

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Climate Resources for OHP Members

Information about climate-related supports, available under Oregon's 1115 Medicaid waiver

Starting March 1, 2024, Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members can apply for access to climate-related resources through a new benefit called health-related social needs (HRSN) services.

Under the new climate benefit, OHP members facing certain life transitions may be eligible to receive devices that maintain healthy temperatures and clean air, including air conditioners, heaters, and air filtration devices. Mini refrigeration units for storing medications and portable power supplies to operate medical equipment like ventilators for power outages caused by climate events are also available. OHP members may qualify to receive more than one device if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Program eligibility

Who qualifies for a climate device?

To qualify for a climate device under HRSN services, OHP members must meet all three of the following criteria:

- (1) Be an OHP member
- (2) Be in at least one of the following eligible populations:
 - Adults and youth released from incarceration in the past 12 months
 - Adults and youth discharged from Institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs) in the past 12 months
 - Individuals who are currently or who have previously been in the Oregon child welfare system
 - Individuals transitioning from Medicaid-only to dual eligibility (Medicaid and Medicare) status within the next three months or past nine months
 - Individuals who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless
- (3) Have a qualifying medical need, which varies by device. For example, a person with a:
 - Health condition worsened by significant heat may qualify for an air conditioner.
 - Health condition worsened by significant cold may qualify for a heater.
 - Health condition worsened by compromised air quality may qualify for an air filtration device.
 - Risk of power outages and reliance on medical devices, like ventilators, may qualify for a portable power supply.
 - Reliance on medication that requires temperature-controlled storage, may qualify for a mini fridge.

OHP members must also live in a residence with consistent access to electricity and have the ability to use the device safely, as devices are only for use in eligible individuals' own home or non-congregate, primary residence.

What if an OHP member is not part of one of the eligible populations listed above? Are there other resources available?

CCO-enrolled OHP members can contact their CCO to see if climate supports are available through "flexible services" (also called health related services). If they have OHP, but are not sure of the CCO, they can call the OHA Client Services Unit at 1-800-273-0557 or email: Ask.OHP@odhsoha.oregon.gov. Open Card OHP members can check with their city or county to find out about local programs providing climate devices.

What resources are available for people not on OHP?

Some cities and counties, such as the City of Portland and Multnomah County, have programs with limited supply.

During heat waves, extreme cold, or air quality emergencies, many communities open cooling centers, heating centers, and clean air spaces. These are safe places for people to go if their home doesn't have air conditioning, heating, or access to clean air. During the next heat wave, extreme cold, or wildfire, people can call 2-1-1 or 1-866-698-6155 to find a local cooling center, heating center or clear air space.

What about people who live in a group setting, such as a nursing facility?

People who live in a group setting do not qualify for a climate device. Group settings include:

- Foster homes,
- Group homes,
- Assisted living facilities,
- Retirement facilities,
- Treatment facilities or homes, and
- Nursing facilities.

What about eligibility for OHP members staying in a temporary shelter, such as a Community Action Center or an overnight shelter?

Devices are required to be provided for use in a members' own home or non-congregate primary residence. It is not permitted in a temporary or group setting, where a climate device would not work well or could not be installed.

What if an OHP member already has a climate device from another Oregon program?

- If an OHP member already has a working AC or an air filtration device (AFD) that was provided from the state in response to heat or smoke events in previous years (within the last 36 months), they will not be eligible for those same devices under this new waiver benefit; however, OHP members may still qualify for other climate devices, such as a heater, mini fridge for medication needs, or a portable power supply.
- If an OHP member received an AFD from Oregon in the last year, they will not be qualified to receive a new one; however, replacement filters may be covered.

Getting a climate device

How will OHP members know if they are eligible? Where do they start the process?

CCO-enrolled OHP members can contact their CCO and ask to be screened for eligibility for a climate device. Open Card OHP members can contact Acentra and ask to be screened for eligibility for a climate device as part of the state's HRSN initiative.

When will OHP members be able to receive a device? Does it matter what season it is?

Devices will be available starting March 1, 2024. OHP members can receive any of the climate devices they are determined eligible for at any point in the year; there is no requirement to receive a device only during the "high risk" season. For example, if someone is eligible for an air filtration device, they can receive it during the spring, even though smoke events are most common during the summer.

How long does it take to get a device?

Once an OHP member is screened for eligibility, they will be notified within two weeks (14 days) of whether or not they qualify for a climate device. If they are authorized to receive a climate device, their CCO or OHA will work with them to deliver the climate device(s) directly to their home. If they qualify for an air conditioner and require installation assistance, their CCO or OHA will also help in arranging installation support.

How will OHP members receive a device?

Most commonly, the device will be shipped directly to the OHP member's home. If they are a CCO-enrolled OHP member, their device shipment will likely be coordinated by their CCO. If they are an Open Card OHP member, OHA will work with them to coordinate delivery of the climate device to their home. OHP members will get more information closer to the delivery date.

Will someone help set up the device?

Only air conditioners qualify for installation support. If someone is a CCO-enrolled OHP member, their CCO will coordinate device delivery. The device may come with the option to request installation assistance, depending on where the CCO is ordering the device from. The CCO will have additional information.

Open Card OHP members can work with OHA to support installation assistance, if required. They can contact Acentra at 888-834-4304 or by email at ORHRSN@kepro.com.

Does this benefit include help with utility bills to run the device?

This benefit does not provide funding for utility assistance. CCO-enrolled members can contact their CCO to see if funds are available through "flexible services" (also called health related services) to support utility costs.

Other resources may be available to support utility costs by contacting 2-1-1 and asking about utility assistance programs. Additional options may be available through Oregon Housing and Community services ([OHCS](#)).

Do OHP members get to keep the climate device?

Yes. Once an OHP members receives a device, it is theirs to keep and maintain.

What if an OHP member moves and the device gets left behind?

Members are eligible for one replacement device within a 36-month period. If additional replacements are needed, a provider may replace the device, subject to their reasonable discretion. Members must remain eligible for services to receive new devices.

What if the device has issues or doesn't work?

Most devices will come with at least a 1-year replacement warranty from the manufacturer. If help is needed with the device in the first 12 months of receiving it, the OHP member can contact their CCO. Open card members can contact Acentra at: ORHRSN@kepro.com.

Can people in apartments install a device?

Section 1 of Senate Bill 1536 changed Oregon's landlord and tenant laws to allow tenants to use and install portable cooling devices. Under the waiver, only air conditioners qualify for installation support, if required. Air filtration devices, mini fridges, and portable power supplies (PPS) do not require any installation and are approved for residential use.

Depending on the unit type, tenants can install the device in a window or for portable units, place the device on the floor with venting to the window, as long as it does not modify/damage the dwelling unit or building when installed. Click [here](#) for more information on cooling devices and tenants' rights.

What uses are not protected under state law?

A landlord may only prohibit or restrict a tenant from installing or using a device if installation or use of the device would:

- Violate building codes or state or federal law;
- Violate the device manufacturer's written safety guidelines for the device;
- Damage the premises or render the premises uninhabitable;
- Require more amperage to power the device than power service to the building, dwelling unit or circuit can accommodate; or
- For window-mounted devices:
 - Block a window that serves as the necessary egress from the dwelling unit;
 - Interfere with the tenant's ability to lock a window that is accessible from outside;
 - Damage or void the warranty of the window or frame, puncture the envelope of the building, or otherwise cause significant damages due to the use of brackets or other hardware required to securely fix the device;
 - Damage the dwelling unit or building because the device cannot be adequately drained; or
 - Risk the device falling

What other requirements may landlords set for tenants?

Under state law, a landlord may require portable cooling devices to be:

- Installed or removed by the landlord or landlord's agent;
- Subject to inspection or servicing by the landlord or landlord's agent; or
- Removed from October 1 through April 30.

Additional information

What are HRSNs?

HRSN stands for health-related social need.” HRSNs refer to the social and economic needs that individuals experience that affect their ability to maintain health and well-being. HRSNs include things such as housing instability, housing quality, food insecurity, employment, personal safety, and affordable utilities. Oregon’s HRSN initiative focuses on addressing housing, nutrition, and climate-related needs. Additional information is available on OHA’s [website](#).

Other Resources on Climate Preparedness

Oregon’s Public Health Division has additional resources on how to stay safe and prepare for extreme weather events, including [wildfire smoke](#), [winter storms](#), [extreme heat](#), and more. The web site www.211info.org also has resources that may be available during extreme weather events.

Questions?

For questions about the 1115 waiver, the climate benefit, or other HRSN assistance, please visit OHA’s [website](#) or call OHA Client Services at 800-273-0557.