



# CUBFacts

## Power Smart Pricing for Ameren Customers

### What is the “Power Smart Pricing” program?

Illinois is first in the nation to launch a statewide residential real-time pricing program, which offers Ameren customers a new way to pay for electricity. CUB has found the program could help cut power costs for a great many electric customers, especially those willing and able to change how and when they use major appliances.

In fact, the program also helps reduce demand for pollution-causing power plants and it can help prevent blackouts by reducing stress on the electricity system during “peak” times, when power usage and prices are at their highest.

While savings aren’t guaranteed, participants in the program have cut their power bills by an average of about 15 percent.

### How does Power Smart Pricing work?

Ameren traditionally charges residential customers a fixed electric rate that changes only twice a year. Power Smart Pricing customers however, pay the market price that can change every hour.

This price variability may sound scary, but for most of the year, the hourly rate is lower than Ameren’s default flat rate. by the season (winter or summer). However, the power smart pricing program bills customers at a price that changes each hour according to the actual market price.

### How can I save money?

The Power Smart Pricing program gives you tools to help adjust your electricity-usage habits. If the price is expected to climb above a certain predetermined level (13 cents per kWh), you will be called or e-mailed the night before, allowing you to change the next day’s power-usage plans to avoid any high-price times.

You can plan your energy usage by checking the “day ahead” prices – a highly accurate estimate of the approaching day’s hourly prices – either by phone or online.

Power Smart Pricing also will provide tips on cutting your energy costs and personalized online account information to track whether or not you are saving under the program.

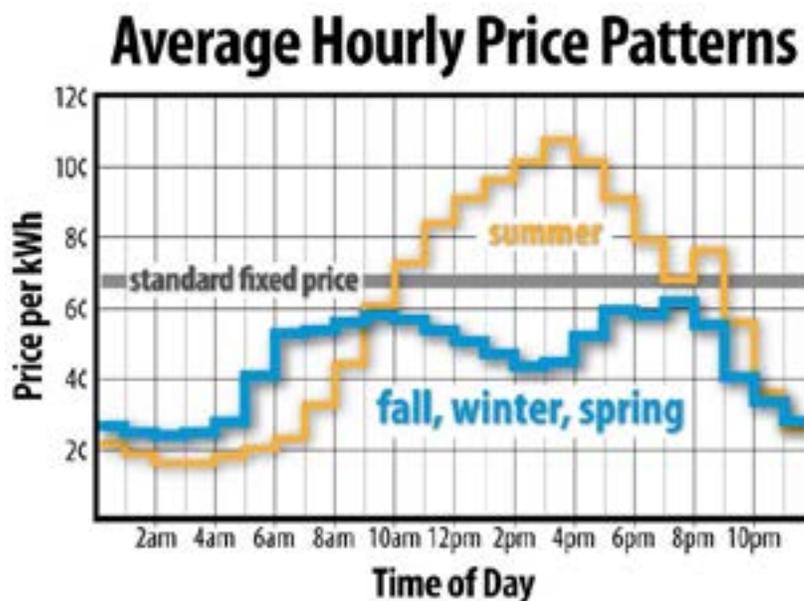
### Is Power Smart Pricing right for my household?

If you consistently use above 350 kWh in a month or have a monthly electric bill that is more than \$50, the program could be right for you. It’s perfect for people who want to take more responsibility for their electricity usage and are curious about how to cut their power bills by changing when they use electricity.

If you heat your home with electricity, or

### How do I learn more about Power Smart Pricing?

Go to [www.PowerSmartPricing.org](http://www.PowerSmartPricing.org), or call **877-655-6028**. Ameren’s program is managed by Elevate Energy, a Chicago non-profit organization.



own an electric vehicle that that you charge at night, you will probably save on the program.

### **What are the requirements of the program?**

The program requires a minimum 12-month commitment. It also requires a special meter that reads electricity usage on an hourly basis. The meter, which has to be accessible to the power company, will be installed at no charge, but you will have to pay a \$2.25 monthly fee for leasing it. (Typical savings should more than cover the \$27 annual cost of this fee.)

### **How will my electric bill look different?**

You will pay all the charges on your electric bill now, with two differences. First, your monthly bill will have the \$2.25 monthly “meter lease” fee added to it. (This charge is in addition to the “meter charge” already on your bill. That fixed charge, which all electric customers pay, covers the costs associated with such tasks as meter reading and testing the meter equipment.)

Also, you won't pay Ameren's standard per-kilowatt-hour electricity rate. Remember, under real-time pricing, you could be charged a vastly different rate for each hour of electricity usage over the course of a month. Your bill will include the number of kilowatt-hours you used over the course of the billing period and a total cost for that electricity. Ameren customers who want more detail will be able to find an online breakdown of how much electricity they used and the rate they paid each hour over that period, at [www.PowerSmartPricing.org](http://www.PowerSmartPricing.org). On the website, you can also view a comparison of what you would have paid under your utility's standard rates versus what you paid in the power-smart pricing program. You can also request this bill comparison by mail.

*If you have any additional questions about these programs, please call CUB, at 1-800-669-5556.*

*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.*

### **Real-time Tips for Saving Money**

Things you can do to save during expensive “peak” hours:

- Temporarily change your central air conditioner to a warmer setting. If you have a window air conditioner, turn it off or put it on a warmer setting.
- If the summer heat gets to you, plan a trip to the beach or a pool during the peak hours. You also can go to an air-conditioned public space, such as a movie house, a museum, an art gallery, a shopping mall, or library.
- If you have an electric stove or oven, grill or enjoy a cool meal like a sandwich or salad.
- If possible, use energy-guzzling appliances like the dishwasher, washer and dryer, and basement dehumidifier in the morning or evening when prices are lower.

For information on incentives to make energy efficiency investments, visit CUB's Efficiency page, [www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org](http://www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org).