



## ITHACA GREEN NEW DEAL

Carbon Neutral Community Wide by 2030

### What is Electrification?

- There is help for you to upgrade your home! The Electrification Project is part of the Ithaca Green New Deal.
- The City of Ithaca has committed to address climate disruption by “electrifying” all buildings in the City.
- “Electrifying” means switching from using natural gas to using electricity to heat our homes and heat our water.

### Why is this necessary?

- Natural gas is a fossil fuel that is causing the climate to warm up and be unpredictable, creating stronger storms, wildfires, flooding, drought and climate disruption worldwide.
- In Ithaca climate disruption is causing irregular rainfall, heavy rains and then long dry periods, hotter summers, flooding, insects and new diseases and invasive species to thrive due to milder winters, season disruption making planting and harvesting problematic, and other impacts.
- We need to stop using fossil fuels as quickly as possible to stop these effects from getting worse.
- Our buildings create about 40% of the “greenhouse gases” that are causing the warming. If we can get our buildings – all our homes and businesses – off of natural gas, we can reduce the damage significantly.
- Using electricity instead of gas means we can get power from renewable sources – hydropower, wind, and solar, and not use damaging fossil fuels.

### Why is this good for me and my home?

- Improving the energy efficiency of your home and switching to electric Heat Pumps will make your home more comfortable in both winter and summer.
- Heat pumps are far more efficient than gas systems.
- Your home will not waste heat in the winter, so you will be warmer, with fewer drafts and no chilly rooms.
- And you will have whole-house air conditioning in summer.
- Since you will not be burning any fossil fuels, your air quality inside will improve.
- Heat Pumps, which will replace gas furnaces, will also dehumidify your home, making it less humid, and resolving low-level mold issues if they are present in your home.
- And you will have the added comfort of knowing your home is not contributing to the climate crisis.

### How will it work?

There is lots of support to help you begin to electrify your home.

- **Step 1:** First find out whether your home needs to be upgraded so it doesn’t waste energy. You can get a free home evaluation from a certified local contractor to see how much energy your home is currently using and how that amount could be reduced – by adding insulation to the outside walls and attic, and sealing up cracks or holes that let the heat out. Here is a link to information about this program and how it works:  
<https://smartenergychoices.org/>  
If you would like help finding a contractor or scheduling an audit, you can call or email our Community Energy Advisor, Leigh Miller at [lvm9@cornell.edu](mailto:lvm9@cornell.edu)
- **Step 2:** Decide what, if any, upgrades you want to make to your home. You can use the same contractor that did the audit, or choose another certified local contractor. The contractor who does the audit and who does the upgrade needs to be certified by NYS in order for you to get the price of the work lowered. Financial incentives to do the work

are based on your income, and range from getting all the work done for free, to getting several thousand dollars off the price when you match it, to qualifying for a very low interest loan or a tax break. Your Community Energy Advisor can help you find out what incentives you qualify for to lower your costs.

**Step 3:** Once you have completed any upgrades you want for your home, you can begin the work of electrification. Local certified contractors are available to help you think about what kind of heat pump system you will need for your home. Air source heat pumps are wall units that are installed near the ceiling in one or more rooms in your home. Your contractor will show you what kind of system you need and how many external and internal units you will need to keep your home cozy in winter and cool in summer. All installations will be done by local contractors, and you will be eligible for several City, state, NYSEG, and federal rebates or incentives for electrification. If you have questions about what your contractor is telling you, you can contact your local CEA here:

<https://smartenergychoices.org/>

If you want to learn more about what a heat pump is and how it works, you can go here

<https://www.solartompkins.org>

- **Step 4:** Besides your heating and cooling system you can also electrify your water heater, your clothes dryer, and your cookstove. The eventual goal is to get off gas entirely. But if your water heater or clothes dryer is new you may want to wait to replace it. Many people are reluctant to get rid of their gas cookstove, but that is mainly because they have had a bad experience or heard bad things about old electric stoves. Induction stoves or stovetops are different, more efficient, and many people are surprised to like them. You can find out more about induction stoves or plan to attend a webinar or in-person demonstration by contacting Guillermo Metz at 607 272-2292 [gm52@cornell.edu](mailto:gm52@cornell.edu)
- **And there is another option:**  
A company called BlocPower has been hired by the City to electrify buildings and homes in the City of Ithaca. BlocPower is financing the project, hiring local contractors to do home evaluations, and putting together proposals for home owners. Learn more about BlocPower at: <https://www.blocpower.io/> If you want to, you can sign up to get more information, and compare with the offers you get directly from local contractors, with no obligation to participate: Sign up here and a representative will contact you: <https://www.blocpower.io/electrify-ithaca>
- Working with BlocPower, you will get an individual electrification plan, outlining installations and costs, including all the options for electrification of the home, including how much each action would cost, and options for paying.
- The building owner will decide on installations, timing, and financing, and sign a contract with BlocPower. You will not have to pay any money up front, but will agree to a monthly loan payment, for up to 15 years to pay for the equipment and installation. You will also get free maintenance of the equipment.

**Why should I participate?** There are both personal and community benefits to participating in electrification.

**Individual benefits** Residents will see a noticeable difference in their home:

- Lower water-heating costs; no huge heating bills, even when it's down in the single digits.
- More comfort in winter with a less drafty house, and whole-house air conditioning in summer.
- Better indoor air quality - no dampness or mold.
- Upgrading now you will take advantage of city, state, and federal benefits to lower your cost.

**Community benefits**

- Our whole community is now and will continue to see negative impacts of climate change. This program benefits us all by mobilizing many people to transition away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible, doing our part to address the climate crisis.
- It allows whole neighborhoods to move forward at the same time, connecting neighbors as people share information and support.
- The Electrification Program also prioritizes people in "disadvantaged communities" who otherwise might not be able to participate. By doing it all together we make a commitment to leave no one out.
- We will reach the City's emissions goals within a much shorter timeframe, because we are working at such a large scale. We do not have twenty or even ten years to make the transition off of fossil fuels. If we want to leave our

children and grandchildren a planet that ensures their survival, we need to make this transition in the next eight or nine years.