

Real Talk with PG&E: Wendy Brummer and Anu Balakrishnan

Season 3, Episode 1: Demand Response programs

Welcome back to “Real Talk” with PG&E. I’m your host, Tatiana Manning, and I support our Voice of the Customer team here at PG&E. With summer approaching, our grid is likely to be more strained, but did you know that your business could earn incentives while promoting a clean and reliable grid? Today, we’ll talk more in detail about two demand response programs, our Automated Demand Response Program and our Capacity Bidding Program, and how they might help your business. In studio, we have Wendy Brummer, program manager with our Clean Energy Programs team and Anu Balakrishnan with our demand response core team. Thank you for joining us today, ladies.

- Thanks for having us.

- Thanks for having us.

- So, Wendy, what is demand response? Help our listeners understand, what is that?

- Demand response, we ask customers to join these programs to volunteer essentially to reduce their energy use during high demand days. In PG&E territory, that means it’s summer, right? Air conditioning load drives our demand quite a bit, so, you know, we ask customers of all types, residential, small to medium businesses, large commercial, and industrial customers to join these programs and we provide incentives for them to do so.

- Anu, can you provide us some details about the programs that we do have?

- Sure, Capacity Bidding Program, it is a third-party aggregator run program. Third-party providers or aggregators, they can be seen as a bridge between the customer and PG&E. What they do on the customer side is provide advice to the customers, what load reduction is possible given their portfolio. They manage the signaling system if the customers don’t have any of their own. So there are several benefits that the aggregators can provide to the customers, and at the same time, customers don’t have to deal with all the operational side for managing a DR program where aggregators manage their portfolio within CBP program and work with PG&E.

- So we’re gonna move on to Wendy, ‘cause we have obviously mentioned the Automated Demand Response program and apparently there’s some technology out there that our customers can take advantage of. And so Wendy, tell us about that.

- Well, what we know, what’s well-documented over the course of decades, is that customers who have technology that is signaled on during demand response events, during these high-demand days, Anu has talked about signals, devices that are communicated to during DR events, helps the customers to reduce energy during DR events, helps them to be more successful. So the CPUC has created a funding mechanism for that. It’s called Automated Demand Response, and at PG&E it’s only non-residential customers. And so we will look at a customer and find out what technology they want to install at their business, and we will fund it up to 75%, even 100% in some instances. And this technology, the cool thing about it is that it’s not just for demand response. It actually is

technology that can help them every day, every day to save energy and subsequently hopefully save on their bills as well, on their energy bills. I like to think of it this way. It's like peanut butter and chocolate. They taste great together. And our DR programs, CBP is one that is enabled by automated demand response incentives. There's another, peak day pricing. Both of these go really well together to provide benefits for customers and benefits for third-party aggregators. And we know that automated response actually brings more load relief to the grid, but also benefits customers even more and aggregators.

- Well, thank you so much both for being here and joining us in studio.

- Thank you for having us.

- Yeah, our pleasure.

- For the folks listening, be sure to listen to more episodes of "Real Talk" at pge.com/realtalk. See you all next time.