

Boscawen Community Power Frequently Asked Questions

What is Boscawen Community Power?

New Hampshire cities and towns that adopt Community Power by their local legislative body (e.g., Town Meeting) can establish their own locally controlled electricity provider. Boscawen Community Power will provide the actual energy known as generation or energy supply, and replaces the energy supply charge from your utility company (in Boscawen's case Unitil or Eversource). The utility will continue to charge you for their transmission and delivery lines.

Community Power is enabled by [New Hampshire RSA 53-E](#).

The overall goal of Boscawen Community Power aggregation is to harness the power of competitive markets and community-scale purchasing of electricity to reduce costs, increase supply options (especially around renewable energy), enable greater customer choice, and provide services to enhance the lives of Boscawen residents and customers, while incurring little to no taxpayer or town administrative expense.

How Would I Participate in Boscawen Community Power?

Once Community Power is adopted by Town Meeting, the Selectboard becomes authorized to contract for services to implement the program. Prior to program launch, all electric customers in town will receive a letter in the mail with Boscawen Community Power rates compared to the utility's supply rate, along with instructions for customers to choose their power option, or opt-in or opt-out of the program.

Thirty days after the mailing, Boscawen residents who currently receive Unitil's or Eversource's default energy supply would be automatically enrolled in Boscawen Community Power on the date of their next monthly meter read. You will continue to get your bill from your current utility. And you can opt-out at any time, effective as of your next monthly meter read / billing cycle.

How would Boscawen Community Power benefit our town?

1. **More Local Choice:** Boscawen would have almost complete control over the sources of our electricity, and how rates are set. Our community power plan will open the door to innovative options including time-based rates, solar battery storage (net metering alternatives), large scale local solar production, electric vehicle charging, energy efficiency options, and more.
2. **Supporting Boscawen's long-term energy goals:** Community Power would give Boscawen control of its energy portfolio, allowing the town to buy more energy from renewable sources.
3. **Lower Costs:** Community Power can lower energy costs by giving Boscawen access to competitive market options for power supply. Community power programs are operating

successfully in a number of NH towns and cities and are supplying power at rates that are lower than Unitil or Eversource rates.

What has Boscawen done to date on Community Power?

The Boscawen Selectboard approved Boscawen's membership in the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire on December 15, 2022, and named the appointed Boscawen Energy Committee to serve as Boscawen Community Power Committee. The Boscawen Community Power Committee drafted and presented a Community Electric Aggregation Plan to the Select Board at their June 8, 2023 meeting. We are now planning two public informational meetings and other outreach to introduce the concept and plan to the community. If there is general agreement to move forward, the Boscawen Select Board would propose to place an article on the warrant for consideration at the 2024 town meeting, asking the voters if they want to approve the adoption of Boscawen Community Power.

If the town meeting approves the warrant article, does everybody have to participate?

No. Participation is voluntary and up to each Until or Eversource account holder.

If Boscawen gives the go-ahead to Community Power, it becomes the default source for our electricity in the way that Eversource offers us just one default electric supplier. People moving into town would automatically be included in the Boscawen Community Power program.

Anybody can choose not to participate by opting out at any point with no fee or penalty. If you opt out, you would continue to get your electricity from Unitil's or Eversource's default supplier, or you could choose to go it alone with an alternative supplier. The more ratepayers who are included in Boscawen's community power group, the more purchasing power we have.

Will Boscawen Community Power change our tax bills?

No.

Boscawen Community Power is independent of town expenses and taxes. When the program is up and running, all expenses are covered by a small surcharge on your electric bill in the same way that Until or Eversource covers various expenses now with surcharges on your bill.

Our membership in the not-for-profit Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH) gives us additional protection from start-up and other expenses:

- We can launch Boscawen's Community Power program with no up-front expense through our membership in the CPCNH.
- Start-up expenses for our program will be recovered through revenues from electricity sales when our program is established and operating.
- All operating costs will be included in the customer rates we set for ourselves. There is no cost to the town.

Boscawen Community Power pays no fees for joining CPCNH. In fact, we aren't committed to use the programs and services the CPCNH offers until we decide to. And at that point we would enter into a cost-sharing agreement. Again, all costs will be paid through our power bills.

What is the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH)?

The Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH) is a non-profit 'Joint Powers Agency' (an organization created and run by the towns and cities which are members) that formed in 2021. CPCNH helps its members (currently numbering 39 cities and towns with many more considering joining) to:

- Streamline the process for authorizing a Community Power program in each community and county.
- Share purchasing, legal, administrative, and other services and staff support.
- Participate in joint power solicitations and local project development opportunities such as community solar, large-scale battery installation, robust energy efficiency programs, electric charging infrastructure, etc.
- Share knowledge and collaborate regionally on clean energy and resilient infrastructure development.
- Speak with one voice at the NH Legislature and Public Utilities Commission on issues related to energy and Community Power.

How do towns and cities share costs as members of CPCNH?

- CPCNH membership provides Boscawen with a menu of services it can choose from, including a Complete Service Bundle which includes power supply procurement and management, data and billing, and customer service. Members can also choose to participate in a specific project, such as community solar installations. CPCNH costs associated with providing and facilitating these services are recovered from members receiving those services.
- The general administrative costs of CPCNH that are not directly related to specific member services or projects are funded on a shared basis by member communities, with each community's share being determined based on the community's annual electric sales on a pro rata basis. These costs are incorporated into the cost of the electricity sold to consumers.
- CPCNH members can launch Community Power programs at no up-front expense through the Coalition, with implementation and operating costs recovered through program revenues post-launch. Communities can also withdraw from the Coalition prior to entering into a cost-sharing agreement without any financial obligation. After entering into a cost-sharing agreement, communities can withdraw subject to any continuing obligations agreed to in the cost-sharing agreements.

What role will Boscawen Community Power play in providing my electricity?

Boscawen Community Power will serve as the local aggregator for electricity purchases for all retail (town government, residential and small commercial) customers who do not choose to opt-out.

The Town will contract with CPCNH to go out to bid for electricity supply for all participating Boscawen customers along with the customers from other participating communities similar community power plans.

The CPCNH will package the bid for electricity, receive and review all bids, select the electricity providers and then notify all customers participating in each community power plan of the price for electricity as well as the range of electricity options available.

Customers will have 30 days notice to opt out of the program prior to automatic enrollment if they would prefer to continue purchasing power from Unitil or Eversource at the default rate. After enrollment and program launch, customers may opt-out any time thereafter, effective at their next monthly meter read / billing cycle.

Will Unitil or Eversource continue to deliver my electricity?

Yes, Unitil or Eversource will continue to own the transmission and distribution system including all electricity substations, power lines, utility poles, transformers, the electricity feed to your home, and your meter. NH is a deregulated state which means that the electric utility that provides service owns all the transmission and distribution equipment, maintains these systems, and bills you for the electricity you use. The incumbent utilities purchase the electricity they supply from independent electricity generators, bidding their electricity business on the open market on a periodic basis. It's the component of your electric bill associated with purchasing electricity from independent generators on the open market that Boscawen Community Power would replace.

Would I be charged a higher delivery rate?

No. The source of your energy doesn't influence the price of energy delivery.

How would I pay my bill?

You'd still pay your electricity bill to Unitil or Eversource, just like before.

If I own solar panels that provide electricity for my property, can I still participate in Boscawen Community Power?

Our Boscawen Community Power plan will address accounting and compensation for net-metered electricity exported to the grid. Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire is working with utilities like Unitil and Eversource to resolve a technical data sharing issue that, once resolved, will allow net metered customers to participate in and benefit from Boscawen Community Power.

How will Boscawen Community Power provide various electricity options?

Our Community Power plan will include three or four choices over sources of electricity, from 100 percent renewable sources to several combinations of renewable, fossil fuel and nuclear sources. In general, an option with a large percentage of renewable power will cost more than an option with a higher percentage of fossil fuel generated power. The Boscawen Community Power plan will include a range of prices and options so that all ratepayers can make a choice that fits their budget and their needs. But keep in mind that the more ratepayers we have in the group-buy, the lower the cost per kilowatt-hour, no matter the power mix. Over time, the cost of renewable power is likely to come down when compared with the cost of electricity generated by non-renewables.

Are there any cities or towns in NH with community power plans up and running?

There are at least a dozen CPCNH members including Canterbury, Nashua, Lebanon, Hanover, and Harrisville that have launched Community Power and are supplying residents with more affordable electricity, and providing more clean energy options. About another 30 CPCNH members (including the neighboring towns of Loudon, Webster, Pembroke, and Warner) are at various stages of planning. Keene, which is not a member of CPCNH, is developing its own community power plan.

Do community power plans exist in other states?

Yes. Nine U.S. states have laws enabling community power plans, including California, Illinois, Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia and New Hampshire. In the state of California alone there are more than four dozen local power plans serving millions of California electricity customers. Massachusetts was the first state in the nation to enable the establishment of community power programs with the creation of the Cape Light Compact, serving Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard customers.

8.23.2023

Subject to further revision