

ENERGY EQUITY IN GEORGIA



Energy equity, or the lack thereof, is a problem in Georgia...

- **Many families are forced to choose** between paying for adequate heating or cooling and groceries.
- **This energy insecurity can lead to financial instability**, driving some families to resort to high-interest payday loans to avoid disconnection of service, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.
- **Improperly heated or cooled homes can lead to or exacerbate health problems** including increases in asthma and other respiratory problems, and heart disease, especially among children and the elderly.

Barriers

Energy efficiency upgrades and solar installations can reduce low-income families' energy burden, but they lack access to energy efficiency and solar programs that could help.

- Barriers to energy efficiency and solar include:
 - Inadequate financial resources or credit,
 - Lack of homeownership (renters are often excluded because they cannot authorize upgrades or installations), and
 - rooftops not suitable for solar.

Energy efficiency and solar can reduce struggling families' high-energy burden, improve financial stability, offer improvements to health, and even promote economic opportunity for communities. That's good news for families, utilities and communities.

What are some solutions?

- **Robust utility-based energy efficiency programs** to complement government-funded weatherization programs¹ **with direct install programs²** for low income households at no cost or through rebates.
- **On-bill financing tariffs** like the PAYS (Pay As You Save) model that allow customers to finance energy efficiency upgrades or solar on their monthly bills.
- **Community, cooperative, and utility scale solar** to reduce the upfront cost of solar panels and expand access to renters and those without suitable rooftops for panels.

Did You Know?

- Energy efficiency improvements increase property value and extend the lifetime of a property³.
- Energy efficiency improvements generate savings that families can use to supplement income and cover other expenses⁴.
- By reducing a home's energy bill, energy efficient measures help save energy used which may help avoid utility disconnections, bad debt write-offs, and expensive reconnections⁵.
- Energy efficiency improvements improve safety, health and comfort⁶.
- Investment in energy efficiency and increased disposable income can lead to direct and indirect job creation in energy and other sectors⁷.

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Partners include:



References

1. www.energy.gov/eere/wipo/about-weatherization-assistance-program-0: Weatherization differs in many ways from what is commonly referred to as “weatherizing your home.” The latter involves low-cost improvements like adding weather-stripping to doors and windows to save energy. The Weatherization Assistance Program takes the “whole house weatherization” approach that analyzes all of the building systems—the building envelope, heating and cooling systems, electrical system, and electric baseload appliances—through the completion of an energy audit. Another distinguishing feature of WAP is the attention to the overall health and safety of the clients being served and the weatherization providers.
2. www.csgrp.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Direct-Installations-for-Energy-Efficiency-Programs-CSG-Conservation-Services-Group.pdf: Direct Install programs by definition are prescriptive, without a testing component. The energy specialist in the performs direct install by carrying out savings measures that may include CFL or LED replacement lighting, low flow showerheads, water saving faucet aerators, thermostats, pipe wrap, and/or smart power strips. A more comprehensive direct install measure program may include air sealing and/or duct sealing, water heater adjustment, or other measures.
- 3-6. Schweitzer, Martin and Tonn, Bruce. “Nonenergy Benefits from the Weatherization Assistance Program: A Summary of Findings from the Recent Literature,” *Oak Ridge National Laboratory and U.S. Department of Energy* (April 2002), available at www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/sites/default/files/2NEBfromWeatherization.pdf
7. Ryan, Lisa and Campbell, Nina. “ Spreading the Net: The Multiple Benefits of Energy Efficiency Improvements,” *International Energy Agency* (2012), available at www.iea.org/publications/insights/insightpublications/Spreading_the_Net.pdf