

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD

OESP & LEAP Manual

Effective: March 1, 2024



Ontario
Energy
Board

PURPOSE

The OESP and LEAP Manual (the Manual) is intended to guide the delivery of the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) and the Low-income Energy Assistance Program's Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA). The Manual also includes information relating to special customer service rules and conservation programs for eligible low-income consumers.

This Manual provides a program guide for the agencies performing intake for OESP and/or LEAP EFA (intake agencies) as well as for electricity distributors, gas distributors and unit sub-meter providers (collectively "utilities"). 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 EFA, to accommodate the unique needs of intake agencies and utilities, some aspects of the administration of LEAP EFA have been left to the discretion of those agencies and utilities. This Manual clearly indicates when such discretion is allowed and when it is not.

The Ontario Energy Board (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 regardless 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 EFA 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 from what was recommended in the respective OEB reports noted above. This is due to periodic updates made to both programs over the years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *OESP and LEAP Program 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 based on prior work completed by the developers of the *Winter Warmth Program Process Manual*. The Manual was revised to include the OESP in 2015 and updated to include changes to OESP since 2015 and changes to LEAP EFA resulting from the 2023 review of the LEAP EFA.

Sincere thanks to all the organizations involved with the OESP and LEAP EFA programs for their ongoing contributions and support.

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

OESP, LEAP EFA, special customer service rules, and conservation programs, encompass the types of assistance for low-income energy customers.

- ❖ OESP provides ongoing, on-bill rate assistance to electricity customers (it is not offered for natural gas) to reduce electricity bills for low-income customers.
- ❖ LEAP EFA is available to natural gas and electricity customers and provides a one-time grant to help customers avoid disconnection.
- ❖ Special customer service rules ensure utilities provide more flexibility to low-income customers.
- ❖ Electricity and natural gas conservation programs assist low-income customers with no-cost energy efficiency upgrades that help lower overall energy costs and make their homes more comfortable.

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, they will direct customers to the OESP and LEAP EFA (if needed). Upon enrolling in either the OESP or LEAP EFA, customers are automatically eligible for access to the low-income customer service rules through their utility, as well as access to specific conservation programs. Customers who receive assistance under the OESP may not need to access a LEAP EFA grant. It is expected, however, that customers who 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 EFA?

Utility customers with an after-tax household income at or less than the income eligibility thresholds which were derived from Statistics Canada’s Low-income Measure (LIM), as set out in Appendix B will be eligible for OESP.

In addition to the criteria set out in Appendix B, there are eligibility requirements specific to LEAP EFA, which are set out in section 3.2 of this Manual.

1.2 What is OESP?

The OESP provides on-bill rate assistance for electricity charges for eligible lower-income households.

Electricity customers can apply for the OESP online, through the application portal at [OESP.ca](https://www.oesp.ca) or for French speaking customers [POAFE.ca](https://www.poafe.ca) hosted by a central service provider (CSP), or through local intake agencies. The delivery of the OESP relies heavily on the cooperation between electricity utilities, intake agencies, and the CSP.

The OESP is tax-payer funded, and its costs are recovered from provincial funds.

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 arrears and facing disconnection. It is intended to be applied only to outstanding natural gas or electricity bills. It is not intended to provide regular or ongoing bill payment assistance.

Customers of natural gas and electricity distributors², as well as those of unit sub-meter providers (USMPs) are eligible for LEAP EFA.

Although LEAP EFA is funded by all ratepayers through each distributor's rates, distributors and agencies may also raise money from private donations to supplement LEAP EFA funding. Funds provided by a particular distributor for LEAP EFA must be used only for that distributor's customers, or customers of USMPs operating within that electricity distributor's service area.

The funding provided by electricity and natural gas distributors is the greater of 0.12% of their total OEB approved distribution revenue or \$2,000 each year recovered through rates. As per section 2.4.3.6 of the OEB's Filing Requirements for Electricity Distribution Rate Applications³, distributors can propose a LEAP EFA funding amount higher than 0.12%. The OEB has set out the expectation⁴ that no eligible LEAP EFA applicant should be denied an emergency assistance grant due to lack of funds. However, as funding is provided by the gas or electricity distributor, an agency should confirm the level of funding from the distributor.

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

³ [See section 2.4.3.6 of Filing Requirements for Electricity Distribution Rate Applications](#)

⁴ Changes to the LEAP EFA were announced in the OEB [letter](#) dated February 12, 2024

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

1.4 Which Utilities Offer OESP and LEAP EFA?

All electricity distributors and USMPs are required to deliver the OESP. As indicated earlier, OESP is provincially funded.

The OEB expects all electricity and natural gas distributors to offer LEAP EFA. LEAP EFA is also available to eligible low-income customers of USMPs for electricity charges. 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 USMP, the agency must enquire as to the relevant electricity distributor. This information can be confirmed by contacting the USMP.

A list of electricity and natural gas distributors and USMPs that support LEAP EFA is available on the OEB's website. A list of electricity distributors and USMPs 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 Agency?

Referrals to the OESP and LEAP EFA can come from a variety of sources, including utility customer service representatives, community service agencies, 211 Ontario, the OEB's Public Information Centre, and government offices and/or government representatives.

If a customer wishes to apply only for the OESP, they should be directed to the OESP portal. Customers who cannot use the OESP portal for any reason may be referred to one of the OESP qualified agencies most conveniently located for the customer regardless of whether the agency happens to be partnered with the customer's electricity distributor to provide LEAP EFA.

If a customer wishes to apply for both the OESP and LEAP EFA, or only LEAP EFA, the customer should be referred to the closest LEAP EFA agency partnered with the customer's electricity or natural gas distributor.

2. The Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)

This chapter provides detailed information about the OESP delivery and its 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.

Ministry of Energy

- Setting the eligibility criteria and rate-reductions also referred to as credits;
- Funding the program; and
- Monitoring and evaluating the program.

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; and
- Responding to questions about the program.

Central Service Provider (CSP)

The OEB selected a CSP to administer the OESP. The CSP receives all applications for the program and determines each applicant's eligibility with the help of the Ministry of Finance and intake agencies. The CSP also communicates 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 utility;
- Ensuring that applicants' signed consent forms, if applicable, are properly signed and received by the CSP, including sending a reminder to applicants who have not yet submitted it;
- 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;
- Notifying utilities of their eligible customers' applicable OESP credit amount and the number of months for which they will receive it;
- 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;
- Providing support to OESP intake agencies and responsible for the agency payment settlement process;
- Managing a contact centre for questions and concerns about the program; and
- 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 (CRA);
- Determining the OESP credit for applicants meeting the income eligibility thresholds;
- Communicating the OESP credit for applicants meeting the income eligibility thresholds to the CSP; and
- Reporting to the OEB.

Intake Agencies

The OESP intake agencies are responsible for the following tasks:

- Providing the CSP, electricity utilities, 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 the last two tax years, or for applicants whose household financial circumstances have changed since they last filed their taxes;

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

Electricity Utilities (Distributors and USMPs)

Electricity utilities are responsible for the following tasks:

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

2.2 Eligibility Criteria for OESP

Eligibility criteria for the OESP, including household income thresholds and the credit amounts are established by the Ontario government through Regulation. The number of people living in the household and their combined income is used to determine the OESP credit an applicant will receive are set out in Appendix B.

Please note: Income from the Child Tax Benefit, Universal Child Care Benefit, Ontario Child Benefit, Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), and the Registered Disability Savings Plan is not included when calculating household income for the purpose of assessing income eligibility for the OESP.

2.3 OESP Application Process

Electricity customers can apply for the OESP independently or with the assistance of an intake agency. This chapter outlines how agencies 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 (aged 18 and older) 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 18 and older must sign and submit an electronic consent form or print and sign a paper copy and mail it to the CSP.

ASSISTED AUTOMATIC INCOME VERIFICATION (AAIV): Applicants who have filed taxes but need help navigating the online or paper application process may seek the assistance of an intake agency. The intake agency will assist the applicant with completing the application and/or upload the application electronically for those applicants who do not have personal access to the internet. The applicant and all household members 18 and older must still sign and submit an electronic consent form or print and sign a paper copy and mail it to the 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 other household members' 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 intake agency's records.

Intake agencies are encouraged to use the online application portal but may submit paper applications as well. When agency staff assist with the application, they must enter their agency ID, 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 by email or mail. In addition, the submission of an application will auto-generate an account (with an ID and temporary password) so that the applicant can easily check the application status, correct any errors, and reapply later.

The following is a step-by-step outline of the AAIV 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, the intake agency should ask the following questions:

- Do you receive an electricity bill and are you the account holder with your electricity utility?
- 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 intake 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, if possible, to other programs or help that may be available to them. It is expected that most ineligible applicants can be identified at the pre-screening stage.

Each intake agency staff is responsible for booking appointments for their agency and informing the applicant of the criteria and documentation required for the application interview. Agency staff should record the date of the appointment, client's name, address, utility and account number.

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

The documents applicants are required to bring to the appointment are different for MIV and AAIV applications; the requirements are outlined below.

All Application Types	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Electricity bill <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To verify the account number, the account holder and service address</i></p>	
AAIVs	MIVs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIN numbers for all tax filers in the household or other temporary tax numbers <p><i>Proof of income is not required</i></p> <p>Note: All household members aged 18 and older must have filed taxes at least once 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"> • Pay cheque stub • Letter from employer • Income tax return • Ontario Works statement • Employment insurance • Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) • Canada Pension Plan (CPP) • Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) • Interest income and dividends • Old Age Security Pension • Rental Income • RRSPs / RRIFs • Recent bank statement

STEP 2: Application Interview

During the application interview, intake agency staff reviews all of 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 access to 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 attend an in-person interview would cause hardship to the customer (this would be assessed at the discretion of the intake 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 AAIV applications only, the intake agency must assist the applicant and all household members 18 and older in signing and submitting an electronic OESP Consent Form; or the agency may instead provide the applicant with a paper copy which must be ***signed by the applicant and all household members 18 and older***. ***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.

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 must 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 and is also available on the OEB's website at [MIV Tool](#). 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 intake 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 intake agency will have an “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 intake agency administrator, however, can revise the password for each agent ID at any time.

Agencies should assign a specific agent ID to each of their staff and ensure that no one uses the same agent ID at the same time. For clarity, the intake agency administrator should create an individual ID and password for each intake agency staff responsible for submitting OESP applications; intake agency staff should not share agent credentials.

When completing an application, intake 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 nor be compensated.

Completing the OESP Application Form

The OESP application form should be completed by intake agency staff during the application interview for all applicants and household members. It is important to complete the form in its entirety each time. For MIVs, 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, AAIV, 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 by email or mail. In addition, the application submission will auto-generate

an account (ID and temporary password) so that the applicant can easily check the application status, correct any errors, and re-apply 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 utility. 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 household income bracket and household size will be used to determine the OESP credit that will be applied to the applicant's electricity bill as set out in Appendix B. Applicants with special electricity requirements (those with electric heat as a primary heating source; those who use certain medical devices requiring electricity; and/or indigenous customers) will be given an OESP credit based on a separate sliding scale. Please refer to Appendix B for the table listing the Energy Intensive credit amounts.

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 to electricity utility the OESP credit due to approved customers, and how long they will receive it. Electricity utilities are responsible for applying the OESP credit to the approved customer's electricity bill.

Approved customers will see the OESP credit on their electricity bill within 1-2 billing cycles of receiving notification of their approval for a credit.

STEP 4: Application Status (if needed)

Applicants can check the status of their application (e.g. pending, draft, hold, approved, denied, replaced) by:

- Logging into 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 a call centre representative to provide the application status, the applicant must provide three of six pieces of information: 1) their reference number; 2) their name, as it was submitted on the application; 3) their service address as it was submitted on the application; 4) their utility; 5) their email address or mailing address; or 6) their utility 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 intake agency staff. Applicants may also call the CSP contact centre for advice and guidance on how to correct an error on their application; the CSP contact centre can correct utility account information errors on an applicant's behalf. The CSP cannot correct errors related to personal information such as dates of birth or Social Insurance Numbers (SIN).

STEP 6: Customer Disagrees with Eligibility Decision

An applicant may disagree with the result of their application review due to either being denied or disagreeing with the amount of the OESP credit that they are approved for. In the case of a consumer disagreeing with the result of their application review, the intake agency should review the disputed application to determine if it may be missing information that might have resulted in a different eligibility decision or credit amount (e.g.: missing household member, Indigenous status, an approved at-home medical device, or electric heating). If such information was missed in error, the intake agency should submit a new application with the corrected information.

If the disputed application is an AIV, the intake agency should assess whether the applicant's current circumstances necessitate a manual income verification via MIV.

If the intake agency's review shows that the application was submitted with the correct information, the applicant should be referred to the CSP contact centre. Applicants whose income was verified by an intake agency will be informed that the decision is final. Applicants who dispute the result of their application review and whose income was verified through AIV would be directed to the nearest intake agency to have their income and household details verified manually through an MIV by an intake agency and, if appropriate, to reapply.

STEP 7: Re-application/Renewal

Change in Circumstances: An OESP recipient must reapply if they move (even if it is within the same utility's service territory). If the OESP recipient 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 scale), the applicant should re-apply for the OESP.

Renewal: OESP recipients are typically eligible for two years and then must reapply for OESP for a reassessment of their eligibility and confirm that they are receiving the correct credit. If the account holder is 65 years old or over, or receives a CPP disability pension, then they must reapply after five years.

Electricity utilities will provide at least 60 days' notice to OESP recipients that they must renew their application.

Note: The OESP system is an application processing system, not an application management system. As such, it does not track renewals and link them to previous applications. Therefore, a complete application is required at the time of renewal or reapplication. All applicants over 18 must sign and submit the OESP Consent Form regardless of the number of times they have applied in the past.

2.4 Files and Record Retention

All application forms and corresponding documentation required for MIVs (whether the application is approved or not), are to be filed and stored by the intake agency in compliance with applicable legal requirements and any instructions of the OEB. They must be retained for seven years unless the OEB directs otherwise. This applies to MIV applications only.

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](#) both provide information that intake agencies may find helpful as they perform intake such as FAQs on eligibility and quick reference guides. In addition, agencies can contact the OEB directly by emailing IndustryRelations@oeb.ca.

Intake agency staff may also refer to the following resources:

Agency Administration Portal: <https://agency.ontarioelectricitysupport.ca/>

- Create and update Online Portal credentials for Intake Agents
- Access training materials and tools

This portal is accessed using the Intake agency's credentials.

Secure OESP Site: https://cf.oeb.ca/html/_oesp_implementation/login.cfm

- Access training materials and tools
- Download marketing materials and application forms (in PDF)

Please contact the OEB for credentials at oespadmin@oeb.ca to access this portal.

3. The Low-income Energy Assistance Program – Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA)

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 roles of agencies will be established through the agreements between the agency and the electricity or natural gas distributor.

The tasks outlined below have been assigned to lead or intake agencies. The division of responsibilities between lead and intake agencies may vary and is at the discretion of distributors, lead agencies, and intake agencies. Note: A lead agency can also be an intake agency.

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 USMPs.

OEB

- Sets program rules and provides oversight of the program;
- Conducts periodic reviews and implements required changes; and
- Responds to questions from utilities, agencies and consumers.

Intake Agencies

Intake agencies may be responsible for the following tasks:

- Screening applicants for LEAP EFA eligibility;
- Processing applications including collecting the necessary information (bills, pay stubs, income information), verifying applicant information with the utility and completing all required forms;
- Ensuring that all necessary documentation and forms are completed;
- Informing the applicant’s utility that assessment of eligibility is being undertaken to ensure appropriate action by the utility, which may include putting a hold on a scheduled disconnection;

- Reviewing applications and making recommendations to the lead agency (where applicable) within the disconnection hold period;
- Communicating information to the applicant regarding approved or denied applications;
- Tracking information and reporting to the lead agency to support the lead agency's reporting obligations to distributors. Assisting with the gathering of data for program reporting; and
- Providing appropriate referrals and follow-up support to applicants.

Lead Agencies

Lead agencies may be responsible for the following tasks:

- Screening applicants for eligibility for LEAP EFA;
- 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 Grant Payment 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 USMPs within that distributor's service area;
- Developing and implementing an appeal/internal review process;
- Tracking applicant names, addresses and account numbers to prevent duplicate requests;
- Providing distributor partner(s) and the OEB with a list of the intake agencies, by geographic area, and updated as required, for the purposes of referrals by call centre staff;
- Upon request by a USMP, 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 E;
- 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 utilities of final decisions on applications so that utilities 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 financial assistance programs, if applicable.

Natural Gas and Electricity Distributors

Distributors are responsible for the following tasks:

- Providing LEAP funds collected from its ratepayers;
- Determining funding allocations within their service territory;
- 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 and low-income customer service rules (see Section 5);
- 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

USMPs are responsible for the following tasks:

- Training their call centre and collections staff on LEAP EFA and low-income 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

Eligibility criteria for LEAP EFA, including income and household size thresholds are established by the OEB. The number of people living in the household and their combined after-tax income is used to determine eligibility as set in Appendix B. Specifically, to be eligible for a LEAP EFA grant, applicants must:

- Be an existing customer of the distributor providing the funding, or an existing electricity customer of a unit sub-meter provider operating within the service area of the distributor;
- Reside at the address for which there are arrears; and
- Meet the income eligibility and household size thresholds set out in Appendix B.

There are additional screening guidelines for LEAP EFA, which are set out below.

Screening Guidelines

In assessing eligibility of 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.
- The applicant has demonstrated a prior attempt to pay the bill. The utility, 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, meaning they are looking for emergency assistance to continue their energy service(s), which is the purpose of LEAP EFA. Agencies are expected to focus on providing emergency assistance to prevent a scheduled disconnection or have the customer reconnected. However, depending on the customer's circumstances, the agency, may provide assistance to applicants in arrears but who have not yet received a disconnection notice or been disconnected (i.e. early intervention) to avoid disconnection.
- Grants provided to individual consumers are intended to be accessed only once per year and should not exceed the maximum grant amounts (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 \$650 (or \$780 for electrically heated homes).

- **Please note:** the criteria to be an existing customer of the distributor providing the funding, or an existing customer of a USMP operating within the service area of the distributor, and to reside at the address for which there are arrears are mandatory requirements.

Agency Discretion

If an applicant does not meet the income eligibility 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.

3.3 LEAP EFA Application Process

STEP 1: Pre-Screening

To assist with the large number of enquiries during program delivery, the lead agency should pre-screen the applicants over the telephone prior to booking an appointment. At pre-screening, four questions should be asked:

- Are you a customer of a natural gas or electricity distributor or USMP?
- Have you received a disconnection notice, or have you been disconnected?
- Do you reside at the address with arrears?
- What is your approximate yearly/monthly after-tax household income?
- How many people are in the household?

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

If, based on the information provided during the pre-screening, the agency assesses that the applicant may be eligible for assistance; the agency 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 (i.e. the primary electricity and/or natural gas account holder as applicable) and then have the applicant come in for an application interview, or whether they require the applicant to come in person 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 complete 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 in-person interview.

In-person interviews are required in most cases, but telephone interviews are permitted in some situations, i.e. 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 mail, fax or email, which may delay the grant process.

STEP 2: Scheduling Interview Appointments

The agency is responsible for booking in-person appointments for their agency and informing the applicant of the criteria and documentation required for the application interview. The agency should record the date of the appointment, applicant's name, address, utility, and account number. Only the utility account holder is required to attend the application interview.

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

- Identification – two pieces of I.D. for the primary account holder (applicant), and one piece of I.D. for each of the other household members are required;
- Current energy bills for their residence – these should verify the amount of arrears;
- Notice of Service Disconnection, if applicable;
- Proof of household income – e.g., cheque stubs, letter(s) from the employer(s) and/or income tax return;
- Bank statement(s) from the most recent month; and
- Copy of rental receipt, lease, or mortgage document that shows that the applicant resides at the address on the utility bill. At their discretion, agencies may accept other documents in lieu of a rental, lease, or mortgage document (e.g., letter from MPP, attestation from a legal clinic or letter from a landlord).

STEP 3: Application Interview

During the application interview, agency staff 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 G). Note that agency staff may have to complete several different consent forms if advocating on behalf of the applicant for multiple utilities and social service agencies (i.e. Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, 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 OESP & LEAP EFA Manual Income Verification process is included in Appendix C.

Completing the LEAP EFA Application Form

The LEAP EFA Application Form (see Appendix G) should be completed by agency staff 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 utility, where appropriate, and checked against the documentation submitted.

STEP 4: Verifying with the Utility

It is important to verify the arrears-related information provided by the applicant with the applicant's utility. 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 utility.

To protect applicants' privacy, a signed Consent to Disclose Information form (see Appendix G) must be mailed, or a scanned copy must be emailed to the utility before they can discuss customer and account information with agency staff.

Utilities are required to put a 21-day hold on a scheduled disconnection if a customer is applying for a LEAP EFA grant.

Agencies should contact the utility 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 utility of the assessment. However, it is important to note that when a utility issues a disconnection notice for non-payment, a customer generally has 14 days from the day the notice is received to pay their bills to avoid disconnection. Therefore, the utility should be notified of the agency's assessment within that 14-day period.

Agencies are expected to notify utilities of final decisions on applications within 21 days from the date of notification by the intake agency to the utility that it is assessing whether a consumer is eligible for LEAP EFA. It is at the discretion of the lead and intake agencies as to which agency is responsible for this step.

STEP 5: Recommending the Grant Amount

Once the application has been completed and signed, and the information verified (including utility verification), it is up to the intake agency to make a recommendation regarding the amount of a grant. The recommendation should address both whether or not to approve the application, and the amount of the grant to be provided. Agency staff should complete the information in the appropriate section of the LEAP EFA Application Form.

One of the key factors to consider when determining a recommendation is whether the grant amount will be sufficient to halt the disconnection or ensure reconnection of a customer's energy services and whether 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, Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), and the Registered Disability Savings Plan is not included when calculating household income for the

purpose of assessing income eligibility for 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 a LEAP EFA grant has been provided and may, therefore, inform the agency's recommendation about the grant amount.

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 financial assistance and housing support programs, if applicable.

STEP 6: Lead Agency Review (if applicable)

If a distributor has a lead agency and intake agencies, a LEAP EFA Application Form completed by an intake agency 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 and other adult household members' pay stubs, employment letter(s), and/or income tax return(s) for all adult occupants within the household;
- A copy of the signed Consent to Disclose Information form;
- A copy of rental receipt, lease, mortgage document or other acceptable documents; and
- A copy of the most recent monthly bank statement(s).

The lead agency should check the application for completeness and review the grant recommendation made by the intake agency. Applications that are incomplete should not be processed for funding until complete. It is the duty of each intake agency staff to ensure that all applications are completed prior to submitting them to the lead agency.

If there has been a recommendation of a grant by the agency staff but outstanding questions remain regarding the application, the lead agency will contact the intake agency to resolve the issues. The application may be returned to the intake agency for completion or denied based on 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 intake agency's recommendation to provide a grant, the application is approved.

Once the application has been approved, the utility should be contacted to stop any further disconnection or collection action on the applicant's account. If the application is denied, the utility 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 should contact the applicant and inform them of the decision.

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

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

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 who 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 who was not part of the original review and assessment). Alternatively, a sample appeals process is included in Appendix F for consideration by lead agencies, and a template Request for Internal Review Form is provided in Appendix G.

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 agencies.

Distributors and lead 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 EFA funds are remaining; and b) that USMPs are reimbursed for LEAP EFA grants provided to their customers in a timely fashion.

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

Please note: agencies must clearly indicate on the Grant Payment Remittance Form which approved applicants have received grants specifically from LEAP EFA, from other sources, and/or 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 6) and/or low-income customer service rules (see section 5). 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 energy 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 E.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.

The Year-end Report, which consists of the Annual Reporting Requirements contained in Appendix E.2 is required to be submitted by the lead agencies to distributors by March 31 of the following year. The Year-end Report provides the information about program spending that distributors require 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 may request that agencies collect and report demographic information about applicants. The requirements for the periodic Demographic Reports are contained in Appendix E.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. When requested, the Demographic Reports must be submitted to the distributor by March 31 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 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 \$650 for electricity and/or natural gas, per household, per year, or up to \$780 for an electrically heated home.

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 \$650 (or up to \$780 for an electrically heated home) may be provided, as long as the applicant will be 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 agreement with the utility for the balance owing (see section 5.2, page 31); and/or
- Supplementary assistance through other non-LEAP EFA sources of 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 must not be used to cover amounts owed for equipment rental (e.g. water heater), equipment financing charges, charges for services other than electricity and natural gas services.

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

If a LEAP EFA applicant is not on OESP already, they should be encouraged by the agency to apply for the OESP at the same time. Receipt of OESP assistance may inform the agency's judgement about the LEAP EFA applicant's ability to sustain energy service going forward if a LEAP EFA grant were provided.

- If an applicant applies for OESP and LEAP EFA at the same time, processing the LEAP EFA application should be prioritized since there is limited time to avoid the impending disconnection or the need to get service reconnected.
- Even if the applicant files taxes and may otherwise be able to go through the AIV process, the LEAP EFA intake agency should always manually verify the applicant's household income when processing OESP and LEAP EFA applications 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.

5. CUSTOMER SERVICE RULES FOR ELIGIBLE LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS

The OEB has established special customer service rules for low-income customers that utilities must comply with. These customer service rules are found in the Distribution System Code (DSC), Retail Settlement Code, Standard Supply Service Code (SSSC), Unit Sub-Metering Code (USMC), and the Gas Distribution Access Rule (GDAR) all of which are posted on the OEB's web site at <https://www.oeb.ca/regulatory-rules-and-documents/rules-codes-and-requirements>

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

Eligibility for the Electricity Low-income Customer Service Rules

Any customer of an electricity distributor or USMP who has been approved for 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, could remain in effect from two to five years (the CSP will inform electricity utilities of each recipient's eligibility duration).

Customers who have received a LEAP EFA electricity grant are eligible for the low-income customer service rules for a period of two years from the date on which the grant was approved.

OESP recipients who have received a LEAP EFA electricity 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 LEAP EFA grant was approved.

Eligibility for the Natural Gas Low-income Customer Service Rules

Any customer of a natural gas distributor who has been approved for LEAP EFA automatically qualifies for the natural gas low-income customer service rules.

Customers who have received a LEAP EFA natural gas grant are eligible for the low-income customer service rules for two years from the date on which the grant was approved.

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

5.2 Summary of Low-income Customer Service Rules

The following sections summarize the customer service rules for eligible low-income customers. The summary of the low-income customer service rules set out below is not intended, nor should it be used as an interpretive tool for the Codes. The summary is an informal description of the rules to assist agencies and it has no legal or regulatory role in the interpretation, implementation, or enforcement of the rules. For full details, see the applicable regulatory documents as noted above.

Security Deposits

If an eligible low-income customer has previously paid the utility a security deposit, the customer may ask for it to be returned, as long as any outstanding arrears have been paid. 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 a utility requests a security deposit, the eligible low-income customer may request and receive a waiver.

Under-billing Adjustments – Not Applicable to Natural Gas Customers

When a billing error has occurred and an eligible low-income electricity customer owes the utility for an underpayment, the distributor must notify the customer that they 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.

Disconnection Grace Period

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

Assistance Information Before Disconnection

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

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

Reconnection Charge – Not Applicable to USMP Customers

When reconnecting an eligible low-income customer's service, electricity or natural gas distributors must waive the reconnection charges. This requirement is not applicable to USMPs.

Arrears Payment Agreements

- ***Down-Payment***
 - A down-payment of up to 10% when an eligible low-income customer enters into a low-income arrears payment 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 payment agreement are:

- At least 8 months if the amount the customer owes is less than or equal to 2 times their average monthly bill;

- At least 12 months if the amount the customer owes is more than twice their average monthly bill but less than or equal to 5 times their average monthly bill; and
- At least 16 months if the amount the customer owes is more than 5 times their average monthly bill.

- ***Late Payment Charges – Not Applicable to USMP Customers***

Outstanding late payment charges need not be waived by the distributor when an eligible low-income 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.

- ***Payment Defaults***

A utility can cancel the arrears agreement if an eligible low-income customer defaults more than twice on making an arrears payment, a regular bill payment, or an under-billing adjustment due.

- ***Second or Further Arrears Payment Agreements***

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

However, if a new arrears agreement is requested less than 12 months of the end of the first successfully completed low-income arrears agreement, the utility can offer the new arrears agreement on the terms that apply to the standard residential customer arrears payment agreement.

6. ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Energy conservation programs assist low-income customers with no-cost energy efficiency upgrades that help lower overall energy costs and make their homes more comfortable. Electricity and natural gas conservation programs are available for low-income customers.

As part of the participant application form titled “LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA) Consent to Disclose Information”, applicants agree to be referred to a conservation program, unless they explicitly opt-out. Agencies should refer applicants to these programs so they are aware of potential opportunities to help them reduce their energy costs.

6.1 Electricity and Natural Gas Conservation Low-Income Programs

The [Energy Affordability Program](#) (EAP) is available through the IESO’s Save On Energy offerings and delivered to income-eligible electricity customers by approved delivery partners.

The [Home Winterproofing Program](#) (HWP) is available through Enbridge Gas Inc. and delivered to income-eligible natural gas customers by approved delivery partners.

The EAP and HWP programs are streamlined into one application. These programs help income-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.

If a low-income customer qualifies for the OESP and LEAP EFA, they may also be eligible for the EAP and HWP.

The programs include 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 EAP and HWP are directly installed in the home and are free of charge to participants.

More information is available at:

- <https://saveonenergy.ca/For-Your-Home/Energy-Affordability-Program>
- <https://www.enbridgegas.com/residential/rebates-energy-conservation/home-winterproofing-program>

Please note that Ontario residents served by Cornwall Electric are not eligible for the EAP as they are not connected to the IESO-controlled grid. Please contact [Cornwall Electric](#) to determine if there are any other programs available in your service territory.

Appendix A – Glossary

AIV – Automatic Income Verification

AAIV – Assisted Automatic Income Verification

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

CRA – Canada Revenue Agency

EAP – The Energy Affordability Program

FAWG – Financial Assistance Working Group

IESO – Independent Electricity Systems Operator

LEAP EFA – Low-income Energy Assistance Program – Emergency Financial Assistance

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

USMP – Unit Sub-meter Provider

Account-holder: a customer who has an account with a utility 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 utilities make on a customer's bill.

Annual Reporting Requirements: the Year-end Reports, which lead agencies must submit to the distributor by March 31 of each year which are then reported to the OEB by distributors.

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

Arrears Payment Agreement (APA): the payment plan that utilities must provide their customers when they are in arrears.

Assisted Automatic Income Verification (AAIV): OESP applicants who file taxes but need help navigating the online or paper application process may apply with the assistance of an agency.

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 electricity utilities.

Change in Circumstance: an OESP recipient must reapply if they move (even within the same utility's service territory). If the OESP recipient 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 should re-apply for the OESP.

Demographic Reporting: information that lead and intake agencies are asked to track and report to their distributor partners. This information is only collected at the request of the OEB who will notify distributors at least six months in advance of the program

year during which the data is to be gathered. It is to be submitted to their respective distributor partner(s) by March 31 of the following year.

Distributor: means a licensed electricity distributor or a rate-regulated natural gas distributor.

Electricity-intensive Medical Device: an at-home oxygen concentrator, a mechanical ventilator, kidney dialysis machine or such other device as may be specified by the OEB.

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

Equal Monthly Payment Plan: distributors must offer non-seasonal residential customers an equal payment plan along with the option of automatic withdrawals from a financial institution. Distributors may cancel a customer's equal payment plan after two missed payments within an equal payment year.

Grant Payment Remittance Form: the LEAP EFA form that agencies are responsible for completing and submitting to natural gas and electricity distributors as part of the funding remittance process. It includes a list of approved applicants, their account numbers, and other relevant information and ensures that such applicants receive their LEAP EFA grants.

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 18 years or older.

Intake Agency: the entity that processes applications including collecting necessary information from each applicant, verifying account details with the utility, and completing all required forms for the OESP and/or LEAP EFA.

Lead Agency: the entity responsible for managing intake agencies and other responsibilities such as tracking program funds for the LEAP EFA Program. A lead agency can perform intake functions where there is no intake agency. Note: there are no lead agencies for the OESP.

Low-income Customer Service Rules: special rules that distributors must follow when dealing with eligible low-income customers; for example, waiving security deposits, allowing longer payment times and more.

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 utilities 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 approved low-income customers with fixed credits that are determined by two sliding scales. The credit amount is based on household income and the number of people living in the home. Customers may receive higher monthly credits based on unique eligibility that includes Indigenous customers or customers living with Indigenous family members, customers using electric heating, and customers using certain electricity-intensive medical devices.

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

Period of Eligibility: the length of time that a customer is deemed eligible 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 to be 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: agencies and energy utilities are encouraged to refer applicants to conservation programs, which will help customers reduce their energy use and lower their overall household costs. Agencies are encouraged to refer customers to any other programs available to assist them.

Security Deposits: Payment required by energy utilities to manage non-payment risk and mitigate bad debts.

Utility: natural gas and electricity distributors and unit sub-meter providers (also referred to as “service provider” in the forms in Appendix G.

Appendix B – OESP and LEAP EFA Income Eligibility Criteria

The income eligibility criteria for the OESP and LEAP is derived from Statistics Canada's after-tax Low-income Measure (LIM). The income brackets and eligible household size for OESP and LEAP EFA were aligned as of March 1, 2024.

Appendix B – Table 1
LEAP EFA income eligibility criteria, by income level and household size
effective March 1, 2024.

		Household Size						
		1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 or More Persons
Household After Tax Income	\$38,000 or less	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	\$38,001- \$54,000	-	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	\$54,001- \$65,000	-	-	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
	\$65,001- \$71,000	-	-	-	-	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible

Appendix B – Table 2
OESP income eligibility thresholds and monthly credit amounts by household size and income level effective March 1, 2024

Household Income (After Tax)	Household Size (# of People in the Household)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
\$38,000 or less	\$45	\$45	\$51	\$57	\$63	\$75	\$75
\$38,001 - \$54,000		\$40	\$45	\$51	\$57	\$63	\$75
\$54,001 - \$65,000			\$35	\$40	\$45	\$51	\$57
\$65,001 - \$71,000					\$35	\$40	\$45

Customers may receive higher monthly credits of between \$52 to \$113 as shown in the table below, based on unique eligibility criteria that includes:

- Indigenous customers or customers living with Indigenous family members;
- Customers using electric heating;
- Customers using certain electricity-intensive medical devices.

Appendix B – Table 3
OESP income eligibility thresholds and monthly credit amounts by household size and income level – Energy Intensive effective March 1, 2024

Household Income (After Tax)	Household Size (# of People in the Household)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
\$38,000 or less	\$68	\$68	\$75	\$83	\$90	\$113	\$113
\$38,001 - \$54,000		\$60	\$68	\$75	\$83	\$90	\$113
\$54,001 - \$65,000			\$52	\$60	\$68	\$75	\$83
\$65,001 - \$71,000					\$52	\$60	\$68

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)
- Interest Income and Dividends
- Old Age Security Pension
- Other Pension
- Rental Income
- Support Payments Received
- RRSPs/RRIFs

Deductions:

- Support Payments Made
- Employment Expenses

The OEB has developed a tool for intake agencies to manually verify and calculate household income. This tool is available on the OEB's website at [MIV Tool](#). 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;
- 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 agency staff 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 \$38,000.58 would be rounded down to \$38,000 and would fall into the ≤ \$38,000 income bracket. To further illustrate this, an annual household income of \$54,000.88 would be rounded down to \$54,000 and fall into the \$38,001-\$54,000 income bracket.

Appendix D – OESP Self-Serve Application Process

Program information and rules can be found on the OESP portal for customers 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 ages 18 and over
- Name of electricity utility 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 Indigenous;
- Preference for email or direct 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 are 18 and above must consent to have their income verified through the CRA. To confirm consent, the CRA requires a signature from anyone over the age of 18 in the household. Applicants must print and sign the consent form and mail it to the CSP or submit the form electronically with an electronic signature. If the signed consent form is not received by the CSP after 90 days, the application will be deleted from the CSP portal.

Appendix E – 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 allocated by the distributor at the beginning of the program year. The total spent should include amounts for both grants to customers, and agency administration & program delivery costs (maximum 15%).
- **Funds dispersed/spent, broken down by:**
 - **Total** – total money spent
 - **Agency Administration & Program Delivery costs** – 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 USMP customers** – total money spent on grants to customers of USMPs 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
 - **USMP applicants** - total number of applicants who were approved for and received assistance that were customers of a USMP.

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 31 of the following year:

- **LEAP EFA funds, in total and broken down as follows:**
 - i. Funds provided by the distributor to agencies for LEAP EFA;
 - ii. Unused funds carried forward from the previous year(s); and Funds received by the distributor's agency partner(s) from non-distributor sources (i.e. donations) that were earmarked for, and used to top up, the LEAP EFA funds. They may 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
- **LEAP EFA funds disbursed, in total and broken down as follows:**
 - i. Money allocated for agency administration and program delivery;
 - ii. Grants provided to the distributor's customers; and
 - iii. Grants provided to customers of licensed USMPs operating in the distributor's service area, including the distributor if licensed as such.
- **The month in which LEAP EFA funds were depleted.**
- **Number of applicants, for LEAP EFA, in total and broken down as follows:**
 - i. Applicants that were the distributor's customers; and
 - ii. Applicants that were customers of licensed USMPs operating in the distributor's service area, including the distributor if licensed as such.
- **Number of LEAP EFA applicants assisted in total and broken down as follows:**
 - i. Applicants who were approved for and received assistance that were customers of the distributor; and
 - ii. Applicants who were approved for and received assistance that were customers of USMPs operating in the distributor's service area, including the distributor if licensed as such.
- **Number of LEAP EFA applicants denied, in total and broken down as follows:**
 - i. Applicants that were customers of the distributor and that applied for assistance but were not approved; and
 - ii. Applicants that were customers of USMPs operating in the distributor's service area, including the distributor if licensed as such, and that applied for assistance but were not approved.
- **Average grant per accepted applicant assisted, as follows:**
 - i. Average grant amount allocated per applicant, for applicants that were the customers of the distributor;

- ii. Average grant amount allocated per applicant, for applicants that were customers of USMPs operating in the distributor's service area; including the distributor if licensed as such;
 - iii. Average grant amount allocated per applicant, measured across customers referred to in both (i) and (ii).
- **Confirmation that the distributor's agency partner(s) has/have adhered to the processes and requirements set out in the "OESP and LEAP EFA Manual".**
 - **The number of applicants who received LEAP EFA in the preceding calendar year (repeat recipients), in total and broken down as follows:**
 - ii. Applicants who received LEAP EFA in the preceding calendar year that were the distributor's customers; and applicants who received LEAP EFA in the preceding calendar year that were customers of USMPs operating in the distributor's service area, including the distributor if licensed as such.

3. Demographic Reporting

The OEB will provide notification to utilities at least 6 months before the start of the LEAP EFA program year for which it will require demographic information to be collected and filed. Lead and intake agencies may be requested to track the following information from time to time. This information should be collected by the agencies throughout the year to be submitted to their respective distributor partner(s) by March 31 of the following year. The information should be submitted to the distributor using the LEAP EFA Demographic Information Excel Template to be provided by the OEB with the notification letter to utilities.

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 income⁵– total number by:
 - Employment Income

⁵ 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.

- 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
- Primary heating source – total number by:
 - Electric
 - Natural Gas
 - Other Fuel Type
- 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 utility
 - 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
 - Distributor/USMP Referral
 - Distributor/USMP Website
 - OESP
 - Social Agency
 - Ontario Works/Ontario Disability Support Program
 - OEB Website
 - OEB Public Information 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 conservation programs
- Total number of applicants where funding not required because advocacy with distributor/USMP was successful

Appendix F – LEAP EFA Appeals / Review Process

As set out in section 3.3 of the OESP and LEAP EFA 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, they 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 provided; 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.

Sample Applicant Information Sheet

**Requesting an Internal Review of a
LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance Application**

You may request an Internal Review of your application for LEAP EFA 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 Request for Internal Review of Application 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 Request for Internal Review of Application Decision within **5** days.

Appendix G – LEAP EFA Forms

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

Application for Low-Income Energy Assistance Program Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA)

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 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 EFA 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 any shelter funds or the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) in the last 24 months? Yes: No:

Social Assistance Worker's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

5. Arrears and Service Provider Information

Name of Service Provider: _____

Check service provider type that applies: Distributor USMP

If USMP, name of Distributor that serves applicant's building: _____

Account Number: _____

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

Do the arrears include equipment rental and/or financing charges?
 Yes: Amount: \$ _____ No:

Grant requested: \$ _____

Has the applicant spoken to the 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 EFA. I understand that payment of funds is not guaranteed, even if preliminary approval is granted. If my arrears are in excess of the LEAP EFA grant amount(s), 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 service may be disconnected, and I may not be eligible for future LEAP EFA grants. 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
Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA)**

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 and account history) for the purpose of determining my eligibility for LEAP EFA. 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	_____
	<i>Agency Name</i>		<i>Fax # / email address</i>

**Low-Income Energy Assistance Program
Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP 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 distributor's service area for the period *(NOTE: not reflected in table above)*

Number of Customers:

LEAP Grant Total:

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

**Request for Internal Review
of Application for Low-Income Energy Assistance Program
Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA)**

You may request an Internal Review of your application for LEAP EFA 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 [] days of your being notified of the denial.

You can request an Internal Review by completing the attached Request for Internal Review of Application 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 on the Request for Internal Review of Application 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 staff who was not involved in your application or the original grant decision. You will receive verbal or written confirmation informing you of the Request for Internal Review of Application decision within [] days from date of your request .

Please see the Request for Internal Review of Application form on page 2

**Request for Internal Review
of Application for Low-Income Energy Assistance Program
Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA)**

<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>()</i> <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/> <i>Signature</i>	<hr/> <i>Date</i>
------------------------	-------------------



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