

ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHAT IS THE OESP PROGRAM AND WHY DID THE OEB DESIGN IT?

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) designed Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP), at the request of the Minister of Energy, to provide ongoing, and on-bill, rate assistance to low-income customers.

The Ontario Clean Energy Benefit (10% bill credit) will end on December 31, 2015. This program will assist low income consumers, after the OCEB ends.

2. WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM?

We consulted with social service agencies, utilities, low-income advocates, First Nations and Métis communities among others in the design of this new rate program. We also looked at programs in other jurisdictions.

The OEB submitted a report with recommendations and the Minister of Energy has largely endorsed the program approach.

3. WHEN WILL THE PROGRAM LAUNCH/BE AVAILABLE?

First on-bill credits will begin after January 1, 2016.

The application process will begin this fall.

4. CAN THE OESP PROGRAM LAUNCH NOW?

For low-income consumers, this program will replace the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit (10% on-bill credit), which will end on December 31. So, the start date is January 1, 2016.

We have more work to do. The OEB is moving forward now with the detailed design and implementation of the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

5. WHAT IS THE IESO'S ROLE?

The Independent Electricity System Operator will assist with the financial matters - the collection of funds and then sending the money on to utilities who will apply the credit to low-income customer bills.

ON BILL CREDITS

6. HOW MUCH MONEY WILL BE CREDITED TO MY BILL?

It will depend on how many people live in your home and their combined annual income.

It is estimated that on-bill credits will range from \$20-\$50.

Sliding Scale Credit Chart (Available in the Report which will be public on March 26):

		Household Size						
		1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 or More Persons
Income Bracket	< \$28,000	\$20	\$30	\$34	\$38	\$42	\$46	\$50
	\$28,001 - \$39,000	-	-	\$30	\$34	\$38	\$42	\$46
	\$39,001 - \$48,000	-	-	-	-	\$30	\$34	\$38
	\$48,000 - \$52,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$30

7. WILL THERE BE A DIFFERENT PROGRAM FOR CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIAL ELECTRICITY REQUIREMENTS?

A second funding level is also being developed for low-income customers with special electricity requirements, such as electric heat, medical devices requiring electricity and First Nations and Métis communities.

We intend to have the program available on January 1, 2016.

ELIGIBILITY

8. HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL THE PROGRAM HELP?

The OESP could benefit more than 500,000 low income Ontario households. Those in greatest need will get the most support.

9. HOW DOES THE OEB DEFINE “LOW-INCOME”?

The recently updated Statistics Canada Low-Income Measure (LIM) will be used to qualify eligible customers. Then, the number of people living in the household and their combined income will be used to calculate the benefit. LIM is used to qualify consumers for other low-income programs as well.

10. WHO CAN APPLY?

The program is available to all low-income electricity consumers of electric utilities, unit sub-meter providers and retail energy companies. Consumers must apply, or opt-in, to the program.

11. HOW DO I QUALIFY? (THE PARAMETERS)

Beginning this fall, we expect eligible low-income consumers will:

- Formally apply, or opt-in, to the program through a central service provider
- Meet the low-income definition as set by the recently updated Statistics Canada Low-Income Measure (LIM)
- Meet certain thresholds according to the number of people living in the home and total household income.

12. WHEN WILL YOU BE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS?

This fall.

13. HOW DO I APPLY?

Beginning this fall, applications will be accepted. Watch for more information from the OEB and check our website periodically at ontarioenergyboard.ca/oesp for more information.

A central service provider will intake applications online, verify household income, and confirm eligibility with consumers.

Ontarians needing in-person support with an online application will be supported by local social agency partners [organizations to be determined].

14. HOW IS THIS PROGRAM DIFFERENT FROM LEAP, EFA?

There is an important difference between the OESP and the currently available LEAP EFA. Notably, the OESP is intended to provide *ongoing* support to low-income consumers struggling to pay their electricity bill while LEAP EFA offers *one-time* support for customers who are temporarily unable to make ends meet due to emergency or illness and have received a disconnection notice.

In some circumstances, an applicant may qualify for both programs.