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**Survey Reveals Low-Income Consumers Need Financial Help to Engage in Smart Energy**

*Lower-income consumers value saving energy and investing in renewable energy, but face significant financial obstacles to engagement*

**ATLANTA – Nov. 17, 2020** – The [Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative](http://www.smartenergycc.org) (SECC) today released a new report that sheds light on lower-income consumers’ behaviors, attitudes and values as they relate to energy efficiency, smart home technology, renewable energy, their electricity providers and climate change.

The “Understanding Lower-Income Consumers and the Smart Energy Future” report was developed from an online national survey administered to 1,000 consumers across the U.S. in August and September. This research defined lower-income consumers as those earning less than \$50,000 annually. Further analysis delineated consumers earning less than \$25,000 as low-income consumers and those earning over \$25,000 as moderate-income consumers.

The report found that lower-income consumers’ values largely align with those of higher-income Americans. As expected, saving money is the primary driver of energy decision-making – a finding consistent with SECC’s past research. About half (47 percent) of lower-income consumers cited “the money I can save” as their primary thought when they consider energy-saving options. Lower-income consumers also expressed considerable concern for the environment and support for investments in clean energy: eighty-one percent value these two priorities.

However, this research also revealed significant financial obstacles for lower-income consumers. According to [ACEEE](http://www.aceee.org), low-income households experience disproportionately higher energy burdens, yet the report found that the majority of lower-income consumers are unaware of financial assistance programs to help pay bills or install energy-efficient upgrades.

Fifty-four percent of low-income consumers are unaware of any bill payment assistance, and only 19 percent are aware of bill assistance programs from their electricity providers. Awareness is even lower for energy efficiency upgrade programs (33 percent) – one of best tools for consumers who want to lower their electricity consumption and bills. However, once the awareness barrier is broken, 90 percent or more of lower-income consumers will take advantage

of the assistance, suggesting that overcoming this communications gap is a major opportunity for stakeholders who want to assist these under-resourced consumers.

The “Understanding Lower-Income Consumers and the Smart Energy Future” report can be [downloaded here](#), and the research team will present a [one-hour webinar](#) on the key findings this Wednesday, Nov. 18 at 1 p.m. (ET).

To learn more about SECC, visit [www.smartenergycc.org](http://www.smartenergycc.org) or follow [@seconsumer](https://twitter.com/seconsumer) on Twitter.