

# Energy Affordability Program Roundtable - Meeting Notes

Meeting date: October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Meeting location: Virtual, Microsoft Teams  
Chair/Sponsor: Nicole Hynum

List of meeting participants attached separately.

## List of IESO Presenters:

Name	Title
Nicole Hynum	Supervisor, Business Development
Stephen Lachan	Program Advisor
David Forgione	Advisor, Market Research

## Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

*New members of the group shared their name, organization, and experience with Save on Energy Programs.*

*Nicole Hynum informed group of the new EAP Roundtable landing page on the Save on Energy website which contains previous meeting materials: <https://saveonenergy.ca/For-Your-Home/Energy-Affordability-Program/energy-affordability-program-roundtable>*

## Agenda Item 2: Business Updates

*Nicole Hynum shared business updates related to program operations, program delivery vendor procurement, and the pilot initiative with Omega Foundation.*

### Action Items from Previous Roundtable

- Based on feedback from June 3 meeting, the IESO developed an EAP program brochure with an Indigenous look and feel.
- The EAP program brochure will also be translated to Oji-Cree, Cree and Ojibway, aiming to have materials available in January 2022.

## **Program Operations**

- EAP delivery has continued uninterrupted following the resumption of in-person activities (which were on-hold due to COVID) in Q2 2021; since we last met with the Roundtable in June, IESO delivery agents have completed over 4,000 EAP projects and have enrolled an additional 1,500 households.

## **Program Delivery Vendor Procurement**

- The IESO is currently undertaking a joint procurement with Enbridge Gas for common program delivery vendors for years 2022-2024; this procurement is expected to result in greater coordination between EAP and Enbridge Home Winterproofing Program, beginning in 2022.

## **Omega Foundation Pilot**

- The IESO is currently undertaking a collaboration pilot with the Omega Foundation, a Canadian registered charity with expertise in connecting income-eligible households with available or underutilized government programs or incentives. The pilot will test the effectiveness of different outreach tactics (e.g., nominal incentives).

## **Agenda Item 3: Activity #1 – Income-Eligible Market Research Strategy**

*David Forgione provided background on the IESO's proposed income-eligible market research strategy.*

*The group then discussed the strategy and the following key areas were explored further:*

### **Enabling broad participation in market research responses from income-eligible segment**

- To enable broad participation, Ipsos (market research service provider) will engage their in-house panel of residential customers who have opted-in to participate in surveys. Ipsos will work with the IESO to ensure a sample size that reflects EAP target segments (e.g., income-tested, Indigenous, seniors, etc.). If some of the target audiences (e.g., Indigenous) are not represented in this approach, the IESO will explore additional avenues (e.g., direct outreach) to ensure research results represent the segment.

### **Measuring awareness and trust levels of the Save on Energy (SoE) Brand**

- Participants will be engaged on the SoE brand to measure awareness and better understand which sources are driving participation in the programs (e.g., program marketing, government messaging, community agencies, word of mouth).
- The group also discussed instances of fraud and whether it could be included as part of the market research to assess if this is affecting participation and trust in the program.

### **Understanding how geographic differences impact needs (e.g., Northern, rural vs. remote)**

- The group discussed whether the specific needs and challenges for northern areas will be addressed (e.g., income criteria does not take into consideration remote/rural factors). The IESO will work with Ipsos to address these concerns when developing survey.
- The group also discussed targeting social housing – the current market research will not target social housing specifically; however, the survey will include questions that allow for those living in social housing to be segmented.

*Next steps: Income-eligible market research findings will be shared with the EAP Roundtable in Q1/Q2 2022.*

## Agenda Item 4: Activity #2 – Identifying and Engaging Participants

*Stephen Lachan provided background on IESO income eligible programs, EAP design objectives, EAP program participation to date, EAP marketing and outreach support, and referral sources. A list of potential opportunities to increase participation was also provided.*

*The group discussed the current strategies for identifying and engaging participants in breakout groups and the following key themes were identified:*

### **Consider Changes to Program Eligibility**

- To account for cost-of-living challenges (e.g., current levels of inflation as well as geographical differences). The IESO acknowledges these challenges and will continue to monitor to ensure the program is in alignment with programs delivered by other agencies and their eligibility requirements.

### **Identifying and engaging potential participants**

- A number of avenues were suggested, including:
  - Explore how sector actors could be engaged using referral fees or outreach funding.
  - Leverage public data sources to find participants; a note of caution was expressed as data sources can be out of date.
  - Engage social agencies to gather more accurate data to inform program marketing.
  - Continued and expanded partnerships with organizations like Enbridge.

### **Marketing tactics, including: key messages, social media, program collateral, etc.**

- The following tactics were discussed:
  - Current focus is on digital tactics, should it be broader?
  - Effectiveness of multi-pronged approach to find hard to reach customer segments.

## Agenda Item 5: Closing Remarks

The next EAP Roundtable meeting is planned to take place in January 2022. IESO will contact all meeting participants with a meeting date and a proposed agenda.