

# Zero-Interest EnerGuide Loan Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General

#### What is this program?

With our new zero-interest EnerGuide loan program, the province is providing financing so people can make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes.

The zero-interest financing must be used to help pay for energy efficiency upgrades under the Nova Scotia EnerGuide for Houses/ecoENERGY program.

#### What is the income criteria?

None. This program is available to all Nova Scotians, so long as they've had an EnerGuide energy evaluation completed in their home.

#### Do I need to have good credit?

Yes. You need to have good credit to access financing through this program.

#### Who is eligible?

Homeowners who participate in the EnerGuide program and complete a final energy evaluation after September 10, 2008.

To be approved for financing, homeowners must have good credit.

Up to 9,000 homeowners could benefit from this program over the next year.

#### How do I apply?

Get started by having your energy evaluation done through EnerGuide (1-800-670-4636). You'll receive expert advice about how to make your home more efficient.

From there you'll need to complete an application to review your credit history and get approval for your energy efficiency upgrades. ([www.HeatSmart.ca](http://www.HeatSmart.ca) or 1-800-670-4357)

#### Where can I get an application?

Online at [www.HeatSmart.ca](http://www.HeatSmart.ca), Access Nova Scotia Centres, energy evaluators, or by calling 424-5200 or 1-800-670-4357.

#### What is the process?

Get started with your EnerGuide evaluation. You have 18 months to make upgrades. Any time throughout that period you may apply for the zero-interest EnerGuide loan.

#### How much can I borrow?

You can borrow up to a maximum of \$5,000.

#### How long do I have to repay the loan?

You will have five years to repay the loan, through fixed monthly payments.

#### How long will this zero-interest loan program be available?

The program will be evaluated after the first year.

#### Can I apply for the zero-interest EnerGuide loan if I haven't completed an EnerGuide evaluation?

No. You must have an energy evaluation through EnerGuide to qualify for these loans. You'll receive expert advice about how to improve the efficiency of your home.

### How the loan works

#### Does it matter what type of home improvements I plan on making?

Yes. The home improvements you plan to make **must be** among those recommended in your energy evaluation report.

#### How will I know if I have good credit?

We will check your credit rating by using a credit bureau and other sources. If you don't use credit cards, we can check your credit by using your income and expense information.

#### Once I complete and send in the application, how long does it take before I find out if I'm eligible to borrow the money?

It may take up to eight weeks to process your application. If you are eligible, we will send you a letter indicating the maximum amount you can borrow, based on the cost estimates provided. *(Please note, the actual amount you can borrow will depend on the actual work you complete.)*

## **Once approved for the loan, how long will it be before I can receive the funds?**

You **must** first complete the work and have your **second** energy evaluation before we will send the loan amount.

However, you may use your loan eligibility letter to arrange for short-term financing or to make payment arrangements with your contractors and suppliers.

## **Can I do the work myself or does it have to be completed by contractors or other professionals?**

Yes, you can do the work yourself. However, you will need to send us receipts for all supplies.

## **I need the money up-front to pay for the supplies. Can I get an advance to do the needed home energy improvements?**

If you qualify for the low- to modest-income EnerGuide program, we can provide you with an advance of up to \$1,500, depending on your estimates. If you would like to receive an advance, please indicate this on your application. You must start making payments on this advance within 60 days of cashing the cheque.

*You must cash the cheque within six months of the issue date or banks will not honour it.*

## **How do I schedule a second energy evaluation?**

You have 18 months to make energy upgrades to your home. Once the upgrades are complete, schedule a follow-up evaluation by calling 1-800-670-4636.

This follow-up confirms what work you have had done from the list of recommended improvements in your first evaluation report.

There is no extra fee for this evaluation.

*If you miss the 18-month deadline, you will not qualify for the loan.*

## **Once the second energy evaluation is completed, how long will it take before I can receive the funds?**

Before the cheque will be sent, you will need to send us the results of the follow-up evaluation, along with receipts for all contractors' work and supplies.

Once we receive this information, we will calculate the amount of loan you will receive. You will receive a cheque within eight weeks.

### Example

You spent \$15,000 on home improvements stemming from your energy evaluation. These improvements qualify for \$2,000 in federal rebates, plus \$1,500 in provincial rebates, for a total of \$3,500 in rebates. That gives you  $\$15,000 - \$3,500 = \$11,500$  net spending on improvements. In this instance, you would qualify for the maximum \$5,000 zero-interest EnerGuide loan.

### Example

You spent \$6,000 on home improvements stemming from your energy evaluation. These improvements qualify for combined federal and provincial rebates of \$2,000. That gives you  $\$6,000 - \$2,000 = \$4,000$  net spending on improvements. In this instance, you would qualify for a \$4,000 zero-interest EnerGuide loan.

## **Once I receive the funds, when do I have to start repaying the loan? How much will the payments be?**

When you receive a cheque for the approved loan amount, you will also receive a letter that sets out the amount of your monthly payments and your payment schedule.

You **must** start to repay the loan 30 days after you cash the loan cheque.

If you received a cash advance (low- to modest-income only), you **must** start to repay 60 days after you cash your loan advance cheque.

*You must cash your cheque within six months or banks will not honour it.*

## **How long do I have to repay the loan?**

You have up to five years to repay the full amount of the zero-interest EnerGuide loan.

If 90 days go by without a payment, interest will be charged on your loan, and your loan will be sent to our collections unit for follow-up.

After five years, interest will be charged on the remaining balance at the going provincial rate, which is set every three months by the Minister of Finance.

**If you have questions about the Zero-Interest EnerGuide Loan Program, or need help with the application, please call**

424-5200 (metro)

1-800-670-4357 (toll-free)