

Attachment-1 Energy Efficiency Programs

Introduction

The purpose of this Attachment is to outline the different energy retrofit programs in the marketplace available to Guelph property owners. The Canada Greener Homes Grant (CGHG), Interest-free Loans for Retrofits, Enbridge Home Efficiency Rebate (HER), Enbridge Winterproofing Program, Alectra Energy Affordability Program (EAP), and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Green Home are the programs that will be reviewed. These programs were chosen because they apply to the City of Guelph and are the most up-to-date programs offered. Each of these options will have a brief description including advantages and disadvantages about the program.

Government of Canada: Canada Greener Homes Grant (CGHG)

The Government of Canada runs the CGHG, which provides grants of up to \$5,000 to help homeowners make energy efficient retrofits, and EnerGuide evaluations (worth up to \$600) along with expert advice to homeowners so they can begin to plan their retrofit projects. Eligible property types include single and semi-detached houses, row housing, townhomes, all-season cottages, mobile homes on a permanent foundation, permanently moored floating homes, mixed-use buildings, and small multi-unit residential buildings. New homes are not eligible for the grant. The program has received at least 30,000 applications so far.

To begin the process the applicant must complete a pre- and post-retrofit EnerGuide evaluation. The applicant then completes at least one retrofit that is both eligible and recommended by the energy advisor in their report. The retrofits eligible for reimbursement include heat pumps, water heaters, renewable energy, air sealing, insulation, windows and doors, thermostats, and certain resiliency measures.¹ The homeowner is responsible for choosing products and materials and getting permits. The homeowner must also provide and keep copies of all their documents.

Advantages

- Only one retrofit needs to be performed to be eligible for reimbursement
- Covers purchasing of renewable energy systems (solar panels)
- Funded by the Government of Canada

Disadvantages

- Once upgrades are certified, the government reimburses homeowners within a month. This means the grant only arrives after participants have spent the money, which leaves out renters and homeowners who can't afford to spend the money up front
- A homeowner isn't guaranteed the maximum grant of \$5,600 as the amount of the grant depends on the audit conducted when the work is done
- There is limited capacity (700,000 grants)

¹ [Web Link to Canada Greener Homes Grant](#)

- The surge in demand for the program is driving up wait times for energy advisers and contractors, and applicants probably will have to wait longer than they'd like for repairs to begin
- As with a number of federally-run programs, funding is tied to the government of the day

Government of Canada: Greener Homes Interest-free Loans for Retrofits

In the 2021 budget, the Government of Canada proposed to provide \$4.4 billion on a cash basis (\$778.7 million on an accrual basis over five years, starting in 2021-22, with \$414.1 million in future years), to the CMHC to help homeowners complete home retrofits through interest-free loans of up to \$40,000.² Loans would be available to homeowners and landlords who undertake retrofits identified through an authorized EnerGuide energy assessment. This program will also include a dedicated stream of funding to support low-income homeowners and rental properties serving low-income renters, including cooperatives and not-for-profit owned housing.

Eligible retrofits include replacing oil furnaces or low-efficiency systems with a high-efficiency furnace, air source heat pump, or geothermal heat pump, upgrading wall or basement insulation and/or wall or roof panels, installing a high-efficiency water heater or on-site renewable energy like solar panels, and replacing drafty windows and doors. More details on the program are anticipated to be announced in early 2022. It is estimated that more than 200,000 households will take advantage of this opportunity.

Advantages

- Funded by the Government of Canada
- Interest-free loan
- Large source of funding to help pay for more costly retrofits
- Provides access to capital up front since it is a loan

Disadvantages

- Some of the details about the program have not been announced as it is still in the design phase and has not been implemented
 - This creates uncertainty because the implementation of the program may change how it works
 - It is not clear if the savings will be less than debt service and if the customer will be left with a net cost for the length of the loan that they are repaying
- Lack of clear qualifying criteria (no guarantee homeowner would receive the loan)
- The program has capacity constraints and is time sensitive because funds are limited and spread over five years
- As with a number of federally-run programs, funding is tied to the government of the day

² [Web Link to the 2021 Federal Spring budget](#)

Enbridge: Home Efficiency Rebate (HER)

HER is a program run by Enbridge, which reimburses homeowners up to \$5,000 for home energy efficiency improvements. A household is eligible if:

- It was planning to renovate or replace old equipment and has not started the work
- The household is a residential Enbridge Gas customer
- The house is a detached, semi-detached, row townhouse, or a mobile home with a permanent foundation
- The home is heated with a natural gas furnace or boiler

Before starting any work, an applicant must first complete a home energy assessment with a registered energy advisor. The registered energy advisor will then provide a report with a list of recommended upgrades to help lower the household's natural gas bill. An applicant must complete at least two eligible upgrades. A few retrofits that are eligible for reimbursement through HER are exterior wall insulation (up to \$3,000), basement insulation (up to \$1,250), boiler (\$1,000), and attic insulation (up to \$750). For each additional upgrade installed, households get additional bonus incentives up to \$750. A final home energy assessment must be completed to qualify for rebates. The \$600 for the energy assessments is reimbursed in the final cheque.

Advantages

- Allowed to participate in the HER and CGHG stacking the rebates.
- The program is not politically sensitive
- Funded by Enbridge

Disadvantages

- A natural gas furnace or boiler must be the primary heating source for both the initial and final energy assessments which means the rebate is not available if natural gas appliances are being removed completely and replaced with alternative fuel appliances
- HER does not cover renewable energy systems (solar panels)
- Cannot receive duplicate rebates for the same efficiency improvements
- Two retrofits must be performed to be eligible for reimbursement
- Applicants are responsible for covering the upfront cost of the initial and final home energy assessments costing \$600
- If the customer has already started a renovation, he/she is not eligible for the rebate

Enbridge: Home Winterproofing Program

The Home Winterproofing Program can help customers lower their natural gas bill and make their home more comfortable. For a home to qualify the participant must have an Enbridge Gas account in their name and the home must be heated with a natural gas furnace or boiler. A customer's household income level must also fit within specific levels to qualify. If a customer qualifies, they are eligible to receive free insulation, draft proofing, and a smart thermostat to reduce energy costs up to 30%. More than 22,000 homes have participated.

The first step is for a customer to see if their home qualifies. Customers can apply online or by phone. The next step is to schedule a home visit where an authorized delivery agent will visit the customer's home to check whether it's properly insulated, or if air is escaping through windows and doors. If it is found that a customer's home is eligible for free upgrades, Enbridge's qualified contractors will install the upgrades at the customer's convenience. The final step is a follow-up home visit which is where the same delivery agent visits the customer again to make sure everything's working properly and answer any follow-up questions.

Advantages

- Free for eligible customers
- Includes customers who rent their home (with written permission from their landlord)
- Not politically tied or time-sensitive

Disadvantages

- Must be an Enbridge Gas customer to qualify
- A home must be heated with a natural gas furnace or boiler to qualify
- Income eligibility requirements disqualifies many households

Alectra: Energy Affordability Program

Alectra's EAP supports income-eligible electricity consumers by helping them to lower their monthly electricity costs through expert advice and energy-saving home upgrades completely free of charge. Alectra also has an extensive educational website, which has useful tips and tricks to save on energy costs.³ To qualify, the participant must be a resident of an eligible Social Housing property or an individual who owns, rents, or leases a residence, is listed as the primary or secondary utility account holder, and meets one of the following criteria:

- Has an annual household income for the previous year that does not exceed certain limits⁴
- Received Allowance for the Survivor, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Allowance for Seniors, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program or Healthy Smiles Ontario Child Dental in the past 12 months
- Received a Low-Income Energy Assistance Program grant or were part of the Ontario Electricity Support Program within the last 12 months
- Is qualified to participate in a natural gas income-eligible demand side management program during the past 12 months

Some participants may qualify for a free home energy needs assessment conducted by a trained energy professional that will help identify energy-efficient upgrades available for their homes, such as replacement of inefficient appliances and professionally installed insulation and draft proofing. These upgrades may be installed during or after an in-home visit. Other participants may qualify instead for free energy saving kits. These are customized to meet their energy needs and could

³ [Web Link to Save on Energy](#)

⁴ [Web Link to Save on Energy - Energy Affordability Program](#)

include energy-saving LED lighting, timers, faucet aerators, and/or a clothes-drying line.

Advantages

- Free for eligible participants
- Educational tips and tricks on the Save on Energy website
- Not politically tied or time-sensitive

Disadvantages

- Eligibility requirements disqualifies many households

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Green Home

CMHC Green Home offers a partial refund on the cost of mortgage loan insurance. A homeowner who buys, builds, or renovates for energy efficiency may be eligible for a refund of up to 25% of the premium. Various houses and condominiums are eligible depending on the building standards they were built to meet.⁵ Before and after a homeowner makes the improvements, the home must be assessed by a Natural Resources Canada qualified energy advisor. The advisor will measure the home's efficiency using one of two EnerGuide scales: the 0-100 scale or the gigajoules per year scale.

Advantages

- Unique way to finance home energy retrofits
- Not politically tied or time-sensitive

Disadvantages

- The homeowner is not reimbursed for the \$600 home energy assessment
- Requires the applicant to have mortgage insurance

⁵ [Web Link - CMHC Green Home](#)