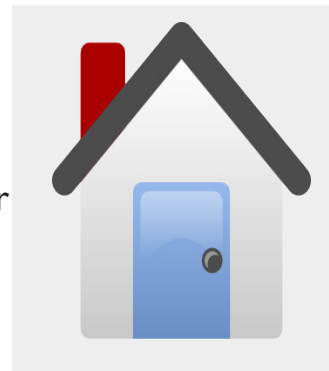


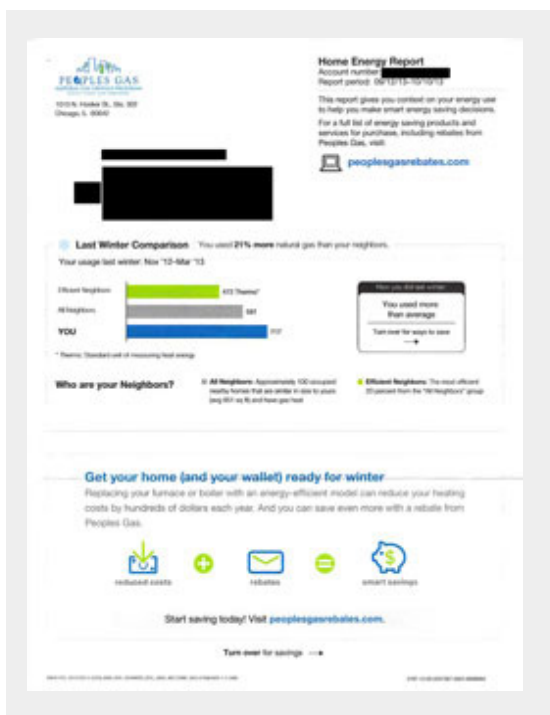


# The Facts on Energy Reports

Illinois utility customers have contacted CUB with questions about “energy reports” they received in the mail. These reports, which includes tips on making a home more efficient, give consumers information about their home’s natural gas or electricity usage, along with statements like this: “You used 21% more natural gas than your neighbors. That cost you about \$102 extra.”



Some frequently-asked questions about the report:



## What is an energy report?

Since 2007, Illinois law has required utilities to run programs aimed at helping customers lower their energy usage. Energy reports are one of many optional programs offered to Land of Lincoln utility customers. Other programs include refrigerator recycling, rebates for high-efficiency furnaces, and discounted light bulbs at hardware stores. Home Energy Reports display:

- How much energy (natural gas or electricity) consumers have used over a set period;
- How that usage (and expense) compares with “neighbors;”
- A “smiley face” grading system (the smiley face is absent if it’s not a favorable comparison); and
- Actions consumers can take to save energy and money.

Evaluations of such programs across the country have shown that they help consumers save energy and money.

## Who sends the report?

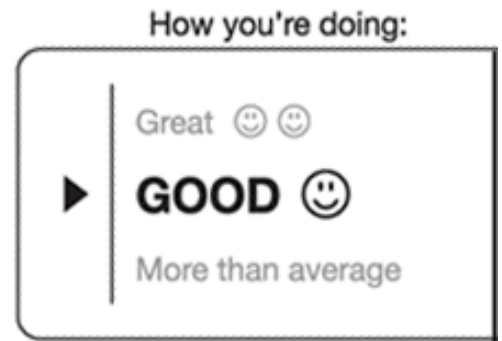
Opower, an Arlington, Virginia-based software company that promotes efficiency worldwide, works with several Illinois utilities to create and send the reports.

## How are the reports prepared?

The reports use utility information about your usage, along with publicly available data about the housing and energy characteristics of the area in which you live. The report doesn’t compare you to a specific neighbor, or even necessarily to neighbors on your block, but to a random sample of about 100 homes in the general vicinity that appear to be occupied and have similar characteristics, such as size and heating source. Utilities say research shows that for most customers a 100-home average is a good indication of typical usage.

## Are the reports accurate?

Home Energy Reports are generally accurate. But there may be inaccuracies with the data used to generate certain individual reports. For example, the publicly available square footage data for a particular home might not be correct. If you suspect there is an issue with the data used to create your report, contact the utility through the phone number or website provided on the report.



## Do any consumers receive reports that give positive energy usage feedback?

Yes. Many consumers receive positive energy usage feedback. The utilities use the “smiley face” approach to energy efficiency because research has shown that neighbor comparison programs are an affordable and effective way to lower consumer usage and costs. Data show that the reports work by getting consumers to pay attention to their usage, and by educating them on how to use efficiency to save money.

## What results do the reports get?

Opower’s efficiency programs have saved consumers worldwide hundreds of millions of dollars, according to the company’s website. Research has shown that programs like this result in average energy savings of roughly 2 percent, which benefits all consumers because it helps bring down energy prices. All utility efficiency programs in the state are evaluated to assess whether they are delivering the savings they have promised, and CUB monitors evaluation results and program proposals.

Under Illinois law, the utilities’ efficiency programs are required to meet cost-effectiveness requirements, meaning their overall money- and energy-saving benefits must outweigh the small “energy efficiency” charges that fund them on our bills. Utilities face fines if they can’t meet annual goals approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission. CUB supports these programs specifically because research shows they are effective at helping customers to learn about and reduce energy usage so they can lower their utility bills.

## Do the reports give neighbors my personal energy-usage information?

No. Participants never receive any information that helps them identify specific homes.

## Can I opt out?

Yes. The reports include a phone number you can call to opt out.

## Are there other energy analysis tools I can use?

One of the benefits of an energy report is that it prompts you to think about your energy usage. CUB Energy Saver, at [www.CUBenergysaver.com](http://www.CUBenergysaver.com), is a free online service that uses detailed and customized analysis to pinpoint the actions you need to take to cut your utility bills. CUB Energy Saver also connects to your ComEd account, recording actual savings. The tool has been showing users how to save an average of \$100 per year on energy bills. Plus, CUB Energy Saver rewards you with shopping and restaurant discounts for cutting your electric bill.

## What is CUB?

CUB is Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog organization. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, the consumer group has saved Illinois residents more than \$10 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline at 1-800-669-5556.