

2015 Energy Forum

Ontario's Energy Assistance Programs

27 October 2015

NEW Ontario Electricity Support Program: Background

- The Ministry of Energy recognizes that electricity costs create significant challenges for low income consumers
- In response to these challenges, the Minister of Energy asked the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) to design, develop and implement a long-term, ratepayer-funded program that would assist qualifying low-income electricity consumers with their electricity bills



Ontario Energy Board

NEW ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

With the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP), low-income households can receive a credit on each electricity bill.

The amount of the credit will depend on how many people live in your house and your combined household income. Find out if you are eligible and how to apply.

THERE'S HELP FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Visit OntarioElectricitySupport.ca



- The OEB submitted a recommendation to the Minister in December 2014 following research and consultation with stakeholders representing utilities, low-income consumers, First Nations and Métis customers, ministries and other programs for low-income consumers
- The Minister of Energy announced the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) on March 26, 2015

NEW OESP: Program Eligibility

- The OESP will provide an ongoing rate reduction directly on the bills of eligible low-income electricity consumers starting January 1, 2016, when the OCEB is scheduled to end
- The fixed monthly credit eligible electricity consumers receive will be determined based on household income and household size (see table below)
- To be eligible, you must be a residential consumer who receives a bill directly from an electricity utility and live at that address

Sliding Scale #1: General OESP Credit Amounts

Level of Household Income	Number of People Living in Household						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 or more
Less than \$28,000	\$30	\$30	\$34	\$38	\$42	\$50	\$50
\$28,001 - \$39,000	-	-	\$30	\$34	\$38	\$42	\$50
\$39,001 - \$48,000	-	-	-	-	\$30	\$34	\$38
\$48,000 - \$52,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$30

NEW OESP: Program Eligibility (cont'd)

- Those consumers who face unique challenges with respect to electricity affordability and outreach, such as First Nation and Métis consumers, consumers who use electric heating, and households using electricity-intensive medical devices, will receive more generous credit amounts (see table below)

Sliding Scale #2: Energy Intensive OESP Credit Amounts

Level of Household Income	Number of People Living in Household						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 or more
Less than \$28,000	\$45	\$45	\$50	\$55	\$60	\$75	\$75
\$28,001 - \$39,000	-	-	\$45	\$50	\$55	\$60	\$75
\$39,001 - \$48,000	-	-	-	-	\$45	\$50	\$55
\$48,000 - \$52,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$45

NEW OESP: How to Apply

- Intake for the OESP is expected to begin at the end of October

1 Online Self-Serve Application

- To apply online, all members of the household must have filed taxes in the last two years
- There will be an easy use electronic form available at OntarioElectricitySupport.ca
- Upon filling in the online form, the applicant must print, sign and mail in the consent form, for the Canada Revenue Agency to verify the income of household members
- Paper applications will also be available for those who do not wish to submit an online application
 - Applicants can access a paper application either at OntarioElectricitySupport.ca or by calling the OESP contact centre at 1-588-831-8151
 - The completed paper application and signed consent form must mailed in for the Canada Revenue Agency to verify the income of household members

2 Assisted Application

- Those households that have not recently filed taxes, whose situation has changed, or generally need more assistance filling out their application, can visit an intake agency
- The intake agency who would assist the applicant in filling out the application would also manually verify their household income

- OESP recipients will have to reapply every two years for the program unless they are 65 years of age or older, or are receiving a disability benefit under CPP

Are there other measures in place to help energy consumers with their energy costs?

NEW DRC Exemption for Residential Consumers

- To help ease pressure on residential consumers, the government is removing the Debt Retirement Charge (DRC) from residential electricity bills after December 31, 2015
- The removal of the DRC for residential consumers coincides with the ending of the OCEB and will help ensure that residential consumers do not experience a substantial increase in their electricity bills once the OCEB has ended
- Eliminating the DRC would save a typical residential electricity consumer about \$70 per year
- Consumers who own or manage a multi-unit building, may be eligible for the DRC exemption. To be eligible for this DRC exemption, consumers must send a Notice to their utility that tells the utility the number of eligible residential units included under their account
- For more information, visit the Ministry of Finance's website ontario.ca/drc or contact your utility

A Case Study

This example assumes a family of four which:

- earns less than \$28,000 each year
- uses 800 kilowatt hours of electricity each month, and
- would have paid a DRC of 0.7 cents per kilowatt hour

This family would receive:

- an OESP credit of \$38 per month, and
- DRC savings of \$5.60 per month, before taxes



Ontario Electricity Support Program

An eligible household of four



could save **\$455** a year with the Ontario Electricity Support Program

and **\$70** a year with the removal of the Debt Retirement Charge

Annual Savings \$525

 Ontario

Additional Energy Assistance Initiatives

- There are several additional assistance options currently being delivered to eligible Ontarians, including:

Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit

- The Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit saves qualifying individuals up to \$993 per year, with a maximum of \$1,131 per year for qualifying seniors

Northern Ontario Energy Credit

- The Northern Ontario Energy Credit helps families and individuals in Northern Ontario by providing tax credits for low- to middle-income families and individuals living in northern Ontario. The maximum annual credit for a single person is \$143, and for a family (including single parents), is \$221

Low-Income Energy Assistance program: Emergency Financial Assistance

- The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, Emergency Financial Assistance provides emergency financial support (up to \$600 annually) for consumers having trouble paying their bills.
- Local utilities and social service agencies can provide more information. More information is also available on the Ontario Energy Board web site

Additional Energy Assistance Initiatives (cont'd)

- There are also a number of programs which are focused on helping consumers through conservation measures, including:

saveONenergy Home Assistance Program

- The Home Assistance Program was developed to help income-eligible homeowners and tenants manage their energy use and costs by offering detailed in-home energy assessments and installing energy-saving measures at no cost. Social and assisted housing providers also qualify for assistance in making their buildings more energy efficient
- Contact the Ontario Power Authority 1-877-797-7534 or visit saveonenergy.ca/homeassistance

Natural gas programs

- Through their Home Weatherization and Home Winterproofing Programs, Union Gas and Enbridge will pay for the full cost of energy efficiency improvements, such as insulation and draft proofing measures, for qualifying customers. Customers can save up to 30% on their energy use, lowering their energy bills
- Contact your utility or visit uniongas.com or enbridge.com

saveONenergy Retrofit for Social and Assisted Housing program

- Assisted and social housing buildings are eligible for advanced funding of as much as 50 percent of the estimated participant amounts for a wide variety of equipment upgrades and building envelope improvement measures
- Contact your electric utility or visit saveonenergy.ca/Business

Questions?