



# CUBFacts

## “Smart Ideas:” Efficiency Programs for ComEd Customers

As a result of legislation fought for by CUB, money-saving energy efficiency programs are available to ComEd customers.

These programs are the result of SB 1592, the electric rate relief and reform law. You may remember that this measure provided \$1 billion in refunds to Illinois electric customers. It also requires Illinois utilities to reduce overall electric usage by 2 percent of demand by 2015, and supply 25 percent of their power from renewable energy sources by 2025.

### Discounts on Energy Efficient Lighting

You can purchase discounted energy efficient Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs) at select retail stores, including:



- |                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Ace Hardware</b>          | <b>Meijer</b>                    |
| <b>Best Buy</b>              | <b>Menards</b>                   |
| <b>Costco (members only)</b> | <b>Navy Exchange</b>             |
| <b>CVS</b>                   | <b>Sam’s Club (members only)</b> |
| <b>Do it Best</b>            | <b>Walgreens</b>                 |
| <b>Food 4 Less</b>           | <b>Wal-Mart</b>                  |
| <b>Home Depot</b>            | <b>Weldon Hardware Supply</b>    |
| <b>Jewel Osco</b>            |                                  |
| <b>Lowe’s</b>                |                                  |

For specific retailer locations, visit [www.comed.com](http://www.comed.com). There is a 12 bulb or 6 fixture limit per purchase, and the discount is available while supplies last.

### Fridge/Freezer Rewards



Don’t just throw your old refrigerator or window air conditioner away! ComEd will pay residential customers \$35 to pick up and responsibly dispose of up to two old refrigerators and freezers, and \$25 for up to two old window air conditioners.

To qualify for recycling, your refrigerators and/or freezer must be:

- Between 10 and 30 cubic feet in size.
  - Empty and working at the time of pick-up
  - Accessible with a clear path for removal by contractor
- \* To receive a window air conditioner rebate, you must schedule pickup for a refrigerator or freezer as well.

### Why does CUB support energy efficiency?

- Immediate savings: making your home more energy efficient lowers your utility bills
- Reduced demand can lead to lower rates
- It is our cheapest, cleanest resource: efficiency can eliminate the need to build expensive, polluting coal-fired power plants

### Why are CFLs better than incandescent bulbs?

- CFLs use 75 percent less energy
  - CFLs last up to 10 times as long
  - CFLs can save you up to \$47 over each bulb’s life
- CFLs can be recycled at Home Depot, Ace Hardware, and IKEA*

To recycle your appliance, schedule a pick-up at 888-806-2273 or enroll online at [www.comed.com](http://www.comed.com).

Please note: program funding is limited. Participation will be on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted.

The EPA estimates that old refrigerators can cost more than \$100 a year to operate.

### **Clothes Washer Rebates**

ComEd residential customers can qualify for a \$75 rebate on select top-loading ENERGY STAR® qualified clothes washers at participating Chicagoland stores. To take advantage of the rebate, find a list of participating retailers at [www.comed.com](http://www.comed.com) and look for the ComEd Smart Ideas® sticker on qualifying units.

### **Advantages of Energy Star clothes washers**

The average household washes 400 loads of laundry a year, which uses precious resources like water, electricity and gas. A high efficiency ENERGY STAR® qualified clothes washer can help conserve these resources. Families can cut their related energy costs by about a third—and water costs by more than half—just by purchasing a select clothes washer with the ENERGY STAR label.



- ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers use about 37 percent less energy and require less than half of the amount of water that regular washers use. Many qualified clothes washers also have a greater capacity than conventional models, meaning fewer loads of laundry.
- Over the life of your new ENERGY STAR qualified washer, you'll save enough money in operating costs to pay for the matching dryer. With your water savings, you could fill three backyard swimming pools.
- Is your washer over 10 years old? Replace it with a new ENERGY STAR qualified washer and you could save \$135 each year on your utility bills. That's like getting your High Efficiency (HE) detergent free year round.

### **Energy Efficiency Loans**

Qualify for special financing on the purchase and installation of select refrigerators, clothes washers or central AC systems. Utility Energy Efficiency Loans provide financing for eligible homeowners, duplex owners, condominium owners, and residential building owners with four units or less. Your loan payment is conveniently added to your monthly ComEd bill. If you qualify for a loan for a \$1,200 refrigerator plus tax and delivery over a ten-year term, you will typically see a loan installment, including interest, of less than \$20 added each month to your ComEd bill.

### **Eligibility**

- Be a current ComEd customer with an active ComEd account number. For Central AC loans you must also be a Nicor, Peoples, or North Shore Gas customer.
- Be a home, duplex, condominium, or residential multi-unit building owner (with a limit of four units per building).
- Have a credit score of 640 or greater.

### **Program Details**

You must pre-qualify for your loan prior to the purchase of any of these products. The interest rate is currently at 4.99%. Pre-qualify for your loan by applying at [ILEnergyLoan.com](http://ILEnergyLoan.com). You will need your ComEd account number from your electric service bill at the time of application. Complete and submit the application. Once the application is approved, there are different steps depending on your choice of appliance.

Once the appliance or AC system is installed and you accept the installation, you will make monthly loan installments through your ComEd utility bill over the repayment term of the loan (up to 10 years). Install-

ments for the Utility Energy Efficiency Loan will be displayed on your ComEd bill as the line item “Energy Efficiency Loan.” It may take up to two billing periods to see your loan payment on your ComEd bill. Payments that you make are applied to your electric service first and then to your loan installment. If the payment amount exceeds the total of the electric service and loan installment, the remaining balance will be applied to the electric service portion of your next ComEd bill.

### Refrigerator or Clothes Washer

- AFC First is the finance company that will process your application for the IL Energy Loan Program. Save the customer number you are provided after you submit the application as reference.
- Once the loan is approved, bring your confirmation notice with your customer number on it to a participating retailer to purchase your refrigerator or clothes washer. Other services, such as service contracts or the installment of a new water line, are not eligible for the Energy Efficiency Loan.
- The retailer will deliver and install your new appliance. If you purchased a new refrigerator, haul away of your old, working refrigerator is required. ComEd will send you a \$35 check for participating in ComEd’s Smart Ideas® Fridge and Freezer Recycle Rewards Program.

### Contractor-installed Central Air Conditioning System

- In addition to completing the loan application, the qualified contractor will also need to provide a formal estimate for the work to be performed including the required information on both the furnace and AC system, and the associated costs for the furnace and AC including installation and startup. The financing available through ComEd is for the AC system portion of the installation.
- AFC First is the finance company that will process your application for the IL Energy Loan Program. AFC will review the documents to confirm that the proposal meets the requirements of the joint ComEd and Gas Utility rebates for a complete system replacement. If all information is in order, AFC will send to the loan documents to either you or the contractor for signature.
  - Be sure you know whether you or the contractor will be applying for the rebates associated with the purchase of the furnace and AC system. If the contractor is applying for the rebates, you should see the rebate listed as a credit on the contractors work proposal.

### Central Air Conditioning Cycling (formerly known as Nature First)

ComEd will give you \$5 or \$10 off your monthly electric bill between June and September for allowing the utility to remotely cycle your central air-conditioner off and on periodically during the hottest days of the year.

Actually, only the compressor gets cycled off. The fan will continue to circulate already cooled air, so you may not even notice a difference in your home. But such programs can make a big difference outside your four walls by reducing electricity demand on hot summer days to prevent power outages, lower rates, and help improve the environment.



You can choose between two cycling options:

#### 50 percent

Time: Weekdays (excluding holidays), 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Unit cycles off: Maximum of 15 minutes every half hour (if needed)

You receive: \$5 credit/month per household, June 1 through September 30. The total credit will be \$20.

**100 percent** (if someone in your household is home during most of the day or has a medical condition this option is not recommended).

Time: Weekdays (excluding holidays), 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Unit cycles off: One continuous 3-hour period during any weekday (if needed).

You receive: \$10 credit per month per household, June 1 through September 30. The total credit will be \$40. To participate in the program, call 888-806-2273 or enroll online at [www.comed.com](http://www.comed.com).

## Residential Real-time Pricing

The Real-Time Pricing program has been available since 2006. Although not technically a part of the company's "Smart Ideas" program, Real-Time Pricing also encourages efficiency and can save you a considerable amount of money. While savings aren't guaranteed, participants have lowered their power bills by up to 16 percent, on average.

### How does the program work?

Participants pay wholesale market prices, which fluctuate hourly, instead of the traditional averaged "flat" rate. To save, you must be able to shift high-electricity activities, such as doing laundry or using the dishwasher, from higher-priced, peak-demand hours to lower-priced, off-peak hours.

### What are the program benefits?

- Participants have more control over electricity use, and consequently, more opportunity to save.
- The program eases stress on the electric grid, especially during high demand periods, leading to more reliable service, lower carbon emissions, and less negative impact on the environment.

### Who may not benefit from the program?

People who:

- Heat their homes with electricity
- Have high winter electricity usage
- Use very little electricity (electric bills tend to be less than \$40 per month)
- Cannot adjust their electricity usage during hours when prices are higher

### What is Load Guard?

Load Guard is an optional program for customers on real-time pricing. It switches your central air conditioner into "conservation mode" for two hours when prices reach a certain high level, which you set. You can change your settings each day, if desired.

For more information see CUB's real-time pricing fact sheet on the Electric page, at [www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org](http://www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org). For more information or to sign up, visit [www.thewattspot.com](http://www.thewattspot.com) or call 1-866-WATTSPOT (1-866-928-8776).

Central Air Conditioning Cycling and Real-Time Pricing are **Demand-response programs**, meaning they are designed to curb our consumption of electricity on hot days, when usage and prices are highest.

## Multi-Family Home Energy Savings Program

If your condo or apartment is served by both ComEd and either Nicor, Peoples, or North Shore Gas, you could qualify to receive upgrades that will save energy, reduce natural gas and electric costs, and help the environment. Trained technicians would install:

- High pressure, low-flow showerheads
- High-efficiency faucet aerators for kitchen and bathroom sinks
- Up to six compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)

For more information, landlords or property managers who are Nicor Gas customers can call 877-735-6687. Customers of Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas can call 855-849-8928.

## Home Energy Savings Program

Homeowners have an opportunity to receive an assessment of their home's energy use to improve its energy efficiency. Home Energy Savings is an energy efficiency service for residential customers who live in single family homes that are jointly served by ComEd and Nicor Gas.

Home Energy Savings provides an assessment of a single family home's energy use that includes:

- Recommended changes and upgrades that can improve the energy efficiency and comfort of the home.
- A proposal for weatherization improvements that qualify for incentives (50 percent of costs up to \$1,250) from ComEd and Nicor Gas.
- Free installation of energy-saving products, such as energy-efficient shower heads, faucet aerators and compact fluorescent lights (CFLs).

### **Details**

The Home Energy Savings assessment will be performed by Building Performance Institute (BPI) certified professionals from Conservation Services Group (CSG), the program implementer.

There is a \$99 co-pay to receive the Home Energy Savings assessment. Homeowners in selected communities will be invited to schedule a Home Energy Savings assessment.

The total time for the assessment is approximately two and half hours per home.

During the visit, the technician will perform a detailed assessment of the home to identify changes and upgrades that may further improve the energy efficiency and comfort of the home.

When the assessment is complete, the homeowner will receive a report detailing the energy-saving products installed and summarizing the home's energy consumption. Additionally, the homeowner will receive a proposal for weatherization improvements that qualify for incentives (50 percent of cost up to \$1,250) from ComEd and Nicor Gas.

### **Participate**

For more information, call 1-888-806-2273, and follow prompts 1, 1, 6.

*If you have any additional questions about these programs, please call CUB, 1-800-669-5556, and ask for Rebecca Devens, policy analyst.*

*CUB works hard to maintain the accuracy and timeliness of this information, but programs often change and/or run out of money. CUB is not responsible for the administration of any of the programs described in this fact sheet. If you are having trouble applying for or receiving benefits from any of the programs described above, please contact the administrator of that program. Please notify CUB if you find any inaccuracies here.*