



WESTERN COMMUNITY ENERGY
YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD POWER AUTHORITY

Frequently Asked Questions for the Community

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The Western Riverside Council of Governments is working with local governments to develop a Program, Western Community Energy (WCE), which will provide the community a choice in the energy supply it receives, enable local control over rate setting, and offer rates competitive to Southern California Edison.

WESTERN COMMUNITY ENERGY HAS ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

In 2016, WRCOG completed a Feasibility Study to identify the potential benefits of implementing a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program. Using conservative numbers and assumptions, the Feasibility Study indicates a CCA will reduce costs, yield positive environmental impacts, and increase local control.

The Program will give residents and business owners control over their rates, power supply and generation options. A CCA will also offer local investment opportunities, compounding the economic benefits of the Program throughout the community and economy as a whole.

WCE is anticipated to launch in late 2018 with five or six jurisdictions, representing over 160,000 residential and commercial accounts. The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG), an association of local elected officials, will govern WCE until it establishes its own Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and Governing Board. WCE could be operating as soon as 2018.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Provide local control over programs, rates, power supply/generation options.
2. Provide consumers a choice in energy supply.
3. Offer competitive utility rates.
4. Provide economic development through implementation of renewable energy projects.



What is a “Community Choice Aggregation” Program?

ANSWER

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) enables local governments (alone or with others through a Joint Powers Agreement) to buy electricity and offer it to customers in their communities. The electricity will still be distributed and delivered over the existing Southern California Edison (SCE) electricity lines. Essentially, a CCA provides consumers with choices in their energy sources instead of being locked into the choices and rates set by SCE.

Are there any CCAs in California?

ANSWER

Yes. There are eight CCA programs up and running in California: Marin Clean Energy, Sonoma Clean Power, Lancaster Choice Energy, CleanPowerSF, Peninsula Clean Energy, Redwood Coast Energy Authority, Silicon Valley Clean Energy, and Apple Valley Choice Energy.

Are existing CCAs successful?

ANSWER

Yes. These CCAs are offering their customers 20-30% more renewable energy than the incumbent utility at prices that are competitive and in most cases lower than the utility rates. Marin and Sonoma are also procuring and co-developing in-state and local renewable resources and offering specialized energy programs designed for its local service areas.

What is Western Community Energy?

ANSWER

Western Community Energy (WCE) will be the CCA Program option for local governments that desire to provide different energy choices for residents and businesses located in their communities.

What are the benefits of WCE?

ANSWER

1. Consumers (residents and businesses) can choose what type of energy resources are serving the community.
2. Local elected officials will be in charge of energy resources, rate-setting, and administration, which provides local accountability and transparency.
3. Energy can be provided at lower and/or competitive rates through negotiation of energy prices below those offered by SCE.
4. Communities can spur economic development by investing in the development of local renewable energy production.

What are the projected savings?

ANSWER

Using conservative assumptions, the Feasibility Study shows a CCA will reduce costs, yield positive environmental impacts, and increase local control.

Estimated Combined Customer Savings for WCE (1st full year):

- 4.4% savings with a 33% renewable mix
- 3% savings with a 50% renewable mix
- 4.2% higher with a 100% renewable mix

What will WCE do?

ANSWER

WCE will be responsible for:

- Procuring and providing the generation portion of customer electricity needs. Ensuring that the generation power is delivered to the necessary grid location required to service the customers.
- Meeting the Resource Adequacy and Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) State requirements.
- Responding to customer inquiries regarding energy supply, management, and oversight.

You say that WCE can provide energy at lower cost, but how can I know for sure?

ANSWER

The CCA Feasibility Study prepared for Western Riverside County concluded that a CCA could offer cost savings as compared to SCE. While there is no guarantee, other CCAs operating in California are experiencing savings compared to their respective investor owned utilities (IOUs). Each year WCE will work with SCE to compare the energy costs offered by both energy providers. This information will be distributed to all WCE customers. If a WCE customer desires to switch back to SCE, they can do so at any time.

How will the rates be set?

ANSWER

Energy rates will be set regularly, based on the projected cost of energy. Unlike SCE rates, which are set by the CPUC, WCE's energy rates will be set by local elected officials representing the participating communities. The public will be encouraged to attend and participate at rate setting meetings to ensure a more transparent process.

What if I don't want to have my energy provided by WCE and just want to stay with SCE?

ANSWER

You can. California law requires that customers receive several notifications to opt-out at no charge, both before and just after a CCA Program launches. All customers have the ability to choose which electricity provider is best for them. California law states that CCAs are "Opt-out" Programs, meaning once a local government takes action, all the residents and businesses will be automatically enrolled in the CCA.

Are customers able to switch back and forth from WCE to SCE if they wish?

ANSWER

Yes. Once a CCA becomes active, all customers automatically will receive energy purchased by the CCA. However, customers may go back to SCE-sourced energy at any time, but might have to pay a fee to SCE and be required to stay with SCE service for one year.

If my power goes out, who do I call?

ANSWER

You would continue to contact SCE in the event of a power-outage.



If I have questions regarding my bill, who do I call?

ANSWER

You would contact WCE.

Will my taxes increase?

ANSWER

No. WCE does not have the ability to tax and there are no impacts on taxes. WCE will be funded entirely by revenue from the ratepayers, requiring zero tax dollars from customers or participating communities.

Will SCE stay involved in our area served by WCE?

ANSWER

Yes. SCE will continue to:

- Own and operate the distribution lines.
- Be responsible for the reliable and safe delivery of electricity to the customer.
- Provide metering services.
- Conduct meter reading and usage data acquisition.
- Handle billing and payment services.
- Provide customer care and account maintenance.

Isn't renewable power more expensive than non-renewable electricity? Wouldn't a CCAs rates be higher?

ANSWER

In today's markets, that is not the case. To date, CCAs in California have been able to offer 25-30% cleaner energy at lower costs to customers compared to higher carbon-based energy sources.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Contact Western Community Energy at 866.356.4175 or www.westerncommunityenergy.com for additional information