



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Clean Energy Financing Program?

The Clean Energy Financing Program is a program that 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 impose 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@clean.ns.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 has been in good standing with respect to municipal taxes, rates, or charges;
- the residence is in a participating municipality;
- note: The District of Lunenburg also 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, but are not limited to, the following:



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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
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**
Q. 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



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To be eligible, the upgrades must also meet a 1:1 debt to savings ratio. This is described in more detail in question 6 below.

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 debt-to-savings ratio.

7. What are the financing interest rates and terms?

The Clean Energy Financing Program offers upgrade financing for a period of up to 10 years. This 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
Town of Bridgewater*	4.18%	12%
District of Lunenburg**	4%	10%
District of Digby	4%	12%
District of Barrington	4%	18%
District of Yarmouth	<i>Based on the Municipality's cost to borrow +1%</i>	18%

Interest rates may be subject to change.

* In 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.

** In the District of Lunenburg the interest rate will be 4% per annum for the first 5 years. At the end of the first five years of the financing, the administrative charge will be adjusted to a fixed charge of Chartered Bank prime, of the Municipality's contracted bank, plus 1.5% for the remaining balance of the financing period



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

Municipality	Maximum Financing Amount
Town of Bridgewater*	\$15,000 – 20,000
District of Lunenburg	\$10,000
District of Digby	\$15,000
District of Barrington	\$10,000
District of Yarmouth	\$15,000

*The Town of Bridgewater'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 \$20,000 or 10% of the full assessed property value.

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. After confirming your eligibility Clean will send you a Customer Agreement to read and sign.

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

Visit www.CleanEnergyFinancing.ca to download the forms. Look for the button for the municipality you live in. If you need assistance completing the forms, please contact CleanEnergyFinancing@clean.ns.ca or 1-844-727-7818.

11. How do I book my Home Energy Assessment?

You can book a certified Home Energy Assessment (HEA) through Clean Foundation by phone or email. Clean Foundation's HEA fee will be added to your overall Clean Energy Financing charge. Alternatively you can book a HEA through another Nova Scotian Service Organization. You can find service organization contact information at www.energycyns.ca/service/home-energy-assessment. If you book through another Service Organization, the fee is not covered by the Clean Energy Financing program.

12. Is the cost of my Home Energy Assessment covered by the program?

If you book an assessment through Clean Foundation, the cost will be included in your Clean Energy Financing Program charge. If you book through another Service Organization, you will be responsible for paying the assessment fee.



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13. What Program Fees will I incur?

Some program admin fees will be added to your Clean Energy Financing as they are incurred. If a homeowner exits the Clean Energy Financing Program early, he or she will only be charged for the costs incurred to date. The schedule below indicates when a homeowner has incurred each program fee:

Stage	Cost
Customer Agreement is signed	\$150
Home Energy Assessment (HEA) is completed	\$99*
Contractor quotes are received by Clean Foundation (assessment of debt-to-savings ratio)**	\$200**
Contractor invoices received by Clean Foundation	\$100

* The cost of assessments performed by Clean Foundation will be included in the overall Clean Energy Financing. The cost of an assessment performed by another service organization cannot be financed through our program and will need to be paid directly by the homeowner.

**For upgrades that require a Supplemental Assessment (e.g. solar photo voltaic) there is an additional fee of \$75. Please note that there might also be a charge for the actual assessment done by the contractor. Contact us at any time if you need assistance or clarity.

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

For homeowners that do not complete clean energy upgrades, the program fees they incurred will become payable 30 days upon exiting the program. Program exit is either the end of program term or upon Clean Foundation receiving confirmation of the participant's exit.



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

If you have had a Home Energy Assessment completed on your home within the last 12 months and have not yet begun upgrades to your home, you may be able to participate in the program without getting a new Home Energy Assessment.

Please note that if you have renovated your home since receiving the Home Energy Assessment, you may be required to get a new assessment in order to participate in the program.

16. What is a Supplementary Assessment? When might I need one?

Home Energy Assessments focus on energy use in a home's building envelope, and may not capture all of the information required to assess a home's suitability for certain upgrades, such as installation of a solar photovoltaic system.

In these cases, Clean Foundation may require that a homeowner arrange a supplemental assessment by a qualified expert to assess whether a certain upgrade is a good choice for your home. The homeowner may choose to complete the supplemental assessment or not, but if no supplemental assessment is completed, the upgrade cannot be approved for financing under the program.

Homeowners will be responsible for paying the cost of any supplemental assessments.

17. 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.

18. 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 & 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.



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19. Who is responsible for paying the contractor?

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

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.

*Please Note: A suite of upgrades may only exceed the total financing amount by a maximum of \$5000. One invoice can be partially financed as long as the total additional cost of all upgrades doesn't exceed this \$5000 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.

20. Is there a deadline for completing the program?

Participants are required to complete the program within 6 months of signing the Customer Agreement.

21. 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.

22. 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.

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

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



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24. 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.

25. Can I make a partial lump sum payment?

Yes.

26. 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.

27. 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.

28. 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 monthly payments over a period of 10 years to repay the PACE Charge (i.e. upgrade costs, program fees, and interest accrued). Depending on your municipality, payments will be made through either a pre-authorized payment plan set up through the municipality or post-dated 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.



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29. 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.

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@clean.ns.ca