



Gas Competition

A guide for Nicor Gas customers

FACT SHEET

January 2018

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. This program is called “Customer Select.” Alternative suppliers sell their offers in a number of ways: door-to-door, over the phone and through the mail—but also at community events and through friends. We’ve even received reports of suppliers working through churches.

WARNING: Right now, the regulated utility—Nicor Gas—is still probably your best choice.

How does competition work?

Your gas bill is divided into three main sections: delivery, supply and taxes. The “delivery” section is where the utility makes a profit, and covers the costs of maintaining the pipes, reading the meter, mailing the bills, and all the other duties relating to administration and infrastructure. You will always pay the regulated utility, Nicor Gas, for delivery; this is how the company makes its money. Also, if there is a gas leak or any other problem with your gas service, you will still call Nicor Gas.

The “supply” section of the bill covers the cost of the actual gas you use. This is the part of your bill that changes if you opt for a different supplier. Traditionally, Nicor buys gas on the market and uses the pipelines to deliver that gas to your home. The utility is supposed to sell the gas at the same price it pays, with no markup. Choosing another supplier means that you will pay a different company to buy and supply that gas. Although those charges will still appear on your Nicor Gas bill, they are actually being set by that other supplier—and unlike the utility, that supplier’s rates are not regulated or reviewed by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC).

What consumer protections do I have?

Illinois law mandates:

- You do not have to pay a cancellation penalty if you cancel a contract within 10 days of the supplier’s charges first appearing on your gas bill.
- After that, no cancellation penalty can be higher than \$50.
- You must give consent, through a signature and a third-party verification process, before being signed up for a door-to-door offer.

Will I save money with another supplier?

There’s no guarantee you’ll save money. Since 2003 CUB has been monitoring alternative supplier offers, and the consumer group has found that about 9 of 10 offers marketed by suppliers have been money-losers. Remember, you don’t have to go with another supplier. It’s optional. If you don’t sign up, you will continue to be served by Nicor Gas with rates regulated by the ICC.

If you find gas choice too confusing or too risky, you’re not alone, and can opt to remain with the utility.

How to avoid natural gas scams

- 1) Be careful about people at your door who say they’re from the “gas company” and offer to lower your bill. Don’t give out your account number or gas bill unless you’re sure you want to sign up for an offer. A dishonest sales rep can use your account number to sign you up for an alternative supplier without permission.
- 2) Find out what the company is charging and how that compares with the utility’s price, below. Ask whether the supplier rate is a fixed rate, and for how long, or a variable rate that changes monthly.

Nicor Gas’ Price for January:
32¢/therm

- 3) Ask if the rate is an introductory rate, how long it lasts, and what the new rate will be. People complain to CUB that the low price they signed up for disappeared after a few months and their bill skyrocketed.
- 4) Ask if the plan charges any fees. CUB has seen monthly fees as high as \$9 a month. That’s about \$100 in costs over a year, before you even use any gas. Also ask if the company charges an exit fee if you want to leave a plan before the contract is up.
- 5) If you don’t want unregulated gas companies to bother you, get on your utility’s do-not-market list. Nicor customers should call 1-888-642-6748.

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. Alternative suppliers include their charges on the supply section of your utility bill. People on a bad supplier 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 you're with an alternative supplier. Here's where to look:

On your Nicor Gas bill:

If you're with another supplier, its name should be on page 1, under "A Message for You." A per-therm rate for the alternative supplier should be listed under "Additional Products and Services."

To end an offer:

If you want to end an alternative supplier offer, call the supplier. 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 the exit fee—if it charges one—waived, and push for a full refund. (Note: Under Illinois law, a company is not allowed to charge you an exit fee of more than \$50.)

If you're not pleased with the company's response, or you can't reach it, file a complaint with CUB, at CitizensUtilityBoard.org, or by calling 1-800-669-5556.

Nicor Gas
An AGL Resources Company

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

Account Summary for	
Account Number:	
Meter Number:	
Service Address:	Roselle
Bill Period:	12/02/15 - 01/04/16 (33 days)
Bill Issue Date:	01/07/16
Total Previous Balance	\$21.49
Payment Received 12/29/2015 - Thank you!	-\$21.49
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

Delivery Charges 12/02/2015 - 01/04/2016		\$21.40
Monthly Customer Charge		\$13.77
All Therms 125.11 @ \$0.0485 =		\$6.07
Environmental Cost Recovery 113.77 @ \$-0.0006 =		\$-0.07
Government Agency Compensation Adjustment		\$0.05
Franchise Cost Adjustment		\$0.32
Transportation Service Charge 125.11 Therms @ \$-0.0211 =		\$-2.64
Balancing and Storage Adjustment		\$2.53
Efficiency Program 125.11 @ \$0.0043 =		\$0.54
Qualified Infrastructure Chrg \$ 17.55 @ 3.59% =		\$0.63
Qualified Infrastructure Chrg \$ 1.76 @ 3.84% =		\$0.07
Taxes		\$4.12
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

Monthly Energy Profile

Current Reading	Previous Reading	Usage GCF	BTU Factor	Therms	Avg. Daily Therms	Avg. Daily Therms
010416	13228	121	1.034	125.11	3.75	3.79
1205	854					

CFP x BTU Factor = Therms

Please see the reverse side of this bill for additional billing explanations.

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.

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