

It's time to take control of your energy budget.



Utility deregulation is making it easier than ever to manage your natural gas and electricity costs. Here's how.

Small businesses have choices when it comes to managing energy supplies and costs. For example, you can choose between continuing to purchase your natural gas or electricity from your local utility company, or you can purchase energy—delivered through your utility—from an authorized energy service company (ESCO). Options like these give you the choices and control you need to manage your budget, minimize your energy costs and maximize your savings.

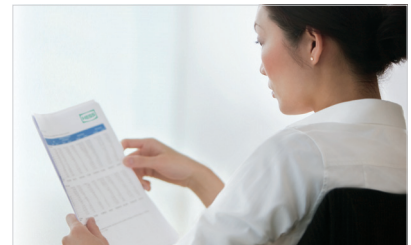
Here is a closer look at these two options—and what they can mean for your business.

Continuing to Purchase Energy from Your Local Utility

Utilities now offer products and services specifically geared to the small business customer.

Each utility's range of programs is different, but some small business services might include:

- › Opportunities for energy audits to help you understand your energy use and find opportunities for conservation.
- › Incentives for energy-efficient upgrades such as programmable thermostats and compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs).
- › E-billing or automated payment programs to help streamline your energy management.



Check with your local utility to learn about the specific small business energy pricing and programs that may be available in your area.



Switching to an ESCO

ESCOs compete for your energy business with competitive rates on natural gas and electricity, plus pricing and contract options that utilities might not be able to offer. These options can include price protection plans to shield you from market volatility and market rate plans to help you take advantage of dips in market prices.

What changes? What stays the same?

When you switch to an ESCO as your natural gas and/or electricity supplier, your energy delivery remains the same.

- › There's no interruption in service. Your energy is still delivered through your local utility.
- › If you have an outage or other energy emergency, you still call your utility for service.
- › Depending on the supplier you choose, you may still receive your bills from—and make your payments to—your utility (the supplier will be listed on your utility bill). Ask about this convenience when considering a supplier's proposal.

How to get started

The [New York State Public Service Commission](#) (PSC) and its [Power to Choose](#) website has resources to help you search for an energy supplier. Just click “How to Choose” or enter your ZIP code for a list of the suppliers in your area. The PSC¹ offers the following suggestions when evaluating suppliers:

- › **Compare** prices and services offered.
- › **Review** terms that may cover special fees, deposits, renewals and switching procedures.
- › **Consider** customer service features such as hours of operation and toll-free numbers.
- › **Research** the company's background. You may want to know how long the company has been in business, its location or if it is affiliated with a utility or any other company.
- › **Always** review the terms and conditions before committing to an ESCO offer.

Choosing the energy supplier, the products and the contract terms that are best for your business can be as quick and simple as completing an online registration form. The time to start taking more control of your energy budget is now.

¹ New York State Public Service Commission “Power to Choose” website. This reference should not be construed in any way as a specific PSC endorsement of Hess Small Business Services.