

## Op-Ed: 4 steps you can take to reduce your energy bills

You may have seen an increase in your energy bills this winter season due to colder than normal temperatures. Yet, there are several actions that you can take – whether you are a homeowner, renter, business owner, or public sector entity – to reduce your energy costs now.

The American Council for an Energy-Efficiency Economy recently ranked Rhode Island #3 in the nation for the success of its energy efficiency programs. Exploring these programs and incentives, which are administered by National Grid for the majority of consumers, should be your first step to reduce your utility costs.

**1) Schedule an energy audit** - Request a no-cost energy assessment of your single-family or multi-family residential building by calling 1-888-633-7947 or visiting [www.riseengineering.com/get-started](http://www.riseengineering.com/get-started). Once scheduled, a certified energy specialist will review your home for efficiency opportunities and may install energy-saving measures at no cost to you, such as LED light bulbs, programmable thermostats, smart power strips and hot water pipe insulation. These instant solutions can help lower electric, heating and water bills immediately. Energy audits are available for business customers as well.

**2) Enroll in a budget plan with National Grid** - This removes the peaks and valleys from your energy bills by spreading your projected annual costs into more predictable monthly payments. For more information about this program, visit <https://www.nationalgridus.com/RI-Home/Bill-Help/Budget-Billing>.

**3) Sign up for payment assistance** - Finally, if you are still struggling to pay your electricity bills, there may be programs to help. National Grid customers can view options for bill assistance at <https://www.nationalgridus.com/RI-Home/Bill-Help/>. If you are not a National Grid customer, you should contact your utility to ask about available programs.

**4) Switch to a supplier that offers a better rate** - You have access to a competitive marketplace where you can shop for your electricity supply, found at: [www.ri.gov/app/dpuc/empowerri](http://www.ri.gov/app/dpuc/empowerri). This free online resource helps you compare energy supply prices and terms to meet your energy needs. You can use this information to make an informed choice when comparing National Grid electric supply rates to those offered by third-party competitive suppliers. The Division of Public Utilities & Carriers can answer any questions you have about switching electricity suppliers by calling (401) 780-9700 or visiting [www.ripuc.org/utilityinfo/electric/faq1a.pdf](http://www.ripuc.org/utilityinfo/electric/faq1a.pdf).

The Energy Efficiency & Resources Management Council in partnership with in-state utilities, strives to develop energy efficiency programs that lower our demand for electricity and natural gas, and thus, lower the costs we all pay.

Energy efficiency is both a short-term and a long-term solution. Reducing your energy use now lowers this month's bill and also reduces stress on energy infrastructure, which keeps costs more stable and predictable throughout the seasons.

All of us - residents, the public and private sectors - are working together to become more energy efficient and alleviate the pain of our energy costs.

NAME, TITLE

Rhode Island Energy Efficiency & Resource Management Council