



July 2024
Newsletter

MANY OCEC MEMBERS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR A \$200 BILL CREDIT FROM WASHINGTON STATE

Through the Washington Families Clean Energy Credits Grant program, OCEC residential members could be eligible for a \$200 Bill Credit. This program is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act to help low-to moderate-income families with their electric bills.

Per state guidelines, these funds will be prioritized to members at or below 80% area median income (AMI) and if funds remain can go up to 150% of the AMI. This is a one-time \$200 credit for eligible residential electric accounts.

It's super easy to apply for this program, visit https://wacleanenergycredits.com/relief_program. You will need your OCEC account number and your billing address zip code to start. Then you will need the number of people in your household as of today, and the total gross (pre-tax) annual income for last year (2023) for all current adult household members. You won't need to upload any documents to apply.

If your application is successful, you will get a \$200 bill credit applied directly to your power bill. You may receive a text message from Washington State Department of Commerce and the software company Promise to apply or to let you know that you were pre-qualified. Promise specializes in helping state and local governments distribute funds to utility customers. OCEC is working with the state and Promise to get these funds into our local community.

Washington State and the Climate Commitment Act are giving out these credits because the increasing expense of utility bills for many households presents a significant obstacle for our residents as the state transitions toward a clean energy future.

The funds must be distributed by September 15th, 2024, so apply today!

Visit <https://wacleanenergycredits.com> for more information about this program.

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10 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT POWER RESTORATION

This month, we'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are 10 things you might not know about restoration:

1. **We need you.** When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or a small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out. Please call our office at (509) 996-2228 to report an outage.
2. **Our employees might be affected too.** Because OCEC is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are local too. They are your neighbors, friends and familiar community volunteers. When you're without power, our people might be too.
3. **It's a team effort.** Every one of OCEC's employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member service representatives are taking your calls, engineers and field staff are surveying damage, dispatchers are organizing crews, and communicators are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.
4. **We assess the situation first.** Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.
5. **Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time.** Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like clinics. Then we complete work that impacts the largest of number of people first.
6. **Our employees face many dangers.** Besides working around high voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)
7. **Flickering lights are a good thing.** Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.
8. **You need a backup plan.** We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a back-up plan—remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take.
9. **Our employees have to plan, and eat.** If you ever see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe, common area to map out their plan for getting your power back on. Also, our crews work long hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals just like everyone else.
10. **Sometimes it's a waiting game.** Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. If you experience an outage, please report it by calling our 24-hour support, (509) 996-2228.

Our mailing address is: PO Box 69, Winthrop, WA 98862

Contact us: Toll Free: (888) 710-2228 | Local: (509) 996-2228

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