



What Georgia Can Do to Improve Energy Affordability: Snapshot

September 2026

[Georgia ranks in the top 10](#) most expensive states for summer cooling, with summer utility bills averaging \$225, the sixth highest in the country. [Extreme weather](#), particularly the increasing frequency, duration, and intensity of extreme heat waves, will continue to worsen this unaffordability. Moreover, Georgia's [Black households](#) disproportionately bear the burden of unaffordable utility bills.

Public backlash against utility rate hikes—[Georgia Power raised residential rates 6 times between 2022 and 2024](#)—and rising energy bills have impacted political races, contributing to some incumbent utility regulators [being voted out of office](#).

As [utility bills continue to rise](#), policymakers should consider the following recommendations to address the ongoing energy affordability crisis in Georgia.

- **Adopt programs to immediately help Georgians afford their utility bills.** Georgia policymakers must act now to ensure that residents, especially low-income families, can afford their utility bills and stay connected to vital energy service. This can be accomplished through a mix of safeguards:
 - Create robust low-income affordability programs
 - Reduce disconnections and aggressive debt collections
 - Eliminate utility junk fees (e.g., late fees, reconnection fees, security deposits, etc.)
 - Use state funds to boost access to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
 - Support energy efficiency programs
- **Implement significant reforms to increase utility commission and regulatory accountability.** Public participation in utility commission proceedings, and guardrails on utility commission decisionmaking, can ultimately protect families and keep bills more affordable. Georgia policymakers should consider the following measures:
 - Increase public participation in utility commission proceedings
 - Appoint a state ratepayer advocate
 - Scrutinize private equity acquisitions of utility companies
 - Limit expenses that can be collected by utility companies in rate cases
 - Keep utility profits within reasonable levels
 - Advance renewable energy on a large scale
 - Protect families and communities from harm from data centers

Ultimately, Georgia has its own unique utility regulatory landscape, and specific legislative and regulatory tools that can be used to promote utility affordability. While there is no magic bullet to bring down utility costs, policymakers should explore the aforementioned range of strategies and common-sense measures to help make utility bills more affordable for Georgia households.

Read the in-depth discussion [here](#). Learn more about how to improve energy security: National Consumer Law Center's Energy and Utilities [webpage](#), including our [What States Can Do to Help Consumers: Energy Insecurity](#) factsheet.

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