



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## LEAD AGENCY FOR LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND HYDRO RELIEF PROGRAM

August 2023

### Overview

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) and Hydro Relief are two energy assistance programs to support individuals who are experiencing challenges paying their hydro bills.

**LEAP** is a program developed by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and is funded through local distribution companies (LDCs). Hydro Ottawa is the local distribution company (LDC) for most Ottawa customers and is the LDC of reference for this RFP. The process by which LEAP is delivered is outlined in the [LEAP Manual](#).

United Way East Ontario (United Way) is responsible for the administration of LEAP in Ottawa for both Hydro Ottawa customers as well as sub-metered customers. Please refer to Appendix A for more details on the roles and responsibilities of Hydro Ottawa, United Way, the Lead Agency and Intake Agencies.

**Hydro Relief** is funded through court mandated funds pursuant to Court file no. 98-CV-158062. As indicated in the Settlement Fund, United Way agreed to act as the administrator of the fund and to create and support a low-income energy assistance program which was named Hydro Relief and managed through an identified Lead Agency. Hydro Relief has approximately one year’s funding remaining.

This fund will be sunsetted once the funds are depleted.

### How The Lead Agency is Funded

Both LEAP and Hydro Relief allow for the Lead Agency to retain a maximum of 15% of the annual funding allotment for each program for the delivery of the program. At this time, LEAP is an annual program while Hydro Relief was funded through a court settlement and the balance has been distributed annually based on an agreed upon schedule.

#### LEAP

Hydro Ottawa identifies the program funds available for LEAP on an annual basis (December/January timeframe). The Lead Agency may use a maximum of 15% of the total funds identified for the given year for their administration fees to deliver the program.

For example, the bullets below show the breakdown used for January 1 – December 31, 2023.

- In 2023, the Hydro Ottawa program funds allocated to LEAP was:  
\$276,108.00
- The amount available for grants was: \$234,691.80
- **The amount available for administration was: \$41,416.20**

## Hydro Relief

Although Hydro Relief has been delivered annually for over 10 years, the fund is not replenished annually. It is expected that by the time this RFP is awarded, there should be approximately one year's worth of funding available.

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| ○ Average annual Hydro Relief funding was:     | \$66,000.00 |
| ○ The amount available for grants was:         | \$56,100.00 |
| ○ The amount available for administration was: | \$9,900.00  |

## Request for Proposals

United Way is inviting organizations interested in being the Lead Agency for both LEAP and Hydro Relief to submit an RFP (maximum 10 pages) outlining the following:

- Your organization's name and address.
- The main contact for your organization (usually Executive Director/President, Board Chair, or other senior leadership representative).
- Your organization's mission and vision.
- Who is your client base (i.e., seniors, persons with disabilities, newcomers, based on geography, etc.)? Maximum 250 words.
- What is your organization's knowledge of the LEAP and Hydro Relief programs? Maximum 500 words.
- Have you been involved in the LEAP and/or Hydro Relief programs? If so, in what capacity? Maximum 500 words.
- What is your organization's capacity to take on the role of Lead Agency? Maximum 750 words.
- Have you managed similar programs before? If so, which program and when did you manage it? Maximum 750 words.
- Does your organization have bilingual capacity? Maximum 250 words.
- Does your organization have the current or scalable capacity to manage the following:
  - Day to day management of the programs (including working with Community Health/Resource Centres/NGOs, receiving/reviewing applications, and making decisions based on the LEAP Manual and Hydro Relief process document).
  - Financial tracking of allocated payments and administrative dollars. Maximum 750 words
- Is your organization a registered charity? *United Way is only able to fund registered charities.* Registered Charity number (RR number) must be included.

**Please submit your RFP no later than 1:00 pm on October 2, 2023, to [agencyinfo@unitedwayeo.ca](mailto:agencyinfo@unitedwayeo.ca).** Any questions related to the RFP can be sent to this email address.

**No late submissions will be accepted.**

Interviews with short-listed applicants may be scheduled. Decisions related to this RFP will be made by October 30, 2023. The successful Lead Agency will be expected to begin delivering the program as of January 1, 2024.

## Appendix A LEAP and Hydro Relief Roles and Responsibilities

### Local Distribution Company – Hydro Ottawa

- Allocates program funding on an annual basis and disburses grants on a monthly basis.
- Provides advance funds, in trust, to the Lead agency for eligible grant disbursements directly to sub-meter providers for their customers
- Works with United Way East Ontario and the Lead Agency to ensure that LEAP is promoted and administered as outlined in the LEAP Manual.
- Works directly with the Lead Agency to process eligible requests
- Applies grant payments to approved customer accounts.
- Supports the promotion of LEAP by making presentations to organizations, networks, agencies, Community Health and Resource Centres, etc.
- Reports program data to the OEB on an annual basis.

### Oversight LEAP and Hydro Relief – United Way East Ontario

- United Way East Ontario (United Way) is the liaison between Hydro Ottawa and the Lead Agency.
- United Way is responsible for the oversight of LEAP for Ottawa.
- United Way holds the funds for Hydro Relief.
- United Way contracts out the Lead Agency responsibilities for both programs.
- United Way receives the LEAP administration funds from Hydro Ottawa for disbursement to the Lead Agency for their work.
- United Way disburses Hydro Relief funds (including administration funds) to Lead Agency.
- United Way receives the monthly reports from the Lead Agency, reviews them, clarifies any concerns, and provides the report to Hydro Ottawa.

### Lead Agency – LEAP and Hydro Relief *(this is the role being contracted for this RFP)*

- Selecting or contracting with intake agencies to undertake intake functions.
- Making financial decisions as to whether to approve or deny applications based on recommendations from the intake agency.
- Tracking program funds.
- Completing the Funding Remittance Form and submitting it to the United Way, ensuring the distributor's funds are remitted only for that particular distributor's customers or customers of unit sub-metering providers within that distributor's service area.
- Funds remittance to Sub-meter company for approved grants for their customers on a monthly basis.
- Developing and implementing an appeals/internal review process.
- Tracking applicant names, addresses and account numbers to prevent duplicate requests.
- Tracking program performance and expenditures and reporting to the distributor in accordance with timelines and metrics.
- Notifying service providers of final decisions on applications so the service provider can take appropriate action.
- Provide oversight of intake agency administration, including training and ongoing support.
- Management of customer files, including negotiating the location of storage and process for transferring files with intake agencies. If the applicant is not eligible or screened out, the lead

agency should provide additional information on referrals to other energy financial assistance programs.

### **Intake Agencies – LEAP and Hydro Relief**

- Screening applicants for eligibility for LEAP.
- Processing applications, collecting the necessary information, verifying applicant information with the service provider and completing all required forms.
- Informing the service provider that the assessment of eligibility is being undertaken to ensure appropriate action by the service provider, which may include a hold on scheduled disconnection.
- Communicating with the applicant regarding approved or denied applications.
- Tracking information and reporting to the lead agency to support the lead agency's reporting.
- Assisting with gathering of data for program reporting.