

WHAT IS PUBLIC POWER?

Municipal electric systems, which are one of three types of electric distribution providers, are often referred to as “public power” because the utilities are part of the local government. As nonprofit entities, municipal electric systems exist to provide reliable, affordable electric service to their customer owners. They are locally owned, managed and governed. As a result, municipal electric systems are subject to local government oversight by a council and/or board of public affairs. Rates, policies and procedures are discussed at community council or board meetings. The other two types of electric providers are investor-owned electric utilities and rural electric cooperatives.

Ohio’s 86 municipal electric systems account for approximately six percent of the electric sales in Ohio and serve an estimated 360,000 residential, commercial and industrial meters. Ohio municipal electric systems range in size from Cleveland Public Power with approximately 80,000 meters to the Village of Custar with 120 meters. In addition, the city of Huron recently formed a municipal electric system and has two commercial customers. The majority of AMP-Ohio member communities have a population of less than 5,000.

Nationwide, there are 2,010 public power systems, which provide electricity to more than 43 million Americans (about 14 percent of all electric sales). The nation’s largest public power utility is the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

There are 41 municipal electric utilities serving nearly 300,000 meters in Michigan; 35 municipal electric utilities serving over 83,000 meters in Pennsylvania; two municipal electric utilities serving 3,500 meters in West Virginia and 16 utilities in Virginia serving over 159,000 meters.

