

Austintown Electric Aggregation Program - Frequently Asked Questions (Updated February 2010)

What is aggregation?

Under governmental aggregation, local officials bring citizens together to gain group buying power for the purchase of competitively priced electricity from a retail electric generation supplier certified by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

How is the Township able to choose a certified electric generation supplier on my behalf?

In November 2009, Austintown's residents voted to allow the Township to contract for an electric generation supplier on their behalf.

Who will be our supplier for the electric program?

FirstEnergy Solutions, a PUCO certified electric marketer from Akron, Ohio. They have served a number of electric aggregation programs across Ohio over the past eight years.

Whom do I call if I have a problem with my electric service?

The local utility, Ohio Edison will continue to deliver your electricity, read your meters, and issue your monthly bills. You will continue to call Ohio Edison at 800-633-4766 for emergency repairs, downed power lines, billing questions, etc.

How will I know if I can save money in this Program?

One of the great features about our electric program is that we've been able to obtain an offer that provides guaranteed savings. The offer negotiated for Austintown residents and commercial accounts provides for discounts on what you would otherwise pay Ohio Edison for the competitive portion of your electric supply charges. The percent discount is shown below.

	Residential Accounts	Commercial Accounts <= 400 kWd
2010 – March 2013	Minimum of 6% discount	Minimum of 3% discount

The savings won't make you rich or change your lifestyle, but every dollar saved helps. We estimate the average resident will save approximately \$150 in the 36-month program and the average commercial account will save several hundred dollars. When you add it all up, it could keep approximately \$2.7 million of disposable income in the Township.

Is our price for power fixed, or does it vary?

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

What if I'm with another supplier and would like to join the Township's program?

Chances are you are not with another marketer. The electric markets have been dormant for shoppers in the Ohio Edison service territory for several years. That's why we pursued an electric aggregation program. Without it, our residents are likely to have no choice of supplier.

What does "opt out" mean?

"Opt out" means that you can decide not to participate in the Township's electric governmental

aggregation program. By returning the opt-out form, which was included in the mailing, you will not be enrolled in the Township's program and you will not receive the discount.

What happens if I do not send in the opt-out form?

If you do not return the opt-out form postmarked by the required date, you will be included in the Township's governmental aggregation program.

What are my energy supply choices if I decide to opt out?

You can stay with your current electric utility, which will continue to supply your electricity as it always has. Or, you can shop for a new competitive electric supplier. A list of competitive electric suppliers certified by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and their current prices is available by calling 1-800-686-PUCO (1-800-686-7826).

Will I get two bills?

No. You will continue to receive one bill from Ohio Edison that shows their distribution charges and the supply charge of FirstEnergy Solutions.

Will I still receive a delivery charge from my local utility – Ohio Edison?

Yes. Even though you have chosen a new supplier of electricity, Ohio Edison continues to deliver the electricity to our homes and businesses. Distribution charges and a flat monthly customer charge (currently \$4/month) apply whether you choose a supplier on your own or remain supplied by Ohio Edison.

Can I stay on budget billing/equal payment plan or have my payment automatically deducted from my checking account as I do now?

Yes, Ohio Edison will continue to offer those programs. However, budget billing applies only to the delivery charges from Ohio Edison. The budget billing program does not apply to your charges from FirstEnergy Solutions. FirstEnergy Solutions is a different company from Ohio Edison and they have no control over Ohio Edison's budget billing policy. On your monthly Ohio Edison statement, you'll see the actual charges from FirstEnergy Solutions for generation and transmission.

Can I exit this program without penalty?

You will be given an initial 21-day period to opt-out free of charge and then another 7-day period as soon as FirstEnergy Solutions enrolls you as their customer. Then, by law, you will be given a chance to opt-out free of charge at least once every 3 years. If you opt-out at any other time, FirstEnergy Solutions reserves the right to assess you a nominal fee to cover their loss. That fee cannot exceed \$25 for residential accounts or \$50 for commercial accounts.

What if I move?

There is no penalty from FirstEnergy Solutions for terminating your agreement if you move.

Who is eligible for the program?

1. Your local utility company must be Ohio Edison;
2. You must be a resident or business owner located within the Township limits;
3. You must not be a PIPP (percentage of income payment program) customer;
4. You must not be in arrears on your bill payment; and
5. You must not be a mercantile customer (electric commercial accounts using over 700,000 kWh/year)

6. You must not be a commercial customer with a peak demand > 400kW
7. You must not be listed on the state's "Do Not Aggregate" list

How will I sign up for the program?

There is no signup required. Residents, however, will have 21 days to opt-out of the program if they decide not to participate. An opt-out mailer will arrive in early February from FirstEnergy Solutions. It will explain the rates, terms and conditions and means for opting-out. If you would like to remain in the program, simply do nothing and you will be enrolled.

How did the Township develop such a program?

The Township used the services of Independent Energy Consultants, Inc. a PUCO certified broker and aggregator of natural gas and electricity - without using any taxpayer money. They have designed, implemented, and administered over 50 successful aggregation programs across Ohio. We researched the process thoroughly and are pleased with the offer they negotiated. Independent Energy Consultants' efforts were instrumental in obtaining this offer for Austintown. The offer from FirstEnergy Solutions has been made available to a select group of communities here in northern Ohio.

Does the Township benefit from the program?

Yes. The Township owned accounts are eligible to receive the discounted rate and the offer brokered by Independent Energy Consultants included a \$457,767 civic grant from FirstEnergy Solutions to our general fund.

Will small businesses, schools and churches be eligible?

Small commercial accounts using less than 700,000 kWh/year and with a peak demand < 400 kW are eligible. Interested accounts using more than this amount, will need to call FirstEnergy Solutions to obtain this rate.

Does this affect my distribution charges or the wires coming to my home?

No. Customer Choice programs in Ohio provide residents the ability to choose an electric *supplier* other than the local utility company. Maintenance of the wires coming to a resident's home continues to be the responsibility of the homeowner.

Can I opt out over the phone?

No, you must mail in your completed form and it must be postmarked by the deadline.

What is the toll-free number for questions?

For answers to your questions, please call FirstEnergy Solutions at 1-866-636-3749, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Is this related to our community's natural gas program?

The programs are similar but totally independent.

Where can I learn more about electric deregulation and assistance programs?

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio has approved a number of additional assistance programs to help customers with their energy bills. You may be eligible to participate in other programs and this offer from FirstEnergy Solutions. Eligibility and enrollment information can be found on the PUCO's website at www.puco.ohio.gov.