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Jonathan Field

Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative
770-833-6026
jonathan.field@smartenergycc.org

Survey: One-Third of Americans Now Struggling to Pay Their Electric Bills

The latest survey in the Smart Energy Snapshot Series reveals exacerbating financial struggles for American energy consumers

ATLANTA – May 7, 2025 – About one-third (31 percent) of Americans say that they have struggled to pay their electricity bills in the past year, according to the latest survey from the [Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative](#) (SECC), a nonprofit organization that studies Americans’ energy-related behaviors, interests and values. This is up from one-quarter of Americans just two years ago.

The [“Addressing Energy Affordability”](#) survey – which reached a nationally representative sample of 2,072 consumers in early April – found significantly higher struggles among lower-income consumers and Americans who rent their homes. Forty-nine percent of Americans making under \$50K annually now struggle with their electric bills (up from 34 percent in 2023), and 46 percent of renters reported struggling to pay their electric bills (compared to 32 percent in April 2023).

As a result, there is also a marked increase in the number of consumers who say that they have had to make a late payment (37 percent in 2025 vs. 32 percent in 2023) or a partial payment (27 percent in 2025 vs. 22 percent in 2023) on their electric bills within the past year.

However, consumers’ knowledge of programs from their electricity providers that could potentially cut their household electricity expenses has largely remained stagnant. Only 18 percent of Americans have seen discounts/rebates for energy-efficient HVAC options – the same percentage as in 2023 – while just 15 percent have seen an offer for an energy audit (16 percent two years ago). Across the board, knowledge of energy-saving programs and offers was noticeably lower among renters and consumers making under \$50K annually.

“Two years after we conducted our first Snapshot Survey, we find that American consumers are increasingly struggling with their electricity bills, particularly those that make under \$50K per year and those that rent,” said SECC’s President & CEO Nathan Shannon. “With the potential loss of LIHEAP and other federal incentives, it’s more important than ever before that electricity providers help connect consumers with energy-saving and energy assistance programs.”

An infographic highlighting key figures from the “Addressing Energy Affordability” survey can be viewed [here](#), and a [slide deck](#) with the full survey findings is available exclusively for SECC’s membership. In addition, a [30-minute webinar](#) on the key survey findings will be held on Thursday,

2020 Howell Mill Road NW, Suite D-260, Atlanta, GA 30318 | www.smartenergycc.org

May 29 at 1 p.m. (ET) with SECC's President & CEO Nathan Shannon and Annie Levenson-Falk, Executive Director of the Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota.

About the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC)

The Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to learn the wants and needs of energy consumers in North America, encourages the collaborative sharing of best practices in consumer engagement among industry stakeholders, and educates the public about the benefits of smart energy and energy technology. To learn more, visit www.smartenergycc.org or follow us on [LinkedIn](#).