



Gas Competition in Illinois

A guide for Nicor customers

FACT SHEET

March 2023

Nicor gas price for March:
45¢ per therm
 (Note: On your bill it's 0.45)

Can I choose another gas supplier?

Yes. Nicor Gas customers are allowed to choose another company (also known as an “alternative retail gas supplier,” or “ARGS”) to supply them with natural gas. Alternative suppliers sell their offers door-to-door, over the phone and through the mail—but also at community events and churches.

CUB gets a lot of reports about misleading marketing and bad deals. Such problems led Illinois to pass the HEAT Act, one of the nation’s toughest consumer-protection laws.

How does competition work?

Traditionally, Nicor buys gas on the market and uses the pipelines to deliver that gas to your home. But you can choose another company to supply you with gas.

If you choose another supplier, you still get a bill from Nicor—because the utility delivers the gas to you—and you still call the utility if your heat goes out. But a different company and its price will be listed on the “supply” section of your bill. (See the other side of this guide.)

Remember, Nicor’s supply price is often the lowest option. It is illegal for Nicor to make a profit off of what it charges you for supply. Alternative suppliers, on the other hand, can charge whatever they want.

Will I save money with another supplier?

There’s no guarantee you’ll save money with an alternative supplier. Since CUB started monitoring alternative supplier offers in 2003, the consumer group found that about 9 out of 10 offers are more expensive than the utility. If you don’t sign up with an alternative supplier, you will continue to be served by Nicor with rates regulated or reviewed by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC).

What consumer protections do I have?

Because of numerous problems in the market, Illinois passed the Home Energy Affordability and Transparency (HEAT) Act of 2019. Among other things, the new law:

WARNING:

In the current market, the regulated utility (Nicor) is probably your best choice.

- Stops suppliers from automatically renewing a contract from a fixed rate to a variable rate (a rate that changes monthly) and then increasing the price.
- Ends termination fees.
- Requires supplier marketing materials and utility bills to clearly state the utility’s current price.
- Makes it harder for suppliers to overcharge customers who get assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.
- Requires telemarketing and in-person marketing to be conducted in a language the customer understands.

There are many more protections in the HEAT Act. If you have questions, please call CUB, 1-800-669-5556.



How to avoid gas scams

- 1) People may knock on your door or call you to say they’re from the “gas company” and can lower your bill. Don’t give out your gas bill or account number unless you’re sure you want to sign up for an offer. A dishonest sales representative can use your account number to sign you up without permission.
- 2) Find out what the company is charging and how that compares with the utility’s price. Is it a fixed rate (and if so, for how long) or a variable rate that changes monthly?
- 3) Ask if the rate is an introductory rate, how long it will last, and what the new rate will be. Your low price may disappear after a few months, causing your bill to skyrocket.
- 4) Ask if the plan charges a monthly fee. A \$10 monthly fee means you pay more than \$100 a year—without using any gas.

How do I know if I'm with an alternative supplier?

BEWARE: Even if you're with an alternative supplier, you will continue to get a bill from your regulated utility. People on a bad deal often tell CUB they had no idea they were with another company until their bill went up. Check your bill each month to see if an alternative supplier is listed.

- Look for another company listed under "A Message for You." A per-therm rate for the alternative supplier should be listed under "Additional Products and Services."
- Call the alternative supplier to end an offer. The name and number of the company should be listed on your gas bill. If you think you were fraudulently signed up, tell the supplier you want a refund.
- If you don't like the supplier's response, file a complaint with CUB, at 1-800-669-5556.

Nicor Gas
An ABL Resources Company

nicorgas.com/myaccount
1 888 Nicor4U 1 888 642-6748

Account Summary for

Account Number: [REDACTED]
 Meter Number: [REDACTED]
 Service Address: Roselle
 Bill Period: 12/02/15 - 01/04/16 (33 days)
 Bill Issue Date: 01/07/16
 Total Previous Balance \$21.40
 Payment Received 12/29/2015 - Thank you! -\$21.40
 Remaining Balance \$0.00
 New Charges - Utility \$25.52
 New Charges - Additional Products & Services \$263.75
Total Amount Due by 01/29/2016 \$289.27

A Message for You

Your Customer Select supplier is **ABC Supplier Inc.** For questions relating to your natural gas cost, contact your supplier at: 877 228-9427. If you have any questions regarding natural gas safety, call Nicor Gas at 1 888 642-6748.

Learn more about payment options and changes coming soon to our processing vendor's fees by visiting nicorgas.com.

Total - Additional Products & Services \$263.75

Customer Select supplier previous balance \$0.00
 ENERGY CHARGE-125THM@1.26016 PER THM 01/04/2016 \$157.52
 ADJUSTMENT 01/04/2016 \$106.23
Total Due ABC Supplier Inc. \$263.75
 ABC Supplier Inc. Questions? Please call 1-877-555-5555

New Charges - Residential - Heat
Rate 1 - Residential Service

Energy Profile

Gas CCF	BTU Factor	Therms	Avg. Daily Therms	Avg. Daily Therms
121	1.054	125.11	2015 3.77	2016 3.79

CCF x BTU Factor = Therms

Monthly Therms Use

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

A Message for You

Your Customer Select supplier is **ABC SUPPLIER** For questions relating to your natural gas cost, contact your supplier at: **1-555-555-5555** If you have any questions regarding natural gas safety, call Nicor Gas at 1 888 642-6748.

Your safety is important to us. Ask to see an employee ID when our field team is working in or around your premises. Also, verify your account information with customer service before making a transaction over the phone.

Taxes

Municipal Utility Tax for Roselle \$21.40 @ 5.15% \$1.10
 Utility Fund Tax \$21.40 @ 0.1% \$0.02
 State Gas Use Tax 125.11 @ \$0.024 = \$3.00
Total \$25.52

Please see the reverse side of this bill

Total - Additional Products & Services \$263.75

Customer Select supplier previous balance \$0.00
 ENERGY CHARGE-125THM@1.26016 PER THM 01/04/2016 \$157.52
 ADJUSTMENT 01/04/2016 \$106.23
Total Due ABC Supplier Inc. \$263.75
ABC Supplier Inc. Questions? Please call 1-555-555-5555