



Advanced Grid Customer Education & Communication Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Revised 10/11/2019

Xcel Energy Colorado requested approval from the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for certain components of its Advanced Grid Intelligence & Security (“AGIS” or “Advanced Grid”) initiative. As part of the Advanced Grid initiative approved by the CPUC on June 21, 2017, Xcel Energy Colorado will install roughly 1.594 million advanced meters to its Colorado electric customers over a timeframe of approximately five years.

In addition to the advanced meters, the Advanced Grid initiative includes a new two-way communication system that wirelessly sends and receives information between the advanced meters and the utility. The addition of advanced meters will provide customers with more choice and control, while allowing Xcel Energy Colorado to better monitor its system and improve service and reliability.

The Advanced Grid initiative will help create a smarter, more resilient grid that can better serve our customers in the decades to come. An integrated system will provide Xcel Energy Colorado with a better understanding of how power is being consumed throughout the grid, enabling us to manage the entire system more efficiently.

To maximize benefits of these investments, a phased customer outreach effort is required to ensure effective change management, customer satisfaction and engagement. Xcel Energy Colorado’s Advanced Meter Customer Education & Communication Plan describes how the company recommends using a customer-focused strategy and sequential approach, as well as a variety of channels, tactics and messages to raise awareness, and support meter installation, and customer engagement to help customers get the most out of this new technology.

This working plan presents a cost-effective, yet wide-reaching, customer education and communication plan for the advanced meter installation customer experience, including technology that will provide energy tools and information. It is a living document and subject to change dependent upon CPUC approvals that will provide final decisions and clarity regarding specific details of smart meter and smart grid programs and initiatives for our Colorado customers. This plan is also subject to change based on any changes to meter installation schedules or timelines.

STRATEGY & COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Our recommended education and communication campaign includes three phases, outlined below. This phased approach helps with the overall change management effort and is designed to ease customers through each stage of the advanced meter deployment process.

Phase I - Raising Awareness: An introductory, wide-reaching effort to inform customers, employees, and community members about advanced meter rollouts and the overall benefits of advanced grid intelligence.

Objectives during this phase include:

- Creating customer and stakeholder awareness about the overall benefits of the advanced grid.
- Explaining why the utility is making this investment, with a focus on customer benefits.
- Engaging public officials, reporters, and others who can support the implementation process.
- Engaging opinion leaders and authoritative advocates.
- Measuring consumer awareness, understanding, and interest in having an advanced meter and access to associated benefits.
- Educating Colorado employees with customer or stakeholder relationships, so they can fully and effectively discuss the benefits and specifics of the advanced grid initiative.

Phase II - Informing Meter Installation: Targeted customer outreach by installation community and/or geographic areas. Communications in this phase focus on the actual meter installation.

Objectives during this phase include:

- Educating all Colorado customers about new meter deployment, ensuring that customers understand the installation process.
- Conducting outreach and notifications about installation to affected customers on a rolling basis.
- Providing communications that minimize confusion by anticipating and answering questions before customers ask them.
- Collecting information and preferences from customers to create deeper relationships with them over the long term.
- Educating customers on the opt-out process and clearly outlining instructions and any associated costs.
- Measuring consumer awareness, understanding, interest, and participation in advanced meter functionalities.

Phase III - Customer Engagement: Targeted follow-up communication to customers who have had an advanced meter installed to ensure satisfaction with the process and informing them about how to take advantage of advanced meter features.

Objectives during this phase include:

- Educating customers about the Home Area Network (HAN) which is part of their

advanced meter, but is not activated when their meter is installed. Once activated, the HAN allows customers to receive their real-time, energy demand consumption from the advanced meter.

- Educating and engaging customers who have had advanced meters installed about online tools and resources.
- Encouraging customers to view their energy use information online.
- Providing follow-up communications to customers about specific ways to use this information to manage their energy use.
- Continuing education to those who have not activated the Home Area Network (HAN) about its benefits, which allows customers to receive their real-time, energy demand consumption from their advanced meter.
- Making it easy for customers to select energy management tools and energy efficiency and conservation offerings available to them, based on their personal preferences.
- Measuring consumer awareness, understanding, interest, participation and satisfaction with advanced meters and associated features.

METER INSTALLATION & COMMUNICATIONS TIMELINE

Release 1

Release 1 of advanced meter installation is planned for Q4 of 2019. This release will support Integrated Volt-Var Optimization (IVVO) testing. A group of 13,000 meters will be installed as part of this phase. The meters will not have any customer facing benefits, such as the availability of interval data or the ability for a customer to view their energy usage. Communications for this release of advanced meter installation will be more transactional and not coupled with any customer facing technology. The tactics for Release 1 are listed, with subsequent years at the end of this plan. Release 1 customers will receive a slightly different approach because their meters will not have any functionality that is apparent to the customer.

Release 2

Release 2 is planned for Q3 of 2021, with 395,000 meters planned for installation. At this time, it is anticipated that residential customers will also be put on a Time-Of-Use (TOU) rate to coincide with their meter installation. A communications plan is under development for TOU, which will be in synch with this plan. The plans will be merged at certain communications points to ensure a positive customer experience and to control costs. By the start of Release 2 deployments, updates to My Account (including HAN), Green Button Connect (GBC) and xcelenergy.com will be available to customers.

Release 3

Release 3 begins in Q1 of 2022, with 534,000 meters planned for installation. It is expected that TOU residential rates will coincide with meter installation. Customers will also have access to Home Area Network (HAN) capabilities, including near real-time interval data, with tools and information to help them save energy and money. Another 504,000 meters will be installed in 2023. Any remaining meters will be installed in 2024.

difference: by talking to stakeholders first, the approach can be customized and messaging can be localized by each community to effectively focus on issues and interests they care about the most.

- Educating customers before their advanced meter deployment by staging communications ahead of key customer contact leading up to the actual installation.
- Using social media as a means to approach advanced meter installation as a new technology rollout across specific geographic locations and targeting customer segments.
- Focusing communication directly on customers. Do not assume they understand the concept of kilowatt hours, how the utility measures electricity, on- versus off-peak usage, etc. Avoiding industry terms and jargon and instead using simple language and a call to action that customers can easily understand.
- Setting realistic expectations on advanced meter functionality.
- Building an extensive set of FAQs to address issues and concerns. Through active employee change management and education, ensuring front-line employees who work directly with customers using these messages and anticipating questions, clearing up concerns, and addressing issues in an accurate and timely manner.
- Collecting customer success stories to make advanced meter/advanced grid benefits tangible and understandable.
- Ensuring full integration and coordination of field operations, communication/marketing, customer care, and billing.
- Customer concerns must be identified quickly, elevated to the appropriate level, and resolved swiftly.

MARKET RESEARCH RESULTS

Xcel Energy Colorado conducted customer research in the form of focus groups on January 22 and 23, 2019. Four focus groups were conducted with Denver residential customers. The results of this research have informed message development and the strategic updates to this plan.

The objective of research was to:

- Explore customers' current understanding of advanced meters
- Understand the perceived benefits and drawbacks of advanced meters
- Explore both positive and negative expectations consumers have about Xcel Energy moving customers to advanced meters
- Explore reactions to different ways of describing advanced meters
- Understand what barriers may arise and how to address them (pre or post advanced meter installation)
- Understand how customers want to be communicated with about advanced meters (what they want to know, and how they want to receive the information)
- Identify any differences between younger (under age 45) and older customers (45+) on these topics

At a high level, the key findings of this research were as follows:

Expectations of New Meters

- Customers believe the new meters could help them save money by providing more detailed usage information, which they perceive as empowering.
- That said, they have questions about the new meter's basic functionality that need to be addressed to convince them of the true utility in these devices.
- They are also concerned about possible out of pocket costs, with many wondering whether the new meters could either cost them money upfront or over the long-run.

Communicating the Change

- Customers want to hear from Xcel Energy about the transition to the new meters at least two or three months in advance of installation.
- They want to be contacted via a multi-channel approach which would include paper mail, email and phone.
- Younger customers (<45) are more likely to say they would seek information on an FAQ page or watch an online video about the process.
- Overall, customers want the communications to have a high degree of transparency

Addressing Barriers

- The potential cost of the new meters is the top barrier that Xcel Energy needs to address. It is unclear from the opt-out process description whether there would be a fee for opting-in or only for opting-out. This perceived lack of transparency about the fees drove skepticism.
- Another way to address barriers is by clearly conveying the reasons why the new meters will benefit customers in the long-run, and by presenting Xcel Energy's motivations behind the roll-out.

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

Xcel Energy Colorado has developed a carefully constructed message framework using best practices and its own market research study. This message framework is essential for successful completion of this plan and the overall transition to advanced meters.

Xcel Energy Colorado typically develops messages using the following process:

Research: Market research lays the groundwork for message development, incorporating customer message testing, customer panels, focus groups, and utility peer research.

Understanding the Audience: While we will be raising awareness among all our Colorado customers, advanced meter messages will target specific customer market segments to ensure maximum effectiveness and tap into the benefits that customers care about the most.

Language and Tone: Messages will be developed using simple, straight-forward language and practical information that customers can easily understand and act upon. Xcel Energy will be working with its advertising agency of record – Carmichael Lynch – to explore the lexicons and language that resonate most with customers.

Overarching Messaging Themes: *Customer Benefits & Value Propositions*

Because of the significant investment other utilities have made in the advanced grid, consumers today are seeing the benefits. The Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative (“SGCC”) is an independent nonprofit organization consisting of commercial, utility, and advocacy organizations that collects information about customers’ views and understanding of advanced meters and grids. SGCC recently updated their advanced grid consumer segmentation framework, which highlights consumer attitudes. According to SGCC, three distinct value propositions of advanced grids have emerged:

Economic: With more information on energy consumption and more choices about how and when they use energy via possible future rate options, consumers may be able to save money

as a result of advanced-grid enabled programs and technologies.

Example messaging theme: *Smart meters and the smart grid provide superior energy usage information which can help consumers save money by enabling them to better manage their electricity use.*

Environmental: The advanced grid enables the incorporation of greater amounts of renewable generation, gives customers more opportunities to make more environmentally conscious choices, and can also reduce the need to rely on fossil fuel generation.

Example messaging theme: *The smart grid helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making it easier to connect renewable energy sources to the electricity grid.*

Reliability: Grid-side intelligence offered by advanced grid technology can reduce the frequency and duration of outages while providing better information when outages do occur.

Example messaging theme: *A smart grid senses problems and reroutes power automatically. This prevents some outages and reduces the length of those that do occur. It strengthens the resiliency of the power network that serves you.*

According to SGCC, the importance consumers place on these benefits has been remarkably consistent and strong, with nearly 90 percent of consumers rating each of these benefits as important, regardless of their awareness of advanced grid technology.

CUSTOMER MESSAGING

After reviewing best practices and conducting customer focus groups in January of 2019 (which was in line with SGCC research mentioned above), the following is the proposed customer messaging:

Elevator Speech

Technology is advancing in every area of our lives, and Xcel Energy is also bringing the world of digital technology to your electric service. The next generation of our energy grid—the advanced grid — will help us serve you better. The advanced grid will give customers more of what they expect from Xcel Energy – clean, reliable energy, new ways to save money, and a better experience for you and all of our customers.

New technologies to help you save energy and money

- You will have more access to useful information about your household energy use, which can help you save energy and money.
- You'll also have online tools to help understand your data and make decisions that will help save energy and money.
- You will be able to see how much energy you're using in near real-time, which will help you make informed energy decisions.
- In the future, the advanced grid will make it possible for you to choose pricing plans and energy savings options that work best for you.

Improved reliability and faster outage restoration

- New digital energy grid technologies will help us prevent outages to you and your neighbors and, in some cases, enable us to automatically reroute power to shorten any service interruptions.
- Advanced grid technologies can detect outages at your home or on the larger electric system, helping reduce the time you are without service.

- You'll receive quicker notifications when service is out and more accurate information on when power will be restored.

More options to protect the environment and use new technologies

- The advanced grid will help us provide you with even more clean energy because it will allow us to maximize the use of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and batteries.
- Energy use data in near real-time will give you the ability to choose how and when you use technology such as batteries and electric vehicles.

Security you can trust

- Energy use data will be securely transferred electronically from the advanced meter, eliminating the need for manual meter reading or estimates, which also helps reduce costs.
- Protecting your data is extremely important to us. We use multiple layers of defense to ensure all data is secure and protected.

Anticipating Customer Questions

Xcel Energy Colorado is developing a multi-faceted set of messages tailored for each specific target audience. Messages will likely address the following topics:

- What is an advanced meter?
- What is an advanced/smart grid or intelligent grid?
- How will advanced meters benefit me?
- How will an advanced grid benefit me?
- Why do we need advanced meters/an advanced grid now?
- What kind of choices do advanced meters offer me?
- Who is paying for advanced meters and advanced grid technology?
- When will I receive my advanced meter?
- Will I be notified before and/or after my advanced meter is installed?
- How will I receive my advanced meter?
- Who will install my advanced meter?
- Will my power be interrupted during my advanced meter installation?
- What can I expect when my advanced meter is installed?
- If I need help after my advanced meter is installed, who can assist me?
- Where can I learn more about getting the most benefit from my advanced meter?
- How will my advanced meter differ from my 'old' meter?
- What is the Home Area Network (HAN)?
- What are the benefits of HAN?
- Why do I have to activate HAN after my advanced meter is installed?
- How can I tell if my meter is an advanced meter?
- Can I opt out of my advanced meter or choose to not to have a new meter installed?
- Will my bill look different after my advanced meter is installed and in use?
- Will my advanced meter make my energy bills higher?
- Will my advanced meter reflect my energy bills accurately?
- Will Xcel Energy now have more control over my energy use with the advanced meter?
- Who will have access to my energy use information and data?

- Will the smart meter compromise my personal privacy or security?
- Will fixed and limited income customers pay more than their fair share for advanced meters?
- If I have a medical condition, with meter installation impact any equipment in my home?
- What options do you have for fixed and limited income customers?
- Is an advanced grid more vulnerable to an outside attack? Does it pose a security risk to the community?
- What kind of radio signals do advanced meters emit?
- Do advanced meters pose a health risk?
- Does automatic meter reading eliminate jobs?
- Will the advanced meter work with my smart thermostat?
- I don't have a smart thermostat. Do I need one to see my energy usage from my advanced meter?
- Where do I go to find my energy usage?
- Does the advanced meter work with the Xcel Energy app?
- I'm a solar customer. How will I be affected?
- I'm already on a pricing plan (e.g. TOU, PDP, AMP), how will the advanced meter affect me?
- I'm an AC Rewards/Saver's Switch customer, how will the advanced meter affect me?

DEFERRAL AND OPT-OUT INSTRUCTIONS

In Release 1 of advanced meter installations, customers will be given an option to defer their meter installation to a later release. This will be communicated to them in the postcard sent 60 days and letter/e-mail sent 30 days prior to meter installation. Deferral information will also be listed on the door hanger left by the meter installer.

Starting in Release 2, customers will have the option to decline or "opt-out" of receiving an advanced meter. This will be communicated to them in the postcard sent 60 days and letter/e-mail sent 30 days prior to meter installation. Opt-out instructions and resources will also be available on the website. A customer can opt-out at any time, either before meter installation, during the visit to install the meter or after the advanced meter has been installed. There are costs associated with declining an advanced meter that would be billed directly to the customer. Only residential and small commercial customers have the option to opt-out (customers with R and C rates).

An advice letter will be filed with the Colorado PUC in the late 2019 to receive approval on the opt-out process and pricing. As of this plan update, the following is being considered:

1. Before advanced meter installation:
 - When customers receive a communication about your advanced meter installation, they can call Customer Care and ask to opt-out of their meter. A monthly meter reading fee of \$10.44 will be added to their bill every month. The monthly charge will start as the meter is manually read.
2. During meter installation/installer arrives at the customer's home:
 - Customers can request to opt out when a meter technician arrives to install their advanced meter. Then customers will call Customer Care to finalize their opt-out. A monthly meter reading fee of \$10.44 will be added to their bill every month. The monthly charge will start as the meter is manually read.
3. After the meter has been installed:

- Customers can call Customer Care and ask to opt out after the meter has been installed. There will be a one-time \$40 trip charge to have the advanced meter removed and an older technology meter re-installed. A monthly meter reading fee of \$10.44 will be added to their bill every month. The monthly charge will start after meter exchange as the meter is manually read.
4. If a customer has opted out and then decides to move:
- If a customer moves from their home, there will be an additional \$40 trip charge to have their meter switched to an advanced meter for the incoming resident. This charge will appear on their final bill.

The instructions for deferral and opt-out as they are finalized will be included on the personalized communications to customers during Phase II (advanced meter installation) communications. This can include direct mail, e-mail, and phone calls.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND TACTICS

Consistent with the lessons learned from numerous utilities that have managed advanced meter deployments and advanced grid investments, the following are proposed communication channels and tactics focused on effectively reaching our target audiences.

Internal Channels and Tactics

Phase I: Raising Awareness

Internal Channel	Description
Talking Points and FAQs	Talking Points will provide employees with an overview of the advanced grid activities and advanced meter/advanced grid benefits, including expected features and functionality. These messages can be used to guide discussions when engaging with or responding to customers. FAQs will provide answers to commonly asked questions, ensure accuracy of information shared with customers, and allow for timely replies to inquiries. A well-informed workforce helps carry the corporate message.
Employee Training & Speaker Resource Kit	Create materials and offer training opportunities for employees who will be working directly with affected customers. Target audiences will include, but not be limited to: Customer Care Agents, Field Crews (meter installers/meter readers), Billing Staff, Community Affairs Managers, Key Account Managers, State Government Affairs, and Regulatory Affairs.

Phase II: Informing Meter Installation

Internal Channel	Description
Talking Points and FAQs	Talking Points and FAQs will build upon existing messages, but be further refined to include an added focus on specific advanced meter installation details. This will include information about what the Home Area Network (HAN) is, the benefits to the customer and why and how it needs to be activated after the advanced meter is installed.
Employee Training	Efforts will build upon previous material, but be further refined to help customers understand the advanced meter installation process and what to expect before, during and after installation. The focus can be on assisting affected customers, gathering customers' feedback on the installation process, and helping customers through a smooth transition to the new technology.
Speaker Resource Kit	The existing Speaker Resource Kit will be expanded to include new information about how to aid customers pre- and post-installation of their advanced meters.

Phase III: Customer Engagement

Internal Channel	Description
Talking Points and FAQs	Talking Points and FAQs will build upon existing messages, but be further refined to include an emphasis on how customers can get the most out of their advanced meter.
Employee Training	Create employee training guides that reflect the type of inquiries we are receiving from customers. Xcel Energy's Customer Care Quick Reference will be a dynamic tool to capture learnings on an ongoing basis. Provide specific employee training on the benefits of HAN, what information it provides and walking customers through the activation process. This will include providing activation for tech-savvy customers and those non-tech savvy customers.

External Channels and Tactics

Phase I: Raising Awareness

External Channel	Description
Xcelenergy.com	Building on existing website resources, launch a dedicated advanced meter/grid section on our customer-facing website. Content will include fact sheets, news releases, and other downloadable resources.
Bill Onsert	A bill onsert is an article or advertisement printed on an additional page of the bill. An initial bill onsert can feature an article about Xcel Energy Colorado's advanced meter/grid modernization plans to raise initial awareness and interest in these upgrades.
Talking Points and FAQs	Fact sheets can focus on advanced meter benefits and overall awareness of advanced grid benefits intended to inform customers of upcoming deployment plans.
Stakeholder Outreach & Community Meetings	We will reach out to community leaders, public officials and influential audiences to provide an initial briefing and enlist their help in sharing information. Conversations allow for dialogue and create opportunities for direct customer feedback into ongoing communications. These meetings also allow employees to reach out to populations that may otherwise be difficult to reach (such as vulnerable or low-income customers).
E-mail	E-mail can be used to promote awareness of the advanced meter benefits to those who have indicated e-mail as a preferred channel. A new customer preference will be developed to automate delivery of emails in Phases II and III.
Social Media	Monitor social media for discussions regarding advanced meters in communities where technology will be installed. Leverage social media as appropriate to disseminate messages to customers (via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) using compelling video content.
Media Outreach	News releases and editorial boards provide reporters with information about the Xcel Energy Colorado's overall plan and vision for advanced meter/advanced technology investments. Media Relations can provide fact sheets and other informational resources to reporters likely to cover advanced meter activities and utility/energy news outlets.

Market Research	Measure consumer understanding and interest in having an advanced meter and access to associated benefits as a result of Phase I activities.
Targeted Advertising: TV, print, radio, digital	Use advertising to raise awareness about advanced meters and the installation process.

Phase II: Informing Meter Installation

External Channel	Description
Direct Mail	Customers will receive communications at 90, 60, and 30 day intervals prior to meter installation. Please see “Bill Onsert” section below for the 90-day customer communication. The 60-day communication will be a 6x9 mailed card alerting customers that advanced meters will be coming to their neighborhood. It will also provide information about advanced meters and their benefits. The 30-day communication will be an operational letter sent to the customer with FAQs. It will inform customers that their meter will be installed within the next 30 days and will set expectations for what will happen on the day of installation. All direct mail communications will provide contact information (via 1-800 number and email) if they have questions. The communications will engage customers to share their preferences and sign up for MyAccount. Customers will also be directed to the website for more details.
Outbound Calls	Each customer will receive a pre-installation outbound call alerting them of a timeframe window when the installation of their advanced meter installation will take place.
Door Hangers	Two types of door hangers will be left upon meter installation: <u>“Meter installed” door hanger:</u> When installation is complete, a door hanger can inform customers about new meter, solicit customer experience feedback, and let them know where to find more information. A magnet affixed to door hanger can provide customer help line numbers and website reminders for future reference. <u>“Sorry We Missed You” door hanger:</u> If installation is unsuccessful, this door hanger will indicate the reason why and provide information to reschedule installation. Any needed corrections will also be listed on the door hanger with check boxes for the installer to note for the customer.
Xcelenergy.com	Additional content can be added to offer more online and downloadable resources for customers who are receiving advanced meters.
Social Media	Monitor social media for discussions regarding advanced meters in communities where technology will be installed. Leverage social media as appropriate to disseminate messages to customers (via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) using compelling video content.
E-mail	Use e-mail to reduce direct mail costs if customers indicate it as a preferred communications channel.
Bill Onsert	The 90-day communication will be a bill onsert to create awareness about advanced meters and their benefits.

Talking Points and FAQs	Talking points and FAQs will build upon existing messages, but will be further refined to include an added focus on specific advanced meter installation details advanced meter installation information, an overview of advanced meter features – including specific information about HAN detailing the benefits to the customer and why and how it needs to be activated after the meter is installed. FAQs will be included in the 30-day customer communication.
Stakeholder Outreach & Community Meetings	Community Affairs managers and State Government Affairs personnel will meet with public officials and community organizations in areas where advanced meters are due to be installed. Examples of materials they can provide include specific information about the advanced meter roll out in their area, FAQs to address specific constituent concerns, advance copies of materials affected customers will be receiving, and key Company contacts for questions. Face-to-face meetings with community groups, neighborhood associations, public officials, environmental organizations, business, nonprofits, clubs, and individuals to encourage them to share information and answer questions that may arise.
Community Event Sponsorships	Speaking opportunities in the communities where installations are taking place. Ensure community opinion leaders are informed about advanced meters, help answer questions.
Media Outreach	As important milestones are reached, consider news releases and outreach to reporters to communicate those achievements.
Market Research	Measure consumer understanding, interest, and participation in having an advanced meter as a result of Phase II activities.
My Account	Include additional content to the customer account web portal to provide energy usage information and energy management tips for customers with advanced meters.
Connect Blog	Articles during Phase II can provide practical information, advice, and testimonials from customers who have had advanced meters installed. Disseminate advanced meter facts and dispel myths.

Phase III: Customer Engagement

External Channel	Description
Xcelenergy.com	Include newer fact sheets, FAQs, and video vignettes to existing web content. Create specific web page dedicate to HAN, which includes activation information and activation help information.
Bill Onsert	Provide basic information and reminders about advanced meters, featured articles addressing advanced meter/advanced grid topics, and engaging customers around the features of their advanced meters such as HAN.
Talking Points and FAQs	Additional fact sheets can focus “how-to” information for customers using MyAccount, understanding their bill, their personalized energy usage information and HAN – benefits, need to activate, activation support information.
Market Research	Measure consumer understanding, and interest participation and satisfaction as a result of Phase III activities.

Connect Blog	Blog articles to continue to educate, update, and enhance understanding of advanced meters and energy management technologies as they are introduced, including the benefits of activating and using HAN.
Outbound Calls	Follow-up advanced meter installation with an outbound call encouraging customer to activate HAN. Educate about benefits of HAN. Provide activation help resources.
Direct Mail	Customers will receive a 6x9 customer information postcard that encourages participation in online energy management tools. This will be sent 30-45 days after meter installation and encourage participation in HAN. The communications will engage customers to share their preferences and sign up for MyAccount.
E-mail	A follow-up email to advanced metered customers can provide a check-in and drive them to available online resources for increased engagement. Target customers after their meter has been installed to encourage them to activate HAN. Measure customer satisfaction. Target customers who have unsuccessfully tried to activate HAN. Measure customer satisfaction.
Web-based instructional videos	Post on xcelenergy.com's HAN page a "How-to" activate HAN for customers to help them through the activation process.
Quick version video content (social media)	Content to be pushed out through YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Highlight advanced meter features in short 15-30 second pieces. Vignettes can build attention and provide educational moments for customers in a variety of channels, including public meetings.
Customer Testimonials	Customers can provide first-hand accounts of ways they have used their advanced meter information for managing energy usage and costs. This will be dependent upon customer reaction to the roll-out and the availability of testimonials.

MITIGATING RISKS AND CHALLENGES

We have conducted research that shows that customers are interested in advanced meters and functionality, but to manage expectations and address customer concerns, our team recognizes the need to put ourselves in the place of our customers. This allows us be fully prepared to anticipate and respond to situations that could affect customers, stakeholders, or the community during advanced meter deployment. We realize the introduction of new technology, logistics of the installations, and transition to using advanced meters will mean that we need to help customers manage through the change, and help them use their data to make decisions that will save energy and money.

Anticipating Key Issues

While individual customer issues will receive attention, we will also track issues on a broader scale. Xcel Energy Colorado will actively monitor sources where customer issues or concerns may originate including, but not limited to:

- Customer Care Call Centers (both residential and business inquiries)
- Inquiries to company executives, regional leaders, and front-line managers
- Inquiries to field and other employee personnel

- Xcel Energy Colorado's Community Affairs, Key Account Management, and State and Government Affairs teams
- Media Relations
- Colorado Public Utilities Commissioners and staff
- Community groups and consumer advocacy groups
- Letters, phone calls, social media posts, and emails from customers

Addressing Concerns

We will use existing processes and procedures for handling issues escalated through our Customer Care team. Our communication materials will attempt to address key issues and possible advanced meter concerns, including but not limited to:

- **Radio Frequency (RF) Emissions:** As advanced meters emit low levels of electromagnetic radiation through their RF communications, Xcel Energy Colorado will educate customers with the goal of alleviating unfounded concerns around health impacts and interference with other wireless devices.
- **Privacy & Security:** The company will assure customers that we take their data privacy seriously by providing information about our data privacy policies. We will also clearly outline steps we take to protect customers' energy use information and personally identifiable information.
- **Accuracy:** Messages will also address the measurement accuracy of advanced meters, and let customers know how to contact us if they have billing questions related to their meter readings. Call center agents will be trained to answer questions and assist customers.
- **Deployment Expectations:** Communications will help make it easy for customers to properly identify our company employees and know what to expect when meter installers are working at their home or business. This includes special instructions for customers with medical conditions that may have equipment in their homes.
- **Opt-Out Policies:** The company will address opt-out policies for advanced meter technology, and let customers know the proper channels for inquiring about available alternatives.
- **Fixed and Low-Income Customers:** Customized communications will recognize and proactively address cost concerns among low-income households, seniors, and vulnerable customer populations. We will seek to engage community leaders, influencers, and representatives of these communities in the development and deployment of our educational efforts. Messages will address how customers on fixed or limited budgets can take advantage of personal energy use information that may allow them to better manage their energy costs. Outreach will also focus on increasing these customers' participation rates in energy efficiency and conservation programs, and cross-marketing Colorado's low income assistance programs. Communication and education materials that could be customized for this segment of customers may include:
 - FAQs and fact sheets addressing their specific concerns and needs.
 - Talking points and scheduled briefings with consumer advocacy groups and nonprofit groups who serve these populations.
 - Customized presentations for community area managers to share with their constituents.
 - Aggressive outreach to organizations serving seniors, low-income, and other vulnerable customer segments, with an emphasis on providing ready-to-use materials that can be distributed via their communication channels, online

resources, events, meetings, and social media platforms.

- **Non-English Speaking Customers:** The company’s service area is expansive and includes a diverse audience spread across the state. Marketing collateral and communications created in Spanish will link to Spanish language webpages and supporting information. This will provide customers with the very best experience.

BUDGET

Consistent with its commitment to Colorado customers, Xcel Energy Colorado has proposed a robust, multi-faceted, and cost-effective plan to support, inform and engage customers throughout the deployment of advanced meter and advanced grid technology. We are proposing a communication plan budget estimate built on an assumption of **1.594 million electric meter upgrades** taking place over a time period of approximately **five years** in Colorado.

These estimates are based on previous customer education campaigns we have executed including the introduction of tiered rates; advanced meters installations in Boulder, Colorado; and our work with net-metered customers; as well as utility best practices. This plan is inclusive of Home Area Network (HAN) marketing costs, as filed with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission in March 2018 and updated in April 2019. The original cost estimates filed were \$3 million for the CPCN and \$1.2 million for HAN. HAN participation is opt-in. These estimates have also been made with high-level meter installations by year and may fluctuate across the years as more details are put into place.

The new cost estimates are \$3.4 million for overall customer awareness and education, and \$1.2 million for HAN. The increase was due to the recommendation of best practices and a 90-60-30 day communication with customers. We will look for ways to automate the customer contact process and update customer preferences to bring those costs back to the original estimate. It is most likely that will be possible with shifting some of the customer contact to email.

This budget does not include IT implementation costs for functions such as integrating interval meter data into MyAccount or into our billing systems. It also does not include estimated costs for any potential Commission-required customer notifications for the Advanced Grid application filing. The proposed budget includes external resources and support for this program (i.e., goods and services), but does not include internal resources (i.e, communication personnel).

Advanced Grid - Colorado	
Customer Education and Communication Plan	
<i>Revised Cost Estimates - October 2019</i>	
2019	\$ 63,425
2020	\$ 25,000
2021	\$ 1,201,125
2022	\$ 1,397,850
2023	\$ 1,344,600
2024	\$ 574,420
	\$ 4,606,420

2019	
Goal: Customer research, planning, IVO testing meter installation	
Installs planned: 13,000	
Tactic	Estimated Cost
<u>Market Research</u>	
Focus Groups (completed January 2019)	\$ 30,000
<u>Phase I: Raising Awareness</u>	
Due to the fact that only 13,000 test meters will be installed for testing IVO, the full set of awareness activities will begin in 2020 leading up to Wave 2 installations; this includes the 90 day bill insert	\$ -
Videos to support regulatory rate review	\$ 10,000
Social media promotion of videos	\$ 1,000
<u>Phase II: Informing Meter Installation</u>	
60 day postcard (\$0.80 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 10,400
30 day letter (\$0.55 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 7,150
Doorhangers (\$0.375 average cost)	\$ 4,875
<u>Phase III: Customer Engagement</u>	
Customer engagement activities will be postponed for this group until they have received a second advanced "next-gen" meter. It is expected that this will be sometime in Wave 2 installations and communications.	\$ -
Total	
	\$ 63,425

2020	
Goal: Planning, Awareness, Informing	
Installs planned: 0	
Tactic	Estimated Cost
<u>Phase I: Raising Awareness</u>	
Market Research	\$ -
Xcelenergy.com	in-house
Talking Points and FAQs	in-house
Paid Social Media (managed in-house)	\$ -
Paid Advertising	\$ -
Develop videos for web and social media	\$ 25,000
<u>Phase II: Informing Meter Installation</u>	
90 day onsert (\$0.05 average cost)	\$ -
60 day postcard (\$0.80 average cost incl. postage)	\$ -
30 day letter (\$0.55 average cost incl. postage)	\$ -
Outbound call	in-house
Doorhangers (\$0.375 average cost)	\$ -
<u>Phase III: Customer Engagement</u>	
These activities will start in 2021	\$ -
Total	\$ 25,000

2021

Goal: Awareness, Informing, Engagement

Installs planned: 395,000

Tactic	Estimated Cost
<u>Phase I: Raising Awareness</u>	
Market Research (message testing)	\$ 30,000
Xcelenergy.com	in-house
Talking Points and FAQs	in-house
Paid Social Media (managed in-house)	\$ 20,000
Paid Advertising	\$ 150,000
<u>Phase II: Informing Meter Installation</u>	
90 day onsert (\$0.05 average cost)	\$ 19,750
60 day postcard (\$0.80 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 316,000
30 day letter (\$0.55 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 217,250
Outbound call	in-house
Doorhangers (\$0.375 average cost)	\$ 148,125
<u>Phase III: Customer Engagement</u>	
Paid Social Media	\$ 5,000
Targeted Digital Advertising	\$ 6,250
Onserts (\$0.05 average cost)	\$ 19,750
Email (three campaigns at \$0.003 per email)	\$ 3,555
HAN specific collateral/materials (could include direct mail)	\$ 265,445
Total	\$ 1,201,125

2022	
Goal: Awareness, Informing, Engagement	
Installs planned: 534,000	
Tactic	Estimated Cost
<u>Phase I: Raising Awareness</u>	
Market Research (message testing)	\$ 30,000
Xcelenergy.com	in-house
Talking Points and FAQs	in-house
Paid Social Media (managed in-house)	\$ 20,000
Paid Advertising	\$ 100,000
<u>Phase II: Informing Meter Installation</u>	
90 day onsert (\$0.05 average cost)	\$ 26,700
60 day postcard (\$0.80 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 427,200
30 day letter (\$0.55 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 293,700
Outbound call	in-house
Doorhangers (\$0.375 average cost)	\$ 200,250
<u>Phase III: Customer Engagement</u>	
Paid Social Media	\$ 5,000
Targeted Digital Advertising	\$ 6,250
Onserts (\$0.05 average cost)	\$ 26,700
Email (three campaigns at \$0.003 per email)	\$ 4,806
HAN specific collateral/materials (could include direct mail)	\$ 257,244
Total	\$ 1,397,850

2023

Goal: Awareness, Informing, Engagement

Installs planned: 504,000

Tactic	Estimated Cost
<u>Phase I: Raising Awareness</u>	
Market Research (message testing)	\$ 30,000
Xcelenergy.com	in-house
Talking Points and FAQs	in-house
Paid Social Media (managed in-house)	\$ 20,000
Paid Advertising	\$ 100,000
<u>Phase II: Informing Meter Installation</u>	
90 day onsert (\$0.05 average cost)	\$ 25,200
60 day postcard (\$0.80 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 403,200
30 day letter (\$0.55 average cost incl. postage)	\$ 277,200
Outbound call	in-house
Doorhangers (\$0.375 average cost)	\$ 189,000
<u>Phase III: Customer Engagement</u>	
Paid Social Media	\$ 5,000
Targeted Digital Advertising	\$ 6,250
Onserts (\$0.05 average cost)	\$ 25,200
Email (three campaigns at \$0.003 per email)	\$ 4,536
HAN specific collateral/materials (could include direct mail)	\$ 259,014
Total	\$ 1,344,600

