



Frequently Asked Questions about Westchester Power

Q: What is the Westchester Power Community Energy Program?

A: Westchester Power enables participating Westchester communities to join together and purchase 100% renewable electricity supply in bulk. Aggregating consumers on a large scale creates the buying power necessary to dictate the terms of our clean energy purchasing. Westchester Power has secured fixed electric supply rates for 27 Westchester municipalities, representing about 115,000 households and small businesses. Since 2016, the aggregate power of the program has reduced CO₂ emissions County-wide equivalent to taking 142,600 cars off the road for one year – it's because of your participation that we are able to make this impact!

Q: How does Westchester Power help to build healthy and resilient communities?

A: Westchester Power is the single greatest contributor to lowering CO₂ emissions in individual communities helping them achieve their climate goals and mitigate the environmental effects associated with climate change. The strength and success of this program is the foundation on which other programs have been built. As examples, Community Solar and clean heating and cooling solutions have been able to build positively on the impact and reduce the use of fossil fuels. These initiatives accelerate the transition to a clean energy future in your community and the County, where it matters most.

Q: How is this different from an energy service company (ESCO)?

A: Westchester Power is a non-profit program (not a commercial endeavor) that has been vetted and sanctioned by your local elected officials and is part of a portfolio of community energy solutions. For more comparative information about Westchester Power vs. ESCOs, go to <https://sustainablewestchester.org/wp>

Q: Who administers Westchester Power?

A: Westchester Power is a program of Sustainable Westchester and in partnership with participating Westchester County municipalities. Sustainable Westchester is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) consortium of Westchester County local governments. Sustainable Westchester has been authorized by the New York State Public Service Commission as the first Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program in New York State and acts as the manager, coordinator, and administrator of the program.

Q: Does Westchester Power replace my utility?

A: No, your existing utility (Con Edison) will continue to deliver your power, maintain lines, and respond to service outages. They are required by law to provide the same customer service to all residents regardless of enrollment in this program. You will still receive only one bill from Con Edison, but you will see separate lines for the electricity **supply** (via Westchester Power's supplier, Constellation New Energy) and electricity **delivery** (via Con Edison). Want to learn more? Our "How to read your Con Edison bill video" is a helpful guide: <https://sustainablewestchester.org/wp/education-and-resources/#bills>

Q: How does Westchester Power procure power?

A: Westchester Power administered a competitive bidding process, soliciting responses from all registered New York suppliers. Constellation New Energy is the supplier for the current contract, beginning January 1, 2021.

Q: How can I be sure Westchester Power will provide energy consistently?

A: Electricity is a highly regulated industry and there are many safeguards against service interruption from supplier error. There is a "grid operator" (called the NYISO) that monitors the grid at the high-voltage level to ensure the proper power is flowing at all times. In addition, the utility remains the "provider of last resort," which means they are obligated to serve any customers whose supplier has failed to buy the requisite power for those customers.

Q: Will I save money by participating in Westchester Power?

A: The program's fixed rates provide rate protection and insurance against utility rate spikes as well as higher energy rates from Con Edison, which may result from the volatility and unpredictable nature of energy trading prices. However, **savings cannot be guaranteed**, and can only be assessed over the entire period of individual participation, not on a short-term basis. In any given month, Con Edison rates can be higher or lower than our fixed rate.

Q: How does the enrollment process work?

A: Residential and small commercial (those not charged for their peak demand) customers that currently receive electric supply from the utility are automatically enrolled as a default from the municipal participation. Residents or small businesses that are presently under contract with a third party electricity supply company (ESCO) are not enrolled. If you are already signed up with an ESCO, but want to switch to Westchester Power, look at the terms of your existing contract to see when it expires and what (if any) penalties apply for early termination. **If you choose to terminate your contract with the ESCO, you can then "Opt In" to join the Westchester Power program.**

Q: What happens if I do not want to participate?

A: **It is absolutely your choice.** You can opt out at any time by filling out the form enclosed, going online to sustainablewestchester.org/wp or by calling Westchester Power directly at 914-242-4725. They will ask you for the same information seen on that form.

Q: Why am I automatically enrolled if I do not opt out?

The Public Service Commission rules establish "community choice aggregation" programs, such as Westchester Power, as the default supply for participating municipalities, replacing utility supply (Con Edison). Previously, if you took no action, you would end up with variable rate utility supply. The starting point is the community-selected supply option (as detailed in the letter), but you can switch supply options, switch back to utility supply, or to a private ESCO at any time without any fees or cancellation charges.

Q: Is there a fee for opting out of Westchester Power?

A: No, there is never a fee or penalty for opting out.

Q: If I opt out after the contract has taken effect, how will that affect my service?

A: Service will not be interrupted whatsoever. Note that the switch back to utility supply may take one to two billing periods depending on your billing cycle.

Q: Does Westchester Power supply "green" power?

A: Yes. In fact, 25 of the 27 participating municipalities have set 100% renewable power supply product as the default option helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change. The 100% renewable power supply product consists of delivered power matched with NY State hydropower Renewable Energy Certificates ("RECs"). Your municipality chose either standard power or green power as the default supply, but you can freely choose to switch supply options at any time. (Refer to details on the enclosed letter).

Q: How can I learn more or have my specific questions answered?

Sustainable Westchester is a part of the community, and we stand behind our commitment to the program and its long-term benefits. If you have questions or want further information, please give us a call; we will happily spend as much time as you need.

For additional information,
email WestchesterPower@SustainableWestchester.org or call (914) 242-4725.

