

# 2021

# SECC Research Agenda for 2021

Providing the smart energy community with the latest information in consumer engagement, the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative's Research Agenda highlights the key trends and topics that will be explored in 2021.

## Q1

2021 State of the Consumer Report

Racial Disparities in Energy White Paper

## 2021 State of the Consumer Report

Drawing on SECC's consumer research projects from 2020, this annual report will present five major themes on today's utility-customer relationship and discuss ways that the energy industry can increasingly move toward customer-centricity.

## Racial Disparities in Energy White Paper

As the third and final publication in SECC's series on lower-income consumers, this white paper will specifically look at variances among Black, white and POC lower-income consumers in regards to interest in smart energy technologies, environmental attitudes, perceptions of electricity providers, awareness of energy assistance programs and more.

## Q2

Smart Home and Energy Data: What Do Consumers Want?

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This research will seek to understand consumers' interests and concerns about data ownership, data sharing and connected devices. Are connected devices meeting consumers' expectations? Are consumers interested in the value experience aggregators bring (e.g., Google Apps, Nest, Alexa)? What do consumers think about privacy, cybersecurity, costs, trustworthy entities or technologies, equipment obsolescence, hacking of systems controls and interoperability? Does concern and interest vary by segment?

## Q3

Understanding the Needs and Wants of Renters: Residential

Understanding the Needs and Wants of Renters: SMBs

## Understanding the Needs and Wants of Renters

### Part 1: Residential

Does behavioral/attitudinal segmentation differ between renters and homeowners? This research will seek to illuminate who renters are in comparison to homeowners as energy consumers. This report will explore renters' values, behaviors and motivations, what types of products and services are of interest, and how stakeholders can resolve their issues and be more helpful. This report will also provide insights on the impact of the pandemic on renters.

### Part 2: SMBs

This research will focus on small and medium businesses who lease/rent their facilities to understand their typical energy consumption patterns, their top values and concerns around energy, percent of energy as total costs of running their business, views of their energy provider, and what products and services are of specific interest to them. This report will also explore how the pandemic has affected SMB renters.

## Q4

Beneficial Electrification: Exploring the Barriers for Consumers

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With widespread electrification on the horizon, this research will explore barriers to electrification, including physical and structural barriers on both the consumer side and the utility side. For example, heat pumps may require new plumbing or electrical work and not a simple swap out. Does the electric panel need an upgrade? What insights can stakeholders offer to help consumers better understand this transition? This research will also explore consumer understanding of their total energy spend (electricity, gasoline, natural gas and other fuel types) and carbon reductions.