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Dufferin County accepting applications for BetterHomes Program

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Applications are now being accepted for Dufferin County's BetterHomes Program.

The $11.25 million program provides up to $40,000 in financing for qualifying households to complete energy-efficient upgrades, such as insulation, new windows, and heat pumps.

?Energy efficiency retrofits are critical to keeping Canadian's bills low while reaching our climate goals. We are proud to support BetterHomes Dufferin taking action to build a clean, affordable future ? one home at a time,? said Tim Hodgson, Canada's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), through its Green Municipal Fund's Community Efficiency Financing (CEF) initiative, provides BetterHomes Dufferin with $5 million in loans and a $2.5 million grant. Natural Resources Canada also provides funding.

?By addressing the financial barriers to energy efficiency upgrades, CEF empowers municipalities and homeowners to take meaningful action on climate change while improving housing affordability and community resilience,? reads a press release from the County of Dufferin.

The $40,000 loan is provided to households at a fixed interest rate of 2.5 per cent. The loan is tied to the property rather than the homeowner and is repaid through property taxes over 20 years.

Qualifying low-income households are eligible to receive the loan with zero interest.

While the County of Dufferin is calling on all homeowners to consider the program, households that heat with fuel oil or propane are especially encouraged to apply. They are expected to see the highest energy and cost savings.

?BetterHomes Dufferin will allow our residents to take practical, affordable steps to make their homes more comfortable and energy-efficient for the long term,? said Janet Horner, former warden of Dufferin County. ?This program reflects Council's commitment to helping people save money on energy costs, reduce emissions, and replace aging heat sources with new energy efficient technologies.?

A free Energy Coach is available to all participants of the BetterHomes program. They will help homeowners through every step of the process ? from the initial energy audit to identifying the most cost-effective upgrades, reviewing contractor quotes and applying for additional rebates.

?What sets BetterHomes Dufferin apart from other programs is that it's designed to address the biggest barrier to home energy upgrades ? upfront costs,? said Sara MacRae, Manager of Climate and Energy for Dufferin County. ?The program will cover initial project expenses, so people don't have to pay out of pocket before the savings begin.?

BetterHomes Dufferin aligns with the municipal priorities the county committed to in its climate action plans. The program helps residents lower energy costs, prepares homes for extreme weather, and stimulates local green-job growth. Eligible projects may also include upgrades for safety, accessibility and electrical systems.

?BetterHomes gives Dufferin homeowners a safe and reliable way to make upgrades that they might otherwise put off.? said Horner. ?Because the loan is tied to the property and paid back slowly through their property taxes, it is an easy, low-risk option where homeowners can see savings immediately while improving their home.?

To apply for BetterHomes, visit betterhomesdufferin.ca/get-started.