

For Tenants:

Ithaca's Electrification program supports property owners to upgrade their rental properties and switch from gas to electric for heating, water heating, and appliances. So where does that leave Tenants?

Support and financial incentives are available to property owners to upgrade their properties for energy efficiency, and to switch from gas to electricity for heating, cooling, water heating, and appliances. NYS and federal money is available to property owners to do this work. The amount of money available to them is based on their tenant's income, not their own.

Rental properties can be upgraded, including improving the insulation and fixing any air leaks that cause drafts, and getting off fossil fuels. Completing this work would make your home more comfortable, healthy, and efficient, and also address climate change.

If you rent your home you can get in touch with your landlord or the property manager to make sure they know about the effort to electrify all buildings in the City, and urge them to participate. You can connect them to our local Community Energy Advisor: Leigh Miller at lvm9@cornell.edu or to the website: <https://smartenergychoices.org/>. Another option is for them to contact BlocPower to learn more about that project to electrify buildings in Ithaca: <https://www.blocpower.io/>

If your landlord is willing to consider upgrading your home, they will need to arrange for the upgrade and any installations with local contractors or with BlocPower. The first step is an audit, to determine what work needs to be done; it is free, and does not oblige the property owner to take any of the recommended actions. This can give you and the property owner information about where the home needs insulation and air sealing, and how much the improvements would cost, as well as information about heat pumps, and the estimated cost of that upgrade.

There is a lot of information on the Smart Energy Choices website including information about audits, heat pumps, appliances, and financing. <https://smartenergychoices.org/>

What happens if your home is upgraded and switched to heat pumps?

First, you will be warmer in winter, and cooler in summer, and you will know that your home is contributing so much less to climate change!

If you now pay NYSEG for both gas and electricity, you will probably see your utility bills go down. When the house is upgraded it will not lose as much heat in the winter and the heating system will not have to work as hard. Plus, Heat Pumps are far more efficient than gas furnaces, and will cost less to run. And if you use window AC units, you also will see savings there, because heat pumps provide air conditioning in summer months.

If you are now paying for electricity but not heat, the heating cost which the landlord was paying (the gas bill) will now be part of your electric bill (since heat pumps run on electricity), raising your cost. The City and BlocPower are aware of this problem, and are concerned about finding ways to not pass this burden on to tenants when the heating costs are no longer paid by the landlord. Landlords are encouraged to continue paying heating costs in winter.