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**TOWN OF WHATELY  
COMMUNITY CHOICE POWER SUPPLY PROGRAM**

**EDUCATION AND INFORMATION PLAN**

**PREPARED BY**

**COLONIAL POWER GROUP, INC.**

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**1 OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

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M.G.L. c. 164, § 134(a) requires that municipal aggregators “fully inform participating ratepayers in advance of automatic enrollment that they are to be automatically enrolled and that they have the right to opt-out of the aggregated entity without penalty. In addition, such disclosure shall prominently state all charges to be made and shall include full disclosure of the basic service rate, how to access it, and the fact that it is available to them without penalty.”

The Education and Information Plan (“Education Plan”) component of Whately’s Community Choice Power Supply Program (“Program”) is two-pronged. The first is general education through which Colonial Power Group, Inc. (CPG) will provide information to eligible consumers by way of the media, electronic communications, and public presentations. The second is direct mail notification which will be mailed out to eligible consumers and will contain information regarding participation and rights.

The purpose of the Town of Whately’s (“Town”) Education Plan is to raise awareness and provide eligible consumers with information concerning their opportunities, options and rights for participation in the Program.

The Education Plan consists of two parts:

- a) General Education: This will be conducted through the media, public meetings and presentations, and electronic communications and will inform eligible consumers about the Program.

- b) Direct Mail Notification: This will be mailed out to eligible consumers and will contain information regarding participation and rights, as well as comparative prices and terms.

The general education effort will provide a broad back drop for the direct mail notification, boosting awareness of the mailing and its purpose and providing reinforcement of key information.

## **1.1 GENERAL EDUCATION**

The general education will provide a description of the Program for eligible consumers. It will consist of a public relations effort, advertising outreach, public presentations and electronic information sources (i.e. toll-free telephone number, websites, etc.). The general education will provide specific information about the Program and maximize the impact of the direct mail notification which will create an environment of public awareness.

### **1.1.1 Press Conference**

The initial launch of the Program will be a media event featuring representatives from the Town, its Competitive Supplier, and CPG. This event will be designed to create an understanding of the Program as a whole including consumer rights and benefits. Representatives from local and regional print and broadcast sources will be invited to attend.

A press kit will be assembled to introduce the Program. Materials may include:

- a) news release;
- b) background information;
- c) deregulation and choice information; and
- d) frequently asked questions.

### **1.1.2 Media Outreach**

Following the launch of the Program, media outreach will continue through local cable television shows, newspapers and internet sources to provide greater public education and to describe the Program, the opt-out process and the toll-free telephone number. Outreach will include public service announcements (PSAs), scheduling interviews of Program spokespersons with local media outlets and securing a positive media presence.

A series of news releases will be distributed to achieve the aforementioned goals. Follow-up news releases will update the media on the status of the Program's progress.

Sample Media List:

- a) The Recorder
- b) Daily Hampshire Gazette
- c) GazetteNet.com

- d) Local Cable TV – Channel 12 Frontier Community Access Television (FCAT)

### **1.1.3 Notices and Public Postings**

Notices in newspapers and in the Town Offices describing the Program, the opt-out process and the toll-free telephone number will further reinforce the Program’s details. Postings will be placed in public buildings (i.e. library, Senior Center, etc.) which will create the necessary repetition of messages required to motivate consumer action and build awareness and understanding.

### **1.1.4 Customer Service Center**

CPG will maintain a toll-free telephone number to address eligible consumer’s questions regarding the Program, deregulation, the opt-out process, price information and other issues eligible consumers may raise. CPG’s customer service center has the capability to provide interpretation services for more than 200 different languages.

### **1.1.5 Website**

All information regarding the Program will be posted on CPG’s website, which is linked to the Town’s website. The website will note if the Town has chosen to fund personnel costs associated with an Energy Manager position(s) through an Operational Adder. CPG’s website will have links to Eversource Energy, formerly WMECo (“Local Distributor”), the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (“Department”), and the Town’s Competitive Supplier.

### **1.1.6 Translation Services**

CPG’s website is equipped with translation services. This will provide for all information regarding the Program to be translated into more than 100 languages. The Town will retain any additional translation services as it determines to be necessary or appropriate for eligible consumers who are hard-to-reach, English is not their primary language or self-identify as speaking English “less than very well”.

### **1.1.7 Public Presentations**

CPG will provide presentations to the Selectboard and to any interested community group (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, Energy Committee, etc.). The Town will seek to identify and potentially work with appropriate community and neighborhood-based groups to assist with education and outreach efforts. The Town may leverage email lists and newsletters to ensure consumers are receiving accurate and timely information.

Sample Community Groups:

- a) Berkshire Environmental Action Team
- b) Berkshire Community Green Network

- c) Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- d) Berkshire Node 350 MA
- e) Mothers Out Front

### **1.1.8 Impaired Physical Capabilities**

The Town will employ assistive technology to ensure all eligible consumers, including those with impaired physical capabilities who require visual or aural assistance, are properly informed. Information sessions will be held in accessible locations, typically in the Town Offices, the Senior Center or the library. Consumers who require assistance (e.g. deaf or otherwise hard-of-hearing, blind or otherwise visually impaired) will have the opportunity to do so ahead of any such public presentation.

The opt-out notification will include a separate Language Access Document which will provide instructions regarding how consumers can receive visual or aural assistance with Program information.

### **1.1.9 Ongoing Education and Outreach**

Once the Program is up and running, education and outreach will continue and will be ongoing. Many of the same vehicles that were utilized prior to and during the launch of the Program will be leveraged to ensure participating consumers are updated in a timely manner on the status of the Program's progress and alerted to any changes in the price and product offering. This will be accomplished through electronic communications, the media, and public meetings and presentations. Specifically, the Town will notify consumers using the following methods: Town and CPG websites; press releases and local cable television shows; and presentations to the Selectboard or to any interested community group (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, Energy Committee, etc.). In addition, notices will be placed in newspapers, in the Town Offices and in public buildings (i.e. library, Senior Center, etc.) further describing the Program's details including the price, the product offering, the opt-out information and the toll-free telephone number. CPG will continue to maintain a toll-free telephone number to address eligible and participating consumers' questions regarding the Program, price information, product offerings, and other issues eligible and participating consumers may raise.

## **1.2 DIRECT MAIL NOTIFICATION**

### **1.2.1 Opt-Out**

The opt-out notification will be sent via standard mail to the billing address of each eligible consumer receiving Basic Service. The notification envelope will be clearly marked as containing time sensitive information related to the Program. The notification will contain a letter describing the Program.

The letter will:

- a) introduce and describe the Program and provide information regarding participation and rights;

- b) inform eligible consumers they have the right to opt-out of the aggregated entity without penalty;
- c) prominently state all charges to be made and a comparison of price and primary terms of the Competitive Supplier and Basic Service;
- d) inform eligible consumers if the Town has chosen to fund personnel costs associated with an Energy Manager position(s) through an Operational Adder;
- e) explain the opt-out process;
- f) inform eligible consumers if the Town has chosen to offer an optional green product and explain the opt-in process; and
- g) include instructions for consumers who are hard-to-reach, English is not their primary language or self-identify as speaking English “less than very well” (i.e. toll-free telephone number).

The opt-out notification will also contain a postcard with a simple check off and signature line for eligible consumers who do not wish to participate. Eligible consumers will have 30 days from the date of receipt of the mailing to return the opt-out postcard in the pre-addressed envelope provided. New eligible consumers will be enrolled in the Program in accordance with applicable Local Distributor rules. Such enrollments shall begin no sooner than 37 days after the mailing of the opt-out notification. Upon initiation of service, these new eligible consumers will receive the same opt-out information as all other eligible consumers.

### **1.2.2 Limited English Proficiency**

The opt-out notification will include a separate Language Access Document to ensure that the mailing is meaningful to all consumers with limited English proficiency and other language access needs. The required Language Access Document will translate the following text into 26 languages.

Important notice enclosed from Town of Whately about your electricity service.  
Translate the notice immediately. Call the number or visit the website, above, for help.

## **2 TIMELINE**

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The schedule below assumes timely preparation of mailing lists as well as space and time availability in the media. Meetings and public presentations will be scheduled upon mutually agreeable schedules. On-going education will continue beyond the 47-day period outlined below through the media and the toll-free telephone number.

- Day 0: Press conference held announcing the Program and introducing the Competitive Supplier
- Day 1: Customer service center (i.e. toll-free telephone number) opens
- Day 1: Press release issued on direct mail notification and start-up of the customer service center
- Day 1: Program information posted on the following websites: CPG, Town, and Competitive Supplier

- Day 1-7: Postings placed in public buildings
- Day 1-40: Public presentations provided informing community groups about the Program and eligible consumer rights
- Day 1-40: Media interviews conducted with Program representatives, as needed
- Day 10: Direct mail notification sent to each eligible consumer (see Day 47)
- Day 12-35: Display ads placed in newspapers describing the Program and the opt-out process and providing the toll-free telephone number
- Day 14: Local cable television show airs describing the Program and the opt-out process and providing the toll-free telephone number
- Day 16-30: PSAs air describing the Program and the opt-out process and providing the toll-free telephone number
- Day 47: Deadline reached for eligible consumers returning the opt-out postcard
- Day 47+: On-going education continues through the media, the toll-free telephone number and individual opt-out mailings to new eligible Basic Service consumers
- Day 90+: Follow-up news releases issued summarizing the Program's status

### **3 BUDGET**

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<b>Notification Method</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Direct Mailing	Competitive Supplier	\$2,000
Press Conference	CPG	\$500
Television Media	CPG	\$500
Newspaper Media	CPG	\$2,000
Electronic Communications	CPG	-----
Public Presentations	CPG	-----