



**TOWN OF ASHFIELD**  
**COMMUNITY CHOICE POWER SUPPLY PROGRAM**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1. WHAT IS THE “COMMUNITY CHOICE POWER SUPPLY PROGRAM”?**

The Community Choice Power Supply Program is a municipal aggregation program which allows local government to combine the purchasing power of its residents to achieve savings on electricity costs. In doing so, it creates competition among suppliers which helps ensure aggressive rates. Consumers are no longer “stuck” with the cost and fluctuation of Basic Service rates because the Program offers them another option.

**2. HOW DID THE TOWN OF ASHFIELD JOIN THIS PROGRAM?**

Following the approval of Article 33 at Town Meeting in May 2023, the Town of Ashfield developed and published its Aggregation Plan (“Plan”) in compliance with Massachusetts law regarding municipal aggregation of electric consumers (M.G.L. c. 164, § 134). The Select Board approved the Plan in October 2023, and a power supply agreement was executed this past December to take effect March 2025.

**3. WHAT IS A “COMPETITIVE SUPPLIER”?**

A competitive (or third-party) supplier is a power supplier other than Eversource. Competitive suppliers provide electricity to consumers either through a municipal aggregation program or through a competitive supplier program. Your electricity is currently being supplied by Eversource unless you have switched to a competitive supplier program on your own.

Your electric bill is divided into two parts: **Delivery and Supply**. Supply is no longer regulated and therefore can be provided by a competitive (or third-party) supplier. Delivery is still regulated and can only be provided by Eversource. Eversource will continue to deliver your electricity over the wires. However, the power running through those wires can be provided by a competitive supplier.

**4. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROGRAMS ADVERTISED TO “LOWER YOUR ELECTRIC BILL” AND MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION PROGRAMS?**

Programs you see advertised are competitive supplier programs in which the supplier contracts directly with the individual consumer. While both programs seek to lower your electric bill, they are run very differently. Competitive supplier programs set their own terms and conditions. Once signed up, it is up to the consumer to monitor the rates. Competitive supplier programs usually have a clause in the terms and conditions that states the consumer remains in the program after the initial rate and term have ended unless specific action is taken to cancel the contract. In many cases, there may be an exit fee. Municipal aggregation programs are run by cities and towns. Once signed up, it is up to the city or town to monitor the rates. Having knowledge of the electricity market, the city or town continually

looks out for their citizens' best interests. Their goals are to provide low, stable rates and possibly green options to their citizens. Municipal aggregation programs have no entrance or exit fees.

**BEWARE OF OTHER ENERGY OFFERS** claiming to be associated with your community or Eversource. You may receive direct mail, phone calls or even visits to your door from energy marketers for the competitive supplier programs mentioned above. These marketers are NOT associated with the Community Choice Power Supply Program or with Eversource. The Community Choice Power Supply Program will notify you of the Program ONLY through mail direct from your community (look for your Town's seal).

#### **5. WHY HAVE I RECEIVED A NOTIFICATION MAILING?**

Your Town has signed a contract with a supplier on behalf of your community as part of their Community Choice Power Supply Program. If Eversource has your account listed as being on Basic Service, you should receive an envelope with a Consumer Notification Letter and Opt-Out Reply Card. If Eversource has your account listed as being contracted with a third-party supplier, you should receive an informational postcard. However, there is a lag between the date the utility provides the account data and the date the letters/postcards are mailed so there may be some accounts that are categorized incorrectly at the time of mailing.

#### **6. WHY HAVEN'T I RECEIVED A NOTIFICATION MAILING?**

You will not receive a notification mailing if you have requested Eversource put a "Supplier Block" on your account so that it is removed from all supplier marketing lists.

#### **7. HOW WILL BEING A PART OF THIS PROGRAM AFFECT ME?**

You will receive the benefit of potentially lower rates on your electricity and therefore a lower electric bill. Otherwise, YOU WILL NOT NOTICE ANY CHANGE. The only difference you will see is that the name of the chosen supplier will be printed under the "Supply/Generation Services Charge" section of your monthly bill. You will continue to receive one bill from Eversource. You will continue to send your payments to Eversource for processing. Eversource will continue to read meters and maintain the distribution and transmission lines. Reliability and quality of service will remain the same. Furthermore, you will continue to have all existing consumer rights and protections.

#### **8. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?**

If you have received a Consumer Notification Letter (for automatic enrollment) AND you have not opted out AND your account is not listed with Eversource as having a "Supplier Block" (a request to have your account removed from all supplier marketing lists), you will not need to do anything to participate. You will be automatically enrolled in the Program.

#### **9. WHY HAVE I NOT BEEN ENROLLED, I THOUGHT IT WAS AUTOMATIC?**

Enrollment is automatic ONLY IF you have received a Consumer Notification Letter stating that and have not opted out. Enrollment is NOT AUTOMATIC if you received an informational postcard because

Eversource has your account listed as being contracted with a third-party supplier at the time of mailing. Also, you will not receive a notification mailing, and therefore will not be enrolled, if you have requested Eversource put a “Supplier Block” on your account so that it is removed from all supplier marketing lists. If that is the case, consumers will have to call Eversource and have the “Supplier Block” removed before enrolling in the Program.

#### **10. CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM IF I DID NOT RECEIVE A NOTIFICATION MAILING FOR AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT?**

Yes, as long as your community has a DPU approved aggregation working with Colonial Power Group. You may OPT-IN AT ANY TIME by filling out the online Opt-In Form at [colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield](http://colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield) OR by calling the supplier chosen by your community (listed on your community's page) OR by calling Colonial Power Group at (866) 485-5858 ext. 1. To avoid delays in your enrollment, before opting in, please make sure that if you have a “Supplier Block” on your account that it is removed. Also, if you have previously contracted with your own supplier, you should confirm with them that you will not incur any fees for leaving their supply.

#### **11. WHEN WILL MY ENROLLMENT TAKE EFFECT?**

Your automatic enrollment, if applicable, will start on the meter read date stated on the Consumer Notification Letter. You will see the new rate on your bill the following month. For example, if your meter read enrollment date is January 1, your usage from January 1 - January 31 will be charged the new rate and billed on February 1. If you opt-in at any other time, enrollment may take up to two billing cycles before taking effect.

#### **12. WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT POWER FROM THIS SUPPLIER?**

Each consumer has the right to choose their own supplier. Enclosed with the Consumer Notification Letter is an Opt-Out Reply Card. If you do not want to participate in the Community Choice Power Supply Program, you can sign and date the card, place it in the envelope provided and drop it in the mail OR fill out the Opt-Out Form at [colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield](http://colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield) OR call the supplier chosen by your community (listed on your community's page) OR call Colonial Power Group at (866) 485-5858 ext. 1. You will then be removed from the list of participating consumers. The initial opt-out period is thirty (30) days from the mailing date of the Consumer Notification Letter.

#### **13. WHAT IF I DECIDE I WANT TO OPT-OUT AFTER THE 30-DAY INITIAL OPT-OUT PERIOD?**

Participation is designed to be as flexible as possible. You may leave the Community Choice Power Supply Program at no charge and be placed on Eversource Basic Service or choose another supplier on your own. Opting out of the Community Choice Power Supply Program is easy. You may fill out the online Opt-Out Form at [colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield](http://colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield) OR call the supplier chosen by your community (listed on your community's page) OR call Colonial Power Group at (866) 485-5858 ext. 1. It may take a couple of billing cycles before you are back on Eversource Basic Service. There is NO CHARGE to opt-out.

Large users (100 kW or 500,000 kWh/year), if you participate initially and then choose to leave the Community Choice Power Supply Program, you may return but the supplier may offer the then-current market rate for the product selected as opposed to the aggregation rate.

#### **14. WHAT IF I HAVE ALREADY CHOSEN A SUPPLIER ON MY OWN?**

Eversource records should indicate that you already have a third-party supplier. If so, you should receive an informational postcard but you will not be automatically enrolled in the Community Choice Power Supply Program. However, there is a lag between the date the utility provides the account data and the date the letters/postcards are mailed so there may be some accounts that are categorized incorrectly at the time of the mailing. This is why we recommend you opt-out if you have received a Consumer Notification Letter (for automatic enrollment) but have contracted with your own supplier.

#### **15. WHAT IF I HAVE ALREADY CHOSEN A GREEN POWER SUPPLY OPTION THROUGH MY UTILITY?**

Your participation in the Community Choice Power Supply Program will not affect your participation in that Green Power Supply Option. Green Options is a renewable energy program, through Green Energy Consumer Alliance, which allows you to choose to have all or part of your electricity generated from renewable resources. Green Options allows for concurrent enrollment with Basic Service or third-party supply (which includes municipal aggregation). Green Options consumers will be included in the account data provided by Eversource and, therefore, you should receive a Consumer Notification Letter (for automatic enrollment).

#### **16. WHAT IF I AM ON A BUDGET PLAN OR ELIGIBLE LOW-INCOME RATE?**

You will continue to receive those benefits from Eversource.

#### **17. WILL I STILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR MASS SAVE PROGRAMS?**

You will continue to be eligible for those incentives, which are sponsored by Eversource.

#### **18. WHAT IF I OPERATE A BUSINESS AND HAVE A "TAX EXEMPT" STATUS, WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO MAINTAIN MY STATUS UNDER THIS PROGRAM?**

Any applicable taxes will be billed as part of the Program's power supply charge. You will be responsible for identifying and requesting an exemption from the collection of taxes by providing appropriate documentation.

According to Massachusetts law, in order to maintain your tax exempt status for your electric bill, you must send a copy of your tax exempt certificate directly to the supplier chosen by your community. (The supplier's name is listed at [colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield](http://colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield).)

## **19. WHAT IF I HAVE SOLAR PANELS ON MY RESIDENCE OR BUSINESS, OR WHAT IF I'VE JOINED A COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECT?**

Net metering and on-bill credits will work the same way with the Community Choice Power Supply Program. You will continue to receive your net metering or on-bill credits while benefiting from the aggregation rate on your electricity. Eversource will continue to post your net metering or on-bill credits to your electric bill at Eversource's Basic Service rate.

## **20. WHAT IS THE MASSACHUSETTS RENEWABLE ENERGY REQUIREMENT?**

By law, all electric supply products are required to include a mandatory minimum percentage of clean/renewable energy resources. The total Massachusetts Renewable Energy Requirement consists of several different state initiatives, each with different objectives and different resource types that qualify. Currently, the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Requirement equals the sum of the Clean Energy Standard (inclusive of RPS Class I), the Clean Energy Standard for existing resources (CES-E), and RPS Class II. A detailed breakdown of the different categories and the minimum requirements of each category can be found at [colonialpowergroup.com/massachusetts-renewable-energy-requirement](http://colonialpowergroup.com/massachusetts-renewable-energy-requirement).

## **21. HOW LONG DOES THE COMMUNITY CHOICE POWER SUPPLY PROGRAM LAST?**

The Community Choice Power Supply Program is in effect until the local government terminates the Program. Throughout the life of the Program, each subsequent contract will vary by rate, term and possibly supplier. You will be automatically enrolled in the next contract at the new rate unless you opt-out. The new rate may be higher or lower than the current rate and the voluntary renewable energy content may change. The latest rates, terms and contracted supplier can be found at [colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield](http://colonialpowergroup.com/ashfield) or by calling Colonial Power Group at (866) 485-5858 ext. 1.

## **22. SHOULD I EXPECT GUARANTEED SAVINGS?**

Basic Service rates change every six months for Residential, Small Commercial & Industrial and Streetlight accounts and every three months for Medium and Large Commercial & Industrial accounts. As a result, the aggregation rate may not always be lower than the Basic Service rate. The goal of the aggregation is to deliver savings over the life of the Community Choice Power Supply Program against Eversource Basic Service. However, future savings cannot be guaranteed.