



Peak Flex Market Program

Contra Costa County

Savings at a glance

Saved over
7,500 kWh

Earned over
\$15,000
in incentives
from MCE and
\$3,000
in bill savings

**Permanently
reduced**
operational costs
year-round

Season at a glance

Participated in
**11 demand
response events**
during summer 2022

Enrolled 20 of the
highest energy-
consuming buildings

Contra Costa County, with over 1 million residents and 200 managed facilities, has been a front-runner in energy conservation since the early 2000s.

In the summer of 2022, the county became a model participant in MCE's Peak Flex Market program, showcasing how strategic adjustments of energy use during demand response events can yield significant energy savings and financial compensation, while supporting grid stability and contributing to environmental sustainability.

“We made slight changes to HVAC schedules in nearly two dozen of our buildings — helping the grid with minimal impact on building occupants and services. We earned over \$15,000 in one summer and saved \$3,000 on our energy bills. The strategies we developed for participating in Peak Flex Market reduced our building operations costs year-round and solidified our role as a leader in sustainability.”

— **Brendan Havenar-Daughton**
Energy Manager, Contra Costa County



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Strategies for Success

Collaborative approach: The key to Contra Costa County's success was creating a working group that included department directors, facility engineers, and HVAC contractors to develop and implement load-reducing measures.

Smart scheduling strategy: Contra Costa County's strategy focused on modifying air-conditioning schedules to start later and end earlier, leveraging an existing Building Management System (BMS) for ease of implementation and minimal impact on staff.

Permanent Benefits & Savings

Contra Costa County determined that the interventions had relatively no impact on the building occupants, demonstrating how efficiently it could reduce energy use while maintaining a comfortable and productive environment.

Encouraged by the success of these measures, Contra Costa County has decided to permanently operate its buildings on the new schedule. The strategies developed for the Peak Flex Market program have helped reduce building operations costs year-round.



Make a difference for California.

Importance of reducing energy use during peak usage times

Beyond the financial benefits for your organization, reducing energy use during peak times is crucial for several reasons:

- Improving grid stability
- Lowering energy costs
- Reducing environmental impact
- Increasing energy efficiency

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“Apart from the economic and environmental benefits of our actions, we are deeply grateful that enough market actors were able to reduce their usage during demand response events, which can lead to significant and tragic outcomes for society at large.”

— **Brendan Havenar-Daughton**
Energy Manager, Contra Costa County

Forward-looking measures

Contra Costa County intends to implement additional energy-saving measures to earn more with MCE's Peak Flex Market program, including:

- Precooling buildings earlier in the day and increasing the AC set points to further reduce load
- Offering employees the option to work from home or leave early to minimize the likelihood of discomfort
- Turning off EV chargers strategically and responsibly
- Reminding employees that small actions, like turning off lights, monitors, and other equipment when not in use, can make a big difference