NYSEG · RG&E | Energy Storage Solutions

Frequently asked questions

What is Energy Storage Solutions?

- Energy Storage Solutions (ESS) is an energy storage incentive program designed to help our customers install energy storage in their home or small business to improve resiliency and reliability. The program is overseen by the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Who is eligible to participate in the program?

- Customers must have an active NYSEG or RG&E electric service account and the battery must be located at the same site as the electric service account with a maximum storage size of 25 kilowatt hours (kWh). The buildings and the battery system must be connected to the grid by an agreement with NYSEG or RG&E.

How will ESS help improve our community and the grid?

- Resilience – a battery can provide backup power during an outage or extreme weather event.
- Cost Savings – a battery can help lower energy demands on the grid, potentially reducing energy costs.

What incentives does the program offer?

- We offer a performance-based incentive of $50 per kilowatt (kW) (average kW per event during the summer season). For additional clarification, go to the program site. An upfront incentive of $200 per kWh (up to 25 kWh) is available for new and commercially available battery systems through New York State Research and Department Authority (NYSERDA). Visit the NYSERDA site for more information on how to enroll and the eligibility requirements.

What is active dispatch?

- Active dispatch discharges (or takes) up to 80% of your battery when an event occurs during the summer season. Events will be called during non-holiday weekdays between May 1 and September 30. Each event can be up to four hours and there will be up to 20 events per season. You can opt out of any event; however, your average performance will be affected and may result in a lower performance payment at the end of the season.

Can I go off the grid?

- No, this program is designed for grid-connected use.

Technology questions

How do batteries work?

- Batteries store energy from the grid or another energy source, like a solar system. During an outage, that stored energy can be accessed and used to keep lights and appliances running. If your home has a photovoltaic (PV) system, the battery can store and be recharged from the energy generated by your PV system.

What are the benefits of a battery?

- Installing a battery in your home or business can help you prepare for power outages or extreme weather events, providing backup power for your lights, small appliances and medical equipment. A battery system can replace a fossil fuel emergency generator with a quieter, cleaner alternative.

Do I need to have solar installed in my home?

- There are several benefits to pairing these systems with a solar system, but you do not need to have solar installed to install a battery storage system. Without a PV system, your battery would charge from the grid and could provide power in the event of an outage.

How do I determine how many batteries I need?

- A program or certified contractor can help you size your system and determine the number of batteries needed based on what you want to power during an outage. For a list of qualified contractors, please visit here.

Where do I put the battery?

- Depending on the type, batteries may need to be located inside or outside of your home. A contractor can help you determine where the battery system should be installed.

What technology is eligible for this program?

- The following technologies are eligible for this program: Tesla, Enphase and SolarEdge. This list will be updated on a yearly basis as new technologies are approved.

How do I connect my battery to the grid?

- An eligible contractor must install the battery and they will handle all the technical details. Even if you're not enrolling in ESS we ask that you or your contractor contact NYSEG or RG&E when installing the battery so they can make sure the electrical grid in your area is ready to connect your battery. For a list of qualified contractors, please visit here.

Do I need internet?

- Yes, a battery storage system needs to be installed in a location with internet service for proper connectivity and program device communications.

How long will a battery power my home?

- This depends on the size and number of batteries in your system, and the items you are powering with the batteries. The larger the battery, the longer it will be able to power your appliances and lights without being re-charged by solar PV or the grid. For example, a refrigerator could continue to run for approximately 33 hours with a 13.5kWh battery.

Do I need to program the battery?

- No, your contractor will implement the storage system controls. During active events, the program administrators will require that the battery settings be implemented through the utility and not at the device level, so that the settings can be easily monitored and updated remotely by the utility without the need for your contractor to come back to reprogram your system.

Can I use my battery if my electricity goes out but there is no storm?

- Yes, your battery can provide power to your home with the energy it has stored anytime there is an electrical outage, regardless of the cause.

Will a battery be discharged before a storm?

- No, your battery will not discharge within two days before any storms are predicted to cause outages in your area.

How hard is it to switch to battery power during a storm?

- Batteries should sense a loss of power automatically and start powering your home immediately.

Residential questions

I have solar now. Doesn’t my home run on solar when the power goes out?

- Not necessarily. Unless your home is specifically wired to do so, when a grid outage occurs, your home will not run on your solar system. With a battery backup system installed, however, your solar system will charge the battery and provide power until the outage ends.

Can a battery help power my essential medical equipment?

- A battery can provide backup power in the event of an outage. This can keep your essential equipment running. Talk with your contractor and the supplier of your medical equipment to determine what will work best for you.

What other opportunities are there to reduce the cost of installing a battery?

- The Federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) and local property tax exemptions may be available to you – consider all options when you are installing batteries with qualifying renewable energy systems. Consult a tax professional to learn about these programs.

What options are available to help pay for the installation costs not covered by the upfront incentive?

- Aside from paying out of pocket, home equity loans and line of credit can be an option. Determine what is best for you.

How long will a home battery storage system last before it needs to be replaced?

- We recommend consulting your specific battery system manufacturer for this information. One of NYSERDA's up-front eligibility requirements states that all batteries must have a minimum 10-year warranty.