TD6.3.2

October 13, 2017

To: Councillor Matlow, Chair, Tenant Issues Committee
Members, Tenant Issues Committee

From: Daryl Chong
President & CEO, Greater Toronto Apartment Association

Re: TD6.3 Status of Suite Metering in Rental Buildings in Toronto

Starting in January 2016, the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) lowered electricity bills for low-income households by applying a credit directly to eligible customers' bills.

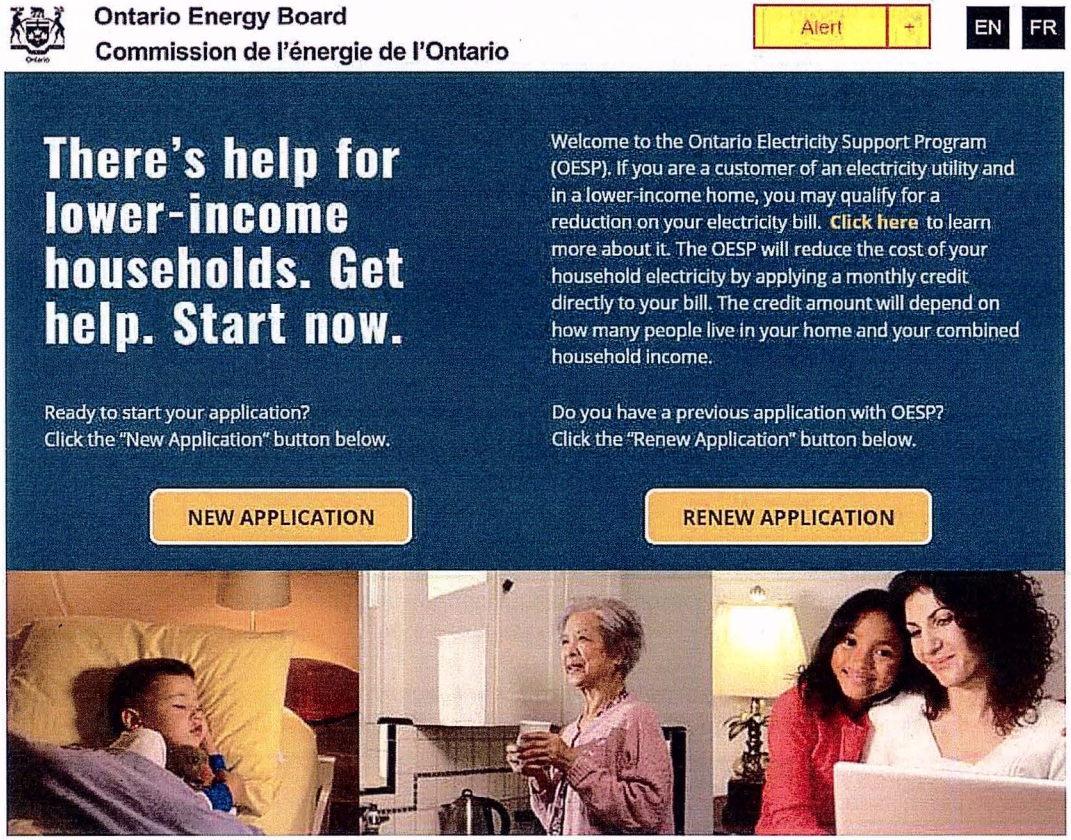
In May 2017, the credits were doubled.

The following provides information regarding financial assistance provided to low-income electricity account holders, and their families.

Programs such as OESP should be included in any discussion regarding sub-metering.

Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)

www.ontarioelectricitysupport.ca



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ABOUT THE ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (OESP)

What is the Ontario Electricity Support Program?

The OESP is an Ontario Energy Board (OEB) program that lowers electricity bills for lower-income households. The OESP provides a monthly credit to eligible customers based on household income and household size. The OESP credits are applied directly to eligible customers' bills.

When can I apply?

You can apply any time. There is no application deadline, but the sooner you apply and are accepted into the OESP, the sooner you will begin to receive the on-bill credits.

When will I start seeing the on-bill credits?

Applications take about 6 to 8 weeks to process. Credits don't take effect until you submit all required information (including the signed consent form, if required) and your application is processed. The credit is applied to your utility bill as soon as possible after your application has been approved.

Eligible customers will receive on-bill credits for two years regardless of when a customer applies and their credits begin. See "How do I Apply?"

If you need assistance before the OESP credit is applied to your bill, please contact your electricity utility or visit the OEB website for more information about other low-income programs that may be available to you.

How do I contact the OESP Contact Centre?

If you have questions about the program, you can contact the OESP Contact Centre in the following ways:

- Call 1-855-831-8151 (toll free within Ontario)
- Email help@ontarioelectricitysupport.ca
- Use the Bell Relay service at 1-800-855-1155 (TTY to TTY)

The OESP Contact Centre is open Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

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OESP AMOUNTS AND ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?	The program is available to all lower-income customers who have accounts with electricity distributors or unit sub-meter providers. Customers must apply to the program.
What if I don't have an electricity account?	The OESP provides a credit directly on the electricity bills of eligible customers. It is only available to an electricity account holder. You may also contact 211 Ontario to find out more about other programs that you may qualify for.
Is there a separate program for Indigenous communities?	The Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association (ONWAA) is available to assist Indigenous households with their applications. Indigenous households can contact ONWAA at 1-844-885-3157 or email oesp@onwaa.com to confirm their availability.
Do all lower-income Indigenous customers qualify for the program?	Indigenous applicants must meet the program eligibility criteria to qualify to receive an OESP credit on their electricity bills. Eligibility for applicants is based on household income and household size.

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How much will the monthly on-bill credit amount be?

The OESP on-bill credit amount will depend on how many people live in the house and the combined household income after tax.

Effective May 1, 2017

OESP Monthly Credit Amounts by Household Income Level

Household Income (After Tax)	Household Size (Number of people living in household)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
$28,000 or less	$45	$45	$51	$57	$63	$75	$75
$28,001 – $39,000		$40	$45	$51	$57	$63	$75
$39,001 – $48,000			$35	$40	$45	$51	$57
$48,001 – $52,000					$35	$40	$45

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May 1st changes to OESP:

- Credits are increasing by 50%; and
- More households can qualify with increases to the maximum income threshold.

If you have already been approved or have recently filed an application, you do not need to reapply. The increased credits will happen automatically.

For more information, please visit the FAQ page on the website.

Why did the OESP credits increase?	On March 2, 2017, the government of Ontario announced Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan, which provides additional support for lower-income energy consumers.

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OESP Changes May 1, 2017

What are the OESP changes effective May 1, 2017?	Monthly credit amounts for OESP have increased by 50 per cent as of May 1, 2017. Additionally, the income eligibility thresholds for some household sizes have increased.
I am already receiving an OESP credit on my monthly utility bill. Do I need to reapply for the increased credit?	No, the increased credit will automatically be applied to your utility bill. Households who are not currently receiving an OESP credit, and who are newly eligible for OESP must apply for the program.
I have recently applied for OESP but don't have a decision yet. Do I need to apply to get the increased credit?	No, if approved the new credit amount will be applied.
What are the households that are newly eligible for OESP as of May 1, 2017?	• A 2 person household with an income in between $28,001 – $39,000 • A 3-4 person household with an income in between $39,001 - $48,000 • A 5-6 person household with an income in between $48,001 - $52,000 Please see the table below which outlines income levels and household sizes.

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For some customers, the need to use more power is unavoidable. If your home is electrically heated, or you rely on an approved medical device requiring a lot of electricity, OESP offers a higher level of assistance.

OESP Monthly Credit Amounts by Household Income Level – Energy Intensive

Household Income (After Tax)	Household Size (Number of people living in household)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
$28,000 or less	$68	$68	$75	$83	$90	$113	$113
$28,001-$39,000		$60	$68	$75	$83	$90	$113
$39,001-$48,000			$52	$60	$68	$75	$83
$48,001-$52,000					$52	$60	$68

Which medical devices qualify for a higher level of assistance?

There are three at-home medical devices that will qualify an applicant for the higher level of assistance:

A. Kidney Dialysis Machine
B. Mechanical Ventilators (invasive and non-invasive)
C. Oxygen Concentrator

How long is the OESP eligibility period?	Most eligible customers need to re-apply every 2 years or whenever their personal circumstances change. For example, eligible customers would need to re-apply if they move or experience a change in income level.
How do I qualify for the extended 5 year program eligibility period?	The extended program eligibility period of 5 years is applicable if any account holder listed on the bill is: 1) 65 and over. If there are multiple account holders on your electricity bill, an account holder 65 years or older needs to be entered as the OESP applicant in order to qualify for the extended 5 year eligibility period. 2) Receiving a CPP disability pension (see CPP definition of severe and prolonged disability at http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/cpp/disability/definition.shtml).Those on disability pensions still have to pass the program income criteria.

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What information do I need to apply?	You need: • Your electricity bill account number, service address, and account holder details. • The birthdates and names of all residents in your home. • Social Insurance Numbers or Temporary Tax Numbers for tax-filing household members.

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Which agencies are involved and how do I reach out to them if I need their help?	We are working with many agencies across the province that are available to help customers complete and submit their application. Agencies can be searched on the OESP website at OntarioElectricitySupport.ca. We continually update the list as new intake agencies sign on. You may also contact the OESP Contact Centre at 1-855-831-8151, 211 Ontario or your local utility for more information.
How can I find an intake agency near me?	We have also created a map of all intake agencies available to help customers complete and submit their OESP applications. You can use this map to search for an intake agency near you. To get to the map, click here.

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Need help applying?

You can contact an intake agency for assistance. Find one close to you.

GTA

Select an agency

OR

Click here to visit Google and search using your postal code to find an intake agency in your area.

ONWAA is available to assist Indigenous communities with their applications. Indigenous households can contact ONWAA at 1-844-885-3157 or email oesp@onwaa.com

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GTA

Select an agency

Select an agency

Albion Neighbourhood Services (North)
Albion Neighbourhood Services (South)
COSTI Immigrant Services
Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre - Main Office
Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre - Resource Room
East York Housing Help Centre
Neighbourhood Information Post
Newcomer Centre of Peel
Peel Multicultural Council
Region of Peel-Brampton
The Arab Community Centre of Toronto
The Arab Community Centre of Toronto - Scarborough location
The Housing Help Centre
Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office
Unison Health & Community Services
Women & Children Social Networking

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