

OCTOBER 6, 2021

Energy Affordability Program Roundtable

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Session Agenda:

Agenda Item	Start Time
Welcome remarks and session overview	1:00
Activity 1) Market research	1:30
Break	2:20
Activity 2) Identifying and engaging participants	2:30
Closing remarks – End of Energy Affordability Program (EAP) Roundtable meeting	3:20

Previous Meeting Action Item & Business Updates

Previous meeting (June 3) action item updates

EAP Roundtable website landing page

Business updates:

- Program operations
- Program delivery vendor procurement
- Omega Foundation



Context / Background To Inform Activity 1) Approach to Income Eligible Household Market Research

Income Eligible Household Market Research: Context

- Formal market research of income eligible residential sector was last conducted 10-years ago to support the development of Home Assistance Program (HAP). Therefore, there is a need to refresh that research to ensure the EAP program offering is meeting the needs of income eligible households.
- Further, there is a need to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on income eligible households.

Objectives For Income Eligible Household Market Research

1. Gain insights into the energy cost management needs of program eligible households throughout Ontario
 - a. Understand how COVID-19 may have changed those needs
 - b. Understand trends and difference in needs across regions and demographic groups
2. Measure the level of awareness and trust for the IESO, Save On Energy brand and EAP program
3. Identify barriers to participation in the EAP for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 offer
4. Assess effectiveness of support services offered
5. Gain insights on how best to promote the program to maintain and increase participation, including the best channels for communications
6. Understand what participants' expectations are in terms of partnerships with Enbridge and other entities

Approach to Market Research

Methodology: Quantitative survey using both online and telephone

Survey Audience: General population of Ontario (Omnibus)

Survey participants will be selected using the following criteria:

1. Income eligible households identified by their household before tax income and the number of people in the household
2. Households that have not participated in the EAP program within the last two years (i.e. program non-participants)
3. The following income eligible households will be oversampled in order to facilitate robust analysis of results:
 - i. Households with seniors
 - ii. Households that identify as Indigenous
 - iii. Households with persons with disabilities
 - iv. Households with new-comers to Ontario
4. Regional and demographic quotas will be set to ensure a representative sample of Ontario households is attained



Activity 1) Input on Income Eligible Household Market Research



Discussion Question 1

What are your thoughts on the Income Eligible Household Market Research objectives?



Discussion Question 2

Do you see any areas of research that are not covered in the objectives?

Discussion Question 3

Are there any additional household characteristics you think should be oversampled, beyond the four listed below?

- Households with seniors;
- Households that identify as Indigenous;
- Households with persons with disabilities; and,
- Households with new-comers to Ontario.



Discussion Question 4

What are some of the main outcomes you would like to see from this Market Research project?



Context / Background To Inform Activity 2) EAP Program

Recap of IESO income-eligible programs

- In January 2021, the IESO launched the EAP to streamline low-income conservation programming and simplify access for income-eligible consumers, by delivering the benefits of two programs that concluded applications last year: the IESO's HAP which was targeted at low-income electricity customers and the Affordability Fund program (AFT)*.
- The EAP provides many of the benefits as HAP, with expanded eligibility intended to support moderate income households with no-cost energy efficiency.
- The IESO has also offered a suite of programs targeted to meet the unique and specific needs of First Nations communities, including: Conservation on the Coast, First Nations Conservation Program, Remote First Nations Pilot Program.

*AFT was delivered by a Trust and Local Distribution Companies

EAP Design Objectives

The EAP was designed with the following objectives:

- Deliver programming to in-need customers that will result in bill savings
- Build upon the experiences learned through past programs (e.g., HAP)
- Expand eligibility to enable support to be provided to the moderate-income customer segment
- Ensure value for funds invested through selection of impactful measures and ability to customize offer to individual circumstances
- Engage the broader sector serving vulnerable customers for feedback and support

EAP Program Participation To Date

Participation estimates for EAP were developed using historical HAP participation rates (Tier 1) and upper-limit participation levels observed within other energy savings kit programs (Tier 2). EAP participation estimates:

- Tier 1: ~91,000 households (2% of the eligible population); Tier 2 : ~81,000 households (3% of the eligible population)

So far (January – September) Tier 1 program participation is consistent with the previous years, notwithstanding COVID-19 interruptions earlier this year

- Tier 1 YTD: 13,931 participants; Tier 2 uptake is much lower than expected, with 160 total kits deployed YTD

EAP Marketing and Outreach Support

The EAP is promoted through a multi-pronged approach, which includes: building awareness, executing on targeted outreach strategies and broadening relationships across the sector using the following tactics:

- Dedicated landing page and enrollment webform on the SEO website
- Program promotion via SOE social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and quarterly residential newsletter
- Awareness-building through local media opportunities (e.g., radio, television spots newspaper)
- Engagement of agencies that work within the sector to ensure awareness of program
- Leveraging IESO Community Energy Champions network to engage on-reserve First Nations

EAP Marketing and Outreach Support Pilot

Additional tactics are also being piloted, including:

- Partnership with Omega Foundation to test different outreach approaches to reaching potential participants
- Use of geotargeted advertising to engage high-potential postal codes to engage potential participations

EAP Referral Sources

- Program referral source data suggests:
 - Word of mouth is working, so we should continue exploring how to expand that channel
 - We could be doing more to engage social service agencies and community organizations

*Data provided by EAP program delivery vendor from January – September 2021

**Referral data is consistent with previous years sources

Referral Source	Count
Advertisement - Radio, TV, Newspaper	40
Brochure in Hydro Bill	477
EAP program delivery vendor	2259
Internet Search/Web Ad	1013
Local Distribution Company	459
Ontario Energy Board (OEB) Low-Income Energy Assistance Program	11
OEB Ontario Electricity Support Program	30
Other Community Organization	33
Other/Miscellaneous	1837
Social Housing Provider/ Landlord	6177
Social Service Agency	86
Unknown	7
Word of Mouth	1122
Total	13551

Potential Opportunities to Increase Participation

The following tactics have been identified as potential opportunities to increase program participation in both Tier 1 and 2 offering:

Opportunity	Timeframe
Explore how sector actors (e.g., partners / agencies) could be engaged to increase awareness and drive participation in the program (Tier 1 & Tier 2)	Oct – Dec
Leverage public data sources (e.g., census data) to support direct marketing and targeted outreach (e.g., geotargeted advertising) (Tier 1 & 2)	Oct – Dec
Increased advertising (e.g., local media) to increase awareness and drive participation in the program (Tier 1 & 2)	2022
Consider changes to program eligibility requirements – e.g., what is considered "moderate-income" (Tier 2)	2022



Activity 2) Identifying and Engaging potential Participants

Discussion Topic 1

Group breakouts to discuss the proposed tactics to identify and engage with potential participants:

- Thoughts on the proposed tactics?
- What other tactics should the IESO should consider?
- What are the potential barriers to implementation?

Discussion Topic 2

- Are there any additional key messages that should be considered – current focus of messaging is financial, comfort and that the program offering is free of charge?
- Are there any opportunities to augment the social media tactics?
- Is there additional program collateral that would be helpful to reach potential participants?
- Should different marketing tactics be used to reach moderate-income participants?

* See appendix for examples of key messages, social media post and program collateral

Thank You

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facebook.com/SaveOnEnergyOntario



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SaveOnEnergy-Ontario](https://linkedin.com/showcase/SaveOnEnergy-Ontario)



Appendix

Current Income Eligibility Cut-Offs

Tier 1

Number of people in the home	Before-tax household income
1	\$36,578
2	\$51,729
3	\$63,354
4	\$73,157
5	\$81,791
6	\$89,598
7+	\$96,775

Tier 2

Number of people in the home	Before-tax household income
1	\$46,748
2	\$58,453
3	\$70,158
4	\$81,863
5	\$93,568
6	\$105,273
7+	\$116,978

Example of EAP Key Messages

- The Energy Affordability Program provides support to income-eligible electricity consumers by providing access to quality energy-efficiency equipment to help to lower monthly electricity costs and increase home comfort
- Residents can benefit through a free home energy needs assessment to help identify energy-efficiency upgrades such as replacement of inefficient appliances, professional-installed insulation, or smart power strips

Example of EAP Key Messages

- Residents may also qualify for free Energy Savings Kits customized to meet their needs. These may include items such as energy-saving LED lights, clothes drying line, or weather stripping
- All expert advice and energy-saving home upgrades under this program are available at no cost to communities. free of charge. Home assessments are conducted by a trained energy professional and a member of the local community may be available to be present during the home energy needs assessment.

Examples of Social Media and Newsletter

Social media post (Facebook, Instagram & Twitter)



Save on Energy @SaveonEnergyOnt · Jul 14

Have you heard about our Energy Affordability Program? 🏠 It's an electricity conservation program designed to help income-eligible customers reduce their energy costs by providing no-cost energy-efficient upgrades for homes. See if you qualify: [saveonenergy.ca/For-Your-Home/...](https://saveonenergy.ca/For-Your-Home/)

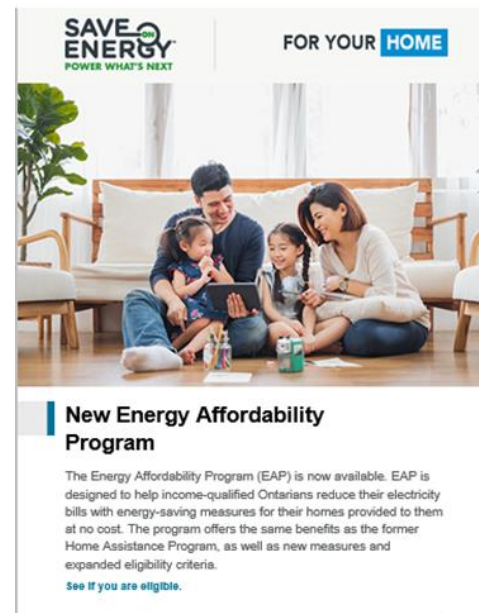


SAVING ENERGY IS SIMPLE WITH THE ENERGY AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM.




SAVE ON ENERGY
POWER WHAT'S NEXT

Newsletter



SAVE ON ENERGY
POWER WHAT'S NEXT

FOR YOUR HOME



New Energy Affordability Program

The Energy Affordability Program (EAP) is now available. EAP is designed to help income-qualified Ontarians reduce their electricity bills with energy-saving measures for their homes provided to them at no cost. The program offers the same benefits as the former Home Assistance Program, as well as new measures and expanded eligibility criteria.

[See if you are eligible.](#)

Example of Brochure



HOW IT WORKS

We make saving energy simple.

1. Give us a call at **1-855-591-0877** or apply online at SaveOnEnergy.ca/EAP.
2. We will discuss the eligibility requirements with you and if you qualify, we'll work together to determine the best available energy-saving measures for your household.
3. Depending on your eligibility, you may receive either an Energy Saving Kit with energy-saving measures for self-installation, or an energy expert may visit your home to see what energy-efficiency upgrades will help you most. These upgrades may be installed during or after an in-home visit.

IS THERE REALLY NO COST?

Yes! The Energy Affordability Program is offered by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), which oversees many energy-efficiency programs in Ontario.

All expert advice and energy-saving home upgrades under this program are completely free of charge.

TO APPLY FOR THE ENERGY AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM OR FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Call **1-855-591-0877**
Visit SaveOnEnergy.ca/EAP



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