



## Frequently asked questions

# Household Energy Efficiency Scheme

November 2021

**These FAQs are designed to provide community members, non-government organisations (NGOs), energy service providers and other interested stakeholders with information about the design and delivery of the Household Energy Efficiency Scheme (the program).**

## What is the Household Energy Efficiency Scheme?

The HEES is a four-year, \$13 million program that aims to reduce energy costs for 10,000 households experiencing hardship by identifying and supporting the implementation of energy saving opportunities and improving household energy literacy.

Eligible households will receive tailored one-on-one coaching and support from NGOs and retailers to improve their energy efficiency and energy wellbeing (financial, mental, physical).

The program is one of the actions outlined in the Western Australian Climate Policy which can be found here:

<https://www.wa.gov.au/service/environment/environment-information-services/western-australian-climate-change-policy>

## How does the program relate to the Climate Policy?

The Household Energy Efficiency Scheme is a commitment in the Western Australian Climate Policy. The program seeks to enhance energy efficiency to reduce energy consumption, which also reduces emissions from energy created using fossil fuels.

## Why is the program needed?

It is widely recognised that energy costs can be a contributing factor for households experiencing hardship.

Evidence shows that Western Australian households on electricity retailer hardship programs consume, on average, 49% more electricity than non-hardship customers, and that energy costs often account for a proportionally greater percentage of disposable income for low-income households (Source: Western Australian Council of Social Service, 2018).

## What does the program aim to achieve?

The program aims to:

### *For households:*

- provide tailored education to improve knowledge of energy efficient practices and encourage behaviour changes that reduce energy consumption and costs;
- build resilience by providing long term cost of living relief and help to prevent households falling into further hardship; and
- complement existing measures that address short and medium term financial stress for households experiencing hardship.

### *For NGOs:*

- develop and foster continuing energy skills and capabilities to support inclusion of energy efficiency and energy bill assistance to households as part of “wrap around” services; and
- develop strong links with electricity retailers.

## How will the program be delivered to households?

The program will be delivered in partnership between NGOs and energy retailers, Synergy and Horizon Power.

The program has been divided into two phases: the Discovery Phase and the Scale Phase.

The Discovery Phase will run from November 2021 to June 2022 and involves the commencement of small-scale pilots to test and

refine program design.

The Scale Phase will see the commencement of full-scale rollout from July 2022 up to June 2025 to reach around 10,000 households across the State.

Household participation in the program is voluntary.

### **How many households are included in the initial pilots?**

The initial pilots will include up to 80 households across metropolitan Perth and Port Hedland, with other locations to be considered in early 2022.

Synergy's initial pilot will involve up to 50 households in the Perth metropolitan area, while Horizon Power's initial pilot will support up to 30 households.

EPWA, Synergy and Horizon Power are working to identify opportunities to increase the number of households reached as part of initial pilots.

### **Who is eligible for the program?**

The program will be available to current Synergy and Horizon Power customers with at least 12 months consumption history. Participating households will need to be available for a home energy assessment and regular coaching sessions.

Retailers in partnership with its NGO delivery partner will be identifying and inviting eligible residential customers to participate in the pilot program.

We are in the process of refining eligibility criteria before the program is rolled out more broadly from July 2022.

### **Will households receive refrigerators and appliance upgrades?**

While the primary focus of the program is on energy coaching to deliver long term change, select households may receive appliance upgrades and replacement of low-energy efficiency appliances, such as old refrigerators.

We need to make sure that appliance upgrades are well targeted for those households most in need. The circumstances where replacement of appliances is appropriate will be identified as part of learnings from the Discovery Phase. Appliance upgrades will begin from July 2022.

The customers participating in the pilots that meet the criteria for major appliance upgrades will be eligible for replacement appliances.

### **What services will the program offer to eligible households?**

The program will focus on electrical energy efficiency measures. For the Discovery Phase it will involve:

- an in-home energy efficiency assessment; and
- tailored education to improve energy efficiency and support behavioural change.

In the initial pilots, Synergy customers will receive a low-cost energy efficiency 'kit', while Horizon Power customers will receive gift vouchers after completing the in-home assessment and program.

The results of the in-home assessments, performed by an appropriately trained NGO representative or other energy service provider, will be used to provide tailored energy efficiency advice and education to households.

The program offering will aim to match the different needs of households in different regions and circumstances.

The program will not include replacing or upgrading appliances that alter the building fabric.

### **Are energy monitoring apps within the scope of the program?**

The small-scale pilots will utilise Synergy and Horizon Power's digital solutions in assisting customers to understand and monitor their energy usage.

This includes Horizon Power's mobile app, and Synergy's online tool My Account.

### **What existing services will the program leverage?**

The program aims to complement the existing services, structures, and processes that Government, NGOs and energy retailers use to help households experiencing hardship.

The program will complement existing services including:

- the Commonwealth supported No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS);
- the Energy Assistance Payment;
- the Hardship Utility Grants Scheme (HUGS);
- financial counselling services;
- existing NGO programs; and
- existing retailer hardship services.

## How has the program been designed?

The initial design of the program was completed by Energy Policy WA, in close consultation with Synergy, Horizon Power and WACOSS and with input from NGOs and service providers.

The final design of the program will evolve based on outcomes from the Discovery Phase, including learnings from small-scale pilots and further feedback received from consultation with NGOs.

## How will the delivery partnership work?

Operation of the program will be coordinated by Synergy and Horizon Power.

NGOs will utilise their existing relationships and understanding of hardship to identify households that are eligible to access the program.

NGOs will also play a lead role in engaging households and delivering program services and may be supported by contracted energy service providers.

## How is the program different to previous energy efficiency programs?

The program has learned from and built on the successes of the Western Australian Government funded Hardship Efficiency Program (HEP) which operated from 2009 to 2012.

The program has a similar scope to the HEP, however delivery will be led by NGOs with expertise in the delivery of social services to households experiencing hardship.

## How is the program different to eastern states energy efficiency schemes such as the Victorian Energy Upgrades Programs (VEU) and South Australia's Retailer Energy Productivity Scheme (REPS)?

The eastern states energy efficiency schemes are funded by obligations placed on large energy retailers. These schemes accredit energy services providers to deliver a variety of energy efficient products and services to eligible households and businesses.

The Household Energy Efficiency Scheme is a Government funded energy efficiency program focused on directly assisting Western Australian

households experiencing energy hardship, with program services primarily delivered by NGOs.

## What opportunities will the program provide to NGOs?

For further information on program design and consultation opportunities, NGOs can [sign up to our mailing list](#).

NGOs that are selected through procurement to deliver the program will be provided with training to build capability in energy efficiency advice and energy bill assistance to their clients.

## How many NGO delivery partners will there be?

It is expected that multiple NGOs will be required to be appointed to deliver the program to around 10,000 households across the State.

## What investment will be made to build NGO capability?

The program is part of wraparound services that NGOs can provide to households experiencing hardship in the medium to long term. To achieve this, we will be investing in building NGO capability to deliver the program.

Training will be developed to support NGO partners to successfully deliver HEES as an energy coach. The training will focus on energy assessment and efficiency and will also cover how to deliver the in-home assessment and follow-up coaching. Training is expected to occur in early 2022.

## What opportunities will the program provide to energy service providers?

Energy service providers may support NGOs to deliver program services where NGOs do not have existing capability to provide energy efficiency or installation services.

## What are the next steps for people interested in providing services to the program?

[Sign up to our mailing list](#).

You can also contact the program team directly at [hees@energy.wa.gov.au](mailto:hees@energy.wa.gov.au).

## Energy Policy WA

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