

## 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 and occupy 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 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 Utility bill payments for previous 12 months with 9 months of credit history, or a produce a letter from a previous electrical utility indicating the Customer is in "good standing" being considered in extenuating circumstances.

### What energy efficiency upgrades are eligible?

Energy efficiency upgrades are modifications to your home that can 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 Energy Rebate Offer (HERO) and such improvements as recommended in your Energy Efficiency Evaluation Report. Some examples of FortisBC's eligible energy efficiency upgrades include:

- Insulation: Exterior wall insulation, crawl space insulation, and attic insulation
- Draftproofing
- Doors
- Windows
- Ventilation, Energy star bathroom fan

For a complete list of rebates please see FortisBC Website:

<http://www.fortisbc.com/Electricity/PowerSense/Homes/HomeEnergyRebateOffer/Pages/default.aspx>

## **What if I have completed the post-retrofit energy assessment and want to take advantage of FortisBC's bonus offer?**

Call FortisBC directly at 1-877-740-0055 for information on the Bonus Offer or visit the FortisBC Website: <http://www.fortisbc.com/Electricity/PowerSense/Homes/HomeEnergyRebateOffer/Pages/default.aspx>

## **What is an energy assessment?**

A home energy assessment identifies improvements you can make to your home's space 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 energy assessment is necessary to access the HELP and any bonus rebates available through FortisBC's HERO program. An energy assessment is performed by a certified energy advisor licensed by Natural Resources Canada. Total Home Solutions (204- 401 Glenmore Rd, Kelowna, BC, Toll Free: 1-888-860-1766) will provide the energy assessment for FortisBC and the City of Penticton. The homeowner pays \$35 plus tax for the pre-assessment and \$200 plus tax for the post-assessment. However, the cost of the post-assessment may now be included in your total loan amount.

## **Are there incentives for doing retrofits?**

Yes, FortisBC Power Sense HERO program helps British Columbians make green choices that save them money. With support from utility partners, HERO rebates are available for insulation, air sealing and more. Participants will receive the eligible rebates directly, and program staff can assist you to find out more. You do not need to use City financing to be eligible for incentives.

## **What is the FortisBC Power Sense HERO program?**

For more information about the HERO Program please visit their website.

<http://www.fortisbc.com/Electricity/PowerSense/Homes/HomeEnergyRebateOffer/Pages/default.aspx>

## **What are HELP details?**

HELP is repaid by the customer through monthly payments on their City of Penticton 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 City Utility bills. 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 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 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, 2022** 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, 2022, where incentives may apply.

## How do I apply?

- Learn about the program
- Complete the HELP Application Form
- Submit the HELP Application Form to City of Penticton, City Yards office, 616 Okanagan Avenue East, Penticton, BC, V2A 3K6, [publicworks@penticton.ca](mailto:publicworks@penticton.ca) or fax to 250-490-2557, office hours: 7:30 am to 3:15 pm Monday through Friday.
- Program staff will notify the homeowner regarding their acceptance into the program via a pre-approval letter which will include City completion forms.
- Program staff will contact Total Home Solutions 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 Total Home Solutions.
- Homeowner receives an Energy Efficiency Evaluation Report (EEER) with a recommendation of improvements.
- The Energy Efficiency Evaluation Report "EEER" will provide information on FortisBC HERO rebates.
- Homeowner to determine which of the retrofit improvements they wish to proceed with as listed in the "EEER".
- Homeowner gets quotations from contractors for the proposed upgrades.
- Homeowner authorizes the contractor to proceed with installation of Energy Retrofits. Please note, 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 Total Home Solutions. (Fee: \$200+ tax) by calling toll Free: 1-888-860-1766. 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. Total Home Solutions will complete all paperwork required to apply for the FortisBC HERO rebates.
  - Submit to the City pertinent Letters of Completion forms to certify that the work was completed.
  - Submit to the City copies of invoice(s) for the retrofit work.
  - Within 5 days of receipt of the above, the City will complete the Loan Agreement and contact the homeowner to execute the required documents. A cheque will be issued for the loan amount within 10 working days and the homeowner will be contacted to pick up their check.
- The homeowner pays the contractor directly.

- Monthly loan payments will be added to the monthly 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 [www.penticton.ca/energy](http://www.penticton.ca/energy).
- Also, a complete package of forms will also be mailed out to you with your pre-approval letter.
- Filled out 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 3:15 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@pentcton.ca](mailto:publicworks@pentcton.ca) at any time if you have questions or need more information. Also visit [www.penticton.ca/energy](http://www.penticton.ca/energy) for the applications, forms and detailed guides which further explain HELP.