

Plaistow Community Power FAQ

What is Community Power?

Community Power is a program in New Hampshire where a municipality procures electricity on behalf residents and small businesses with the goal of cost savings and increased use of renewable energy, as enabled by NH RSA 53-E.

The purpose of community power is to enable cities and towns to deliver the benefits of the competitive electric market to their residents and businesses. The law empowers the municipality to create a buying group of the electricity customers within its boundaries that are eligible (not yet using competitive supply). Using that buying power, the municipality then sets the terms and conditions for an electricity supply contract and solicits competitive bids.

What are the program benefits?

Programs across the region and country have demonstrated positive results over years of operation. Savings can't be guaranteed, but demonstrated savings create a foundation for lower bills and increasing our renewable supply while offering individual customers exactly the choices they need and want for maximum cost savings and renewable energy up to 100%.

More program benefits include:

- No cost to town budget
- Stable rates
- Reduction of energy costs
- Consumer protections
- Energy efficiency programs
- Local energy planning
- Increasing resiliency

How does this affect my electric bill and service?

This program only affects the supply cost line on electric bills. The utility will continue to own and manage their distribution poles and wires, emergency services, and billing. All other services and costs will remain the same.

The utilities support supply options for customers, including community power, due to utility companies in New Hampshire no longer owning generation assets. They purchase supply contracts to serve default service customers, which are a pass-through cost for the utilities.

What is the effect on the Town budget?

There is no cost to the Town budget for a Community Power program.

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

The utility default rate changes twice per year, but the municipality is not bound by this rigid schedule. Market timing, buying power, contract length, and other strategies, like group net metering, are used to lower rates.

Does Community Power offer choices?

Yes. Different plans offer a product option for every resident and business. The plan may include any, or all, of the following or similar:

- **Standard Program Default:** As the new municipality default rate, eligible customers will automatically be enrolled in this product. This will include 5-10% more renewable energy purchased through NH Class I Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). The program default is cost competitive with the utility default.
- **Basic:** Meets the state standard for New Hampshire renewable energy content (as of 2023, 23.4% RECs). This will be the lowest cost option of the program.
- **50% Renewable:** Matches 50% of energy use with Class I RECs
- **100% Renewable:** Matches 100% of energy use with Class I RECs

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

No. 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, those currently on default service, 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 but can opt in to participate.

How can I learn more about the program?

More information can be found at community power website

