

# Community CENTS FAQ

## **What is Community Cents?**

Community Cents is a program developed in 2017 that allows St. Croix Electric Cooperative members to voluntarily round up their monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar. For example, a bill that is \$118.42 would be rounded up to \$119 and the extra \$0.58 would be added to the Community Cents fund. Money collected via Community Cents will supplement available funds for the Commitment to Community Grant program the following year: “Cents” collected in 2017 will be evenly split and added to the funds for the Commitment to Community Grant allocations in June and November 2018.

## **If we already have Commitment to Community Grants, why do we need another program?**

Community Cents will supplement the Commitment the Community Grant program, enabling the Cooperative to have a greater impact with its grant awards. The Board of Directors continues to see an increase in Commitment to Community Grant applications. While we are fortunate to serve members in a prosperous county, there is still a great need among many organizations that serve our communities. Each year, worthy local organizations who aid in serving those with unmet needs are denied a grant because of limited funds. Currently, \$12,700 is available, annually, to Commitment to Community Grant applicants (\$1.37 per member); grants are capped at \$500 per calendar year per organization. Directors review applications twice each year (June and November).

## **What difference can my few cents each month make?**

A lot. On average, a member would contribute \$6/year (up to \$11.88 if they rounded up \$0.99 each month, which is highly unlikely). Neighboring cooperatives whose members participate in similar programs to round up monthly electric bills generated \$31,250 and \$52,640 in 2016, alone.

Between 2003 and 2016, the Commitment to Community Grant program provided more than \$130,000 to 179 unique organizations. Community Cents will allow Cooperative members to make a greater impact in our local communities. Past grant recipients have included local libraries, fire departments, EMT squads, food pantries, backpack programs, homeless shelters, nutrition education, Scouts, 4-H clubs, VFWs and American Legions, among others. Our members are living the 7<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Principle of Commitment to Community.

## **How can I enroll?**

Multiple ways:

- Online at [www.scecn.net](http://www.scecn.net) → enter “Community Cents” in the search bar and fill out the online webform.
- Call SCEC at 715-796-7000 during normal business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday).
- Check the box under your address on the remit stub of your monthly electric bill and return with your payment.

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## **Community Cents**

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### **How can I enroll? (continued)**

Members with more than one account must specify which account(s) they wish to enroll in Community Cents. Once a member enrolls, they will participate in Community Cents until they notify St. Croix Electric Cooperative, in writing, to cancel their participation.

### **What happens if I move?**

Participation in Community Cents is tied to a member's account, not the member. If a member moves outside the St. Croix Electric Cooperative service territory, their participation in Community Cents would end as of their last bill. The new members at that address would have to enroll in Community Cents in order to participate; participation does not automatically continue at the service location/address. If a member currently participating in Community Cents moves within SCEC's service territory, they would have to notify the Cooperative to continue their participation in Community Cents at their new address, otherwise, participation would automatically cease with their last bill at their former address.

### **Do I have to participate?**

Participation in Community Cents is voluntary. Results from a member survey indicated enough interest to warrant the Board of Directors to create and offer the program to members.

### **Are my Community Cents contributions tax deductible?**

Since the Commitment to Community Grant program is not a charitable organization, or foundation registered or approved by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), donations through the Community Cents program are not tax deductible.