*ALERT to LIHEAP Participants*

Even though you can choose which company supplies your natural gas and electricity, in order to make a well-informed decision, you should compare all offers from alternative suppliers to your utility’s price to make sure that you are paying the lowest rate.

- Illinois law allows consumers to choose whether to buy their natural gas and electricity supply from their utility or an alternative supplier.
- You do not need to enroll with an alternative supplier to receive your LIHEAP benefits.
- No one helping you with your LIHEAP benefits should try to enroll you with an alternative supplier.
- Do not sign up with an alternative supplier until you compare their offer to the price charged by your utility.
- *Compared to utilities, alternative suppliers can charge higher prices and more fees.*

**Know Your Options**

- **Check your utility bill to determine the source of your supply.**
  - Are you purchasing natural gas or electricity supply from your utility company or an alternative supplier?

- **Find out how much you are paying by locating your supply rate on your utility bill.**
  - How much is the rate for supply?
  - What type of rate is it? (A fixed rate charges one price during a certain period of time. A variable rate charges a different rate each month based on market conditions.)
  - Is it a temporary introductory rate? If so, how long will it last?
  - Is there a monthly fee or other additional charge?

- **Compare your rate.** You can compare utility and alternative supplier prices online.
  - Electricity prices: http://www.pluginillinois.org/offersbegin.aspx

- **Decide if you should switch.** If the utility is cheaper, consider switching back to the utility company. You may be charged a fee of up to a maximum of $50 for cancelling with the alternative supplier, but it may save you money in the long run.

- **Be careful when shopping around.** If you are considering switching, do not share your account information unless you are ready to enroll. Take a couple of days to consider every offer.

  **To learn more information or file a complaint, please contact:**

  **The Illinois Attorney General’s Office**  
  1-800-386-5438

  **The Illinois Commerce Commission**  
  http://www.icc.illinois.gov/consumer/complaint/  
  1-800-524-0795

For more information about alternative suppliers, visit IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov/consumers/public_utilities.html.
Frequently Asked Questions

What do alternative suppliers do?
Traditionally, utilities purchased natural gas and electricity on behalf of their customers and also delivered it to their homes. Today, alternative suppliers can purchase energy on behalf of their customers and have the utilities deliver it. In other words, utilities always deliver energy to consumers’ homes, but consumers can choose whether the utility or an alternative supplier provides the energy that they purchase.

Do I have to switch to an alternative supplier?
No. The choice is yours. You do not have to do anything to continue purchasing supply from your utility.

Why would I switch to an alternative supplier?
Alternative suppliers may offer programs such as renewable energy or unique pricing plans that are not available from the utility. However, there is no guarantee that you will save money by switching to an alternative supplier. Carefully review all the terms of any offer and compare them to utility prices before switching. To find out how much utilities and alternative suppliers are charging, you can visit:

- Natural Gas Prices
  - www.icc.illinois.gov/ags/products.aspx
- Electricity Prices

Some towns may use municipal aggregation, which means that your local government has negotiated one rate for all residents. You can still opt out of municipal aggregation and choose the utility or another alternative supplier instead.

Will switching cost me more money?
Some alternative suppliers cost more than the utility and some cost less. Utilities charge consumers the same price that the utility paid for the supply—they cannot charge more. Alternative suppliers are allowed to charge higher prices and additional fees.

What types of plans are available?
You will be charged for supply based on how much you use. Electricity is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh) and natural gas is measured in therms. You may have options for pricing plans:

- A fixed price plan charges a flat rate during a certain period of time.
- A variable price plan charges a different rate each month based on market conditions.
- An introductory price charges one special rate for a certain period of time and then typically increases.

It’s important to note:
- If you are considering a variable price plan, remember that the rate may go up or down.
- If you are considering a fixed price plan, remember that your rate is locked even if the market price goes up or down.

When comparing rates, remember to factor in any additional monthly fees charged by a supplier.

What happens after I switch?
If you switch suppliers, the utility will continue to deliver energy to your home and handle billing and maintenance issues. You will still receive a bill from your utility for the cost of delivery. That bill may also contain charges from the alternative supplier for supply, or the supplier may send you a separate bill.

What if I sign up with an alternative supplier but change my mind?
Illinois law gives consumers 10 days to cancel a contract with an alternative supplier. There is no termination fee for cancelling before this date. After 10 days, you may be charged a termination fee up to a maximum of $50.

Where can I find more information about the options available to me?
For current rates available to customers of the natural gas utilities and various alternative natural gas suppliers, visit http://www.icc.illinois.gov/ags/consumereducation.aspx.

For current rates available to customers of the electricity utilities and various alternative electricity suppliers, visit http://www.pluginillinois.org/offersbegin.aspx.

Where can I report problems with an alternative supplier?
You can file a complaint with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office online at www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov or by phone at 1-800-386-5438, or with the Illinois Commerce Commission online at www.icc.illinois.gov/consumer/complaint/ or by phone at 1-800-524-0795.