

County of Woodford Illinois

Electrical Aggregation - Frequently Asked Questions

On August 12, 2024, the County Board approved a resolution to authorize placement of a referendum regarding an “opt-out” electricity aggregation program on the November 5, 2024, election ballot.

The question will ask Woodford County residents:

Shall the County of Woodford have the authority to arrange for the supply of electricity for its residential and small commercial retail customers who have not opted out of such a program?	Yes _____	No _____
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Electrical Aggregation, permitted through amendments to Section 1-92 of the Illinois Power Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3855/1-92 (“Act”), enables municipalities to establish electricity aggregation programs for the purpose of seeking alternative suppliers of electricity in hopes of lowering customer rates for electricity supply. If the County implements an aggregation program with a new electricity supplier, the new supplier would be responsible for generating the electricity and delivering it to Ameren/ComEd. Ameren/ComEd would remain the distributor of electricity in Woodford County and customers would continue to receive bills through Ameren/ComEd. Likewise, Ameren/ComEd will remain responsible for all distribution system issues, including power outages.

- 1. Did you know?** Ameren/ComEd no longer serves as an electricity supplier that generates electricity for its customers but continues to provide power generated by others through its distribution system.
- 2. What is electrical aggregation?** Aggregation is a program that allows local governments to bundle, or aggregate, residential and small commercial retail electric accounts and seek bids for a cheaper source of power.
- 3. What will happen on the November 5, 2024, election ballot?** Voters will be asked whether or not the County of Woodford should have the authority to operate an electrical aggregation program. Voting “Yes” means that you want the County to be able to implement an opt-out program. Voting “No” means that you do not want the County to have this ability.
- 4. If the referendum passes, what is the next step?** Passage of the referendum does not mean the County will definitely implement an aggregation program. It only gives the County the ability to do so. If the County does proceed with the program, the County would adopt a broker of choice who would begin working to identify a new supplier through a competitive bidding process in order to secure a lower electricity supply rate for eligible customers.

5. **Will there be a public information process?** If the referendum passes, the County could host multiple public hearings and meetings prior to the bidding process. During the bidding and purchasing process, public announcements through normal communication channels (website, www.woodford-county.org, Nathan Hendricks, David Meinhold Woodford County Board Member, and media) will be provided to help keep residents informed.
6. **When will the County seek competitive bids?** If the referendum passes on November 5, the County estimates it will seek competitive bids in the Spring 2025, with the new rates being applied to electrical bills in the Summer 2025.
7. **What does opt-out mean?** All eligible customers will be automatically included in the program unless they affirmatively choose not to participate (or “opt-out”). The opportunity to opt-out will be available to customers after the bids are received and the electric rate and identity of the supplier are made known to customers, but before customer accounts are switched to the new electricity supplier.
8. **Who will be ineligible for the opt-out program?** Residential and business owners who use electricity to heat their homes / buildings (also known as “space heat” customers) will not be eligible. These customers already receive lower electrical rates from Ameren/ComEd and would not realize significant price savings, if at all, through aggregation. Certain other customers whose rates would not be improved by aggregation also may not be eligible. Pursuant to recent regulatory rulings by the Illinois Commerce Commission, small business customers are now considered only those customers that consume 15,000 kWh or less - small business customers that exceed this consumption level would not be eligible for the program.
9. **I have already signed up with another supplier on my own. Am I still eligible to participate in the program?** A number of alternate retail electricity suppliers (ARES) have been soliciting individual customers to switch from Ameren/ComEd. If you already have switched from Ameren/ComEd to an ARES, you may have entered into a contract that requires you to receive electricity supply from the ARES for a particular period of time at a specified price. If you have already signed up with an ARES on your own, you will not be automatically switched over to the Counties program. Upon termination or expiration of your individual contract with the ARES, you would then be eligible to switch over to the Counties program if you choose to do so, but you may be subject to termination fees or charges from your ARES. You should check with your provider to better understand any restrictions or policies that might apply.
10. **If the new rates are 20% lower than Ameren/ComEd rates, will I save 20% on my entire bill?** Your electric bill is comprised of three different portions: 1) electricity supply services; 2) delivery services; and 3) taxes and other. Only the electric supply services portion, which is typically at least 50% of the total electric bill, would change if the County proceeds with an opt-out program. The “delivery services”, i.e. the transmission and distribution components of the bill, will be unaffected by aggregation.

- 11. Will my electric bill increase? What happens if the Ameren/ComEd rate drops below the new rate?** The goal of aggregation is to decrease electrical bills. The implementation of an aggregation program will allow the bidding process to represent rates below the current PTC rates and will not allow civic contributions nor civic grants to be applied in the bidding process and our agreements.
- 12. Will residents receive a separate bill for the supply of electricity?** No, the bill format will remain the same as it is today. The energy supply charge already incorporated into Ameren/ComEd bills will remain. Ameren/ComEd customers will receive the bill and remit payment in the format currently selected (via mail or electronically).
- 13. Who will I call if my power goes out?** Residents will continue to call Ameren at 1-800-755-5000 or ComEd at 1-800-EDISON1 (334-7661). Ameren/ComEd is responsible for ensuring that electricity flows through its distribution network to all homes and businesses in Woodford County. Aggregation will not change how Ameren/ComEd responds to outages.
- 14. Ameren/ComEd has indicated that they will be continuing to implement system improvements to help improve reliability. Does this change Ameren/ComEd's plans?** No. Aggregation does not impact Ameren/ComEd plans to improve its system and to address reliability issues. Ameren/ComEd is mandated by law to deliver electricity and to make necessary improvements to the transmission system, regardless of where the source of energy is purchased or generated.

For more information, please visit the County's website at www.woodford-county.org or contact the Woodford County Board Office, at (309) 467-7343.