

Frequently Asked Questions: Electricity & Natural Gas Aggregation

In 2011, voters gave the City of Cincinnati the power to negotiate on behalf of its citizens and small businesses for a favorable price from suppliers of electricity and natural gas.

This new supply began that summer for electricity and started with customers' billing cycles in November 2012 for natural gas.

Program Update August 2015: City selects Constellation Energy Service – Natural Gas, LLC to provide natural gas for the Natural Gas Aggregation Program through October 2017

1. **What is aggregation?**

Adopted by the Ohio General Assembly in 1999 and 2001, governmental aggregation for electricity and natural gas gives communities like ours the ability to shop for service on behalf of residential and small business customers. By combining (aggregating) the electric and natural gas load of eligible residential and small commercial customers, these customers are able to likely obtain better pricing than if they had remained on the basic Duke utility rate.

Importantly, the City has an aggregation program for both electric and natural gas service, but because electric and natural gas service are very different, the two programs are served by different suppliers and have different terms and conditions. The fact that electric and gas have to be treated separately means also that customers participate separately and they will receive separate opt-out mailings specific to electric or natural gas service.

2. **Do I have to participate in the program?**

The City's program is an "opt-out" program, which means that eligible customers are notified by the supplier and must decline if they do not want to participate. If they do nothing upon notification, they will be included in the aggregate customer base, and realize the savings the City has negotiated on their behalf. Participating customers will be given the opportunity to opt out at least every two years for natural gas service and every three years for electricity after initial service. If customers do choose to "opt-out" they may choose another competing supplier, or continue to receive electric and natural gas supply from Duke Energy-Ohio at the standard service offer rate.

3. **What does it cost to participate in the aggregation program?**

There is no cost for enrollment in the program for eligible customers.

4. **Will I still receive a bill from Duke?**

The aggregation program only affects your supply of electricity and natural gas. You will still be a customer of Duke for the delivery of your electric and gas supply under the program and you will still receive a bill from Duke for both the delivery of your electric and gas service, as well as for the electricity and gas supplied under the aggregation program. Your Duke bill will clearly indicate which charges relate to delivery and which relate to electric and gas supply and generation. A contact number for questions related to your service will be included on every bill.

5. **If I join the aggregation, can I stay on budget billing?**

Yes, you can remain on budget billing.

6. **Can I still have my payment automatically deducted from my checking account as I do now?**

Yes. How you pay your utility bill will not change.

Natural Gas Aggregation FAQs

1. **Who is eligible to participate in the program?**

With certain exceptions, all residential and non-residential customers that use less than 500,000 cubic feet per year at a single location, that are located within the municipal boundaries of the City are eligible to be included in the aggregation program. However, customers on Duke Energy-Ohio's PIPP program and customers that are currently in arrears in their payments to Duke will not be included in the program. Also, eligible customers who are currently receiving their natural gas supply from a competitive supplier will not be automatically enrolled in the program, but may elect to participate subject to the terms and conditions of their current supply agreement.

2. **When will I begin to receive service under this program?**

The natural gas supply that the City is currently negotiating is expected to begin with the customer billing cycles starting in November 2015.

3. **How much will I save if I participate in the program?**

It is very difficult to predict savings due to the variable nature of the natural gas market. However, compared to the previous year, July 2015-July 2014, the average household would have saved approximately 11.3% off their natural gas utility bills compared the basic Duke Energy Ohio utility rate.

4. **Who will be the supplier for the program?**

The City has selected Constellation Energy Services – Natural Gas, LLC. to provide natural gas services for eligible citizens and small businesses. For questions concerning the natural gas aggregation program, please contact Constellation toll-free at (844) 830-3336 or online at www.constellation.com/oh-cincinnati. Constellation customer service representatives are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

5. **Is there a Senior Discount?**

Yes, senior citizens age 65 or older participating in the aggregation program may opt to receive a discount of \$0.01 per ccf off the monthly variable rate or any applicable fixed rate by contacting Constellation at (844) 830-3336.

6. **Is there a fee to leave the Aggregation Program?**

Constellation will not charge you a fee if you choose to leave the aggregation program once enrolled.

Electricity Aggregation FAQs

1. **Who is eligible to participate in the program?**

With certain exceptions, all residential and non-residential customers that use less than 700,000 kilowatt-hours per year, that are located within the municipal boundaries of the City are eligible to be included in the electric aggregation program. However, customers on Duke Energy-Ohio's PIPP program, as well as customers that are currently behind in their payments to Duke, will not be included in the program. Also, eligible customers who are currently receiving electric supply from a competitive supplier will not be automatically enrolled in the program, but may elect to participate subject to the terms and conditions of their current supply agreement.

2. **How will I know if I can save money under the Cincinnati electric governmental aggregation program?**

Under the Cincinnati governmental aggregation program, the price you pay for electric generation supply is guaranteed to be lower. In other words, each month, you'll receive a 7 percent discount for the generation portion of your electric supply. The City of Cincinnati expects the average household to save approximately \$50 annually on its electricity bills.

3. **Is your price for residential power fixed, or does it vary?**

In this program, the discount you will receive is fixed, so each month you will save 7 percent off the generation portion of your bill. Since the actual price per KWH charged by the utility may change each month based on the season and your usage, the price per KWH from FirstEnergy Solutions will also change each month. Regardless, you are guaranteed to save 7 percent off the competitive portion of your electric bill.

4. **What if I have an existing contract with another electricity provider?**

If a customer does have a contract with another electricity provider, and wishes to become part of the City's aggregation program, they should review the provisions of the contract to determine their options, as the terms of each contract can vary. If customers sign contracts for a provider other than First Energy Solutions in the meantime, they will not be eligible for the rates the City has negotiated.

5. **Who will be the supplier for the program?**

The City has chosen First Energy Solutions (FES) as the electricity provider with whom the City will now negotiate a contract for a 100 percent green energy supply. For questions concerning the electric aggregation program, please call 1-866-636-3749.