



# ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR FIRST NATIONS

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## 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 program that lowers electricity bills for eligible lower-income households. Starting January 1, 2016, the OESP will provide a monthly credit to eligible customers based on household income and the number of people in the house. The OESP credits will be applied directly to eligible customers' bills.

#### 2. Is there a different OESP program for lower-income First Nations and Métis?

Yes. After engaging with First Nations and Métis, the OEB determined a higher level of support should be provided for lower-income First Nations and Métis households to help address some of the unique challenges that may lead to higher electricity use and costs.

There is a separate application process for First Nations households.

#### 3. What is the OESP application process for First Nations customers?

The Ontario Native Welfare Administrators' Association (ONWAA) will provide on-site, face-to-face assistance in First Nations communities. This will provide community members with the opportunity to complete an application with personal support.

ONWAA will need the following to complete the application:

- Last electricity bill
- Birthdates and names of all residents in the home
- Proof of household income.

Please contact ONWAA at 1-844-885-3157 or email [oesp@onwaa.com](mailto:oesp@onwaa.com) to confirm their availability.



First Nations customers may also apply online if you have recently filed taxes and have verified income from Canada Revenue Agency that is reflective of the household's total income.

#### **4. When will the program be available to First Nations customers?**

The program begins January 1, 2016 for all lower-income households in Ontario, including First Nations.

Applications will be accepted starting mid-fall 2015.

### **OESP AMOUNTS AND ELIGIBILITY**

#### **5. Are all First Nations customers automatically eligible for this program?**

All lower-income First Nation households who are customers of an electricity utility are eligible and may qualify for OESP.

#### **6. Who can apply?**

The program is available to all eligible lower-income customers who have accounts with electricity utilities, unit sub-meter providers and retail energy companies. The account holder can apply.

#### **7. What if I don't have an electricity account?**

The OESP provides a credit on the electricity bill of eligible customers. It is only available to an electricity account holder.

#### **8. How much assistance will First Nations customers receive?**

For some customers, the need to use more power is unavoidable. That is why OESP offers a higher level of assistance to lower-income First Nations households, customers whose homes are electrically heated, and those who rely on an approved medical device requiring a lot of electricity.



**OESP Monthly Credit Amounts – Energy Intensive**

Household Income	Household Size (Number of people living in household)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
\$28,000 or less	\$45	\$45	\$50	\$55	\$60	\$75	\$75
\$28,001-\$39,000			\$45	\$50	\$55	\$60	\$75
\$39,001-\$48,000					\$45	\$50	\$55
\$48,001-\$52,000							\$45

**9. How is that different from other low-income households?**

The OESP will provide a monthly credit to eligible customers based on household income and the number of people in the house.

**OESP Monthly Credit Amounts**

Household Income	Household Size (Number of people living in household)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
\$28,000 or less	\$30	\$30	\$34	\$38	\$42	\$50	\$50
\$28,001 – \$39,000			\$30	\$34	\$38	\$42	\$50
\$39,001 – \$48,000					\$30	\$34	\$38
\$48,001 – \$52,000							\$30

**10. What medical devices qualify for a higher level of assistance?**

The following two medical devices qualify:

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

**11. Do First Nations who are using eligible medical devices and living in electrically heated homes receive an even higher level of assistance?**

No. The additional credit amounts already account for any or all of these factors.

**12. Are the household income amounts listed in the OESP Monthly Credit tables before or after tax income?**

The household income amounts listed on the table are after tax, or net income.



### **13. My kids go away to school/live with another parent part-time. 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.

### **14. How long will it take to process my application and will the credits be applied retroactively?**

Customers who qualify can expect to see the credits appearing on the bill within six to eight weeks. For example, a customer who applies on February 1, will likely see the credit appear on their April bill (or up to four months later depending on their utility's billing cycle).

Credits will not be applied retroactively from the date the application was submitted or approved.

### **15. What if I need help now?**

Other low-income assistance programs are available before January 1, 2016.

For information, please contact your local electricity utility or visit [OntarioEnergyBoard.ca/OEB/Consumers](http://OntarioEnergyBoard.ca/OEB/Consumers) or call 1-877-632-2727.

### **16. Is this a one-time application process or do I need to keep applying on a regular basis?**

Applicants will receive the credit for 24 months from the date the first credit is applied to the bill and will need to re-apply every two years to continue receiving the credit. This eligibility period may be extended from two years to five years for certain customers whose circumstances are unlikely to change, for example seniors aged 65+ and customers receiving a CPP Disability Pension.

### **17. What if I move?**

Customers who move, or whose circumstances change, must re-apply.



## 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. The LEAP offers one-time support for customers who are temporarily unable to make ends meet due to emergency or illness and could have their electricity disconnected. In some circumstances, an applicant may qualify for both programs.

## PROGRAM FUNDING

### 19. How is the OESP funded?

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

### 20. 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.