

Home Energy Loan Program (HELP) Guide and Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Home Energy Loan Program (HELP)?

The Home Energy Loan Program, or HELP, is a loan service available through the City of Penticton for eligible energy efficiency upgrades made by City of Penticton residents that own their own homes. HELP is repaid by the customer through monthly payments on their City of Penticton utility bill.

Who can apply for the Home Energy Loan Program?

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a City of Penticton Residential Electric Utility Customer.
- Must be the registered owner of the property and hold the utilities account in the registered owner names(s).
- Must pass a credit check based on electric Utility bill payments for previous 12 months, with 9 months of credit history, or produce a letter from a previous electrical utility company indicating the customer is in "good standing" may be considered in extenuating circumstances.

What energy efficiency upgrades are eligible?

Energy efficiency upgrades are modifications to your home that reduce your energy use and save you money on your utility bills. Eligible upgrades include (but not limited to) insulation, reducing air leakage, and installing more efficient space and water heating systems. An attractive way to fund these upgrades is through a City of Penticton Home Energy Loan.

What types of energy efficiency upgrades can be financed?

HELP upgrades can be used for the same energy efficiency retrofits that are eligible for rebates through FortisBC's home rebate program, and improvements recommended in your EnerGuide Assessment and Renovation Upgrade Report. Some examples of FortisBC's rebates include:

- Insulation: Exterior wall insulation, crawl space insulation, and attic insulation
- Draft proofing and air sealing
- Upgrading doors and windows
- Heat pump purchase and installation

For a complete list of rebates please see FortisBC website:

<https://www.fortisbc.com/rebates-and-energy-savings/saving-energy-in-your-home>

Are there incentives for doing retrofits?

Yes, FortisBC provides rebates on many of the upgrades you will find recommended in the Renovation Upgrade Report you receive after the energy assessment. FortisBC has rebates available for insulation, air sealing and more. You do not need to use City financing to be eligible for incentives.

<https://www.fortisbc.com/rebates-and-energy-savings/saving-energy-in-your-home>

How do I submit a rebate application to FortisBC?

Contact FortisBC directly for information on submitting rebate applications:

- homerebates@fortisbc.com
- 1-855-909-2329 for natural gas rebates
- 1-855-909-2331 for electricity rebates

What are an EnerGuide Assessment and Renovation Upgrade Report?

First, an EnerGuide energy assessment will be performed on your home to identify how energy is used and where heat is lost. You will then be provided with a Renovation Upgrade Report which identifies improvements you can make to your home that could result in hundreds of dollars in energy savings each year. Your home will also receive an EnerGuide® for Houses rating. In addition to saving energy, you'll also be helping to minimize your carbon footprint.

Do I have to complete a home energy assessment and is there a cost?

Yes, an EnerGuide energy assessment is necessary to access the Home Energy Loan Program and for accessing some rebates through FortisBC. An energy assessment is performed by a certified energy advisor licensed by Natural Resources Canada. GreenSpace EcoConsulting (250-492-2423) will provide the energy assessment for the City of Penticton. The homeowner pays \$35 plus tax for the pre-assessment and \$200 plus tax for the post-assessment. The cost of the post-assessment may also be included in your total loan amount.

What are HELP details?

Once you have identified and completed a renovation to your home, save and submit all applicable paid invoices for costs incurred for the retrofit. HELP is then repaid by the customer through monthly payments on their City of Penticton electric utility bill. The maximum loan amount is \$10,000, and features a 10-year amortization. The interest rate is fixed at prime + .50% (interest rate is set at the time the loan is granted). Monthly loan payments are made through your City of Penticton Electric Utility bill. Loans can be repaid in full, or in part, at any time without penalty.

When a lump sum payment is applied, the amortization of the loan will be reduced. If the home is sold before the amortization period is over, the loan will need to be paid in full upon the sale of the house. The on-bill financing will form a component of the City of Penticton Electric Utility bill and will be subject to the normal utility collection procedures including service disconnects and addition of outstanding amounts to property tax.

How is the credit approval determined?

Applicants must have a satisfactory 12-month City of Penticton electric utility bill payment history for the residential home being upgraded.

Can a homeowner complete the work? How about contractors?

The work can be done by the property owner or by a contractor; it is up to you to decide. More than one contractor is also permitted as it may be necessary to have more than one contractor complete different types of retrofits and at different times. If the property owner does the work on his or her own, then only material costs may be financed.

Keep in mind that program forms and documentation will have specific areas for contractors and the participants. If you have questions, ask our Program Staff at any time about what they should fill out.

Is there a time limit on completing the Energy Efficiency Upgrades?

The City of Penticton HELP program will end **Dec. 31, 2024** or until such time as program funding is depleted, after which no energy efficiency upgrade loans will be issued. This means all energy efficiency upgrades and the post-assessment audit must be completed by November 30, 2024, where incentives may apply.

How do I apply?

- Learn about the program.
- Complete the HELP Application Form.
- Submit the HELP Application Form in person to City of Penticton, City Yards office, 616 Okanagan Avenue East, Penticton, BC, V2A 3K6, office hours: 7:30 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday or by e-mail: publicworks@penticton.ca Program staff will notify the homeowner regarding their acceptance into the program via a pre-approval letter or e-mail which will include City of Penticton completion forms. Program staff will contact GreenSpace EcoConsulting who will call the homeowner directly to arrange an appointment for a home energy assessment.
- The homeowner pays \$35+ tax for the energy pre-assessment, directly to GreenSpace EcoConsulting.
- Homeowner receives a Renovation Upgrade Report with a recommendation of improvements.
- Homeowner to determine which of the retrofit improvements they wish to proceed with as listed in the Renovation Upgrade Report.
- Homeowner obtains quotations from contractors for the proposed upgrades and the homeowner pays the contractor directly.
- Homeowner authorizes the contractor to proceed with installation of Energy Retrofits. Please note that the City will only loan the homeowner a maximum of \$10,000.
- Upon completion of work the homeowner will:
 - Schedule a Post-retrofit Energy Assessment with GreenSpace EcoConsulting by calling (250-492-2423) (Fee: \$200+ tax). The post energy assessment will verify that the retro-fit measures were safely and correctly installed and will provide a new EnerGuide rating for the home.
 - Submit to the City the Completion forms to certify that the work was completed.
 - Submit to the City copies of the invoice(s) for the retrofit work.
- Within 10 working days of receipt of the above, the City will issue a cheque for the loan amount, prepare the loan agreement, and contact the homeowner to come in and execute the loan documents and pick up their cheque.
 - The homeowner pays the contractor directly.
 - Monthly loan payments will be added to the monthly City of Penticton utility bill.
 - The homeowner starts to pay down the loan with every monthly payment.

Where do I obtain the required forms and where do I submit them?

- All forms and additional information are available online at <https://www.penticton.ca/city-services/utility-electrical-services/electric-water-accounts/home-energy-loan-program-help>.
- A complete package of forms will also be mailed or e-mailed to you with your pre-approval letter.
- Completed forms are to be submitted to the City of Penticton, City Yards office, 616 Okanagan Avenue East, Penticton, BC, V2A 3K6. Office hours: 7:30 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday.

I have more questions. Who do I speak to?

We are here to help! Please do not hesitate to contact Public Works at 250-490-2500 publicworks@penticton.ca at any time if you have questions or need more information.