

Competitive Electric Suppliers





The Job of the Attorney General

Attorney General

Maura Healey is the chief lawyer and law enforcement officer of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.





Who the AGO Serves & How

Who:

The Commonwealth

Residents of the Commonwealth and their public interests

State departments, officers, and commissions

Groups of consumers

How:

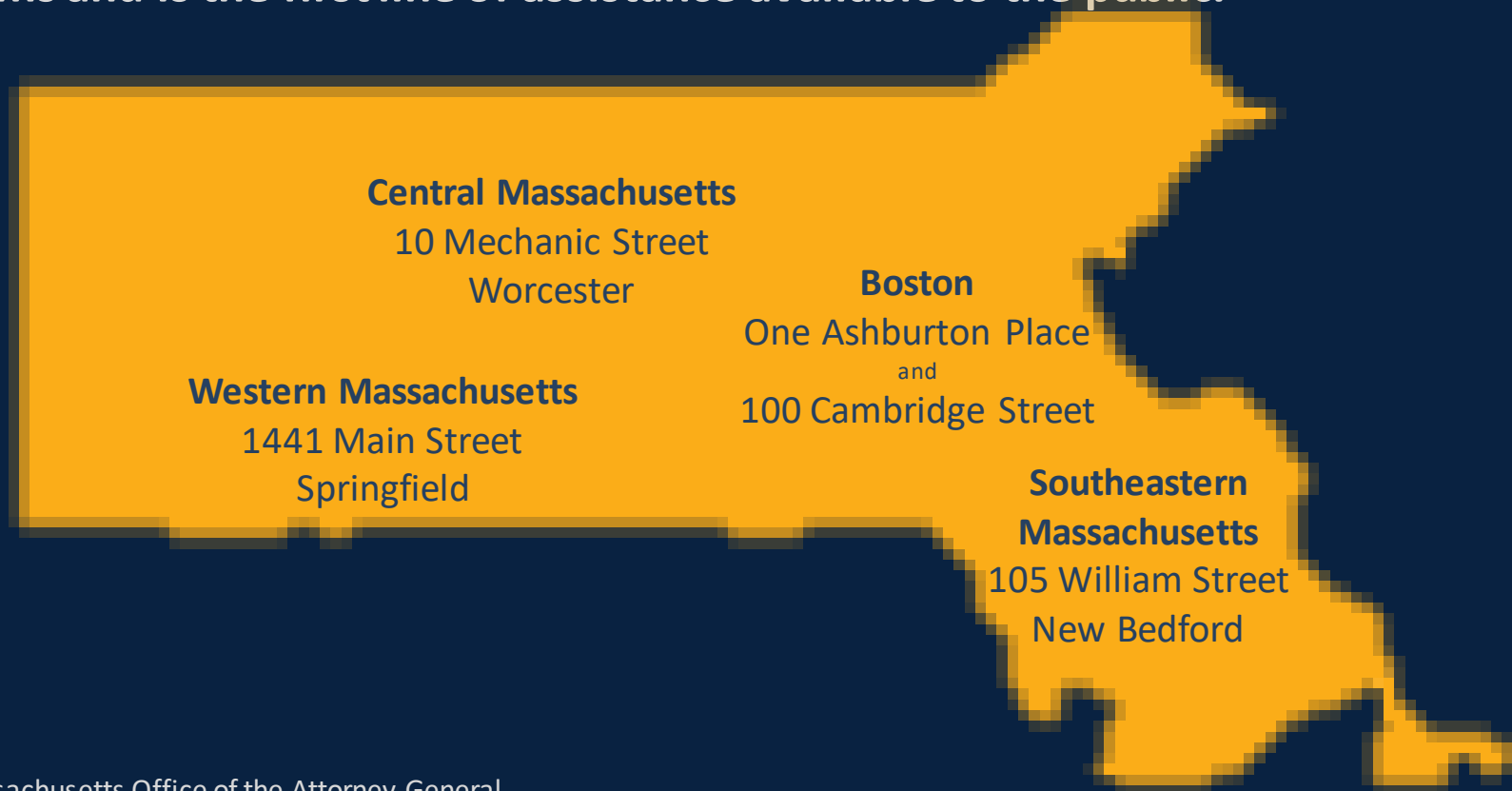
Four Major Ways this Work is Executed





Where the AGO is located

Attorney General Maura Healey and her staff engage with every city and town in the Commonwealth. The Attorney General's Public Inquiry and Assistance Center supports over thirty regional consumer and face to face mediation programs and is the first line of assistance available to the public.





What is a Competitive Electric Supplier

- A competitive supplier is NOT your utility. They are a company to purchase electricity wholesale and sell it to retail customers.
- If you switch to a competitive supplier you would see it reflected on a line item on your electricity bill.



Your Electric Supply Options

- **Basic Service:** From your utility company. Electricity procured every 6 months and is generally the most affordable.
- **Municipal Aggregation:** Your city/town negotiates a price with a competitive supplier for the city/town's residents.
- **Competitive Supply:** When you sign up with a competitive supplier to receive electric supply at a specific rate.



Tips for Consumers

- **Beware of impersonators:** Your utility will never go door to door or ask you to see your bill or account.
- **Protect your utility account number as if it were your credit card.**
- **Know how to evaluate your electric rate:** Your basic service rate changes every 6 months, it is usually higher in the winter and lower in the summer.



Tips for Consumers – Contracts

- When you switch to a competitive supplier you are signing a contract. Before signing you should ask:
 - How long is the contract?
 - Is my rate fixed or variable?
 - Does this contract auto-renew?
 - Is there a cancellation fee?
 - Are you saving money over the course of the contract?
 - If my contract auto-renews, will I be charged the same rate or a different rate?

You have 3 days to cancel a contract with a competitive supplier.



Example

- It is February, you're on basic service and you're paying 12.67 cents per kilowatt/hour.
- A competitive supplier offers you a fixed rate of 11.20 cents per kilowatt/hour and a 9 month contract term.
- Should you switch?



Example, continued

- Probably not!
- While you don't know for sure, your price with basic service rate is likely to go down in the Summer months. The price in the example is National Grid's price from February of 2018, it went down to 10.87 cents per kilowatt/hour in May.
- That means in the summer months, when total electricity bills are at their highest, you will be paying more than if you had stayed on the basic service rate.
- The AGO found that consumers who switched to competitive supplier lost \$253 million over the three years studied.



If you're having trouble paying your bills

- Your utility offers a number of flexible billing options including: budget billing, low-income rates, arrearage management and other options.
- You can file a complaint with the Attorney General's Office and request assistance from the Consumer Advocacy Service.
- Know that the AGO has found the average customer who signs up with a competitive electric supplier pays **\$226 more** than had they stayed on basic service.



Consumer Protections

- Your source of heating cannot be shut off during the winter months (11/15 through 3/15). Though your heat may not come from electricity.
- If all residents of your home are over 65 your electricity and/or gas cannot be shut off without permission from the Department of Public Utilities.
- If you are having a financial hardship and one of the following applies you cannot have your electricity shut off without authorization from DPU:
 - You, or someone in the home is seriously ill
 - You have an infant under 12 months in your home
 - All adults in the home are age 65 or older and a minor child resides in the home.