

Smart Energy Rewards

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

What is Smart Energy Rewards?

Smart Energy Rewards by San Diego Community Power is a pilot program that allows Community Power to adjust the settings of smart thermostats or connected water heaters to reduce energy use when energy demand is high.

These adjustments reduce strain on the energy grid and may help lower your energy bill while keeping your home comfortable and supplied with hot water.

How does Smart Energy Rewards work for smart thermostats?

By enrolling an eligible smart thermostat, you allow Community Power to temporarily adjust its temperature settings during a Smart Flex Event, when electricity demand is high, and the grid is under strain.

Smart Flex Events can be called between June 1 and October 31 for up to four hours between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Up to five events can be called per week. Smart Flex Events will not be called during weekends or Federal holidays unless State officials declare a grid emergency.

During these events, your thermostat receives a signal to raise the temperature and reduce the use of your air conditioning. Depending on the weather, Community Power may signal your thermostat to precool your home up to one hour before the event begins.

You always keep control of your thermostat, but frequent overrides may affect eligibility for participation incentives.

How does Smart Energy Rewards work for water heaters?

Traditionally, water heaters heat water regularly to a standard temperature throughout the day, even when electricity is most expensive.

Water heaters enrolled in Smart Energy Rewards superheat water in the tank well above the standard temperature twice a day. Community Power will send your water heater a daily signal to superheat when electricity costs and demand are lower, usually before 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Who is eligible to participate in Smart Energy Rewards?

Smart Energy Rewards is available to Community Power residential customers with an eligible smart thermostat or heat pump water heater. Applicants must be the account holder or an authorized user.

Smart Thermostats must:

- Be connected to air conditioning.
- Be on the list of eligible models.
- Not be enrolled in another demand response program, such as the Emergency Load Relief Program or Demand Side Grid Support.

Heat pump water heaters must:

- Be new and in the process of being installed through TECH Clean California at their service address.

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- Have a thermostatic mixing valve.

Customers who previously opted out of Community Power must first return to Community Power before applying. Customers who opted out 60 or more days after their original Community Power start date may be unable to immediately return.

How do I enroll in Smart Energy Rewards?

- **Heat pump water heaters:** You can [apply using the water heater enrollment form](#).
- **Smart thermostats:** You can [apply using the smart thermostat enrollment form](#).

Enrollment availability and eligibility are subject to change.

Can I enroll multiple devices?

Yes, up to three smart thermostats and up to three water heaters are each eligible to earn an enrollment and ongoing incentive.

What happens if I opt out of Community Power or if I move out of Community Power's service territory?

Customers who opt out of Community Power service or move outside of its service territory will be unenrolled from the pilot and forfeit any future or unpaid incentives.

Can I unenroll from Smart Energy Rewards?

You can unenroll from Smart Energy Rewards at any time by contacting Community Power and requesting to be unenrolled. Unenrolling from the program forfeits all ongoing incentives.

I think I'm already enrolled in a similar program. How is Smart Energy Rewards different?

Smart Energy Rewards is how Community Power customers can temporarily reduce or shift electricity use when demand is high. While there are several programs that do this, Smart Energy Rewards is only for Community Power customers. Participants may only be enrolled in one demand response program.

For smart thermostats: During warmer days, Community Power may adjust the thermostat to precool the home ahead of the start of a Smart Flex Event.

For heat pump water heaters: Smart Home Flex works differently and is coordinated with the TECH Clean California statewide initiative.

If you're installing a new heat pump water heater through TECH Clean California, you are required to enroll in a water heater rewards program, like Smart Energy Rewards, and a demand response program like OhmConnect.

What is OhmConnect and why do I need an OhmConnect account for my water heater?

OhmConnect is the approved residential demand response program with the TECH Clean California statewide initiative. Participants installing an eligible heat pump water heater must create an account with OhmConnect and enroll their device through Community Power.



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Customers who enroll their device with OhmConnect are ineligible for Smart Energy Rewards because Community Power will be unable to adjust the water heater's settings.

If you previously enrolled your device with OhmConnect, you must unenroll and remove your device from your account before applying for Smart Energy Rewards. Be careful not to delete your OhmConnect account.

What data is collected and how is it used?

Community Power and its contracted service provider may collect data such as a customer's name, contact information, energy usage and production and the thermostat's operational data. Service providers used by Community Power during this pilot program are obligated to protect our customers' data.

The data Community Power receives from the customers' devices will be used to inform participation and performance during a Smart Flex Event and may be anonymously summarized in publicly available studies and pilot evaluation reports. These reports will not individually identify customers.

This data is strictly confidential in accordance with Community Power's [Privacy Policy](#), which can be found in the footer of our website, at SDCommunityPower.org/.

Community Power will not sell customer data to third-party data collectors or brokers.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Contact Community Power by emailing us at SmartEnergyRewards@SDCommunityPower.org or calling 888-382-0169 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Smart Flex Event Questions

What are Smart Flex Events?

Smart Flex Events occur when high energy use is expected to put a strain on energy resources and increase electricity costs, or when a grid emergency is called by state officials to reduce energy usage. A signal is sent to your smart device(s) to temporarily adjust their settings to help prevent your system from turning on and using energy.

Can I opt out of a Smart Flex Event?

Yes, you can opt out of a Smart Flex Event at any time. Since Smart Flex Events are called when electricity demand and costs are high, we encourage you not to opt out. Opting out too many times may jeopardize your participation incentive.

What if my home becomes uncomfortable during a Smart Flex Event?

To help ensure that you are as comfortable as possible during a Smart Flex Event on warmer days, we may send a signal to the thermostat to precool your home to help maintain a comfortable temperature.

You are always in control of your comfort and can override the automatic adjustments at any time. Adjusting the temperature during a Smart Flex Event will automatically opt you out of the event.



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Incentive Questions

What incentives are available, and how are they earned?

Community Power offers incentives for approved smart thermostats and connected heat pump water heaters that remain enrolled and participate.

Smart Thermostats

- Enrollment incentive: \$50 per smart thermostat, issued after successful enrollment.
- Participation incentive: \$25 per thermostat each year for continued participation in Smart Flex Events. Participation incentives are typically issued annually in November.

Heat Pump Water Heaters

- Enrollment incentive: \$50 per connected water heater, issued after successful enrollment and connection to Community Power.
- Participation incentive: \$5 per month, up to \$60 per year, for continued participation. Participation incentives are issued twice a year, typically in July and November.

If you unenroll from Smart Energy Rewards, you will no longer be eligible for ongoing participation incentives.

How will I get my incentive?

Enrollment and participation incentives are sent as paper checks mailed to the address provided during enrollment. Digital payment options are not available at this time.

When will I receive the enrollment incentive and participation incentive?

Enrollment incentives will be mailed once Community Power has approved your enrollment application, and your device is successfully connected. It may take up to 10 business days to process your application.

Participation incentives for smart thermostats are mailed in November. Connected water heater participation incentives are mailed in July and November. It may take up to 20 business days to process and send participation incentives.

Please allow for up to two weeks for mail delivery of the checks.

Smart Thermostat Questions

Which smart thermostats are eligible to enroll in Smart Energy Rewards?

A current list of eligible smart thermostats is available on the Smart Energy Rewards webpage, SDCommunityPower.org/Smart-Energy-Rewards.

I don't have air conditioning. Can I still enroll and participate?

No. Customers must have an air conditioning unit or system that can be controlled by a smart thermostat to participate in Smart Energy Rewards.



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Heat Pump Water Heater Questions

What connected water heaters are eligible to enroll in Smart Energy Rewards?

Connected heat pump water heater(s) must be a new eligible model being installed as part of the [TECH Clean California heat pump water heater program](#) and must be connected to the internet using a Universal Communication Module (CTA-2045 /EcoPort) or, for Rheem water heaters only, through Wi-Fi.

[View the current list of TECH Clean California eligible water heaters through the WatterSaver website.](#)

Please note: GE water heaters cannot currently participate in Smart Energy Rewards.

Can I enroll a water heater that is already installed?

No. Only new eligible water heaters being installed through TECH Clean California may enroll. Previously installed water heaters are not eligible for Smart Energy Rewards.

Universal Communication Module Questions

What is a Universal Communication Module?

A Universal Communication Module is a small device that plugs into your water heater's CTA-2045/EcoPort.

All water heaters, except Rheem Hybrid Water Heaters, need a Universal Communication Module to receive signals from Community Power and participate in Smart Energy Rewards. You will only receive your enrollment incentive once Community Power confirms that the Universal Communication Module is installed.

How do I get a Universal Communication Module?

After you submit your enrollment application, Community Power will review your information and determine if a Universal Communication Module is needed for your water heater. If required, it will be shipped to you at no cost.

Generally, most heat pump water heaters that are not manufactured by Rheem require a Universal Communication Module to participate in Smart Energy Rewards. If you have a Rheem heat pump water heater but are unable to connect it to Wi-Fi, Community Power will provide a Universal Communication Module at no cost.

Please indicate that you need one during Step 3 on your enrollment form.

How do I install a Universal Communication Module?

An abridged Universal Communication Module installation guide for the most common brands of water heaters will be included in your shipment. To view the full guides, please visit [WatterSaver](#) and download the connection guide for your specific water heater.

You can find digital versions below:

- [A.O. Smith, American, Reliance, State, Lochinvar and U.S. Craftmaster](#)
- [Ariston and American Standard](#)
- [LG](#)
- [Rheem, Ruud and Richmond](#)



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Your Universal Communication Module must be installed and connected for your water heater to participate in the program and to receive your enrollment and participation incentives.

Please note: If your Universal Communication Module is not installed within 30 days of receiving it, you will be unenrolled from Smart Energy Rewards and you will forfeit all incentives. You may be asked to return the Universal Communication Module to Community Power.

Who do I contact if I need assistance installing a Universal Communication Module?

If you need assistance installing your Universal Communication Module or have any questions, please contact us at SmartEnergyRewards@SDCommunityPower.org to schedule a support call. A water heater contractor can also help you install a Universal Communication Module.

How do I return a Universal Communication Module?

Contact Community Power if you want to return your Universal Communication Module, and we will email you a prepaid return shipping label.

