

REAL News Release
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Home Heating Bills Skyrocket, REAL Recommends Actions

With electricity and propane costs already skyward bound, and natural gas soon to follow, it's making more sense to invest in making your house more energy efficient.

There are two programs that can help if you're low income. But the income level is so high that roughly half of Lanark County would qualify. For e.g., to qualify, a two-person household, whether renting or owning, must have a combined income of about \$39,000 or less, OR receive one of a range of supports including the GIS or ODSP. Check these programs to see if you qualify.

If you heat with natural gas, contact Envirocentre in Ottawa toll free at 1-877-580-2582 or find details about the program at their website at <http://envirocentre.ca/services/weatherization-program/>

If you use electricity, and everyone does, the qualifications are basically the same, but contact GreenSaver at 855-591-0877 or search for Home Assistance Program, GreenSaver, or Home Assistance Program, Hydro One online for the details.

Don't get bogged down by the process. Both will require that you send documents to prove your eligibility. But, the audits and all the actions are free to you. You could end up with new appliances, and more insulation in your attic and basement, all for free. It costs less for utilities to invest in making your home more energy efficient than it does for them to build new power plants or bring in more (expensive) natural gas.

For those who can't take advantage of these programs, or who want more detailed knowledge about their own particular houses and environmental footprints, REAL continues to provide an extensive range of thorough home energy audit services.

REAL's Certified Energy Advisor, Alan Leonard, is a home performance expert with 30 years experience in construction and building science, and

eight years experience in audits. He is very conscientious and dedicated to giving you impartial advice.

We all know we need more insulation and that we should seal up cracks. But, an energy audit of your own house provides you with the specific information you need for that house, and, critically, helps you decide where you will get the greatest payback for your investment. The written report recommends the measures that help you to most effectively save on your energy bills.

If you have home energy problems such as ice damming, condensation on windows, dry air, cold or drafty rooms or summer overheating, the energy advisor can diagnose the problem and suggest the best solution.

The advisor performs a thorough basement to attic evaluation of your home, including insulation, windows, doors, HVAC and water heating. An air leakage test is done with a blower door to determine how drafty your house is, where the leaks are, and the best air sealing method. All this information is gathered to create a computer model that simulates the performance of your home and helps guide your advisor in making recommendations. Depending on your needs, REAL's advisor is also able to use thermography to assess your house problems.

The CEA will provide you with a customized written energy efficiency evaluation report that rates the current efficiency of your house, gives specific improvement recommendations and calculates the energy savings that you can expect from your upgrades.

While at your home your auditor will be pleased to answer your questions and discuss the changes you can make. As well, he is available after you have reviewed your report for further questions.

REAL wants to help you complete the most effective upgrades to your house and is committed to helping you improve the efficiency and comfort of your home, while reducing its impact on our natural environment.

The Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL) is a not-for-profit community environmental organization that has been working since 1989 to enhance and protect our environment in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville

counties. To review all of REAL's home energy audit services go to the website at REALaction.ca. To schedule an appointment, call 613-283-9500.