

## **Research Resources Regarding Needs and Impacts Relating to Low Income Utility and Energy Consumers**

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In development of strategies, programs and policy regarding utility and energy, it is important to take into account the need for affordable access to essential services by low income households. The below resources include organizations or agencies focused on low income related issues, research and data relevant to low income energy and utility issues, sites with a demonstrated expertise regarding the need for access to affordable services, and industry and state agency back-up sites.

This listing was prepared in February 2007 as a guide to assist in readily accessing potentially relevant information -- it is not a definitive listing. If you have updates or suggestions, please email them to Shirley Bergert: [sbergert@connlegalservices.org](mailto:sbergert@connlegalservices.org).

**The listings are organized as follows:**

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## **I. RESEARCH AND CONSULTING ORGANIZATIONS / FIRMS**

**Democracy and Regulation:** <http://www.DemocracyAndRegulation.com>

D&R has a range of reports relating to low income energy and utility issues, including deregulation, affordability issues, consumer protection, customer service issues, weatherization and energy efficiency, effective advocacy for low income consumers in legislative and regulatory fora, and related international issues.

D&R provides expert consulting services to assist consumer advocates, including research, analysis, negotiation, strategic advice, and expert witnesses (Jerrold Oppenheim or Theo MacGregor, 1-978-283-0897).

**Fisher, Sheehan & Colton:** <http://www.fsconline.com/>

FSC is a law and economics research and consulting firm. Their areas of expertise include analysis of the home energy affordability gap, housing economics, energy regulation, and utility restructuring. They maintain an extensive library of their research and analysis regarding energy and utility issues and impacts on low income consumers.

FSC provides expert consulting services in research, testimony and technical assistance in support of judicial and administrative litigation, and they engage in empirical research (Roger Colton, [RColton101@aol.com](mailto:RColton101@aol.com)).

**National Consumer Law Center:** <http://www.consumerlaw.org/>

NCLC publishes a manual with CD Rom entitled "Access to Utility Service" (\$90 -- [http://www.consumerlaw.org/publications/manuals/access\\_utility.shtml](http://www.consumerlaw.org/publications/manuals/access_utility.shtml)), appropriate for attorneys and other advocates. It covers: utility regulation and de-regulation, and consumer claims against de-regulated utilities; rights regarding access to utility service, metering issues, billing disputes, deposit issues, customer service issues and utility terminations; affordability strategies, including LIHEAP benefits, utility company low income affordability programs, and utility charges in subsidized housing; weatherization efforts; publically-assisted housing utility allowances; and telecommunications issues, including affordability.

NCLC also publishes the "Guide to the Rights of Utility Consumers," designed for a lay audience (\$15 -- [http://www.consumerlaw.org/publications/guides/utility\\_guide.shtml](http://www.consumerlaw.org/publications/guides/utility_guide.shtml)).

NCLC provides expert consulting services to assist consumer advocates regarding interventions in utility proceedings, legislative drafting, and policy advocacy (John Howat ([jhowat@nclc.org](mailto:jhowat@nclc.org)) & Charlie Harak ([charak@nclc.org](mailto:charak@nclc.org)) at 617.542.8010, Olivia Wein ([owein@nclcdc.org](mailto:owein@nclcdc.org)) at 202.452.6252.

## **II. US GOVERNMENT**

**General Accountability Office:** <http://www.gao.gov/>

GAO acts as the investigative arm of Congress regarding expenditure of federal funding. It has created numerous reports over the years regarding energy and weatherization assistance. Search "energy assistance" and "weatherization assistance" to locate the reports.

**US Department of Energy:** <http://www.energy.gov/>

DOE has numerous articles and resources regarding low income energy issues. Search “low income” on the website. DOE has several sections with information of particular interest regarding low income issues:

- **Energy Information Administration:** <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/recs/contents.html>

Information regarding residential energy consumption patterns with income and housing characteristics. It has a subscription electronic update service, the Energy Users listserv (see bottom of listing under “Consumption Lists,” [http://www.eia.doe.gov/listserv\\_signup.html#consumption](http://www.eia.doe.gov/listserv_signup.html#consumption)).

- **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy:** <http://www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization/>

Information on federal weatherization funding and programs. Note this funding is limited and additional weatherization assistance may be available through state mechanisms.

- **National Renewable Energy Laboratory:** <http://www.nrel.gov/>

Information on renewable energy issues. Search “low income” on website.

**US Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families**

HHS’ website has two sections of particular interest:

- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program:**  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap/>

This section has information on federal energy assistance funding. Note this funding is limited and additional assistance may be available through state mechanisms.

- **LIHEAP Clearinghouse:** <http://www.liheap.ncat.org/>

This section provides state by state information on restructuring, energy and weatherization assistance and utility termination policies, as well as links to studies and reports regarding low income energy related issues.

**III. RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS**

**AARP:** [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

Search the website for “low income energy” for articles of interest, including state by state guides to energy and weatherization assistance.

**Annie E. Casey Foundation:** <http://www.aecf.org>

Publishes annual Kids Count summary of child welfare data by state.

**Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:** <http://www.cbpp.org/search.html> (search CBPP page for “energy”)

CBPP researches, analyzes and prepares reports relating to policies affecting low income persons, including analysis of the need for energy assistance.

**Coalition on Human Needs:** <http://www.chn.org/issues/liheap/>

CHN is an organization focused on addressing the needs of low income persons. It has updates on federal energy assistance funding and links to research by others on energy and utility affordability issues.

**Economic Policy Institute:** <http://www.epi.org>

EPI is a good source for general economic and labor data.

**Food Research and Action Center:** <http://www.frac.org/> (search FRAC page for “energy”)

FRAC researches, analyzes and prepares reports focused on hunger and nutrition, including studies and reports linking hunger and energy issues among the poor.

**Note two recent studies linking hunger and health with adequate energy assistance, independent of but related to FRAC’s work:**

- **Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics:**  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/118/5/e1293>

This journal included an article in November 2006, “Heat or Eat: The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and Nutritional and Health Risks Among Children Less Than 3 Years of Age.”

- **American Society for Nutrition:** <http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/abstract/136/11/2939>

This journal included an article in November 2006, “Seasonal Variation in Food Insecurity Is Associated with Heating and Cooling Costs among Low-Income Elderly Americans.”

**Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law:** <http://old.povertylaw.org/search/index.cfm>

NCPL has articles on low income energy issues. In search by topic, click on “public utility/energy” and under document type, click on “poverty law news,” then click “begin search.”

- **Clearinghouse Review:** <http://www.povertylaw.org/clearinghouse-review>

NCPL publishes this legal journal of poverty law which includes articles regarding energy related issues, but it is only available by subscription.

**Six “Strategies for Family Economic Self Sufficiency:**  
<http://www.sixstrategies.org/sixstrategies/selfsufficiencystandard.cfm>

Calculations of the real poverty line, by family size and configuration, for almost every state and county in the nation.

#### **IV. ENERGY, WEATHERIZATION AND FUEL BANK BACK-UP ORGANIZATIONS**

**Energy Opportunity Studies:** <http://www.opportunitystudies.org/>

This is a back-up organization for community based organizations providing information on energy affordability and weatherization.

**National Association for State Community Assistance Programs:**  
<http://www.nascsp.org/WAP/wap.htm>

This is the back-up organization for the organizations administering federally funded weatherization assistance, largely Community Action Agencies funded by the federal Community Services Block Grant. To access information regarding the weatherization program, go to: <http://www.waptac.org/sp.asp?id=1437>. The left column has links to a range information including state offices responsible for weatherization administration and regulations governing the program.

**National Community Action Foundation:** <http://ncag.org>

The back-up organization for community action programs. Click on “Energy” under “Issues” for federal and state-by-state low-income energy data and other information.

**National Energy Assistance Directors' Association:** <http://www.neada.org/>

NEADA provides up-to-date information on federal energy assistance funding under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. It also publishes a detailed survey and report regarding impacts on low income households attempting to cope with rising energy expenses.

**National Fuel Funds Network:** <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org>

NFFN is a coalition of nonprofit agencies, utilities and government representatives providing utility bill assistance from funds raised as charitable donations, typically through fuel banks. It provides action alerts on federal energy assistance funding. The site has links to state fuel bank systems and other related resources: <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/sites.html>. It has consumer oriented materials and reports: <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/publications.html>

**National Low Income Energy Consortium:** <http://www.nliec.org/>

NLIEC sponsors conferences relating to low income energy issues and maintains a library of press articles and editorials (<http://www.nliec.org/Resources.htm>) and links to its projects and reports (<http://www.nliec.org/Projects.htm>).

- **Journal of Energy Assistance:** <http://www.energyassistancejournal.org/>

This online quarterly journal is sponsored by NLIEC and began publication in January 2007, focused on energy assistance issues.

#### **V. ENERGY EFFICIENCY ORGANIZATIONS**

**American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy:** <http://www.aceee.org/index.htm>

Search the site for low income. Additionally, the “Consumer Resources” section has information regarding conservation tips and federal and state tax and rebate programs:  
<http://www.aceee.org/consumer/consumer.htm>

## **VI. UNIVERSITIES**

**Institute for Sustainable Energy:** <http://www.ct-energyinfo.com/>

While focused on Connecticut programs and issues, this Institute is developing research links relevant to low income issues.

**The National Regulatory Research Institute at Ohio State University:** <http://www.nrri.ohio-state.edu/ConsumerAffairs>

NRRI, at Ohio State University, is the research arm of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. It has research, analysis and reports related to low income issues, including links to state conservation programs, affordability impacts of rising utility costs, utility deposit credit information and “convenience” fee credit card payment issues, and budget billing programs. It also maintains a library of low income materials by others at: <http://www.nrri.ohio-state.edu/dspace/handle/2068/574>.

## **VII. STATE UTILITY AGENCY BACK-UP ORGANIZATIONS**

**National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners:** <http://www.naruc.org/>

NARUC’s website provides up-to-date information on federal energy assistance funding under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act. For other article, search “low income” on their site.

**National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates:** <http://www.nasuca.org/>

This is the back-up organization for state consumer counsels. The site is most notable for its lack of information and focus on low income consumers, though it includes telephone lifeline information.

## **VIII. INDUSTRY BACK-UP ORGANIZATIONS**

**American Gas Association:**  
[http://www.aga.org/Content/ContentGroups/Advocacy1/Issues/LIHEAP\\_Resources.htm](http://www.aga.org/Content/ContentGroups/Advocacy1/Issues/LIHEAP_Resources.htm)

AGA is the back-up organization for local gas utilities. Its website has information on energy assistance that may be useful.

**Edison Electric Institute:** [http://www.eei.org/industry\\_issues/retail\\_services\\_and\\_delivery/low-income\\_energy\\_assistance/index.htm](http://www.eei.org/industry_issues/retail_services_and_delivery/low-income_energy_assistance/index.htm)

EEI is the back-up organization for local electric companies. Its website has information on their membership’s low income programs.