



## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

# CONSUMERS' FACT SHEET

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# Duke Energy Ohio COMPARING YOUR NATURAL GAS CHOICES

There are a lot of rates, offers, programs and even incentives involved with making an energy choice. This fact sheet from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, provides information to consider when comparing a marketer or aggregator's energy offer.

Market rates for natural gas have been historically low in Ohio and are likely to remain low. As a result, consumers are unlikely to save money by switching from the Gas Cost Recovery rate to a gas marketer or aggregator at this time. Historical rates for Duke Energy Ohio can be found on the OCC's web site.

### Gas Cost Recovery Rate

Duke is the only major natural gas utility in Ohio using the Gas Cost Recovery rate. Duke calculates this rate on a monthly basis based upon its expected cost to purchase and transport natural gas to consumers. The rate is adjusted based on the amount used. Duke cannot make a profit on the GCR, it can only charge the costs it incurs. The Gas Cost Recovery rate does not include distribution costs, which consumers continue to pay to their local utility even if they choose a marketer or aggregator.

The Gas Cost Recovery rate changes each month. Refer to several bills to calculate an average before comparing with a marketer's offer. To save consumers money, a marketer or aggregator must offer the same service at a lower rate than the Gas Cost Recovery rate.

### Questions to Ask Before Signing a Contract

- ▶ Are savings guaranteed or could you lose money compared to Duke's Gas Cost Recovery price?
- ▶ Is it a price that remains the same for the contract term (fixed rate) or can the rate change over time (variable rate)?
- ▶ Is there a fee to terminate the contract early?
- ▶ Will the contract automatically renew at the end of its term if you don't cancel it?
- ▶ If the contract will automatically renew, at what price will it renew?

### What do these rates mean?

The rate offered by marketers will either be higher or lower than the Gas Cost Recovery rate. It will also either be a fixed or variable rate.

**Fixed Rate:** This is the price per hundred cubic feet (Ccf) that will remain the same throughout the contract period.

**Variable Rate:** This is the price per hundred cubic feet (Ccf) that can change month-to-month. Consumers should ask how often a variable rate is subject to change. Marketers must explain the factors that cause the variable rate to change.

Hybrid programs include a fixed rate for a period and a variable rate for the

Supplier:	Offer (per Ccf)	Contract Term	Offer Details
<b>AEP Energy</b> 1-866-258-3782 (toll free) <a href="http://www.aepenergy.com">www.aepenergy.com</a>	\$0.469 - Fixed rate \$0.479 - Fixed rate	12 months 24 months	Enroll online. Web offer only for new customers.
<b>Cincinnati Bell Energy</b> 1-866-852-6849 (toll free) <a href="http://www.cincinnatienergy.com">www.cincinnatienergy.com</a>	\$0.433 - Fixed rate \$1.005 - Variable rate	12 months Month to month	Discount for first month only No early cancellation fee
<b>Constellation NewEnergy</b> 1-877-997-9995 (toll free) <a href="http://www.constellation.com">www.constellation.com</a>	\$0.549 - Fixed rate \$0.499 - Fixed rate	12 months 36 months	\$150 early cancellation fee \$150 early cancellation fee
<b>Duke Energy Ohio</b> 1-800-544-6900 (toll free) <a href="http://www.duke-energy.com">www.duke-energy.com</a>	\$0.5405	Month to month	Gas Cost Recovery (GCR) rate
<b>IGS Energy</b> 1-888-995-0992 (toll free) <a href="http://www.igsenergy.com">www.igsenergy.com</a>	\$0.579 - Fixed rate \$0.549 - Fixed rate \$0.519 - Fixed rate \$0.519 - Fixed rate	12 months 12 months 36 months 60 months	No early cancellation fee \$99 early cancellation fee \$99 early cancellation fee \$99 early cancellation fee
<b>NRG</b> 1-855-388-5276 (toll free) <a href="http://www.nrghomepower.com">www.nrghomepower.com</a>	\$0.419 - Variable rate	Month to month	No early cancellation fee
<b>Palmco Energy</b> 1-877-726-5862 (toll free) <a href="http://www.palmcoenergy.com">www.palmcoenergy.com</a>	\$0.592 - Variable rate	Month to month	Introductory rate for first two months only. No early cancellation fee.
<b>SouthStar Energy Services</b> 1-888-466-4427 (toll free) <a href="http://www.southstarenergy.com">www.southstarenergy.com</a>	\$0.499 - Variable rate \$0.299 - Fixed rate \$0.379 - Fixed rate \$0.339 - Fixed rate	Month to month 2 months 12 months 6 months	No early cancellation fee No early cancellation fee \$150 early cancellation fee \$75 early cancellation fee
<b>Value Power and Gas</b> 1-877-811-7023 (toll free) <a href="http://www.valuepowerandgas.com">www.valuepowerandgas.com</a>	\$0.699 - Variable rate	Month to month	No early cancellation fee
<b>Viridian</b> 1-866-663-2508 (toll free) <a href="http://www.viridian.com">www.viridian.com</a>	\$0.519 - Fixed rate \$0.499 - Fixed rate \$0.500 - Fixed rate	12 months 24 months 36 months	No early cancellation fee No early cancellation fee No early cancellation fee
<b>Volunteer Energy Services</b> 1-800-977-8374 (toll free) <a href="http://www.volunteerenergy.com">www.volunteerenergy.com</a>	\$0.422 - Variable rate	Month to month	No early cancellation fee

**Note:** Not all participating suppliers on this comparison fact sheet serve all areas of Duke Energy Ohio service territory. Residents should verify the service area of the supplier prior to enrolling.

*Disclaimer: This information has been obtained by the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and should be used only as a comparison guide. The rates are updated weekly. The most up-to-date rates can be found on the PUCO's energy choice website, [www.energychoice.ohio.gov](http://www.energychoice.ohio.gov). The OCC is not responsible for selections you make based on the information contained herein. Contact the supplier before enrolling to verify its rate, contract terms and availability in your county. For more information about the energy choice programs and participating suppliers visit [www.occ.ohio.gov](http://www.occ.ohio.gov).*

remainder of the contract period. Other hybrid programs charge one rate during the winter (November-April) and another rate during the summer (May-October).

### Promotional Offers

Some marketers offer discounts or incentives to enroll. Consumers may be offered a rate discount, rebate or cash back incentives. Other offers may include shopping and dining rewards, gift cards and fuel rebates. The value of the incentives should be accounted for when estimating how much money could be saved, if any, by choosing a marketer.

Marketers may also offer a percentage off the Gas Cost Recovery rate. While the percentage of discount may remain the same, the price of natural gas could change and raise or lower the price consumers pay for service.

Consumers should also be aware of "teaser" rates that offer a percentage off the Gas Cost Recovery rate for a very brief period, such as 1-3 months, and transition consumers to a higher, variable rate for the remainder of the contract period.

### Making your choice

Visit the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's energy choice website, [www.energychoice.ohio.gov](http://www.energychoice.ohio.gov), to compare rates between marketers. Visit the OCC's website, [www.occ.ohio.gov](http://www.occ.ohio.gov), to see fact sheets about "Energy Choice 101," "Comparing Your Energy Choices" and "Consumer Protections in Energy Choice." There are also OCC webpages devoted to comparing your natural gas and electric choices.