OESP and changes to LEAP resulting from the 2014 review of LEAP EFA.

The *LEAP EFA Manual* was based on prior work completed by the developers of the *Winter Warmth Program Process Manual*.

Sincere thanks to all the organizations involved for their current and prior contributions.

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1. HELP AVAILABLE FOR LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS: OESP, LEAP EFA, CUSTOMER SERVICE RULES, AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Together, OESP and LEAP encompass four types of assistance for low-income energy customers.

OESP provides ongoing rate assistance to electricity customers (it is not offered for natural gas). It will reduce electricity bills for low-income customers and is intended to thereby, to improve payment patterns and reduce disconnections of electricity service.

LEAP is available to natural gas and electricity customers and includes three components:

- ❖ Emergency Financial Assistance, referred to throughout this Manual as “LEAP EFA,” provides a one-time grant to help customers avoid disconnection;
- ❖ Customer service rules ensure utilities provide more flexibility to low-income customers; and,
- ❖ Targeted conservation and demand management programs help low-income customers reduce their energy costs by reducing their energy usage.

As much as possible, the OEB wishes to provide “one window” access to these programs. It is expected that as agencies screen and assess applicants in need, that they will direct customers to the OESP, LEAP EFA (if needed), and/or energy conservation programs. Upon enrolling in either the OESP or LEAP EFA, customers are automatically eligible for access to the LEAP customer service rules through their local distributor. Customers who receive assistance under the OESP may not need to access a LEAP EFA grant. It is expected, however, that customers who wish to access a LEAP EFA grant for their electricity arrears will apply for OESP since this will improve the likelihood that they can sustain electricity service after the LEAP EFA grant has been provided.

1.1 Who is Eligible for OESP and LEAP?

Customers with an after tax household income at or less than the thresholds set out in the OESP sliding scales, taking into account household size (which were derived from Statistics Canada Low-Income Measure), as set out in Appendix B, will be eligible for the OESP and LEAP.

There are additional eligibility requirements for LEAP EFA, which are set out in section 3.2 of this Manual.

1.2 What is OESP?

The OESP is rate assistance program for low-income households. It provides an on-bill rate reduction for customers who have been determined to be eligible for certain rate classes.

The OESP could benefit more than 500,000 low-income Ontario households that are customers of electricity distributors and unit sub-meter providers (together, these are referred to as electricity service providers).²

Electricity customers can apply for the OESP online, through the application portal at www.OntarioElectricitySupport.ca or www.AideElectriciteOntario.ca hosted by a central service provider (CSP), or through local intake agencies. The delivery of the OESP relies heavily on the cooperation between utilities, intake agencies, and the CSP.

Funding for the OESP comes from a per kilowatt-hour electricity charge paid by all electricity customers in Ontario, including residential, commercial and industrial customers. The charge is set annually by the OEB. The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) will manage the collection and distribution of funds to cover program costs.

1.3 What is LEAP EFA?

LEAP EFA is a grant program intended to provide emergency relief to eligible low-income customers who may be experiencing difficulty paying current arrears. It is intended to be applied only to outstanding gas or electricity bill payments. It is not intended to provide regular or ongoing bill payment assistance.

Customers of natural gas and electricity distributors³, as well as unit sub-meter providers are eligible for LEAP EFA.

Although LEAP EFA is funded by all ratepayers through each distributor's rates, distributors and social agencies may also raise money from private donations to supplement LEAP EFA funding. Unlike the OESP, the funds provided by a particular distributor for LEAP EFA must be used only for that distributor's customers, or customers of unit sub-meter providers operating within that distributor's service area.

Customers can apply for LEAP through an intake agency that has partnered with the local distributor. The delivery of LEAP EFA relies heavily on the cooperation between distributors and social service agencies.

² This includes customers who have signed a contract with an electricity retailer.

³ This includes customers who have signed a contract with an electricity or natural gas retailer.

1.4 Which Utilities Offer OESP and LEAP EFA?

Generally, all electricity distributors and unit sub-meter providers⁴ are required by the OEB to deliver the OESP.

Similarly, all electricity and natural gas distributors are expected to offer LEAP EFA.⁵ LEAP EFA is also available to eligible low-income customers of unit sub-meter providers. The funds for these customers come from the electricity distributor that serves the area where the applicant lives. Therefore, if an applicant provides an electricity bill from a unit sub-meter provider, the agency must inquire as to the relevant electricity distributor. This information can be confirmed by phoning the unit sub-meter provider.

A list of electricity and natural gas distributors and unit sub-meter providers that deliver LEAP is available on the OEB's website. A list of electricity distributors and unit sub-meter providers that deliver OESP is available on the OESP portal.

1.5 How are Customers Referred to OESP and LEAP EFA and Connected with the Appropriate Intake Agency?

It is anticipated that referrals to the OESP and LEAP EFA will come from a variety of sources, including utility customer service representatives, community service agencies, 211 Ontario, the OEB's Consumer Relations group and offices of government and/or political representatives.

If a customer wishes to apply only for the OESP, he or she should be directed to the OESP portal. Customers who cannot use the OESP portal for any reason may be referred to the intake agency most conveniently located for the customer (e.g. near work or home etc.) regardless of whether the agency happens to be partnered with the customer's electricity service provider to provide LEAP EFA.

If a customer wishes to apply for both the OESP and LEAP EFA, or only LEAP EFA, the customer would be referred to the closest agency partnered with the customer's electricity service provider.

⁴ Some unit sub-meter providers do not currently offer the OESP because they do not serve residential customers.

⁵ Dubreuil Lumber Inc., is not rate-regulated by the OEB and does not offer LEAP EFA.

2. The Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)

This chapter provides detailed information about the OESP delivery and the application process.

2.1 *Delivering OESP: Who Does What?*

There are many entities involved in delivering the OESP. Their respective roles and responsibilities are detailed below.

Ontario Energy Board (OEB)

The OEB provides the regulatory framework required to facilitate the delivery of OESP, including the following:

- Establishing program rules and processes
- Setting the charge for all electricity customers to cover the costs of the OESP
- Setting the rate-reduction, referred to as credits, for recipients
- Monitoring and evaluating the program

Central Service Provider (CSP)

The OEB has selected a CSP to administer the OESP. The CSP will receive all applications for the program and determine each applicant's eligibility with the help of the Ministry of Finance and intake agencies. The CSP will also communicate eligibility determinations to applicants.

Specifically, the CSP is responsible for the following tasks:

- Maintaining the online application portal
- Receiving all electronic and paper applications
- Verifying applicants' account information with their electricity service provider
- Ensuring that applicants' signed consent form, if applicable, is properly signed and received, including sending a reminder to applicants who have not yet mailed it in
- Determining applicants' eligibility with the help of intake agencies and the Ministry of Finance
- Determining the OESP credits for eligible customers who do not file taxes

- Informing electricity service providers of their eligible customers, the OESP credit that each eligible customer should receive, and the duration of each customer's eligibility
- Notifying applicants when their application has been approved or denied and, if approved, the OESP credit that they will receive, and the number of months for which they will receive it
- Providing information to the public about the program, how to apply, how to navigate the portal, and providing assistance to people who have difficulty completing the application
- Managing a contact centre for questions and concerns about the program
- Reporting to the OEB

Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the following tasks:

- Verifying the household income of applicants who are tax-filers through the Canada Revenue Agency
- Determining the OESP credit for which approved applicants are eligible
- Communicating the credit for approved applicants to the CSP (reflecting the approved amounts)
- Reporting to the OEB

Intake Agencies

The OESP intake agencies are responsible for the following tasks:

- Providing the CSP, electricity service providers, and the OEB with up to date contact information
- Answering program questions and redirecting customers to the OESP portal or OESP contact centre to complete their application or get more information
- Pre-screening applicants on the phone or in person for eligibility
- Managing Agent IDs and passwords
- Manually verifying the household income of applicants who have not filed a tax return in respect of the last two tax years, or for applicants whose household employment/income circumstances have changed since they last filed their taxes
- Informing applicants who do not meet the income eligibility criteria based on the manual verification of income performed by the agency, that they are not eligible for the program

- Assisting applicants with completing and submitting online and paper applications to the CSP
- Mailing the OESP consent form on behalf of applicants, if requested
- Referring customers to LEAP EFA and other energy financial assistance programs and/or conservation programs, where applicable

Electricity Service Providers (Distributors and Unit Sub-Meter Providers)

Electricity service providers are responsible for the following tasks:

- Verifying customer accounts with the CSP
- Applying the credit to customers' bills in accordance with the Distribution System Code or the Unit Sub-Metering Code, as applicable
- Answering program questions and redirecting customers to the OESP portal or OESP contact centre to complete their application or get more information
- Notifying recipients when they must reapply for the program (e.g. when they move, when their eligibility expires etc.)
- Reporting to the OEB

2.2 Eligibility Criteria for OESP

Customers of electricity service providers with an after-tax household income equal to, or less than, the thresholds set out in the OESP sliding scales, taking into account household size, are eligible for the OESP. The eligibility thresholds were derived from Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure and are set out in Appendix B.

The number of people living in the household and their combined income will be used to determine the OESP credit an applicant will receive.

2.3 OESP Application Process

Electricity customers can apply for the OESP independently or with the assistance of an intake agency. This chapter will outline how agencies will perform intake for the OESP.

There are three ways to apply for the OESP:

SELF-SERVE AUTOMATIC INCOME VERIFICATION (AIV): If all members of the household (above the age of 16) have recently filed taxes, customers can apply independently, either online through the OESP portal, or by mailing in a paper

application. The applicant and all household members over 16 must sign a paper copy of the consent form and mail it to CSP.

ASSISTED AUTOMATIC INCOME VERIFICATION (Assisted AIV): Applicants who file taxes but need help navigating the online or paper application process may apply with the assistance of an agency. The intake agency will assist the applicant with completing the application. The applicant and all household members over 16 must sign a paper copy of the OESP consent form and mail it to CSP.

MANUAL INCOME VERIFICATION (MIV): Applicants who cannot have their income verified based on a recent tax filing must apply through an intake agency. Applicants who do not file taxes, or whose circumstances have changed since they last filed must take this route. The intake agency is accountable for manually verifying the applicant's and household member's income sources and assessing their total household income. A checklist of potential income sources for applicants is included in Appendix C of this Manual. The applicant must sign the consent at the bottom of the MIV application form and a copy must be retained for the agency's records.

Agencies are encouraged to use the online application portal but may submit paper applications as well. When an agent assists with the application, they must enter their agency ID and password and their own name.

Once the application is submitted, either through the portal or by mail, a reference number will be generated by the CSP and communicated to the applicant through email or mail. In addition, the application submission will auto-generate an account (ID and temporary password) so that the applicant can easily check application status, correct any errors and reapply at a later date.

The following is a step by step outline of the Assisted AIV and MIV application process.

STEP 1: Pre-Screening and Scheduling Interview Appointments

When a prospective applicant contacts an intake agency to inquire about applying for OESP, intake agencies should ask the following questions:

- Do you receive an electricity bill and are you the account holder with your electricity service provider?
- How many people live in your household?
- What is your estimated annual after-tax household income?
- Have you and your household members filed taxes in the last two years and are those reflective of your household's current income?

Based on the answers to these questions, if the customer is likely to be eligible for the OESP and requires agency assistance the agency should schedule an in-person interview with the primary electricity account holder. If the applicant does not require

agency assistance, they should be informed of the option to apply independently through the OESP portal. If the applicant is not eligible, they should be directed to other programs or help that may be available to them. It is expected that the majority of ineligible applicants can be identified at the pre-screening stage.

Each intake agent is responsible for booking appointments for their agency and informing the applicant of criteria and documentation required for the application interview. The agent should record the date of the appointment, client’s name, address, service provider and account number.

The length of the appointment scheduled and the documentation required may be determined by whether the applicant requires MIV or assisted AIV.

The documents applicants are required to bring to the interview are different for MIV and Assisted AIV applications. Here is a list for each:

All Application Types	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current electricity bill <i>To verify the account number, account holder and service address</i> 	
Automatic Income Verification	Manual Income Verification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIN numbers for all tax-filers in the household or other temporary tax numbers <i>Proof is not required</i> <p>Note: All household members between the ages of 18 and 74 must have filed taxes in the last 2 years to be eligible for Automatic Income Verification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of income from all household members <i>This may include one or more of the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent pay cheque stub Recent letter from employer Recent income tax return Recent Ontario Works statement Employment Insurance Ontario Disability Support Program Canada Pension Plan Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Old Age Security Pension Rental Income RRSPs Recent bank statement

STEP 2: Application Interview

During the application interview, the agent reviews all the documentation necessary to verify household income, obtains consent and completes the OESP Application Form with the applicant.

In-person interviews are required in most cases during the application process for the purpose of verifying personal information. However, to address issues related to mobility or transportation, or the geographic distance between the applicant and the

agency office, telephone interviews are permitted in some situations, for example where:

- The community served is a large geographical area, where travel required to an in-person interview would cause hardship to the customer (assessed at the discretion of the intake/lead agency); or
- The applicant is experiencing mobility or travel difficulties due to age, disability, illness or injury.

In these cases, the agency may conduct telephone interviews to review documentation and complete the application. Applicants will still need to provide all required documentation and signatures, for example via mail, fax or email, which may delay the application process. Caution should be exercised when transmitting sensitive personal information. The CSP contact centre cannot take applications over the phone.

Obtaining Consent

An OESP application cannot be processed if consent has not been obtained.

For MIV applications only, the *applicant* must sign the consent at the bottom of the OESP application form and a copy of the form (either paper or electronic) must be retained by the intake agency.

For assisted AIV applications only, the agency must provide the applicant with a paper copy of the OESP Consent Form which must be ***signed by the applicant and all household members over the age of 16. The form must then be mailed to the CSP.*** The CSP will not process the application until a properly signed consent form has been received. If the customer reapplies for the program later on (see Step 7 below) they will not have to mail in a new consent form unless a new household member must consent to have their income verified. Agencies must not retain copies of the consent form for AIV applications.

An OESP consent form may be signed on behalf of an applicant or household member by a guardian or trustee. In these cases, copies of the Power of Attorney or Representation Agreement should be obtained and provided to the CSP. These documents may be scanned and emailed to the CSP.

Documentation

All required documentation should be checked and copies should be made for the applicant's file. A process for Manual Income Verification is included in Appendix C. A checklist to help calculate household income and determine eligibility for the program is available to agencies in Excel format. A copy of the checklist should be saved for the applicant's file.

If the applicant does not provide the required documentation at the time of the interview, it is important to inform the applicant that the application cannot be processed until the applicant provides all the necessary documents.

If, upon reviewing the documentation, the agency determines that the applicant does not meet the income eligibility criteria for the OESP, the agency should inform the applicant that they are not eligible for the program.

Logging on to the Portal

Each agency will have a master “administrator” user ID and password. Using that account, each agency’s administrator can create agent IDs and passwords for their staff as needed; there is no limit on the number of agent IDs for each agency. Agent IDs will be generated by the CSP and conform to a specific format (agency administrators will not be able to change the agent ID format). The agency administrator, however, can revise the password for each agent ID at any time.

Agencies may assign a specific agent ID to each of their staff or have several generic agent IDs that are shared, provided no one uses the same agent ID concurrently.

When completing an application, agency staff must enter their agent ID, password, and name when prompted.

In some cases an applicant may start an application on the portal independently and subsequently seek assistance from an agency. During the application interview the agency should start a new application and enter their agent ID, password, and name when prompted. If the agency does not do this, and instead just completes the application that was started and saved by the customer, the agency’s assistance with that application will not be tracked in the portal.

Completing the OESP Application Form

The OESP application form should be completed by the agent during the application interview for all eligible applicants. It is important to complete the form in its entirety each time. The income information recorded on the OESP application form must be verified with the applicant and checked against the documentation submitted.

If the application is completed through the portal, the fields that appear will automatically adapt to the type of application (i.e. AIV, Assisted AIV, or MIV) based on the information entered into the first three fields in the portal. Paper copies of the AIV and MIV application forms as well as consent forms can be downloaded from the portal.

Once the application is submitted, either online through the portal, or on paper via regular mail, a reference number will be generated by the CSP and communicated to the applicant through email or mail. In addition, the application submission will auto-

generate an account (ID and temporary password) so that the applicant can easily check application status, correct any errors and reapply at a later date.

Once the application is submitted the agency's role is essentially finished. All remaining steps in the process are completed by the CSP and the electricity service provider. After the application has been submitted, the applicant may request the agency's assistance to check the status of the application and/or correct an error and resubmit the application.

STEP 3: OESP Credit Calculation and Communication (performed by CSP)

The applicant's income bracket and household will be used to determine the OESP credit that will be applied to the applicant's electricity bill. Applicants with special electricity requirements (those with electric heat as primary heating source; certain medical devices requiring electricity; and/or Aboriginal customers) will be given an OESP credit based on a separate sliding scale.

The CSP will communicate with applicants directly via email or mail, letting them know they are eligible or ineligible for the program, and if they are eligible, what their OESP credit will be and how long they will receive it. The CSP automatically communicates the OESP credit due to eligible customers, and how long they will receive it, to electricity service providers. Electricity service providers are responsible for applying the OESP to the electricity bill of eligible customers.

Successful applicants will see the OESP credit on their electricity bill within 1-2 billing cycles.

STEP 4: Application Status (if needed)

The CSP will generate an application reference number when the application is submitted. Applicants can input their reference number into the portal to check the status of their application (e.g. pending, draft, hold, approved, denied, replaced).

If an applicant did not record their reference number, they can check their application status by:

- Logging in to the OESP Portal using their ID and password while on their own or while visiting an agency.
- Calling the CSP contact centre. In order for the call centre representative to provide the application status the applicant must provide three of six pieces of information: a) their reference number; b) their name, as it was submitted on the application; c) their service address as it was submitted on the application; d) their service provider; e) their email address or mailing address; or f) their service provider account number.

STEP 5: Error on Application (if needed)

If the CSP is unable to process an application due to incomplete or incorrect data provided by the applicant, the CSP will place the application on hold. The CSP will send the applicant an email or letter notifying them of the general area of the application in which an error was made and direct them to correct it. After 90 days, applications that are not corrected and resubmitted will be removed from processing. Applicants will be able to correct errors in their application by logging in to their account on the OESP portal and accessing their application. They can either complete this on their own or with the assistance of an agency. Applicants may also call the CSP contact centre for advice and guidance on how to correct an error on their application, but the CSP contact centre cannot correct any errors on an applicant's behalf.

STEP 6: Customer Disagrees with Eligibility Decision

An applicant may disagree with the result of an 'ineligible' decision or disagree with the OESP credit amount that has been applied to them through an 'eligible' decision. These complaints should be referred to the CSP contact centre. Applicants whose income was verified by an agency will be informed that the eligibility decision is final. Applicants whose income was verified through AIV may be directed to the nearest intake agency to have their income and household details verified again in person by an agent, and if appropriate, reapply.

STEP 7: Re-application

Change in Circumstances: If an OESP recipient moves or experiences some other change in circumstance, such as a change in the number of household members or a significant change in household income (i.e. a change in income that would put the applicant into a different income bracket on the OESP sliding scales), the applicant must re-apply for the OESP.

Renewal: OESP recipients must renew their application every two years, with the exception of recipients over 65 years old or who receive a CPP disability pension, who will only have to renew their applications every five years.

Electricity service providers must provide at least 60 days' notice to OESP recipients when they must renew their application.

To ease the re-application process, once the applicant has logged into the portal, the application form will be pre-populated with non-sensitive personal information obtained from the previous application. In such cases, household members who mailed in their consent form with their first application will not be required to do so again. Only new members of the household (or household members who recently turned 16 and may, therefore, have any income verified) will be required to mail in the consent form.

2.4 Files and Record Retention

All application forms and corresponding documentation (whether the application is approved or not) are to be filed and stored by intake agencies in compliance with applicable legal requirements and any instructions of the OEB. They should be retained for seven years unless the OEB directs otherwise.

2.5 Confidentiality

The information collected from applicants throughout the application process includes information of a personal nature, such as income, which is private and confidential. Intake agencies should all take reasonable and appropriate steps to safeguard the confidentiality of this information by, for example, storing electronic and hard copies of the information securely.

2.6 Additional Resources for Intake Agencies

The OESP portal and the OEB's website contain further information that intake agencies may find helpful as they perform intake such as eligibility FAQs and quick reference guides.

3. The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)

3.1 *Delivering LEAP EFA: Who Does What?*

In some communities, LEAP EFA may be delivered by one agency, which has responsibility for all functions. In other communities, it is a network of agencies that are responsible for the basic functions required to deliver the program. These functions essentially break down into two areas: “intake” functions that relate to work with applicants and “lead” functions that involve overall program coordination, financial management and reporting.

The tasks outlined below have been assigned to lead or intake agencies. At the discretion of distributors, lead agencies, and intake agencies, however, the division of these responsibilities between lead and intake agencies may vary.

The following sections provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the major players in the delivery of LEAP EFA: intake agencies, lead agencies, distributors, and unit sub-meter providers.

Intake Agencies

Intake agencies may be responsible for the following tasks:

- Screening applicants for eligibility for LEAP EFA;
- Processing applications including collecting the necessary information (bills, pay stubs, income information), verifying applicant information with the service provider⁶ and completing all required forms;
- Ensuring that all necessary documentation and forms are completed;
- Informing the applicant’s service provider that assessment of eligibility is being undertaken to ensure appropriate action by the service provider, which may include a hold on a scheduled disconnection;
- Reviewing applications and making recommendations to the lead agency within the disconnection hold period;
- Communicating information with the applicant regarding approved or denied applications;
- Tracking information and reporting to the lead agency to support the lead agency’s reporting to utilities;
- Assisting with the gathering of data for program reporting;
- Providing appropriate referrals and follow-up support to applicants; and

⁶ “Service provider” means natural gas or electricity distributor, or unit sub-meter provider, as appropriate.

- Notifying service providers of final decisions on applications so that service providers can take appropriate action.

Lead Agencies

Lead agencies may be responsible for the following tasks:

- Screening applicants for eligibility for LEAP EFA, and income eligibility for customer service measures and conservation programs, as appropriate;
- Performing intake functions where there is no intake agency;
- Selecting or contracting with intake agencies to undertake intake functions;
- Making final decisions as to whether to approve or deny applications based on recommendations from intake agencies;
- Tracking program funds;
- Completing the Funding Remittance Form and submitting it to the distributor and ensuring each distributor's funds are remitted only for that particular distributor's customers or customers of unit sub-meter providers within that distributor's service area;
- Developing and implementing an appeals/internal review process;
- Tracking applicant names, addresses and account numbers to prevent duplicate requests;
- Providing distributor partner(s) with a list of the intake agencies, by geographic area, and updated as required, for the purposes of referrals by distributor call centre staff;
- Upon request by a unit sub-meter provider, providing a list of the intake agencies operating in the relevant distributor service areas, for the purposes of referrals by call centre staff;
- Tracking program performance and expenditures and reporting to the distributor in accordance with timelines and metrics set out in Appendix F;
- Providing oversight of intake agency administration, including training and ongoing support;
- Management of customer files, including negotiating the location of storage and process for transferring files with intake agencies;
- Notifying service providers of final decisions on applications so that service providers can take appropriate action; and
- If an applicant is not eligible or screened out, the lead agency should provide additional information and referrals to other energy financial assistance programs.

Natural Gas and Electric Distribution Companies

Distributors are responsible for the following tasks:

- Collecting the amount of money from ratepayers for LEAP EFA established by the OEB;
- Determining funding allocations within their service territory by geography;
- Establishing partnerships, contracts, and operational procedures with lead agencies;
- Providing lead and intake agencies with up to date contact information;
- Training call centre and collections staff on LEAP EFA, customer service rules, and conservation programs;
- Receiving, recording and taking appropriate action upon notification from an intake agency (or lead agency as appropriate) that an assessment of eligibility is being undertaken;
- Confirming customer and account information used in determining program eligibility, including information on payment history;
- Receiving, recording and taking appropriate action upon notification from an intake agency (or lead agency as appropriate) of decisions on applications; and
- Reporting to the OEB.

Unit Sub-Meter Providers

Unit sub-meter providers are responsible for the following tasks:

- Training call centre and collections staff on LEAP EFA and customer service rules;
- Providing lead and intake agencies with up to date contact information;
- Receiving, recording and taking appropriate action upon notification from an intake agency (or lead agency as appropriate) that an assessment of eligibility is being undertaken;
- Confirming customer and account information used in determining program eligibility, including information on payment history;
- Receiving, recording and taking appropriate action upon notification from an intake agency (or lead agency as appropriate) of decisions on applications; and
- Reporting to the OEB.

3.2 LEAP EFA Eligibility Criteria

The income eligibility requirements for the OESP are the same for LEAP EFA. There are, however, additional screening guidelines for LEAP EFA, which are set out below.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for a LEAP EFA grant, applicants must:

- i. be an existing customer of the distributor providing the funding, or an existing customer of a unit sub-meter provider operating within the service area of the distributor;
- ii. reside at the address for which there are arrears; and
- iii. have an after-tax household income at or below the thresholds set out in the OEB's OESP sliding scales, taking into account household size (which were derived from Statistics Canada Low-Income Measure), as set out in Appendix B.

Screening Guidelines

In screening applicants for LEAP EFA agencies should also consider the following:

- Receipt of financial assistance should allow the applicant to maintain or reconnect their energy service, in order to promote the sustainability of the customer's connection.
- The applicant has demonstrated a prior attempt to pay the bill. The service provider, as appropriate, can be contacted for information about the applicant's payment history if necessary. Agencies should consider future sustainability of the applicant's connection in addition to past payment performance.
- The applicant is in threat of disconnection or has been disconnected. Agencies should focus on providing emergency assistance, but will need to balance this with early intervention (e.g. assistance to applicant in arrears but who have not yet received a disconnection notice or been disconnected).
- Funding should be accessed only once per year, up to the financial cap (see section 4). Note: at the discretion of the agency, in exceptional circumstances a household may apply more than once a year for LEAP EFA if the first grant was less than the maximum of \$500 (or \$600 for electrically heated homes).

Agency Discretion

If an applicant does not meet the income threshold or the screening guidelines set out in section 3.2, the agency may exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances and approve the applicant. In such cases, the agency should have a documented rationale.

Please note: the criteria to be an existing customer of the distributor providing the funding, or an existing customer of a unit sub-meter provider operating within the service area of the distributor, and to reside at the address for which there are arrears (section 3.2 (i) and (ii)) are mandatory requirements.

3.3 LEAP Application Process

STEP 1: Pre-Screening

To assist with the large number of inquiries during program delivery, workers at each intake agency should pre-screen the applicants over the phone prior to booking an appointment. At pre-screening, four questions are asked:

- Are you a customer of a natural gas or electricity distributor or unit sub-meter provider?
- Do you reside at the address with arrears?
- What is your approximate yearly/monthly (after-tax) household income?
- How many people are in your household?

If the applicant is not eligible, they should be provided with information about other resources and/or conservation programs that may assist them.

If, based on the information provided during the pre-screening, the agent determines that the applicant may be eligible for assistance; the agent should proceed with an application. It is at the discretion of the agency whether they begin the application process over the phone with the applicant and then have the applicant come in for an application interview, or whether they require the applicant to come in for an application interview to start the application process.

Before proceeding with the application, agencies must obtain the applicant's consent for the release of personal information required to effect the application. If the agency starts the application process over the phone, consent may be verbal for this stage, but written consent must be obtained when the applicant comes to the agency for the application interview.

In-person interviews are required in most cases but telephone interviews are permitted in some situations, to accommodate mobility constraints. In cases where attending an in-person interview would cause undue hardship for the applicant, the agency may conduct telephone interviews to complete the application. Applicants will still need to provide all required documentation and signatures, for example via fax or email, which may delay the grant process.

STEP 2: Scheduling Interview Appointments

Each intake agent is responsible for booking appointments for their agency and informing the applicant of criteria and documentation required for the application interview. The agent should record the date of the appointment, client's name, address, service provider and account number. Only the utility account holder is required to attend the application interview.

The applicant must be informed that they're required to bring the following documents to the interview:

- Current energy bills for their residence – these should verify the amount of arrears;
- Notice of Service Disconnection, if applicable;
- Applicant Identification - two pieces of I.D. for the main applicant, and 1 piece of I.D. for each of the other household members are required;
- Copy of rental receipt, lease or mortgage document;
- Proof of household income – e.g. cheque stubs, a letter from the employer and/or income tax return; and
- Bank statement from the most recent month.

STEP 3: Application Interview

During the application interview, the agent reviews all the documentation, obtains consent and completes the LEAP EFA Application Form with the applicant.

Obtaining Consent

Before proceeding with the application, agencies must obtain the applicant's consent for the release of personal information required to process the application. Agencies are asked to have the applicant sign the Consent to Disclose Information Form (see Appendix I). Note that the agent may have to complete several different consent forms if advocating on behalf of the client for multiple service providers and social service agencies (i.e. Ontario Works, ODSP, etc.). The applicant should be informed that no information can be shared with companies or agencies without signed consent provided by the applicant.

Documentation

All required documentation should be checked and copies made for the file. If the applicant does not provide the required documentation at the time of the interview, it is important to explain to the applicant that the application cannot be processed until the applicant provides all the necessary documents. Guidance on the Manual Income Verification process is included in Appendix C.

Completing the LEAP EFA Application Form

The LEAP EFA Application Form (see Appendix I) should be completed by the agent during the application interview for all eligible applicants. It is important to complete the form in its entirety for all applicants.

The information recorded on the LEAP EFA Application Form must be verified with the applicant and service provider, where appropriate, and checked against the documentation submitted.

STEP 4: Verifying with the Service Provider

It is important to verify the arrears-related information provided by the applicant with the applicant's service provider. Information to be confirmed includes:

- the amount owing on the account;
- whether a disconnection notice has been issued;
- any payments made on the account; and
- any discussions the applicant has had with the service provider.

To protect applicants' privacy, a signed Consent to Disclose of Personal Information form (provided in Appendix I) must be faxed to the service provider before they can discuss customer and account information with agents.

Electricity distributors and unit sub-meter providers are required to put a 21-day hold on a scheduled disconnection if a customer is applying for a LEAP EFA grant. Gas distributors will also put a 21-day hold on disconnection pending review of an applicant's low-income eligibility. Agencies should contact the local gas distributor to confirm or consult their current Conditions of Service.

Agencies should contact the service provider to advise that they are assessing the applicant's eligibility to determine whether they are eligible for LEAP EFA. It is at the discretion of the lead and intake agencies as to which agency undertakes this step, and at what stage in the application process they notify the electricity service provider of the assessment. However, it is important to note that when an electricity service provider issues a disconnection notice for non-payment, a customer generally has 10 days from the day the notice is received to pay his or her bills to avoid disconnection. Therefore, the service provider should be notified of the social agency's assessment within that 10-day period.

STEP 5: Recommendation about Funding

Once the application has been completed and signed, and the information verified (including service provider verification), it is up to the intake agent to make a

recommendation regarding funding. The recommendation should address both whether or not to approve the application, and the amount of the grant to be provided. The agent should complete the information in the appropriate section of the LEAP EFA Application Form.

One of the key factors to consider when determining a funding recommendation is whether or not the disconnection will be halted and the applicant will still be able to pay their energy bills in the future. LEAP EFA is not intended to provide long-term financial assistance and applicants must be able to maintain their energy costs after the grant has been provided.

Please note: Income from the Child Tax Benefit, Universal Child Care Benefit, Ontario Child Benefit, and the Registered Disability Savings Plan is not included when calculating household income for the purpose of assessing income eligibility for the OESP or LEAP EFA. These sources of income however, can be considered when assessing whether an applicant is likely to be able to sustain electricity or natural gas service after an EFA grant has been provided and may, therefore, inform the agency's recommendation about funding.

If the recommendation is to deny the application, it is important to document the reasons why the application is being denied. There is a section on the LEAP EFA Application Form to record this information. Furthermore, agencies should ensure that referrals are made to other energy financial assistance programs and other appropriate housing support programs.

STEP 6: Lead Agency Review (if applicable)

If your community has lead and intake agencies, a completed LEAP EFA Application Form must be sent to the lead agency for processing with all the required documentation attached. The following documentation should be sent to the lead agency:

- A copy of the completed LEAP EFA Application Form;
- A copy of the energy bill;
- A copy of the applicant's income stub, employment letter, and/or income tax return for all adult occupants within the household;
- A copy of the signed Consent to Disclose Information form;
- A copy of proof of rent or mortgage amounts; and
- A copy of most recent monthly bank statement.

The lead agency should check the application for completeness and review the recommendation for funding made by the intake agency. Applications that are incomplete will not be processed for funding until complete. It is the duty of each intake

agent to ensure that all applications are completed prior to submitting them to the lead agency.

If there has been a recommendation by the agent for funding but outstanding questions remain regarding the application, the lead agency will contact the agent to resolve the issues. The application may be returned to the intake agency for completion or denied on the basis of not meeting the criteria.

If the lead agency is satisfied that the application is complete, the eligibility criteria are met, or where not met, the lead agency is satisfied with the intake agency's rationale for approval, and agrees with the agent's recommendation for funding, the application is approved.

Once the application has been approved, the service provider should be contacted and requested to stop any further disconnection or collection action on the applicant's account. If the application is denied, the electricity service provider should be contacted and informed of the decision. It is at the discretion of the lead and intake agencies as to which agency is responsible for this step.

STEP 7: Notifying the Applicant

At no time is the intake agency permitted to communicate to an applicant that they will receive a grant through LEAP EFA, without first receiving official confirmation from the lead agency. Once the intake agency receives confirmation from the lead agency, it may contact the applicant and inform him/her of the decision.

It is important that applicants to LEAP EFA be notified as soon as possible whether or not their application has been approved. This is important for two reasons:

- If the application is approved but payment is not reflected on the applicant's account with the service provider within a reasonable amount of time, the applicant should be directed to the intake agency. The intake agency should then contact the lead agency or service provider for a status update.
- If the application has been denied, the applicant needs to be notified so that he/she can make other arrangements regarding payment to the service provider.

Appeals / Request for Internal Review (if Needed)

If the applicant is denied, they must be informed about the appeals process. The lead agency is responsible for developing and implementing an appeals/internal review process for applicants that are not satisfied with the outcome of their application. Lead agencies may use an existing process, provided that it includes an independent review of the application (i.e. the application must be reviewed by someone that was not part of the original review and assessment). Alternatively, a sample appeals process is included in Appendix G for consideration by lead agencies, and a template appeals form is provided in Appendix I.

STEP 8: Grant Payments

Grants are applied directly to successful applicants' accounts. Grants must **never** be issued directly to applicants.

Distributors and agencies are not required to physically transfer LEAP EFA funds back and forth. Distributors may hold onto LEAP EFA funds and apply grants directly to customer accounts on the advice of lead or intake agencies, as applicable.

Utilities and agencies should work out the mechanics of their funding arrangement together. If a "virtual" funding remittance process is adopted it must ensure a) agencies always know how much LEAP funds are remaining, and b) unit sub-meter providers are reimbursed for EFA grants provided to their customers in a timely fashion.

To support the funding remittance process, regardless of the process in place, agencies should complete the Payment Remittance Form, provided in Appendix I, which includes a list of approved applicants, their account numbers, and other relevant information.

Please note: agencies must clearly indicate on the Payment Remittance Form which approved applicants have received funding specifically from LEAP EFA, from other sources, and from a combination of the two. This information must be provided to enable distributors to fulfill their reporting obligations to the OEB.

STEP 9: Referrals to Other Programs & Services

In addition to, or instead of, LEAP EFA, some applicants could benefit from other assistance programs or services such as the OESP and conservation programs (see section 9) and/or special low-income customer service measures (see sections 7 and 8). Agencies are encouraged to provide information about any other programs that the applicant might benefit from.

The Consent to Disclose Information Form includes, by default, consent for the applicant to be contacted by their electricity provider about conservation programs, unless the applicant specifically opts out.

STEP 10: Program Reporting and other Administrative Requirements

The lead agency's Monthly Report, contained in Appendix F.1, must be submitted to their natural gas or electricity distributor partner(s) by the 15th day of the following month. This report allows distributors to monitor fund levels and ensure that agencies and call centres are advised when funds are nearing depletion.

The Year-end Report, which consists of the Annual Reporting Requirements contained in Appendix F.2 is required to be submitted by the lead agencies to the distributor by March 31st of the following year. The Year-end Report provides the information about

program spending needed by distributors to fulfill their regulatory reporting obligations to the OEB and can be used to provide valuable feedback to all stakeholders regarding the operation of LEAP EFA, and whether any changes to the program are needed.

From time to time, the OEB will request that agencies collect and report demographic information about applicants. The requirements for the periodic Demographic Reports are contained in Appendix F.3. The OEB will provide advanced notification to agencies when it expects the demographic information to be collected for the upcoming LEAP EFA program year. The Demographic Reports must be submitted to the distributor by March 31st of the following year.

Since most of the information can only be collected during the interview process with the applicant, it is of vital importance that the applications are completed in their entirety.

3.4 Files and Record Retention

All application forms and corresponding documentation (whether the application is approved or not) are to be filed and stored by intake agencies in compliance with applicable legal requirements and any instructions of the OEB. They should be retained for seven years unless the OEB directs otherwise.

3.5 Confidentiality

The information collected from applicants throughout the application process includes information of a personal nature, such as income, which is private and confidential. Intake agencies should all take reasonable and appropriate steps to safeguard the confidentiality of this information by, for example, storing electronic and hard copies of the information securely.

3.6 Grant Level

The grant level for LEAP EFA is set at a maximum of \$500 per fuel, per household, per year⁷. Agencies may use their judgement for customers with electrically heated homes to offer up to \$600 per household, if necessary.

If the applicant owes less than the maximum, the grant cannot exceed the amount owed.

If the applicant owes more than the maximum, a maximum grant of \$500 (or \$600 for an approved electrically heated home) may be provided, as long as the applicant will be

⁷ A household could therefore receive \$500 for electricity bill arrears, and \$500 for natural gas arrears.

able to sustain their energy service following the grant. In such cases, the agency should have a documented rationale.

Options for applicants who owe more than the maximum to sustain their energy service include:

- Entering into an arrears payment arrangement with the service provider for the balance owing (see sections 7 for electricity and 8 for natural gas customers); and/or
- Supplementary assistance through other funds for the balance.

If these options are not available the applicant may be denied assistance on the basis that they cannot sustain their energy service and should be referred to other programs for assistance. Grants should not include amounts owed for equipment rental (e.g. water heater) or equipment financing charges.

4. APPLYING FOR OESP AND LEAP EFA AT THE SAME TIME

The following section provides guidance on what to do when an applicant wishes to apply for the OESP and LEAP EFA simultaneously:

- Even if the applicant files taxes and may otherwise be able to go through the AIV process, the agency should always manually verify the applicant's household income when processing an OESP and LEAP application simultaneously. This will minimize any duplication of work for program intake and reduce the likelihood of an applicant receiving conflicting eligibility determinations for the two programs.
- The income eligibility criteria are the same for both programs, but LEAP EFA has additional screening guidelines. If an applicant is eligible for LEAP EFA they are also eligible for the OESP. If an applicant is eligible for the OESP, they may or may not be eligible for LEAP EFA, depending on whether they meet the additional screening guidelines for LEAP EFA.
- In order to receive a LEAP EFA grant, a customer should also apply for the OESP if they are not already on the program. In this situation, processing the LEAP EFA application should be prioritized since there is limited time to avoid the impending disconnection. Receipt of OESP assistance may also inform the agency's judgements on whether a LEAP EFA applicant is likely to be able to sustain utility service going forward, if a grant were provided.

5. ELECTRICITY CUSTOMER SERVICE RULES

The OEB has established special customer service rules for low-income electricity customers which are found in the Distribution System Code, Retail Settlement Code and Standard Supply Service Code. A very similar set of rules is set out in the Unit Sub-Metering Code.

5.1 Who is Eligible for Low-Income Customer Service Rules?

Any residential electricity customer who has been determined to be eligible for the OESP or LEAP EFA automatically qualifies for the low-income customer service rules.

Eligibility for the OESP, and consequently the low-income customer service rules, will remain in effect from two to five years (the CSP will inform electricity service providers of each recipient's eligibility duration).

Customers that have received a LEAP EFA grant are eligible for the low-income customer service rules for a period of two years after the date on which the grant was provided.

OESP recipients who have received a LEAP EFA grant are eligible for the low-income customer service rules until the later of a) their OESP eligibility expiring or b) two years from the date on which the EFA grant was provided.

It is the responsibility of the distributor to provide eligible customers access to the applicable customer service rules. Customers must contact their local distributor to take advantage of some low-income electricity customer service rules. Intake agencies should be familiar with the low-income electricity customer service rules so that they may better assist low-income energy customers.

5.2 Summary of Low-Income Electricity Customer Service Rules

The following sections summarize the customer service rules for eligible low-income electricity customers. The summary of the low-income electricity customer service rules set out below is a synopsis and is not intended, nor should it be used as an interpretive tool for the Codes. The summary is a narrative and informal description of the various amendments made to the Codes and it has no legal or regulatory role in its interpretation, implementation or enforcement. For full details, see the applicable electricity sector Codes posted on the OEB's web site at <http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Industry/Rules+and+Requirements/Rules+Code+Guidelines+and+Forms#electricity>.

Security Deposits

If an eligible low-income electricity customer has previously paid the distributor a security deposit, the customer may ask for it to be returned, after he or she has paid any outstanding arrears. Any remaining security deposit returned will be credited to the customer's account if the amount due is less than the customer's average monthly bill. If the amount is equal to or greater than the customer's average monthly bill, the customer may request a refund by cheque.

If the customer is an eligible low-income electricity customer and the distributor requests a security deposit, the customer may request and receive a waiver.

Under-Billing Adjustments

When a billing error has occurred and an eligible low-income electricity customer owes the distributor for an underpayment, the distributor must notify the customer that he or she may elect to pay over:

- a) a period equal to the duration of the billing error, up to a maximum of 2 years; or
- b) a period of 10 months where the under-billed amount is less than twice the customer's average monthly bill, and over a period of 20 months where the under-billed amount equals or exceeds twice the customer's average monthly bill.

Equal Monthly Payment and Equal Billing Plans

Under an "equal monthly payment plan" an equal amount is automatically withdrawn from a customer's bank account each month to pay their electricity bill. The amount to be paid is based on a forecast of the customer's consumption. An annual "true-up" is applied to ensure the total amount paid is consistent with the actual amount consumed.

An "equal billing plan" means that each bill the customer receives is for an equal amount, calculated based on a forecast of the customer's annual consumption. Like an "equal monthly payment plan" there is an annual true-up. Unlike the "equal monthly payment plan" an "equal billing plan" does not require monthly withdrawals from a bank account.

Both plans may help customers smooth fluctuating electricity expenses over the year (it may be especially helpful to customers with electric heat).

Electricity service providers are not required to offer these plans to customers who have signed a retail contract, but some do so voluntarily.

Disconnection Period

If, during the disconnection notice period, an agency advises a distributor that they are assessing whether a residential electricity customer is eligible for bill payment assistance, the distributor must suspend disconnection action for a period of 21 days after receiving notification from the agency.

Assistance Information Before Disconnection

Information provided by the distributor in the written disconnection notice, and in the final attempted telephone call 48 hours before disconnection, must include reference to the special arrears payment agreement available for eligible low-income electricity customers.

The disconnection notice, and telephone call to be attempted 48 hours before disconnection, must also inform customers that emergency financial assistance and other programs are available for eligible low-income electricity customers, and that more information is available from their electricity distributor.

Arrears Payment Agreements

Down-Payment

A down-payment of up to 10% may be requested when an eligible low-income electricity customer enters into a low-income arrears agreement, either for the first time or after having successfully completed a previous such agreement.

Repayment Time Periods

The time periods to repay arrears under a low-income arrears agreement are:

- 8 months if the amount the customer owes is less than or equal to 2 times his or her average monthly bill;
- 12 months if the amount the customer owes is more than 2 and less than or equal to 5 times his or her average monthly bill; and,
- 16 months if the amount the customer owes is more than 5 times his or her average monthly bill.

Service Charges and Late Payment Charges

Outstanding late payment charges need not be waived by the distributor when an eligible low-income electricity customer enters into a low-income arrears agreement; however, additional late payment charges on the amount that is covered by the agreement **cannot** be charged after the customer has entered into the agreement.

Service charges related to collection, disconnection, non-payment and/or load control devices are to be waived when an eligible low-income electricity customer enters into a low-income arrears agreement for the first time or after he or she has successfully completed a previous such agreement.

Payment Defaults

Utilities can cancel the arrears agreement if an eligible low-income electricity customer defaults more than twice on making an arrears payment, a current bill payment, a security deposit due or an under-billing adjustment due.

The defaults must occur over at least a 2 month period.

Second or Further Arrears Payment Agreements

If an eligible low-income electricity customer successfully completes an arrears payment agreement, he or she can request a new agreement anytime needed thereafter.

However, if a new arrears agreement is requested within 12 months of the end of the first successfully completed low-income arrears agreement, the distributor can offer the new arrears agreement on the terms applicable to the standard residential electricity customer arrears agreements.

6. NATURAL GAS CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICIES

Natural gas distributors are required to have appropriate customer service policies for their residential and low-income customers and establish a process for resolving customer complaints. Each distributor must develop customer service policies in the following areas:

- bill issuance and payment;
- allocation of payments between gas and non-gas charges;
- correction of billing errors;
- equal payment and equal billing plans;
- disconnection for non-payment;
- security deposits;
- arrears management programs;
- management of customer accounts; and
- process for resolving customer complaints.

Since each natural gas distributor sets its own customer service policies, the policies are not summarized in this Manual. Each natural gas distributor's customer service policies are reflected in its conditions of service which are available on its website.

6.1 Who is Eligible for Low-Income Customer Service Policies?

A customer who is qualified for LEAP EFA automatically qualifies for all of the low-income natural gas customer service policies. Once a customer is qualified as an eligible low-income customer, the low-income status will remain in effect, for the purpose of the low-income customer service policies, for two years from the date the customer was qualified.

It is the responsibility of the distributors to provide eligible customers access to the applicable customer service policies. Customers must contact their distributor in order to take advantage of some low-income customer service policies. Agencies should be familiar with the low-income natural gas customer service policies in order to better assist customers.

7. ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Many low-income customers live in homes that are in need of energy efficiency upgrades. Energy conservation programs can be effective tools to assist low-income energy customers to manage their overall energy usage and therefore better manage energy costs. Many electricity utilities and natural gas utilities offer conservation programs designed specifically for low income customers.

As part of the application process LEAP EFA recipients consent to be referred to a conservation program, unless the applicant specifically opts out. Agencies should refer potential low-income customers to these programs as they could assist in reducing their energy costs.

7.1 Electricity Conservation Programs: HOME ASSISTANCE Program

The saveONenergy HOME ASSISTANCE program helps qualified Ontario homeowners, tenants and social and/or assisted housing providers improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Participating in the program can help reduce energy use, help manage energy costs and improve home comfort. The HOME ASSISTANCE program is funded by the Independent Electricity System Operator and offered by participating electricity utilities.

If an eligible low-income customer qualifies for the OESP and LEAP EFA, they may also be eligible for the HOME ASSISTANCE program.

The program includes a detailed in-home energy assessment, professional installation of energy-saving measures and advice on steps that can be taken to save even more energy. All conservation devices and products provided under the HOME ASSISTANCE program are directly installed in the home and are free of charge to participants. The HOME ASSISTANCE program is not available in all areas of the province. For more information on the availability of the HOME ASSISTANCE program, please contact your local electricity distributor.

7.2 Natural Gas Conservation Programs

Conservation programs are available for customers of some natural gas utilities. Both Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. and Union Gas Limited have developed a more comprehensive suite of free conservation programs for qualifying low-income customers. More information about the programs can be obtained from the utilities.

Appendix A – Glossary

AIV - Automatic Income Verification

CSP - Central Service Provider (selected by the OEB to deliver the OESP)

CRA - Canada Revenue Agency

FAWG - Financial Assistance Working Group

IESO - Independent Electricity Systems Operator

LEAP - Low-Income Energy Assistance Program

LEAP EFA - Low-Income Energy Assistance Program emergency financial assistance

LIM - Low Income Measure

MIV - Manual Income Verification

MOF - Ministry of Finance

OEB - Ontario Energy Board

OESP - Ontario Electricity Support Program

ODSP - Ontario Disability Support Program

OW - Ontario Works

Account-holder: a customer who has an account with a service provider at a residential dwelling.

Agency Discretion: the freedom that agencies possess when making decisions about certain aspects of customers' eligibility for LEAP EFA and the EFA application process. For example, if an applicant does not meet all of the eligibility requirements of the LEAP EFA, but proves exceptional need for a grant, and that they will be able sustain service once they receive that grant, agencies may exercise their discretion and approve the applicant.

Agent ID: the code that intake agency staff will use to identify themselves when they log into the OESP system.

Adjustments: any kind of change or correction that natural gas or electricity service providers make on a customer's bill.

Annual Reporting Requirements: the Year-end-Reports, which Lead Agencies must submit to the distributor by March 31st of each year.

Arrears: amounts owing after a customer misses one or more required payments.

Arrears Payment Agreement: the payment plan that service providers must provide their customers when they are in arrears.

Automatic Income Verification (AIV): the process in which income is assessed by the Ministry of Finance, with assistance from Canada Revenue Agency for OESP applicants who are tax-filers.

Central Service Provider (CSP): the entity chosen by the OEB to administer the OESP. It is responsible for managing all applications and communicating eligibility to successful applicants and their service providers.

Change in Circumstance: any significant change in household size or income, a move from one residence to another, or a change in any other factor on which the OESP credit determination is made. A change in circumstance may affect the amount of the OESP credit a customer should receive. If a customer moves, they must reapply for the OESP, if they experience any other change in circumstances they are encouraged to reapply.

Demographic Reporting: information that lead and intake agencies are asked to track and report to their distributor partners once every three years. It is to be submitted to their respective distributor partner(s) by March 31st of the following year.

Electricity-Intensive Medical Device: an oxygen concentrator, a mechanical ventilator, or such other device as may be specified by the OEB;

Electricity Service Provider: either an electricity distributor or unit sub-meter provider.

Eligibility Requirements: conditions that an applicant must fulfill to be eligible for the OESP and LEAP EFA.

Equal Billing Plan: an arrangement between a customer and a service provider whereby the amount due in each bill is equalized over the billing periods in a year.

Equal Monthly Payment Plan: an arrangement between a customer and a service provider whereby the amount due in each bill is equalized over the billing periods in a year and the amount is automatically withdrawn from a customer's bank account on a monthly basis.

Household: the account-holder and any other individuals living at the account-holder's service address for at least six months in a year, including people other than the account-holder's spouse, children or other relatives;

Household Income: the combined annual after-tax income of all members of a household aged 16 or over;

Intake Agency: the entity that performs application intake for the OESP and/or LEAP EFA.

Lead Agency: the entity responsible for managing intake agencies and other responsibilities in the LEAP EFA Program. Note: there are no lead agencies in the OESP.

Low Income Customer Service Rules: special rules that distributors have to follow when dealing with low-income customers; for example, waiving security deposits, allowing longer payment times and more. Customers who successfully apply to the OESP or LEAP EFA are eligible for the OEB low-income customer service rules.

Low Income Measure (LIM): developed by Statistics Canada, the LIM a fixed percentage (50%) of median, adjusted, after-tax household income, where 'adjusted' indicates that a household's needs are taken into account based on the number of household members.

Manual Income Verification (MIV): the process in which household income is calculated for applicants who are non-tax-filers, or for applicants whose circumstances have changed since they last filed taxes.

OESP Contact Centre: managed by the CSP, the contact centre provides information about OESP and how to apply, answers customer questions and provides support to electricity service providers and intake agencies.

OESP Credit: a fixed dollar amount credited to eligible electricity customers on their electricity bill each month.

OESP Sliding Scales: the OESP provides eligible low-income customers with fixed credits that are determined by two sliding scales. The scales target the greatest assistance at those who need it most, with additional assistance available to customers using certain medical equipment at home, electric heat, as well as First Nations and Métis customers.

OESP Online Portal: applicants and agencies will use the online portal to apply or help applicants apply for the program. The CSP will manage this portal.

Payment Remittance Form: the form that agencies are responsible for filling out and sending to natural gas and electricity distributors in order to support the funding remittance process in LEAP EFA. It includes a list of approved applicants, their account numbers, and other relevant information and ensures that successful applicants receive their LEAP EFA grants.

Period of Eligibility: the length of time that a customer is deemed eligible for OESP or the LEAP customer rules. For OESP, when the period of eligibility ends, customers must reapply to continue receiving the on-bill credit.

Pre-Screening: the process by which agencies assess whether a customer is likely eligible for OESP and/or LEAP EFA and determine which customers should attend an in-person interview to apply.

Re-application: required when an applicant (or the household) experiences a change in circumstances or their eligibility for OESP expires.

Referrals: intake agencies and service providers are encouraged to refer applicants to conservation programs, which will help customers reduce their energy use and lower their overall household costs. Intake agencies are encouraged to refer customers to any other programs available to assist them.

Renewal: a re-application for OESP that occurs because an applicant's period of eligibility ends.

Security Deposits: the money service providers require new customers to pay in order to open an account.

Service Provider: natural gas and electricity distributors and unit sub-meter providers.

Utility: natural gas and electricity distributors

Appendix B – OESP & LEAP EFA Income Eligibility Criteria

The table depicts the OESP and LEAP income eligibility criteria, by income bracket and household size:

		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

The OEB derived the eligibility criteria for the OESP and LEAP from Statistics Canada's after tax Low Income Measure (LIM).

Appendix C – OESP & LEAP EFA Manual Income Verification

Income Sources to Be Verified

When verifying an applicant's household income, agencies must obtain documentation for each of the following, as applicable:

Income:

- Employment Income
- Employment Insurance (EI)
- Ontario Works (OW)
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
- Old Age Security Pension
- Other Pension
- Rental Income
- Support Payments Received
- RRSPs

Deductions:

- Support Payments Made
- Employment Expenses

The OEB has developed a tool for intake agencies to use in order to manually verify and calculate household income. This tool is available on the OEB's website. Agencies are encouraged to use this tool and to keep a copy of the report it produces with their records of each application.

Optional Guidance for Verifying Self-Employment Income

Applicants or household members who are self-employed should provide the following documentation:

- The applicant/household member's two most recent bank statements; and
- The applicant/household member's Income Tax Assessment from the previous year; and
- The last two months of the applicant/household member's most recent Invoices/Receipts showing income earned

Where an applicant seeks to demonstrate proof of cash income, the following information should be provided:

- Signed letter from the employer, written on the company's letterhead, indicating:
 - the applicant/household member's job description;

- the exact amount of payment the applicant/household member receives;
- how often the applicant/household member receives payments;
- the duration of the employment; and
- the number of hours the applicant/household member works per month; and
- The applicant/household member's two most recent bank statements; and
- The last two months of the applicant/household member's most recent Invoices/Receipts showing income earned

The applicant will be asked to submit all of the above documentation. With the applicant/household member's written consent, the worker may phone the employer to verify employment income.

If the applicant cannot provide the documents listed above or the documents are insufficient to verify the applicant's income, the following information should be provided by the applicant:

- The applicant/household member's two most recent bank statements; and
- A legal affidavit signed by the applicant/household member confirming his/her employment (indicating the place of employment, employment's start date, hours, job position and salary); and
- A business registration number, if self-employed.

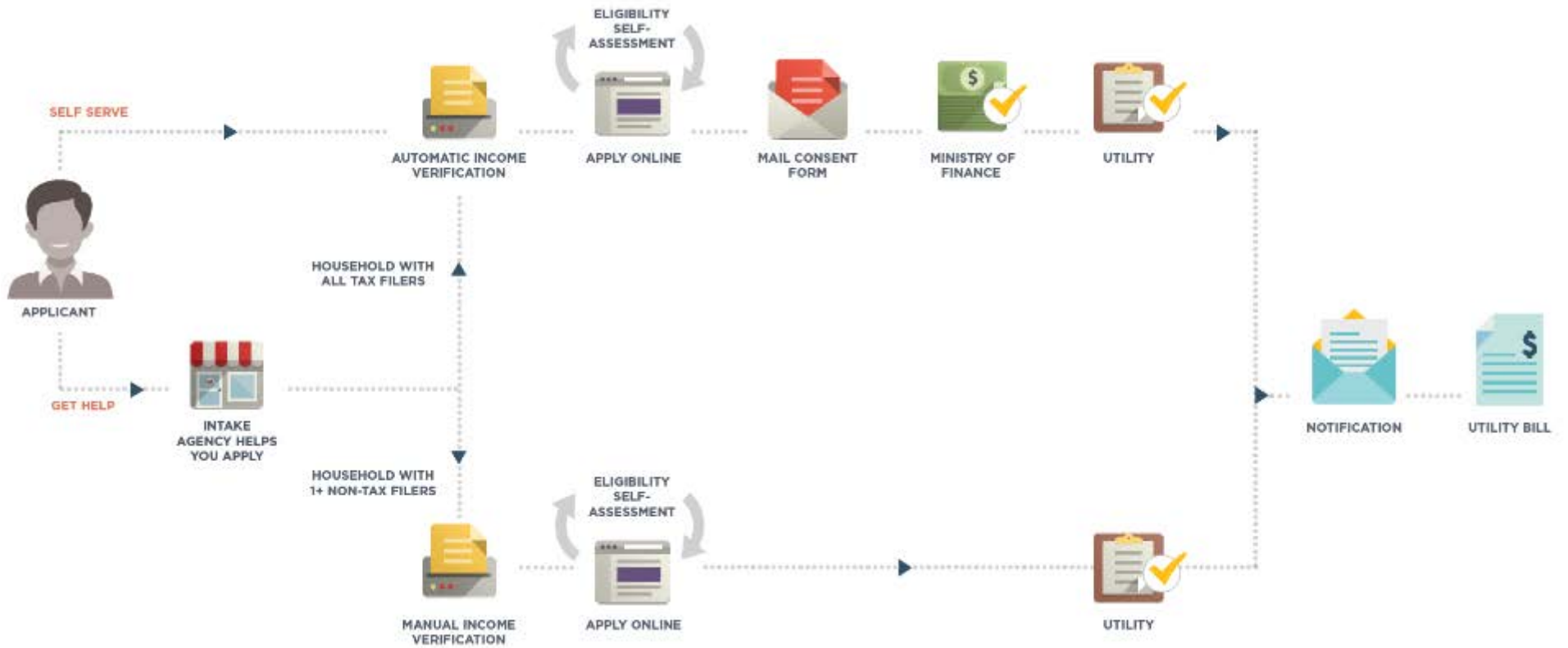
Determining the Income Bracket

Once an agency has determined the applicant's household income the agency should select the applicable income bracket in the application form.

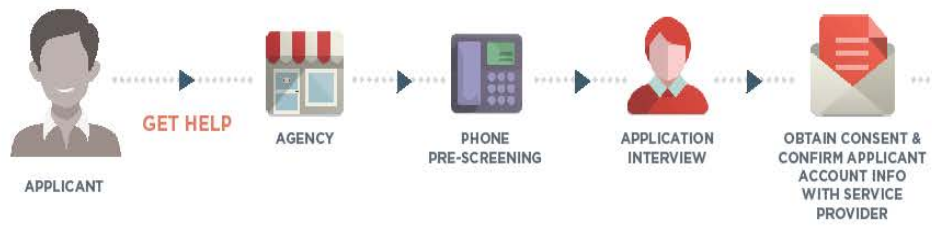
Where an applicant's household income falls on the cusp of two income brackets, all decimals should be dropped from the income calculation to determine which bracket the applicant falls into. When doing so, agencies should always round down. For example, an annual household income of \$28,000.58 would be rounded down to \$28,000 and would fall into the ≤ \$28,000 income bracket. To further illustrate this, an annual household income of \$39,000.88 would be rounded down to \$39,000 and fall into the \$28,001-\$39,000 income bracket.

Appendix D – OESP & LEAP EFA Application Flowcharts

OESP Application Process:



LEAP EFA Application Process:



Appendix E – OESP Self-Serve Application Process

Program information and rules can be found on the OESP portal for customer to read before they begin the application. A simple, easy to use eligibility self-assessment tool can help customers decide if they should proceed with the application.

At a minimum, applicants will provide the following information:

- Names and dates of birth of each member in the household;
- Service address of household, as it appears on their electricity bill;
- All Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) of individuals in the household between the age of 18 and 74 (SINs are optional for individuals with the ages of 16, 17 and 75+);
- Name of electricity service provider and account number as it appears on their bill;
- If applicable, self-declare electricity intensive medical equipment and select from a list of qualified devices for each applicable member in household;
- If applicable, self-declare electric heat as primary heating source for household as a whole;
- If applicable, self-declare whether applicant or other member(s) of household are First Nation or Métis;
- Preference for email or mail communications; and
- Consent for their personal information to be collected, verified, shared and stored.

Upon submission of the application through the OESP portal a reference number will be provided to the applicant through email or mail. The OESP portal will auto-generate an account (ID and temporary password) so that the applicant can easily save the application and come back to it later, check application status, correct any errors, or reapply at a later date.

Customers can also obtain a paper copy of the application, fill it out, and mail it, along with the signed consent form, to the CSP. The CSP will send the applicant a confirmation of receipt of the application and will provide the applicant with a reference number, user account and temporary password.

All individuals within the household above the age of 16 who provided SINs must consent to have their income verified through the Canada Revenue Agency. To confirm consent, CRA requires a signature from anyone between the age of 18 and 74 in the household. Applicants must print and sign the consent form and mail it to the CSP. If the signed consent form is not received at the CSP office after 90 days, the application will be deleted from the CSP portal.

Appendix F – LEAP EFA Reporting Requirements

Where an agency administers LEAP EFA for more than one distributor, it is important to remember that distributor funds cannot be pooled together. Funds and other reporting information must be separately tracked for each distributor.

For the purposes of this section, an applicant is defined as a household who has had an application form completed and verified. For greater clarity, this includes households that have been approved for assistance and those that have been denied assistance.

1. Monthly Reporting Requirements:

The following is a list of information that must be sent by lead agencies to their respective distributor partner(s) on the 15th day of the following month:

- **Funds remaining** - Money that remains after the total spent to date (pay-out) is deducted from the total funds given by the distributor at the beginning of the program year. The total spent should include amounts for both grants to customers, and program costs (maximum 15%).
- **Funds dispersed/spent, broken down by:**
 - **Total** – total money spent
 - **Agency Administration & Program Delivery fee** – total money allocated for agency administration & program delivery (maximum 15%)
 - **Grants to distributor customers** – total money spent on grants to direct customers of the distributor (i.e. customers that receive a bill directly from a distributor)
 - **Grants to unit sub-meter customers** – total money spent on grants to customers of unit sub-meter providers that operate in the distributor's service area (i.e. customers that receive a bill directly from a unit sub-meter provider)
- **Number of applicants assisted (i.e. applicants approved) broken down by:**
 - **Total applicants** - total number of applicants who were approved for and received assistance
 - **Distributor applicants** - total number of applicants who were approved for and received assistance that were direct customers of a distributor
 - **Unit sub-meter applicants** - total number of applicants who were approved for and received assistance that were customers of a unit sub-meter provider

2. Annual Reporting Requirements

The following is a list of information that must be sent by lead agencies to their distributor partner(s) to support the distributor's regulatory reporting obligations to the OEB. The information must be sent to the distributor by March 31st of the following year:

- **Budget, broken down by:**
 - **Total** - the total budget for the current year
 - **Amounts Received** - total money received from the distributor in the current calendar year
 - **Amounts carried forward** - total money unused in previous year(s) that was carried forward for use in the current year
- **Funds dispersed/spent, broken down by:**
 - **Total** – total money spent
 - **Agency Administration & Program Delivery fee** - total money allocated for agency administration & program delivery (maximum 15%)
 - **Grants to distributor customers** - total money spent on grants to direct customers of the electricity or natural gas distributor, as applicable (i.e. customers that receive a bill directly from a distributor)
 - **Grants to unit sub-meter customers** - total money spent on grants to customers of unit sub-meter providers that operate in the distributor's service area (i.e. customers that receive a bill directly from a unit sub-meter provider)
- **Number of applicants, broken down by:**
 - **Total applicants** - total number of applicants who applied for assistance (both distributor customers and unit sub-meter customers)
 - **Distributor applicants** - total number of applicants who applied for assistance that were direct customers of a distributor
 - **Unit sub-meter applicants** - total number of applicants who applied for assistance that were customers of a unit sub-meter provider
- **Number of applicants assisted (i.e. applicants approved) broken down by:**
 - **Total applicants** - total number of applicants who were approved for and received assistance
 - **Distributor applicants** - total number of applicants who were approved for and received assistance that were direct customers of a distributor
 - **Unit sub-meter applicants** - total number of applicants who were approved for and received assistance that were customers of a unit sub-meter provider
- **Number of applicants denied, broken down by:**
 - **Total applicants** - Total number of applicants that applied for assistance but were not approved
 - **Distributor applicants** - Total number of applicants that applied for assistance but were not approved that were direct customers of a distributor

- **Unit sub-meter provider applicants** - Total number of applicants that applied for assistance but were not approved that were customers of a unit sub-meter provider
- **Average grant per accepted applicant assisted:**
 - **Total** – average grant amount allocated per applicant, measured across both distributor and unit sub-meter customers
 - **Distributor average** - average grant amount allocated per applicant that were direct customers of a distributor
 - **Unit sub-meter average** – average grant amount allocated per applicant that were customers of a unit sub-meter provider
- **Non-distributor funds** – total funds received from non-distributor sources (i.e. donations) that were earmarked for, and used to top up the LEAP EFA funds
 - **Include** - funds received by the distributor from a third party or from the distributor’s shareholder(s) (i.e., not funded from distribution revenues) as a donation and then provided by the distributor to its social agency partner(s)
 - **Exclude** - funds received under the terms of the settlement of the class action proceeding regarding late payment penalties
- **The month LEAP EFA funds were depleted**
- **Number of applicants who received LEAP emergency financial assistance in the prior calendar year, broken down by:**
 - **Total applicants** - total number of applicants who received LEAP EFA in the prior calendar year (both distributor customers and unit sub-meter customers)
 - **Distributor applicants** - total number of applicants who received LEAP EFA in the prior calendar year that were direct customers of a distributor
 - **Unit sub-meter applicants** - total number of applicants who received LEAP EFA in the prior calendar year that were customers of a unit sub-meter provider

3. **Demographic Reporting**

Lead and intake agencies are requested to track the following information every three years. This information should be collected by the agencies throughout the year (broken down by month), to be submitted to their respective utility partner(s) by March 31st of the following year. The information should be filed using the LEAP EFA Demographic Information Excel Template. The OEB will provide notification to utilities in advance of the start of the LEAP program year when it expects Demographic Information to be collected and filed.

All information tracked should include **both accepted and rejected applications, with the exception of the following:**

- Total number of adults / children assisted (accepted only);
- Reason application not accepted (rejected only); and
- Applications where the grant amount was not adequate to cover arrears (accepted only).

Demographic information to be collected:

- **Total number of applications received**
- **Average monthly income per application**
- **Average arrears owed per application**
- **Total number of adults assisted (only accepted applications)**
- **Total number of children assisted (only accepted applications)**
- **Primary source of income⁸ – total number by:**
 - Employment Income
 - Employment Insurance (EI)
 - Ontario Works (OW)
 - Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
 - Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
 - Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
 - Other
- **Average monthly housing costs by:**
 - Rent Payments
 - Mortgage Payments
- **Housing status of applicant – total number by:**
 - Private rental
 - Social housing
 - Own
- **Dwelling type – total number by:**

⁸ The Child Tax Benefit and OSAP were removed from this list in October 2015 because they are no longer included in the LEAP EFA household income calculation. This change was made to align the eligibility and manual income verification requirements for LEAP EFA and OESP.

- Detached house
- Semi-detached house
- Duplex
- Row House
- Moveable Dwelling
- Low rise (under 5 storeys)
- High rise (over 5 storeys)
- Other
- **Primary heating source – total number by:**
 - Electric
 - Natural Gas
 - Other Fuel Type
- **Family type – total number by:**
 - Single (no children)
 - Single (with children)
 - Married or common-law (no children)
 - Married or common-law (with children)
 - Other
- **Reasons applicants not accepted – total number (only rejected applications) by:**
 - Did not meet income eligibility criteria
 - Cannot maintain housing
 - Does not live at address of arrears
 - No attempt at recent payment
 - Applicant did not provide required documents
 - Already accessed funds during program year
 - Insufficient program funds remaining
 - Arrears too large for grant amount to allow customer to stay connected
 - Not a customer of a service provider
 - Other
- **Reason for needing assistance – total number by:**
 - High Heating Costs
 - Job Loss
 - Illness
 - Pending EI
 - Marital Breakdown
 - Unusually High Bill
 - Unexpected Expenses
 - Child Tax Benefit Issues
 - Child Support Issues
 - Other
- **How applicants heard about the program – total number by:**
 - Word of Mouth
 - Utility Referral
 - Utility Website
 - Social Agency

- Ontario Works/Ontario Disability Support Program
 - OEB Website
 - OEB Customer Relations Centre
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Newspaper
 - Billing Insert
 - Poster
 - Other
- **Total number of applications where grant amount was not adequate to cover arrears (only accepted applications)**
 - **Total number of applicants referred to utility conservation programs**
 - **Total number of applicants where funding not required because advocacy with utility was successful**

Appendix G – LEAP EFA Appeals / Review Process

As set out in section 3.3 of the OESP & LEAP Manual, lead agencies are required to have a review process for those applicants who disagree with the decision regarding their application for LEAP EFA funds. It is suggested that this process is clearly explained to all applicants when they are denied assistance, through phone or letter. Agencies can use the attached template to provide information on the appeals process to applicants whose application has been denied.

It is recommended that the review process for each agency include:

- The process for which applicants can register their request for review. For example, by letter, phone call or application;
- The time frame in which their request for review may be considered. Ten days is a suggested time frame;
- The review of the applicant's denial of assistance must be completed by agency staff who were not involved in the application process or the decision. If agencies do not have an appropriate internal staff for this, you may consider another partnering agency staff person. A panel may also be considered, comprising internal staff/a partnering agency/board member;
- Reviewers should be provided with the client's application, supporting documents and a description of the client's situation. If this information is provided to an outside agency, it will be important that consent to release information has been signed by the applicant before the information is signed; and
- There must be an appropriate time frame for the applicant to be informed of the decision resulting from the review. It is recommended that this is no longer than five days due to the urgency of the situation. Applicants should be informed in writing or by phone call.

Requesting an Internal Review of a LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance Application

You may request an Internal Review of your Application for LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance if you disagree with the denial of your Application. A request for a review of your Application can only be made if your Application has been denied. An Internal Review cannot be completed for an increase in granted funds. Your request must be made **within 10 days** of your being notified of the denial. You can request an Internal Review by completing the attached Internal Review Form or by written request to the location where the original application was processed. At a minimum, you must provide the following (either in the letter or the Internal Review Form):

- * A statement regarding why you think the decision should be reconsidered or was incorrect
- * Your name, date of birth, utility account number, and address
- * Signature and date

Your application will be reviewed by an agency member who was not involved in your application or the original grant decision. You will receive verbal or written confirmation informing you of the Internal Review Decision within 5 days.

Appendix H – LEAP EFA Forms

1. Application for LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance
2. Consent to Disclose Information
3. Payment Remittance Form
4. Request for Internal Review of Application

Application for LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance

Agency Name: _____

The information collected here is for our internal use only. All information collected is considered confidential and will not be discussed with anyone outside our agency and LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance without your permission.

1. Applicant Information

Date of Application: _____ Date of Follow-Up Interview: _____

Name of Applicant: _____ Client #: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: _____

Name of Co-Applicant (if applicable): _____

Address: _____
Street Address Unit/Suite City Postal Code

Phone #: (H) _____ (W) _____ Other Contact #: _____

Referral from: _____

Has the client received a LEAP grant before? Yes: When: _____ No:

2. Household Information

	Name	Relationship to Applicant	Date of Birth (day/month/year)	Gender
1)	_____	_____	_____	_____
2)	_____	_____	_____	_____
3)	_____	_____	_____	_____
4)	_____	_____	_____	_____
5)	_____	_____	_____	_____
6)	_____	_____	_____	_____
7)	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Housing Information

Do you own? Live in social housing? Private rental?

Dwelling type: Detached House Semi Detached House Duplex

Row House High rise (5 storeys or more) Low rise (under 5 storeys)

Moveable Dwelling Other (please specify): _____

Primary Heating Source: Electricity Natural Gas Other Fuel Type

Monthly Rent: \$ _____ Mortgage: \$ _____

4. Income Information

Employment Income Verified through documentation?

Applicant: \$ _____
Other household member(s): \$ _____

Support Payments

Employment Insurance \$ _____
Ontario Works \$ _____
Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) \$ _____
Canada Pension Plan \$ _____
Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) \$ _____
Other (please specify): _____ \$ _____

Other household member's other income: \$ _____

Other (monthly): \$ _____

Total Monthly Income: \$ _____ **Total Annual Income:** \$ _____

If you are on social assistance, have you accessed the Shelter Fund or Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative in the last 24 months? Yes: No:

Social Assistance Worker's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

5. Arrears & Service Provider Information

Name of Service Provider: _____

Check service provider type that applies: Utility Unit Sub-Meter Provider

If Unit Sub-Meter Provider, name of Utility that serves applicant's building:

Account Number: _____
Amount of arrears: \$ _____ Verified by service provider?

Do the arrears include a security deposit, reconnection fee, equipment rental and/or financing charges?
Yes: Amount: \$ _____ No:

Reason(s) for current arrears & request for assistance:

- High heating costs
- Job loss
- Illness
- Pending EI

- Marital breakdown
- Unusually High Bill
- Unexpected Expenses
- Child Tax Benefit Issues
- Child Support Issues
- Other (provide details): _____

Grant requested: \$ _____

Has the applicant spoken to Service Provider about arrears? Yes No

If yes, what was the result of the discussion(s)? (provide details): _____

Details on Disconnection notice (if applicable): _____

Scheduled date of disconnection (if applicable): _____

Last payments made on the account: Date: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Date of last contact with Service Provider: _____

Payment Arrangements (provide details): _____

6. Service Agreement

I, the undersigned, affirm the information provided is true. I acknowledge that should any information provided be found not to be true, I will not be eligible for LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance. I understand that payment of funds is not guaranteed, even if preliminary approval is granted. If my bill is in excess of the LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance grants, I agree to make a payment arrangement with my service provider for the balance. I understand that if I fail to make payments, which I have agreed to pay directly to my service provider, my utility service may be disconnected, and I may not be eligible for future LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance. I have read, understood and agree to these conditions and requirements.

Applicant signature

Date

Agent name (please print)

Agent's signature

- TO BE COMPLETED BY AGENCY -

Recommendation

Grant: Yes Amount: \$ _____ Criteria have been met

No If no, please give rationale (*check all that apply*):

- Does not meet income criteria
- Did not provide required documents
- Cannot maintain housing
- No attempt at recent payment
- Does not live at address of arrears
- Not a customer of a service provider
- Already accessed funds during year
- Insufficient program funds remaining
- Arrears too large for grant amount to allow customer to stay connected
- Other (*please specify*): _____

**Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)
Emergency Financial Assistance
Consent to Disclose Information**

Personal Information:

Name: _____

(First, Middle Initial, Last)

Name of Service Provider: _____

Service Provider Account Number: _____

Residential Address: _____

(Street Address, Unit Number, City, Postal Code)

Consent:

I grant my consent to ___[Agency]___ to obtain information about my account with my Service Provider (including the status of my account balance) for the purpose of determining my eligibility for LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance. I also grant my consent to my Service Provider to use and disclose my personal information for these purposes.

Signature of person giving consent

Date

By completing this form, you may be contacted by your Service Provider about participation in energy conservation programs. If you do not wish to be contacted about such programs, you can opt-out by initialing here: _____

Please return completed form
to:

at

Agency Name

Fax #

EFA GRANT Payment Remittance Form

AGENCY NAME:	_____
SERVICE PROVIDER:	_____
PERIOD:	_____

	CUSTOMER NAME		Account #	Grant Amount	Name of Fund*	Comments (if any)
	Last	First				
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Number of customers is: ## Grant Total: \$0.00

LEAP EFA Grants to Customers of Unit Sub-Meter Providers in Utility's Service Area for the Period

(NOTE: not reflected in table above)

Number of Customers:

LEAP Grant Total:

***NOTE: Agencies must indicate when a customers has received a grant (in whole or in part) from LEAP EFA so that utilities may fulfill their reporting obligations to the OEB**

Request for Internal Review of LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance Application

<hr/> <i>Last name</i>	<hr/> <i>First name</i>	<hr/> <i>File number (for office use only)</i>
<hr/> <i>Address (number, street, apartment number, or rural route)</i>	<hr/> <i>Date of birth (Month/Day/Year)</i>	
<hr/> <i>City/ Town</i>	<hr/> <i>Postal Code</i>	<hr/> <i>() Telephone number</i>
<hr/> <i>Intake worker name (if known)</i>	<hr/> <i>OW/ODSP Member ID (if applicable)</i>	

1. What was the date you were notified of the denial?

2. Why do you disagree with the decision? Provide any additional information that you think would be helpful.

You may include supporting documents. Please forward copies only.

Please sign this form and drop it off to: _____
(Name of Agency)

(Address of Agency – street address, city/town, postal code)

<hr/> Signature	<hr/> Date
------------------------	-------------------