

Oregon Department of Energy

NEWS

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Oregon stimulus funds at work

Family Grateful For New Furnace Even If It Was August

With temperatures in the 90s this summer, Aaron and Virginia Meyers haven't had to use their new ENERGY STAR gas furnace installed in May. But, the Portland homeowners anticipate that their home will be much warmer and their gas bills will be considerably less come next winter.

The furnace purchase didn't appear possible at the beginning of 2010 for the young family. Aaron was working in a low-paying call center job and Virginia was a stay-at-home mom with then four-year-old Violet and one-year-old Roxy. But then, Virginia found some information on the Internet about the State Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program managed by the Oregon Department of Energy in partnership with the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services.

The Oregon Department of Energy received \$3.6 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus funds) to provide eligible low-income Oregon homeowners with a 70 percent reimbursement (up to \$2,000) for ENERGY STAR heat pumps and furnaces purchased on or after January 1, 2010. The program was recently expanded to include purchases of ENERGY STAR water heaters, refrigerators, dishwashers and clothes washers made on or after July 1, 2010 by Oregon homeowners.

The Meyers qualified as low-income earning less than 60 percent of the state's median income levels. They've owned their northeast Portland home since 2004. Virginia called and started the rebate process.

"It went very smoothly and we got our rebate check much more quickly than I expected," said Virginia.

The Meyers had done some preliminary work. Three or four years ago, they took advantage of a free walk-through energy audit offered by the Energy Trust of Oregon as they used NW Natural Gas services to heat their home. Their monthly gas bills were high - nearly \$300 a

month during the winter - and they wanted to know how they could make their 1955 mid-century modern home more energy efficient. The auditor presented them with a list and at the top was replacement of the 80 percent efficient gas furnace that was estimated to be 20 years old and oversized for the home.

“He told us that our old gas furnace was way too big for our home,” said Virginia. “Our home is only 1,600 square feet. It was producing more heat than we needed and was inefficient.”

The Meyers started saving and looking into rebates. She even had six different heating contractors give her estimates on a new energy-efficient furnace. They had some money saved up, but unexpected bills ate up their furnace fund.

When Virginia found out the family qualified for the Appliance Rebate, she didn't waste any time. The Meyers selected Sunset Heating and Cooling of Portland to install the new Lennox ENERGY STAR 95 percent efficient gas furnace. The total cost of the furnace was \$3,359 and it qualified for the 70 percent rebate maximum of \$2,000. The installation cost was \$1,401. The Meyers also received a rebate from Lennox for \$250. Ecos, a company that works with NW Natural low-income customers, provided a \$550 rebate and NW Natural provided a \$100 rebate that went directly to the Sunset Heating and Cooling to reduce the Meyers' bill. In addition, Sunset Heating and Cooling gave the family a free year membership to OMSI.

A stipulation of the program is that the old appliance be recycled. Sunset Heating and Cooling took care of the old furnace disposal for the Meyers.

“We are very happy with the program,” Virginia said.

“The Appliance Rebate program is specifically aimed at Oregon homeowners who are low-income,” said Rebecca Sweetland, Program Manager with the Oregon Department of Energy. “Oregon has had a Residential Energy Tax Credit for many years that provides tax credits for premium energy efficient appliances, but low-income homeowners often don't have a tax liability to benefit from the tax credit. The Appliance Rebate program can help them and it removes inefficient appliances.”

More details on how to apply for the Appliance Rebate program follow.

How to apply for the Appliance Rebate Program

The US Department of Energy awarded the Oregon Department of Energy with \$3.6 million of federal stimulus funds from the State Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate. On January 1, 2010, the Department began to provide eligible low-income Oregon homeowners with a 70 percent reimbursement (up to \$2,000) for ENERGY STAR heat pumps and furnaces purchases on or after January 1, 2010.

Eligible Oregonians are those who own their home and earn less than 60 percent of the state's median income levels (see link below). The Department is partnering with the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services which is providing an additional assistance benefit for those in crisis situations.

Effective July 1, 2010, the Oregon appliance rebate program has been expanded to include

eligible low-income homeowners who purchase ENERGY STAR water heaters, refrigerators, dishwashers and clothes washers. Purchases must be dated on or after July 1, 2010.

Available rebates will be distributed on a “first-come, first-served” basis until funds are depleted or February 17, 2012, whichever comes first. Interested Oregon homeowners can contact OHCS at 1-800-453-5511 (option 2, selection 4) to learn about the program and apply for a rebate voucher. After purchase and installation of eligible ENERGY STAR appliances, qualified homeowners may redeem vouchers for 70 percent of the purchase price, up to a specified maximum. Old appliances must be legally recycled (not re-sold or re-used) in order to receive rebate funds.

For more information, go to:

www.ohcs.oregon.gov/OHCS/SOS_ARRA_State_Energy_Efficient_Appliance_Rebate_Program.shtml, call 1-800-453-5511 (option 2, selection 4) or e-mail appliancerebate@hcs.state.or.us.

Rebate maximum amounts for ENERGY STAR:

Furnaces - 70% up to \$2,000

Heat pumps - 70% up to \$2,000

Refrigerators - 70% up to \$700

Electric heat pump water heaters - 70% up to \$1,400

Gas tankless water heaters - 70% up to \$1,200

Gas storage water heaters - 70% up to \$1,400

Dishwashers - 70% up to \$400

Clothes washers - 70% up to \$800

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