



## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

# CONSUMERS' FACT SHEET

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# Columbia Gas of 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 Standard Choice Offer to a gas marketer or aggregator at this time. Historical rates for Columbia Gas of Ohio can be found on the OCC's web site.

### Standard Choice Offer

The Standard Choice Offer is the market-based rate of natural gas consumers receive. It is a combination of the monthly wholesale price of natural gas and the price determined by a monthly, competitive auction. The lowest bidders in the auction win the right to supply natural gas to consumers at the Standard Choice Offer rate. If consumers select the Standard Choice Offer they will see the name of the auction's winning bidder on their natural gas bill—although this does not mean that they have entered into a contract with the bidder—and their bill will say Standard Choice Offer or "SCO." The Standard Choice Offer does not include distribution costs, which consumers continue to pay to their local utility even if they choose a marketer or aggregator. Frequently asked questions about Columbia's Standard Choice Offer can be found on the OCC's web site.

The Standard Choice Offer changes each month. Refer to several bills to calculate an average before comparing with a marketer or aggregator's offer. To save consumers money, a marketer or aggregator must

### Questions to Ask Before Signing a Contract

- ▶ Are savings guaranteed or could you lose money compared to the Standard Choice Offer?
- ▶ Is it a price that remains the same for the contract term (fixed rate) or can the price 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?

offer the same service at a lower rate than the Standard Choice Offer.

### What do these rates mean?

The rate offered by marketers and aggregators will either be higher or lower than the Standard Choice Offer. 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 remainder of the contract period. Other hybrid programs charge one rate during

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>	\$0.465 - Fixed rate \$0.485 - Fixed rate	12 months 24 months	Enroll online. Web offer only for new customers.
<b>CenterPoint Energy Services</b> 1-888-200-3788 (toll free) <a href="http://www.CenterPointEnergyRetail.com/OCC">www.CenterPointEnergyRetail.com/OCC</a>	\$0.455 - Fixed rate \$0.455 - Fixed rate	12 months 24 months	No early cancellation fee Use Promo Code "CESOCC"
<b>Columbia Gas of Ohio</b> 1-800-344-4077 (toll free) <a href="http://www.columbiagasohio.com">www.columbiagasohio.com</a>	\$0.4415	Month to month	Standard Choice Offer (SCO)
<b>Constellation NewEnergy</b> 1-877-997-9995 (toll free) <a href="http://www.constellation.com">www.constellation.com</a>	\$0.549 - Fixed rate \$0.529 - Fixed rate \$0.659 - Variable rate	12 months 36 months Month to month	\$150 early cancellation fee \$150 early cancellation fee No early cancellation fee
<b>Dominion Energy Solutions</b> 1-800-362-7557 (toll free) <a href="http://www.dom.com">www.dom.com</a>	\$0.486 - Fixed rate \$0.537 - Fixed rate	12 months 24 months	No early cancellation fee No early cancellation fee
<b>Energy Cooperative of Ohio</b> 1-888-541-4646 (toll free) <a href="http://www.ohioenergycoop.com">www.ohioenergycoop.com</a>	\$0.549 - Variable rate	Month to month	No early cancellation fee
<b>IGS Energy</b> 1-888-995-0992 (toll free) <a href="http://www.igsenergy.com">www.igsenergy.com</a>	\$0.629 - Fixed rate \$0.599 - Fixed rate \$0.619 - Fixed rate \$0.619 - 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>Indra Energy</b> 1-888-504-6372 (toll free) <a href="http://www.indraenergy.com">www.indraenergy.com</a>	\$0.390 - Variable rate	Month to month	Introductory rate for <b>first two months only</b> . No 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>SouthStar Energy Services</b> 1-888-466-4427 (toll free) <a href="http://www.southstarenergy.com">www.southstarenergy.com</a>	\$0.669 - Variable rate \$0.399 - Fixed rate \$0.459 - Fixed rate \$0.379 - 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>	\$0.6995 - Variable rate \$0.4099 - Fixed rate	Month to month 12 months	No early cancellation fee No early cancellation fee
<b>Volunteer Energy Services</b> 1-800-977-8374 (toll free) <a href="http://www.veenergy.com">www.veenergy.com</a>	\$0.4224 - Variable rate	Month to month	No early cancellation fee

<sup>1</sup> "Price match guarantee": If prices are low, customer may get best available 12-month price by contacting Intergys, who will match rate or release customer from contract.

**Note:** Not all participating suppliers on this comparison fact sheet serve all areas of Columbia Gas of 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).*

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 Standard Choice Offer. 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 Standard Choice Offer 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 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), and look for fact sheets about "Energy Choice 101," "Comparing Your Energy Choices" and "Consumer Protections in Energy Choice." There are also OCC web pages devoted to comparing your natural gas and electric choices.