



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Clean Energy Financing Program?

The Clean Energy Financing Program helps a municipality provide low interest financing to qualifying homeowners interested in undertaking clean energy upgrades. Once the upgrades are completed, the homeowner repays the municipality over time on their property tax bill – which is why these types of programs are often referred to as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing. Alternately, they are sometimes called Property Assessed Payments for Energy Retrofits (PAPER).

2. How does the program work?

Interested homeowners must register to participate in the Clean Energy Financing Program. After verifying that their property qualifies, the homeowner will enter into an agreement with the municipality to complete eligible clean energy upgrades. The municipality would then add a Local Improvement Charge on the property equal to the cost of the upgrades, plus lender rate and program fees.

3. Who is administering the program?

The program is being administered by Clean Foundation on behalf of the municipality. Questions about the program and how it works can be directed to Clean at 1-844-727-7818 or cleanenergyfinancing@cleanfoundation.ca

4. What are the program eligibility criteria?

Homeowners may qualify for low interest financing if:

- they own a detached, semi-detached or row house (multi-unit buildings are not eligible for the program);
- all of the property owners consent to participation in the program;
- the property is in good standing with respect to municipal taxes, rates or charges;
- the residence is in a participating municipality;
- note, the Town of Amherst requires a credit check for each homeowner.

5. What types of clean energy upgrades qualify for the program?

Homeowners can apply for Clean Energy Financing based on the clean energy upgrade recommendations from a Home Energy Assessment performed by an Energy Advisor certified by Natural Resources Canada.

Eligible clean energy upgrades include the following:

Clean Energy Upgrade Type
A. Insulation for ceilings, floors, main walls, kneewalls, foundation walls, foundation headers, foundation slabs and crawlspaces
B. Draftproofing including caulking, weather stripping and duct sealing
C. Exterior doors



Frequently Asked Questions

D. Exterior windows
E. Domestic Hot Water Tanks
F. Drain Water Heat Recovery Systems
G. Heat Pumps
H. Wood & Pellet Heating Systems
I. Exhaust Ventilation
J. Balanced Heat Recovery Ventilation
K. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations* , ***
L. Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Systems*
M. Solar Hot Water Systems*
N. Solar Hot Air Systems*
O. Solar Photovoltaic Systems*
P. Swimming Pool Heating & Circulation Systems* , ***
Q. Well Pump**
R. Supplementary work required to successfully complete the above-listed upgrades. This may include, but is not limited to, removal of existing equipment or components, repairs and maintenance required, installation of vapour barriers and other water controls and freeze protection, testing and abatement of asbestos and vermiculite, and electrical upgrades

* These upgrades will require a supplementary assessment, in addition to a Home Energy Assessment, to determine if they meet the required savings-to-debt ratio.

** Only available to participants in District of Lunenburg and East Hants.

*** Not available in East Hants.

6. What is the 1:1 debt-to-savings ratio?

The intent of this program is for the cost of clean energy upgrades, program fees and cost of borrowing to be less than or equal to the estimated energy savings over the financing period. The program will only finance an upgrade or upgrade package that meets this estimated debt-to-savings ratio.



Frequently Asked Questions

7. What are the financing interest rates and terms?

The Clean Energy Financing Program offers upgrade financing for a period of up to 15 years depending on your municipality. The interest rate is fixed, and the municipalities will not negotiate different terms with homeowners. If a homeowner enters default, the interest rate will increase to the municipality's tax arrears rate.

Municipality	PACE interest rate	Default interest rate	Term
Town of Bridgewater*	1%	12%	Up to 15 years
District of Lunenburg	2%	10%	15 years
District of Digby	2%	15%	15 years
District of Barrington	4%	18%	10 years
District of Yarmouth	<i>Based on the municipalities cost to borrow +1%</i>	18%	10 years
Town of Amherst	<i>Based on the municipalities cost to borrow +2%</i>	12%	10 years
Municipality of Cumberland	<i>Based on the municipalities cost to borrow +2%</i>	15%	10 years
Town of New Glasgow	1.5%	15%	10 years
Victoria County	4%	10%	10 years
East Hants	1.85%	9%	10 years
Inverness County	1.5%	18%	15 years

Interest rates may be subject to change.

* In the Town of Bridgewater interest rates are charged as recorded in the Town of Bridgewater Fees Policy (policy 89) on the date the customer agreement is signed.



Frequently Asked Questions

8. What is the maximum financing I can get through the program?

Municipality	Maximum Financing Amount
Town of Bridgewater ¹	\$15,000 – \$40,000
District of Lunenburg ²	Up to \$20,000
District of Digby ³	\$10,000 – \$25,000
District of Barrington	\$10,000
District of Yarmouth	\$15,000
Town of Amherst ⁴	\$15,000 – \$25,000
Municipality of Cumberland ⁴	\$15,000 – \$25,000
Town of New Glasgow ⁵	Up to \$15,000
Victoria County	\$20,000
East Hants	\$20,000
Inverness County	\$15,000

¹ The Town of Bridgewater's Maximum Eligible Amount is \$15,000 for homes with full assessed property values of less than or equal to \$100,000. For homes with full assessed property values of more than \$100,000, the Maximum Eligible Amount is lesser of \$40,000 or 15 per cent of the full assessed property value.

² The District of Digby's Maximum Eligible Amount is \$10,000 for homes with full assessed property values of less than or equal to \$66,667. For homes with full assessed property values of more than \$66,667 the Maximum Eligible Amount is the lesser of \$25,000 or 15% of the full assessed property value

³ The District of Lunenburg's Maximum Eligible Amount is the lesser of \$20,000 or 15 per cent of the full assessed property value.

⁴ The Town of Amherst's and Municipality of Cumberland's Maximum Eligible Amount is \$15,000 for homes with full assessed property values of less than or equal to \$150,000. For homes with full assessed property values of more than \$150,000, the Maximum Eligible Amount is lesser of \$25,000 or 10 per cent of the full assessed property value.

⁵ The Town of New Glasgow's Maximum Eligible Amount is the lesser of \$15,000 or 15 per cent of the full assessed property value.



Frequently Asked Questions

9. How do I apply to participate in the program?

You will first need to be pre-qualified by completing the Registration Form and submitting it to Clean Foundation, who will confirm your eligibility.

10. Where do I find the Clean Energy Financing Program documents and forms?

Visit CleanEnergyFinancing.ca to apply. If you need assistance completing the forms, please contact CleanEnergyFinancing@cleanfoundation.ca or 1-844-727-7818.

11. How do I book my Home Energy Assessment and is the cost covered by the program?

You can book a certified Home Energy Assessment (HEA) through Clean Foundation by phone or email. Alternatively, you can book a HEA through another Nova Scotian Service Organization.

If you book an assessment through Clean Foundation, the cost is covered by your Clean Energy Financing program participation fee. Please see the information on program fees in question 13 for more information. If you book through another Service Organization, you will be responsible for paying an additional assessment fee of \$199 (plus any applicable taxes) to them directly.

12. What Program Fees will I incur?

A program participation fee of \$250.00 is required to take part in the program. ***The program participation fee is non-refundable and will be included in your total financing amount.***

In addition to the provincial and federal retrofit incentives, you have access to through the Home Energy Assessment program, this \$250 participation fee grants you access to low-cost financing, an additional Greenhouse Gas emissions retrofit incentive (where available), guidance from our team on what retrofits will be cost effective for your home, and ongoing support from our team of Energy Advisors and Technical Analysts.

This process is more in-depth than a typical home energy audit and requires our team to collect information beyond the scope of a standard assessment. This may include energy billing information, data from combustion analysis, zonal blower door test data, and/or additional photos and measurements of your home.

Please note: The Town of Amherst also requires a credit check for each homeowner. The cost of the credit check is \$30 per homeowner.

13. What if I enter the Clean Energy Financing Program but do not complete any clean energy upgrades?

If a homeowner exits the Clean Energy Financing Program early, they will be billed for the program participation fee by the municipality. The program fee will become payable 30 days upon exiting the program.

If applicable in their municipality the homeowner will also be billed for the cost of any credit checks (\$30 per homeowner).



Frequently Asked Questions

14. What if I've already had a Home Energy Assessment completed?

Although we may be able to use some data from your previous assessment a visit to the home will still be required.

15. Who is responsible for getting quotes from contractors?

It is up to the homeowner to contact contractors to obtain quotes and to retain contractors to complete the approved clean energy upgrades.

16. Is there a list of contractors who can complete the clean energy upgrades?

Yes. Clean Foundation has a list of contractors on our Trade Partner Network page. Efficiency Nova Scotia also has a Partner Directory. Please note: Clean Energy Financing can only work with contractors with liability insurance and WCB clearance. We can also accept quotes from companies who do not appear on those lists; however, proof of the company's WCB clearance and liability insurance must be provided along with their quote(s).

If you are unable to find a contractor who can do the work that you are interested in (for example, solar panels), please contact us. Unfortunately, the Clean Energy Financing program cannot finance the homeowner doing the work themselves.

Note: Neither Clean Foundation nor the municipality are responsible for the work quality of any contractors and assume no liability for the work undertaken.

17. Who is responsible for paying the contractor?

Homeowners are not responsible for paying contractors. As program administrator, Clean Foundation will pay the contractor directly.

However, where a homeowner has chosen to have additional work completed over and above the maximum financing amount, or an invoice exceeds the maximum approved financing limit, the homeowner will be responsible for paying the amount in excess of the maximum financing limit.

18. What if the quote from my contractor is greater than my approved financing amount? Can I still proceed with the work?

It is possible if the quote still meets the debt-to-savings ratio and is within the maximum financing limits. However, the homeowner is responsible for paying all costs in excess of the approved financing amount.

*Please Note: A suite of upgrades may only exceed the total financing amount by a maximum of \$5,000 in most municipalities. One invoice can be partially financed if the total additional cost of all upgrades does not exceed this \$5,000 cap. The total amount financed will still be the pre-determined municipal maximum.

Clean will notify the affected contractor up-front so that they can issue a split invoice or Clean can arrange to make a down-payment on the invoice. It is the homeowner's responsibility to pay the remainder of the invoice directly to the contractor.



Frequently Asked Questions

19. Is there a deadline for completing the program?

Participants are strongly encouraged to complete the program within six months of signing the Customer Agreement.

20. If I'm not satisfied with my contractor's work, who is responsible for making it right?

Homeowners are responsible for selecting a contractor to complete the recommended upgrades, and that contractor is solely and entirely responsible for the quality of the work completed. Neither Clean Foundation nor the municipality are responsible for any defects in workmanship or materials.

For this reason, it is strongly recommended that homeowners select contractors who are bonded, insured, and who offer warranties that are in keeping with the industry standard.

21. Am I required to receive consent from my mortgage lender?

No, this program does not require lender consent. However, it is recommended that you notify your mortgage lender about your participation in this program.

22. Can I pay off my financing early?

Yes. Homeowners may choose to pay off the balance of their financing in full at any time during the term of their financing, without any penalties.

23. Can I make a partial lump sum payment?

Yes. Homeowners may choose to make a partial lump sum payment at any time during the term of their financing, without any penalties.

24. Can I change the terms of the financing once I have signed the Financing Agreement?

No. Once you have signed a Customer Agreement, the terms are locked and cannot be changed.

25. What is the effect of having Clean Energy Financing registered against my property?

Pursuant to the municipality's PACE By-Law, the Clean Energy Program financing constitutes a lien against the Property until the amount of the financing, applicable interest, administrative charges and any penalties for missed payments, have been paid in full.

The PACE By-Law provides the municipality with a method of enforcing the payment of financing owing by the homeowner as is authorized by section 81A(1) of the *Municipal Government Act*. Under section 81A(1)(d) of the *Municipal Government Act*, this charge is a first lien on the property until the charge is paid in full.

26. How will I pay the PACE costs that I incur?

After you send Clean the invoice for your last Clean Energy Upgrade you will be asked to make equal payments over a period of 10 or 15 years depending on your municipality to repay the Clean Energy Financing Fees (i.e., upgrade costs, program fees, and interest accrued). In East Hants payments are made yearly. In all other municipalities payments are made monthly. Inverness County does not support pre-authorized payments, so homeowners are encouraged to set up automatic withdrawals through their



Frequently Asked Questions

bank (to taxes@invernesscounty.ca) or pay in monthly cheques. The payment schedule will be made available through the municipality.

If you exit the program without completing Clean Energy Upgrades, any incurred program fees will be due 30 days after you exit. The date of your exit is based on confirmation of Property Owner exit, or end of program term. If these program fees are not paid within 30 days, interest will be accrued on the outstanding balance and payable at the same rate applied by the Municipality for unpaid taxes.

27. What happens if I sell my home before my payment term is up?

During the process of sale, the Property Owner must provide a copy of the Customer Agreement to the new owners. When the property is transferred to a new owner the lien is transferred to the new owner along with the property. At this time, the new property owner shall continue to be liable to the Municipality for all Property Owner obligations and liabilities under this Agreement unless a lump sum payment representing the outstanding balance of the Financing Charge plus accrued interest and any applicable late charges is received by the Municipality at the time of the sale.

District of Lunenburg: In the District of Lunenburg the CEF charge is non-transferable. If the property owner(s) decides to sell the property, a lump sum payment representing the outstanding balance of the CEF charge plus accrued interest and any applicable late charges must be received by the Municipality at the time of the sale.

Want to chat with someone about the Clean Energy Financing program?

Call us toll-free at 1-844-727-7818, or email us at cleanenergyfinancing@cleanfoundation.ca