Commercial Strategic Energy Management
Frequently asked questions

At PSE, we want our customers to have the information and support needed to get the most out of our energy-management programs. Thank you for being an important part of our energy-saving efforts. Below is a list of frequently asked questions that we receive from customers participating in the Commercial Strategic Energy Management program.

Q: What is CSEM?

A: CSEM stands for Commercial Strategic Energy Management, and is a PSE incentive program that focuses on low- and no-cost energy projects. The program encourages participants to reduce energy usage through behavior changes, as well as operations and maintenance (O&M) improvements.

Q: Is there a penalty for not achieving savings?

A: No, there is no penalty. The PSE team will continue to provide support and guidance to implement best practices to achieve energy savings.

Q: What is the time commitment for participating in the CSEM program?

A: The grant agreement is three years but the customer has an option of renewing this grant at the end of the three-year period. Incentives are available with each renewal grant agreement.

Q: This program sounds too good to be true?

A: PSE is required by the Washington Utilities and Transport Commission (WUTC) and the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) to provide energy-conservation programs. PSE has mandated energy-reduction goals and this program is one that was implemented to provide energy reductions.

Strategic energy management (SEM) is a type of program that focuses on reducing customers' energy usage through low- and no-cost energy-saving measures. PSE's CSEM program is one of the oldest SEM programs in the country.

Q: Will I have to figure out how to save energy alone?

A: No. When you sign up with the program you will be partnered with a PSE engineer who will come out and inspect your facilities to help you identify energy-saving projects to start.

The CSEM program also has training resources (e.g., BOC level 1 and 2) that CSEM participants can utilize to get up to speed on how to save energy in their facilities by implementing low- and no-cost energy-saving measures.

Q: What are the CSEM requirements?

A: Requirements to qualify for the program are: 1,000,000 kWh or 135,000 therms annual usage across portfolio and you must appoint an energy champion (point of contact for PSE).

Q: What are the deliverables associated with CSEM?

A: PSE provides templates for all the following deliverables:

- Resource management plan (only needs to be completed once)
- Facility action plan (only needs to be completed once)
- Site quarterly checklists

Q: Will the CSEM PSE engineer assist with other incentive programs?

A: Yes. PSE engineers know the different energy-efficiency programs well and will provide support in connecting customers to the appropriate incentive program that will yield best incentive dollars for a specific project. We will also do our best to provide information on other incentive programs available to customers outside of PSE.

Q: Will the funding for energy efficiency ever go away?

A: PSE is mandated to provide efficiency programs by the state and the energy efficiency department is funded through the rider fee on customer bills. So the funding for energy efficiency will always be available to customers.

Q: Will CSEM help with compliance for Clean Buildings?

A: Yes. Signing up for CSEM will help you with compliance with the Clean Buildings Act in two ways. First, PSE engineers will help you to identify and implement energy-saving measures that will help lower your building energy use intensity (EUI). And second, the resource-management plan can be altered to fulfill the documentation needs of the O&M plan required for Clean Buildings compliance.

Q: Can I use more than one PSE program if I am signed up for CSEM?

A: Yes, you can. You can still participate in other incentive programs and PSE engineers will partner customers with the program that provides the highest funding level for that project.

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