



Addressing Energy Affordability

In 2023, the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC) released its first-ever Smart Energy Snapshot Survey, which revealed a quarter of Americans were struggling to pay their electric bills and that many lacked awareness of programs to help lower their bills.

With consumers facing rising utility costs – plus the potential loss of energy assistance programs and other financial challenges – SECC is reevaluating the financial landscape to reveal fresh insights for industry stakeholders looking to better assist consumers.

31%



of Americans have struggled to pay their electric bill in the past 12 months, including:



49%

of those who make <\$50k/year
(34% in 2023)



46%

of those who rent their homes
(32% in 2023)

Source: This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll from April 4-7, 2025, among 2,072 adults ages 18 and older.



Consumers making under \$50k per year have had to...

44% Make a late payment
(Up from 39% in 2023)

29% Make a partial payment
(Up from 25% in 2023)

17% Apply for an assistance program
(Down from 27% in 2023)



Struggling consumers are trying to decrease their bills by...

48% Lowering heat and A/C consumption

37% Reducing appliance usage

29% Replacing inefficient bulbs with LEDs



Struggling consumers are challenged with finding ways to save and need assistance from their electricity providers.

22% Aren't sure what to do and need info on how to save energy

17% Already use as little heat and A/C as possible

12% Can't afford home improvements
(insulation, weather-stripping, windows, etc.)



Consumers still lack awareness of utility programs and offers that could lower their bills.

25% Recall seeing an offer for an energy audit in the past year

18% Have seen rebates for energy-efficient HVAC
(e.g., heat pumps)

16% Are aware of options to change their rate plan
(e.g., time-of-use, flat fee)