

Lee Community Power Information and FAQs

December 14, 2022

What is Community Power?

Community Power is a new program in New Hampshire where a municipality purchases electricity for its residents and small businesses for cost savings and increased use of renewable energy. If its Plan is approved, the Town provides electricity supply options for residents and small businesses that are not already on competitive electricity supply.



Community Power offers local control over electricity supply, while the utility continues to provide wires and poles, emergency services and billing.

How does this affect my electric bill and service?

This program only affects the supply cost line on our electricity bills. The distribution utility companies will continue to own and manage the distribution poles and wires, emergency services and billing. Charges for these remain the same. The utilities will continue to respond to outages and provide customer services.

What is the cost to the Town for running a Community Power Program?

There is no impact on the Town budget for a Community Power Program.

Does the program affect service from the utilities, or their profit?

The utilities profit from providing transmission and distribution services. They make money on the infrastructure and services that provide power and serve you in an emergency. Energy supply is a 'pass-through' cost on which they do not profit.

Does the program affect my electricity discounts or net metering program benefits?

Utility programs for electric assistance and net metering customers will be unchanged. The rules regarding Community Power may allow for enhanced benefits for qualifying customers by the time the program is launched.

If I vote yes on Community Power at town meeting, do I have to participate?

No. The program will provide new default service for eligible customers, but all customers can opt out, change products, join, or leave the program at any time with no program penalty or fees. Customers currently on competitive supply are not eligible for automatic enrollment and will have to opt in to participate.

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How will Community Power get better electricity rates than the utility default?

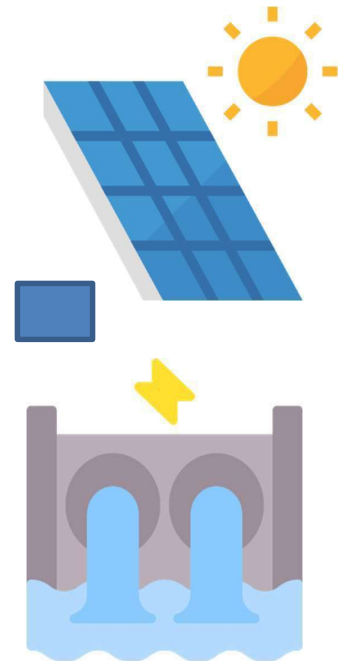
The utility default rate changes twice per year, but the Town is not bound by this rigid schedule. Market timing, buying power and strategies like group net metering are used to lower rates. Past performance can't guarantee future results, so we work with a consultant to generate savings for Community Power.



Does Community Power offer lowest cost energy choices?

Yes. A 'Basic' option offers the best price possible while meeting all state requirements. The Basic option has no additional renewable energy above the state required minimum.

Does Community Power offer renewable energy choices? Yes. The Town's Draft Community Power Plan outlines four choices, three of which offer renewable energy in addition to the state minimum now required, currently 22.5%. The program default is cost competitive with utility default and has 5-10% additional renewable energy. There are also choices for more renewable energy, up to an additional 100%, all potential options for any Community Power program.



Where does the renewable energy come from?

The program can choose to purchase renewable energy certificates (RECs) from certified renewable energy providers, mostly solar and small hydro projects. RECs are the accepted and verified currency for renewability across the country. Your Community Power program will purchase only RECs attached to the New England electricity grid and as close to town as possible, including projects in town. Prioritizing local projects has additional benefits including local jobs and resilience.

This seems too good to be true, cost savings and more renewable energy.

Programs across the region and country have demonstrated results over years of operation. Savings can't be guaranteed, but demonstrated savings create a foundation for increasing our renewable supply dramatically while offering individual customers exactly the choices they need and want for maximum cost savings and renewable energy up to 100%. The program may have more benefits that include stable rates, consumer protections, outreach for energy efficiency programs, and local energy planning and project support in the future, for lowering energy costs further and increasing resiliency in the face of climate change.