

## What is Community Electricity Aggregation?

Community Electricity Aggregation is a mechanism by which a City or a Town can buy electricity supply in bulk for residents and businesses, with the goals of controlling costs through competitive, stable rates and increasing the renewable energy content. It is also known as municipal aggregation, Community Choice Aggregation or Community Choice Energy. Good Energy, L.P. is the energy consulting group hired by the four communities whose plans were the first in the state to be approved by the Public Utilities Commission on May 26. Good Energy entered the New England market in 2015 with national experience in aggregation programs and currently manages over 40 active Community Electricity Aggregation programs in Massachusetts.

## What changes?

For electricity customers in communities that implement CEA, few visible changes take place: they continue to receive only one bill for electricity from the utility, National Grid, and National Grid continues to repair outages and deliver the electricity. For those who choose to participate in the program, only the supply portion of the electricity bill changes to the supplier chosen by the City or Town by a competitive bid process.

## Who participates?

Every electricity customer in a community is eligible to participate in the community's program - whether they are a resident, a business, a renter or an owner. The programs are structured with voluntary participation and automatic enrollment.

- Voluntary participation: customers can leave the program at any time - either before the program starts or during - without penalty.
- Automatic enrollment for those with National Grid as electricity supplier: For at least 30 days before the program launches, each customer receiving supply from National Grid (called Standard Offer or Last Resort service) will have the opportunity to opt out (i.e. not participate) or choose one of the program's optional products. Those that take no action will be enrolled in the program's default supply option.

Prior to program launch, each municipality will conduct **extensive education and outreach to notify their communities**. This includes mailing a Notification Letter to each customer with program details and ways to opt-out such as a via prepaid mailer, phone and online form.

- Opt in required for those with another electricity supplier (i.e. Not National Grid): Those Rhode Island residents and businesses who have already chosen an electricity supplier other than National Grid are not automatically enrolled in the program, though they can voluntarily opt in to the program at any time.

## How much does it cost?

Community Electricity Aggregation programs can be implemented without cost to the City or Town budget, and they require only intermittent staff time for oversight and guidance. The program's consultant, Good Energy, takes care of all the drafting, planning, outreach, development and customer service aspects of program management, and their services are paid for by a fee included in the supply rate. The community benefits from the program that has the potential to bring lower electricity rates (although savings cannot be guaranteed), but the benefits go far beyond that. Since all of the Rhode Island programs that have been approved so far intend to add additional renewable energy to their electricity mix, above and beyond the state requirements, the displacement of fossil fuels from electricity generation benefits all in the state and beyond with a reduction in pollution, decrease in greenhouse gases that cause climate change, and the much-needed push for the development of more renewable resources in our region.

## What options are offered?

Most Community Electricity Aggregation plans include several options with different amounts of renewable energy content - from those that just meet the state minimum standards to those that cover 100% of a user's consumption with RI New renewable energy (the state's measure for the cleanest renewable energy). The goal is to provide a good choice for all participants in any given community.

Program participants are enrolled in the default option, unless they choose an optional product.

**Green Default:** A green default is meant to be a win-win economically and environmentally. It includes some additional renewable energy, and by leveraging the bulk buying power of the community, the cost is meant to remain competitive and affordable. Across the entire city or town, this extra renewable energy adds up to a massive impact.

Providence, Central Falls, Barrington and South Kingstown plan for their default to add 10% RI New renewable energy on top of the state's minimum requirement, which is 17.5% in 2021.

### Options:

- "Opt Up" options: 50% and 100% RI New renewable energy - for those that want to maximize their environmental impact.
- "Basic" option: for those that seek the lowest possible price in the program, it includes only the minimum state requirements for renewable energy (17.5% in 2021).

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