



ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SUPPORT PROGRAM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

ABOUT THE ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (OESP)

1. What is the Ontario Electricity Support Program?

The OESP is an Ontario Energy Board (OEB) rate program that lowers electricity bills for low-income households.

Starting January 1, 2016, the OESP will provide a monthly, on-bill credit to eligible customers based on household income and number of people living in the home. Eligible customers will receive an on-bill credit of between \$30 and \$50 a month.

2. When will I start seeing the credit on my bill?

Credits will be applied to bills for electricity used on or after January 1, 2016.

Eligible customers can expect the credit to appear directly on their bill about six to eight weeks from the date their application is approved.

Credits will not be applied retroactively to January 1, 2016.

OESP ELIGIBILITY

3. Who can apply?

The program is available to all low-income customers who have accounts with electric utilities, unit sub-meter providers and retail energy companies. Customers must apply to the program.

4. What if I don't have an electricity account?

As the OESP provides a credit on the electricity bills of eligible customers, it is only available to an electricity account holder.

If you don't receive an electricity bill you may qualify for other programs. Please contact 211 Ontario for more information.



5. Which medical devices qualify for a higher level of assistance?

There are two medical devices that will qualify an applicant for the higher level of assistance:

- A. Oxygen Concentrator
- B. Mechanical Ventilators (invasive and non-invasive)

6. Should I report before- or after-tax household income when applying?

Please use after tax, or net income, to report household income.

7. How is my income, and the income of household members, verified?

The Ministry of Finance will verify your income with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) using your Social Insurance Number (SIN) and the SINs of any other income tax filers in your household. The CRA verifies your income as declared on your tax return from last year or the year before.

8. What if I haven't filed income tax?

If you have not filed an income tax return recently, or if your situation has changed since you last filed, you can apply for the OESP through a designated community group listed at OntarioElectricitySupport.ca or call the OESP Contact Centre at 1-855-831-8151.

9. I need personal assistance. Who do I go to for help?

More than 90 community groups are now ready to help customers apply. Please visit OntarioElectricitySupport.ca for a complete list. You may also contact 211 Ontario, your local utility or the OESP Contact Centre at 1-855-831-8151 for more information.



10. Members of my household don't live with me full-time. My kids go away to school and my parents spend winters away. Can I count them in my household size total?

Residents must live in the home for 6 months or more per year to be counted in your household total.

11. How often do I have to apply?

Most eligible customers will have to reapply every two years or whenever personal circumstances change such as a move or change in income levels.

12. What if I need help now and can't wait until January 2016?

If you need assistance before the OESP begins, please contact your electricity utility or visit the OEB website for more information about other low-income programs that may be available to you.

13. Will the program be monitored to ensure only those who truly need it are receiving credits?

The OEB will randomly audit applications to verify applicant information and the eligibility of households. If an error is found to have occurred, credits may simply be cancelled. If an audit and subsequent investigation points to fraudulent activity, credits could be cancelled and amounts could be clawed back.

PROGRAM FUNDING

14. How is the OESP funded?

The OESP will be funded by all ratepayers through a per kilowatt-hour charge on electricity bills.

15. What will it cost ratepayers?

Until we know how many customers will be using this program it is difficult to provide an exact figure. At this time, based on eligibility of more than 500,000 customers, we expect this program will cost the average residential customer about \$1 each month.



16. How much will small business and industry pay for this program?

We won't know the exact amount until we know how many customers apply for OESP. We expect the range for most small businesses to be \$2 - \$4 per month. Larger users will be charged \$0.001 - \$0.0018 per kilowatt-hour. This is the same per kilowatt-hour charge that will be applied for small business and residential customers.

17. Why is the program funded through all ratepayers? I'll never use the program. Why am I paying for it?

The OESP is a rate program developed by the Ontario Energy Board to lower electricity bills through an on-bill credit. It could benefit more than 500,000 low-income Ontario households.

For low-income Ontarians, paying their electricity bill can be a challenge. Electricity represents a significantly greater share of their monthly expenses. For example, for households with an annual income of \$20,000, a typical electricity bill could be 10 per cent or more of their income. The OESP is one of several programs designed to help electricity consumers with limited financial resources.

18. How is this program different from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)?

There is an important difference between the OESP and the currently available LEAP.

The OESP is intended to provide ongoing monthly bill payment support to low-income customers. LEAP offers one-time support for customers who are temporarily unable to make ends meet due to emergency or illness. In some circumstances, an applicant may qualify for both programs.

19. Where can I get more information about the OESP?

Visit the website at OntarioElectricitySupport.ca. You may also contact 211 Ontario, your local utility or the OESP Contact Centre at 1-855-831-8151 for more information.