

## Data highlights from our ongoing survey

**56% of respondents reported that their household is consuming more energy due to COVID-19**

**47.4% of respondents were not aware of energy assistance programs that could help with utility bill payment during COVID-19**

**24% of respondents did not know what weatherization was when asked.**

**Most respondents practice some form of energy conservation. For example, 35% of respondents use sunlight instead of electric lighting to save on electricity, 32% wear more clothes or use more blankets in order to save on heat, and 48% unplug devices not in use to save on electricity.**

**80% of respondents believe that they have the right to energy**

## What do you think?

## About the Project

The Energy Rights Project is a social science study that investigates 1) how people understand energy systems, 2) how people access and use energy in their homes, 3) how organizations shape understanding of energy systems and everyday access to energy, and 4) how policy shapes relationships between energy users, energy providers, and energy assistance organizations.

The Energy Rights Project has three main objectives:

- To collect data and provide analysis that is useful for energy service organizations (ESOs) and policymakers.
- To provide an archive of material that can lend insight into household energy use, the struggle to secure affordable access, to energy and what can be done to address common problems related to energy affordability and security.
- To help educate people about energy - through our research activities and also by working with other organizations.

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## The Energy Rights Project

Engaging Citizens, Speaking to Policy

# What are energy rights?

In the United States, we are not taught to think about energy as a right. But shouldn't it be?

Below is a list of energy rights that the Energy Rights Project team came up with before beginning our research. We invite you to think about your relationship to the below items and provide us feedback. Maybe there is something that is not on the list that you think is an energy right.

- I have a right to electricity.
- I have a right to internet access.
- I have a right to air conditioning.
- I have a right to clean water for bathing, cooking, and drinking.
- I have a right to heat.
- I have a right to choose my energy provider.
- I have a right to choose the source of my energy supply.
- I have a right to phone service.
- I have a right to financial assistance to pay my utilities as needed.
- I have a right to itemized utility bills.
- I have a right to updated appliances, if I am a renter, so that my bills are affordable.
- I have a right to appliances and HVAC units that keep my living space healthy.
- I have a right to a weatherized home.



## What people have said about their right to energy:

"I believe I have a right to be able to make payment agreements if I'm having a difficult situation, a longer payment plan than just a short term agreement."

"That energy should be available. That energy should be consistent and well maintained. And reasonably priced. This is dependent on government oversight."

"I have a right to sustainable energy. I think the government has to put things in place for people to be able to afford energy, and they also need to educate people on proper use of energy."

"I have a right to the basics to live. Come to think of it, it sucks that they charge you for that. These are things you need to live. Never looked at it that way until just now."

# Barriers to affordable energy

One of the things we've learned from talking to Philadelphians is that, while it seems like everyone should have access to energy --- utilities like electricity, gas for heating and cooking, water for bathing and drinking, and oil for heating systems -- many people face barriers to consistent access to energy that is affordable. Here are some of the biggest barriers to affordable energy that we've found:

- Income guidelines for energy assistance programs prevent working families from getting what they need
- Homes that have older model appliances, drafty windows and doors, use more energy, making it harder to heat and cool homes affordably
- Utility bills are often confusing to read and it's not always clear what we're paying for

**Join us in the effort to shift thinking and policy so that affordable, sustainable, and healthy energy is guaranteed to everyone.**

