

Natural Gas Governmental Aggregation Programs Frequently Asked Questions

(North Canton - September 2011 Update)

What is Governmental Natural Gas Aggregation?

Simply put, it's the entire community joining together to form one large buying group. By voting to allow an aggregation, residents allow their community to shop for natural gas on their behalf.

What are the benefits of Gas Aggregation?

When residents form one large buying group they have more buying power. The aggregation is in a better position to negotiate favorable pricing and supply terms than what could ordinarily be achieved by any one individual resident.

How does a community become an Aggregator?

The community must first get the approval of voters within the community to form a natural gas aggregation program. Upon a majority vote, community leaders will proceed through a series of steps to become certified as a Governmental Natural Gas Aggregator by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

Are there different types of Aggregations?

Yes. A community may conduct an "Opt-Out" program or an "Opt-In" program. With Opt-Out programs, each eligible resident is automatically enrolled in the program unless they notify the supplier that they DO NOT wish to participate. With Opt-In programs, each resident must notify the supplier to actively enroll in the program. Opt-Out Aggregations are the most common types of aggregation programs.

How do Opt-Out Aggregations work?

With the assistance of a PUCO certified consultant, a community seeks bids from Certified Retail Natural Gas Service Providers. A qualified bidder is selected to supply the aggregation with its gas for a set period of time. An "Opt-out" notice is sent to each eligible community resident prior to the start of the aggregation. Each resident has 21 days from the postmarked date on the notice to contact the supplier to withdraw or "Opt-Out" of the program. After the 21-day period, any resident not opting out will be submitted to the utility company for enrollment in the program. The utility company will send notice of the pending enrollment to each participating resident. Each resident will then have 7 days to rescind their enrollment in the program by contacting the utility company. After the 7-day rescission period, all participating customers are officially enrolled in the program. The new supplier will appear on your natural gas bill within one to two billing cycles after enrollment is verified by the utility.

What is my price for gas?

A low fixed rate of \$5.58/Mcf will take effect for December 2011 through November 2012. This rate compares very favorably to offers residents can find on their own and unlike many offers, our program has no penalty if you decide to leave early.

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

Dominion East Ohio (DEO) will continue to deliver your natural gas and maintain the pipeline system that brings it to your home or business. You will continue to call DEO 1-877-542-2630 for emergency repairs or gas leaks. For non-emergencies such as billing questions, service turn on or turn off, call 1-800-362-7557.

Who is the natural gas supplier for the City's program?

IGS Energy with headquarters in Dublin, Ohio was selected to serve our community's program for a 2 year program that began December 2010. IGS Energy won a competitive bid process and was chosen as our program's supplier through the November 2012 bill cycle. IGS Energy is certified by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, and currently supplies customers and governmental aggregation programs across Ohio.

Will it cost me to join the program?

No. Enrollment in the program is free and you need not take any action. You only need to be eligible to participate. Eligible account holders should expect to see an “opt-out” notice from IGS Energy in mid-October 2011 inviting you to join. The notice will explain the rates, term and conditions and process for opting out if you wish not to participate. Please refer to the eligibility criteria shown below.

Is everyone eligible for the program?

No, by law there are certain limitations on eligibility. All of the current participants in our community’s program will receive a notice of the new program rates, terms and conditions and continue to be eligible. Newly eligible residents or businesses must be located within the community limits. Furthermore, they must have received an opt-out notice from IGS Energy. Here are the criteria for new member eligibility:

1. Your local utility company must be Dominion East Ohio;
2. You must not have chosen a supplier on your own;
3. You must be a resident or business owner located within the community limits;
4. You must not be a PIPP (percentage of income payment program) customer;
5. You must not be in arrears on your bill payment; and
6. You must not be a mercantile customer (natural gas commercial accounts using over 500 Mcf/year).

When does the next program start?

Customer switching takes place when meters are read. Therefore, your start date will depend on when DEO reads your meter. Your service from IGS Energy is expected to begin with gas flowing in December 2011.

How long is the program?

The community’s governmental aggregation program can go on indefinitely. This offer from IGS Energy is for one year and will end with your November 2012 billing period.

What if I don’t want to participate?

While most residents will remain in, and benefit from governmental aggregation programs, the choice is up to you. If you do not want to participate you will have 21 days in which to return a reply card to IGS Energy or call them toll free at 1-800-280-4474. If you fail to do that, IGS Energy will enroll you as a new customer. DEO will then acknowledge the enrollment and send you a confirmation letter reminding you of the pending switch. That letter will mention that you can cancel the switch by contacting DEO within 7 days.

Will I get two bills?

No. For your convenience, you will continue to receive only one bill from DEO. It will show DEO’s delivery charges and the supply charge amount owed IGS Energy. DEO continues to read your meter, issue monthly bills and responds to all service calls.

Can I remain on budget billing?

Yes. If you are on budget billing you will remain on budget billing. (Note: DEO calculates your monthly budget amount each month by summing your total delivered gas cost on a rolling 12-month basis and dividing that total by average monthly usage in the same 12-month period.)

Can I exit this program without penalty?

Yes. A very attractive feature of our program is your ability to leave free of charge at any time for any reason. There are several “formal” opportunities to take yourself out of the program. First, when an offer is presented you will have 21-days to opt-out by returning a card to IGS Energy or making a toll-free phone call. If you do not opt-out DEO will then send a confirmation notice giving you 7 more days to cancel the switch. Furthermore, by law, you will be able to leave without penalty at least every two years. If you would like to choose another supplier or return to the utility company supply, notify IGS Energy at 1-800-280-4474. If you leave the program it may take one to two utility billing cycles before the switch appears on your utility bill.

My friend lives in a nearby community and has a different rate from IGS than mine. Why?

Natural gas prices are highly volatile. Market rates change often and quickly. Price differences between communities will vary based primarily on the contract term and the dates on which pricing was secured for the community.

Can I enroll if I do not receive an Opt-Out notice?

Yes. During the initial enrollment, any eligible resident that does not receive an Opt-Out notice may contact IGS directly at 1-800-280-4474 to enroll in the program. You may also go to www.igsenergy.com and enter promo code: AGA27.

Can I enroll after the initial enrollment period?

IGS Energy will always try to accommodate residents should they wish to enroll after the initial enrollment period. However, IGS reserves the right to decline late enrollments depending on market conditions.

Can I enroll even if I currently purchase my gas from another supplier?

Yes, however your supplier may charge an early termination fee. All residents should check the terms and conditions of their current contract for more information.

What happens if I'm part of the program and I move?

A resident moving within the same community can stay in the aggregation by providing IGS with their new address. If a resident moves out of the community or does not provide IGS their new address, their participation will end and no early termination fee will apply.

This sounds complex is our community qualified to handle such a program?

We have retained Independent Energy Consultants, Inc., a PUCO certified broker and aggregator of natural gas, without using any taxpayer money. They have designed, implemented, and administered similar successful gas and electric programs that impact over 100 communities across Ohio. We will have their assistance and that of IGS Energy throughout the program.

How do I contact IGS Energy?

IGS' customer service department is open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm EST Monday through Friday. You may call them toll free at 1-800-280-4474 or visit their website at: www.igsenergy.com.

These FAQs help but I still have a question?

If you have additional questions please call IGS Energy at 1-800-280-4474, weekdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST. For general information on natural gas deregulation in Ohio, you can also visit the Web Sites of the Ohio Consumer's Counsel (www.pickocc.org), or the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (www.PUCO.ohio.gov). **Please do not contact our offices. We are pleased to have made this program possible, but are not prepared to handle calls.**