

Temporary Changes to Screening Guidelines for LEAP for 2022

Q/As

Background:

On January 10, 2022, to further support Ontarians through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) issued a [letter](#) to all licensed electricity distributors and rate-regulated gas distributors temporarily increasing the flexibility of the Low-income Energy Assistance Program – Emergency Financial Assistance (LEAP EFA). In addition, given the significant amount of LEAP EFA funding available, the maximum value of LEAP grant amounts was increased to ensure that low-income customers with higher-than-average arrears are given the opportunity to receive assistance to the greatest degree possible.

Questions and Answers

Q: What are the temporary changes to the screening guidelines for LEAP EFA?

A: The OEB has made temporary changes to the screening guidelines used by LEAP EFA agencies in evaluating applications for this year. They are:

- Applicants do not need to be in threat of disconnection or have been disconnected in order to be eligible, but they still need to be in arrears and at or below the income thresholds
- Eligible customers may apply for and receive LEAP EFA more than once per year, but the total amount received by a household may not exceed the maximum grant amount
- This year, the maximum value of grant amounts has been increased to \$1,000 (\$1,200 for customers with electrically-heated homes). This is double the maximum allowed grant under the usual LEAP program rules.

Eligible customers cannot receive more money than they owe on their bills. Therefore, they may not receive the maximum grant amount.

Q: How long are these temporary changes in effect?

A: These temporary changes are in effect for the 2022 calendar year.

Q: What are the benefits of these temporary changes?

A: To further support Ontarians through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the OEB has made these temporary changes to provide increased flexibility to distributors and their agencies, and to maximize emergency financial assistance at a time when energy consumers need it most.

Q: Are there other programs to support low-income customers?

A: Yes. Customers who meet the income threshold requirements for LEAP EFA may also qualify for the [Ontario Electricity Support Program](#) (OESP), a program that provides ongoing, monthly bill payment support.