



SOPEC

Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council
www.sopec-oh.gov



Q: What is Community Choice Aggregation?

A: According to the [Office of the Ohio Consumer's Counsel](#), "Local governments can use the buying power of many customers in their communities to purchase electricity or natural gas on their behalf through aggregation. While savings (from the utility's standard offer) are not always guaranteed, many communities are able to obtain discounted prices from energy marketers to offer to customers in the community."

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs, like the SOPEC Electric Aggregation Program, bundle all eligible residential and small commercial electric utility accounts in a community together to receive a competitive supply rate from an Ohio-registered Competitive Retail Electric Service (CRES) provider. With CCA, the local utility remains the electric utility managing billing customers for electricity service, maintaining electric poles and lines, and responding to power outages.

Sometimes the local government itself will run a CCA, or sometimes a third party (e.g., SOPEC) will manage the program. Starting and running a CCA is quite a lot of work, so not all local governments will want to handle the task themselves. Section 4928.20 of the Ohio Revised Code authorizes communities to purchase power jointly. As an electricity aggregator, SOPEC has combined the purchasing power of our member communities to provide eligible residents and small businesses in your community with competitive electricity supply rates that meet the goals of the opt-out SOPEC Electric Aggregation Program.

Q: What is the difference between Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), Government Aggregation, Community Energy Aggregation (CEA), and Energy Aggregation?

A: They all refer to the same type of programming.

Q: Why should my council recommend SOPEC's government aggregation to its residents?

A: As a governmental aggregator, we use our expertise in energy markets to:

1. Review energy pricing;
2. Evaluate supply options;
3. Negotiate supply contracts;
4. Ensure technically safe and reliable energy purchases are made for the group; and
5. Take the burden off your municipality.

This gives eligible residents and small businesses:

1. Bargaining power;
2. Cost reduction;
3. Savings; and
4. Peace of mind that the research has been undertaken.

Q: Who is eligible for CCA?

1. Residents; and
2. Small businesses.

Q: Who is not eligible for CCA?

A: Opt-out electric aggregation *excludes* the following categories of customers

1. Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) customers;
2. Anyone who has shopped for power (without rejoining program);
3. Large industrial customers; and
4. Anyone who opts-out during the program.

Q: Are municipal accounts eligible for CCA?

A: They can be if of an eligible size. However, these accounts are typically better served through the SOPEC [Public Pricing Program](#). See below- **Q: Does SOPEC have an "opt-in" aggregation program?**

Q: Can my city/village/political subdivision join SOPEC before the aggregation ordinance is passed?

A: Yes. Whether or not to join SOPEC is a decision for each community's council/commission. It may make sense for a community to do this because SOPEC provides energy and sustainability advice and the ability to join our Solar Request For Proposal (RFP).

Q: How does my village or city set up a CCA?

A: In order for communities to offer a government aggregation program, they must first obtain voters' approval in a local election. If the voters approve the opt-out aggregation ballot language, the local government must approve a plan of operation and governance, hold at least two public hearings, and notify their residents of the plan of operation and governance, including details such as rates and other terms and conditions for the energy offer. The notice must include the option for consumers to opt-out of the energy aggregation offer.

Q: Does SOPEC help us do this?

A: SOPEC will lead you through each step. Our in-house counsel prepares the ordinances for the local election (there is NO cost to place this on the ballot). We will help you educate your residents about governmental aggregation through presentations, events, yard signs, and mailers.

SOPEC already has an existing Plan of Operation and Governance. A community/political subdivision joins SOPEC by adopting SOPEC's Bylaws and Agreement Establishing SOPEC.

SOPEC and AEP Energy handle all the opt-out notices.

Q: Is this going to cost the village/city money?

A: No surprises. Nothing extra. Just what is agreed upon in the program design.

Q: What is the difference between an "opt-in" and "opt-out" program?

There are two types of energy aggregation programs that may be available to consumers: "opt-in" aggregation and "opt-out" aggregation. SOPEC's CCA program is opt-out.

In an "opt-out" plan, consumers are automatically enrolled in the aggregation plan unless they affirmatively choose not to participate.

In an "opt-in" plan, customers may voluntarily sign up to participate if a government body or other type of organization chooses to aggregate. Participation rates are typically much less in an opt-in program.

Q: After we join, then what?

A: You have a seat at SOPEC's General Assembly that we hold throughout the year.

We have lawyers and sustainability experts at your disposal if you have any energy questions.

Your residents and small businesses have their own dedicated customer care line at AEP Energy.
1-877-648-1937

You also have a dedicated Community Liaison who will visit your council, give you updates, and is here for ANY energy questions, concerns, or projects you need help with.

We want to expand your bandwidth by taking some of the administrative burdens and adding value where ever possible.

Q: Does SOPEC have an "opt-in" aggregation program?

A: We do. It is called our Public Pricing Program(P3). We formed it to serve public accounts that cannot participate in the CCA program. These accounts are a different rate class because they are not a resident, small business, or use more than 700,000 kWh/year. This different rate class usually ends up 10-15% cheaper than our opt-out program. Examples are universities, water and sewer plants, churches, and non-profits within a SOPEC member community.

Q: What is different about SOPEC from private brokers?

A: We were formed in 2014 as an *alternative* to private brokers. We are a *nonprofit*, therefore we do not have investors to pay. Well, we do- it is you and your community!

A Community Grant is part of our program based on the number of meters your community has and you may use that money in your community. These monies never expire, so you may let them build year over year for a big project if desired.

SOPEC also budgets a Regional Grant each year to help with larger sustainability goals that affect more than one member community.

Q: What is renewable energy?

A: "Renewable energy is energy produced from sources like the sun and wind that are naturally replenished and do not run out. Renewable energy can be used for electricity generation, space and water heating and cooling, and transportation.

Non-renewable energy, in contrast, comes from finite sources that could get used up, such as fossil fuels like coal and oil." <https://www.energy.gov/eere/renewable-energy>.

Q: What is the catch? This seems too good to be true!

A: We have heard that a lot. We intend on building a relationship with your community and earning your trust!

Unfortunately, there have been some private brokers out in your communities promising a low rate, and then after an introductory period of time, residents incur huge rate hikes.

Our rates are locked in so they will not change. In a volatile energy market that is peace of mind.

We are a government entity, therefore we must be transparent through public records and Sunshine Laws. We are audited every two years.

We are local too. You will see us and hear us. We will know your name and you will know our face.

Q: Who will my bill come from?

A: Your bill still comes from AEP Ohio. The transmission lines are the same. Your generation will come from AEP Energy/SOPEC.