

Providing the energy industry with the latest information in consumer engagement and smart energy, the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative's Research Agenda highlights the key topics that will be explored in 2024.

Q1

2024 State of the Consumer Report

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Drawing on SECC's consumer research projects from 2023 along with curated outside research, this annual report will present major themes on today's utility-customer relationship and discuss ways that electricity providers and other industry stakeholders can increasingly move toward customer-centricity in 2024 and beyond.

Q2

Understanding the SMB Landscape: New Needs and Concerns

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Diving into the small-medium business (SMB) segment, we will explore their needs and wants from their electricity providers in the post-pandemic landscape. We will also examine their interests and challenges around building and transportation electrification, decarbonization goals, demand response and alternative rate options.

Q3

Payment Strategies in a Post-Pandemic Age

Payment Strategies in a Post-Pandemic Age

With relief funding beginning to end, coupled with high energy costs and inflation, many consumers are facing greater energy burdens today. As electricity providers work on arrearage retirement assistance options and other collection strategies, are consumers aware of their repayment assistance options? This report will study how to maximize enrollment for programs that will benefit consumers and explore strategies that empower consumers and maintain community goodwill while also keeping the bottom line in mind.

Q4

Modern Energy Messaging: Engaging Stakeholders and Consumers

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To help consumers along their electrification journeys, many stakeholders must work together. From home builders to electricians and contractors, as well as appliances installers and EV dealers, it is critical for electricity providers to understand the best ways to engage and assist these electrification partners. Qualitative research will help us gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing businesses working with consumers to ensure a better energy transition for all. Then, a consumer survey will explore marketing messages around electrification, energy efficiency, electric rates and demand response programs. This effort will provide insights into messaging electricity providers can use to better promote new and existing programs.

Smart Energy Snapshot Series

In 2023, SECC started this series of short-form surveys to stay updated on consumer trends and perspectives on smart energy technology and programs. Potential topics for 2024 include:

- Artificial Intelligence: Consumer Perceptions and Concerns
- Unlocking the Smart Home
- EV Managed Charging
- Don't Leave Us in the Dark: Reaching Spanish-Language Households

Providing consumers with relevant, reliable information on important, timely topics, the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative's Education & Outreach Agenda highlights the key projects that will improve consumer understanding and engagement in 2024.

Q1

Reaching Out to Renters

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Many educational resources for consumers on ways to use energy more wisely focus on homeowners, but what if you rent your home? In the first quarter, we will continue our *Questions to Ask* campaign with resources focusing on the steps that renters can take to become smarter energy consumers.

Q2

The Consumer Voice in the Energy Movement

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This white paper will provide a showcase of utility examples around the themes presented in the *2024 State of the Consumer* report. We will present examples in action on how electricity providers from across the United States and Canada are listening and engaging with consumers as part of today's energy movement.

Q3

Educating on Electrification

Educating on Electrification

As more government decarbonization strategies focus on electrification efforts, consumers are often asking themselves — what are some of the ways you can electrify your home? We will continue our *Questions to Ask* campaign with resources focusing on common consumer journeys towards electrification in their home, like “What is a heat pump?” and “What should I know about electrification?”

Q4

Driving the Electric Vehicle Conversation

Driving the Electric Vehicle Conversation

Building off our *Educating on Electrification* resources, we will shift our focus to electric transportation in the final quarter of the year by developing a fast-lane option for consumers to answer the question — what should I know about electric vehicles (EVs)?