

Phone Survey: Energy Use During COVID-19

The Energy Rights Project

Verbal Consent Script

Hello my name is _____ and I am a researcher for the Energy Rights Project. I'm calling to see if now is still a good time for you to take the phone survey; the survey takes about an hour. [Wait for a response]

OK, as part of our verbal consent process, I'm going to give you some more information about the project and the survey so that you understand your rights as a participant, as well as how you're contributing to the study.

This survey is part of a federally-funded study that is being led by Dr. Kenner. The project has been vetted and approved by Drexel's human subject research review board. We are studying household energy use and barriers to energy access in the Mid-Atlantic region. We've been doing this project for 18-months now and we have surveyed more than 150 people since the pandemic started in March.

Your participation in our survey is voluntary and anonymous; we will not collect any personal identifying information during the survey. Some questions may make you uncomfortable. You are welcome to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You can also stop the survey at any point if you do not want to continue.

I will ask you questions about your living conditions before and after COVID-19 began, your employment status, energy consumption, and bill payment. The data that we collect from the survey will be made available to our larger research community, but again, all responses are anonymous. Our survey results will likely be reported in online publications and scholarly journals. We also publish a quarterly newsletter with project updates. The survey will take about an hour. Is that OK with you? I'll also be taking notes throughout the survey so there may be moments of silence. Do you have any questions for me before we start the survey?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has negatively affected you, you can talk to Dr. Alison Kenner or you can contact Drexel University's IRB office, which vetted and approved this project. When you pick up your gift card, you will receive a copy of this script with Dr. Kenner's contact information and contact information for the review board. The workshop host will contact you in the next few weeks so that you can pick up your gift card.

Contact Information

Dr. Alison Kenner, Associate Professor, Drexel University
Phone # (484) 461-5375 / Email address: amk438@drexel.edu

Drexel IRB Office

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your involvement in a research study or questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call us at 267.359. 2471 or email HRPP@drexel.edu.

Thinking About Energy Rights

In our survey, we asked, “Do you think you have a right to energy?” and then we asked, if yes, what you thought you had a right to. Below is a list of rights that the Energy Rights Project team came up with for this survey. In the United States at least, we are not taught to think about energy as a right, so some of what appears on this list may seem strange or radical. We invite you to think about your relationship to these goods.

- 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 an itemized (breakdown of my) 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.

Energy Assistance Programs

One of the greatest hurdles to addressing energy vulnerability in the United States is that many people are unaware of energy assistance programs or do not apply for assistance. We list below two national assistance programs designed to help families with low to moderate incomes meet their monthly expenses. Please remember that each state may have additional programs you can apply to meet monthly expenses. Each state may also implement slightly different versions of the national programs here contained, but you can always get more information by contacting your state’s local offices. We’ve also listed energy assistance resources and mutual aid resources specifically for residents of Philadelphia.

LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps families living on low incomes pay their heating bills in the form of a cash grant. Households in immediate danger of being without heat can also qualify for crisis grants. The cash grant is a one-time payment sent directly to the utility company/fuel provider to be credited on your bill.

These grants range from \$200 to \$1,000 based on household size, income, and fuel type. Remember: This is a grant and does not have to be repaid

a. The following website provides details of each state's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), including information on the application process, eligibility requirements, and available funding for the program:

<https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/snapshots.htm>.

b. This link is to find your local office: <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/db/index.php>

c. If you need help and cannot access the online site you can contact the *National Energy Assistance Referral* (NEAR) project: **Call 1-866-674-6327** or TTY 1-866-367-6228

d. Some general requirements to apply for the program are: your income has to be at or below the state's maximum allowable income, you may (depending on state) need to show proof of bill payments, and you need to meet the deadline specified by your state. Also, if you qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or certain Veteran's benefits *you may* be able to automatically qualify

WAP (Weatherization Assistance Program)

a. The Weatherization Assistance Program is administered by the Department of Energy (DOE). Weatherization is meant to improve your home's energy efficiency by sealing drafts, improving insulation, and implementing other measures to reduce energy loss. Weatherization helps to reduce monthly bills by increasing energy conservation in the home. The program is likely administered by one or two organizations in your county. Each state has slightly different qualifications but is primarily awarded based on income.

b. The following link has information on how to apply, qualifications, and local state offices for more information: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/wap/how-apply-weatherization-assistance>

CAP (Customer Assistance Programs)

Customer Assistance Programs are often offered by utility companies. Contact your water, electric, gas, phone, or internet providers to see if they offer bill payment assistance. The assistance may lower your monthly bill or have a budgeted payment, depending on customer needs.

Customer Support Phone Numbers for Philadelphia Utility Companies:

PECO: 1-800-774-7040

PGW: *PGW's Customer Service Centers are currently closed due to COVID-19. Please visit <https://www.pgworks.com/customer-care/crp>

Philadelphia Water Department: (215) 685-6300

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

- a. Run by the Internal Revenue Service, this form of assistance is a tax credit given to low-to-moderate income individuals and couples, and prioritizes couples with children.
 - b. The following link provides information to see if you qualify:
<https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit/do-i-qualify-for-earned-income-tax-credit-eitc>
 - c. Hotline: Call NCMEC at **1-800-843-5678**
-

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- a. This is a federal income supplement that aims to help those with disabilities and those on little to no income. It is a form of cash assistance that provides income for food, clothes, and shelter.
- b. The following link provides general eligibility requirements for the program:
<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm>
- c. The following link is a tool to see whether you are eligible:
<https://ssabest.benefits.gov/>
- d. This link is the program's general page: <https://ssabest.benefits.gov/>
- e. The national hotline is: toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213, Mon-Fri 7am-7pm.

UESF: 215-972-5170

The Utility Grant program is designed to bring a customer's delinquent account up to date. UESF's financial assistance, the matching utility bill credit, and any contribution by the individual must zero out the utility bill. Families and individuals are eligible to apply for assistance every two years.

To be eligible, individuals and families must:

- Have a notice of termination or be off service for PECO, PGW or PWD.
- Be Philadelphia residents.
- Have not received a UGP grant in the past 24 months.
- During LIHEAP season, have applied for LIHEAP Cash and Crisis program first, before coming to UESF.
- Owe an amount that is not in excess of the utility grant. All grants must be applied to the utility account and reach a zero balance. If the amount surpasses the maximum grant allowed, the applicant is responsible for the balance.
- Be at or below 175% of Federal Poverty Level (to be determined at the time of application).

To check your eligibility, go to: <https://uesfacts.org/check-your-eligibility/>

ECA's Heater Hotline: 215-568-7190

The Heater Hotline provides free repairs for income eligible homeowners with broken gas, oil, coal, or electric heating systems. This year round program can perform preventative maintenance and heater clean outs during the spring and summer months.

Free Repairs

- Oil burners
- Gas valve
- Thermostats and heating controls
- Chimney and flue
- Circulator and blowers
- Heating pipes and gas leaks

Requirements

- Own and occupy single family home (no apartment or businesses)
 - Homeowners only
 - Income below the 150% Federal Poverty Level (Federal Poverty Line)
-

Basic Systems Repair Program: 215-448-2160

The Basic Systems Repair Program (BSRP) provides free repairs to correct electrical, plumbing, heating, structural and roofing emergencies in eligible owner-occupied homes in Philadelphia.

What types of emergencies are eligible?

- Dangerous electrical conditions, such as overheating or sparking wiring or entire circuits that won't stay on
- Leaking or broken sewer lines
- Leaking or broken water service lines
- Violations from the Water Department, Philadelphia Gas Works, PECO or Philadelphia L&I
- Roof leaks which have caused a 4 sq. ft. or larger section of ceiling to collapse (Small roof leaks are not considered emergencies)
- Structural repairs to exterior walls of home (Brick pointing and stucco are not considered emergencies)

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for free emergency repairs you must own and live in the single-family house with the problem, be current or under current payment agreement for both your property taxes and your water bill, meet the income guidelines, and not own any other residential property.

Complete and submit an online application form at: <https://phdcphila.org/application-form/>

Neighborhood Energy Centers

Neighborhood Energy Centers (NEC) have trained Energy Counselors that can help you with a wide array of services. With 15 Neighborhood NECs, located throughout the city, you'll always have access to utility assistance!

ACHIEVEability

59 N. 60th St
215-557-8484
West Philadelphia, West Park & Overbrook

Center in the Park
5818 Germantown Ave.
215-848-7722
Northwest Philadelphia

Congreso De Latinos Unidos
216 W. Somerset St.
215-763-8870
North Philadelphia, East of Broad Street

Diversified Community Services
1920 S. 20th St.
215-336-3511
South Philadelphia, West of Broad Street

Germantown Crisis
35 W. Chelton Ave.
215-843-2340
Northwest Philadelphia

GPASS
4943 N. 5th St.
215-456-1662
North Philadelphia, Olney, Logan, & Nicetown

H.A.C.E.
4907 Frankford Ave.
215-437-7867
Frankford, Kensington, & Northeast Philadelphia

Hunting Park
3760 N. Dehli St.
215-225-5560
North Philadelphia, Nicetown, Logan, & Olney

Mt. Vernon

631 N. 39th St.
215-475-9492
Mantua, East Parkside, Powelton Village

New Kensington
2515 Frankford Ave.
215-427-0350
Kensington, Frankford, & Northeast Philadelphia

Nicetown CDC
4300 Germantown Ave.
215-329-1824
West Oak Lane, North Philadelphia, Nicetown, Olney & Logan

Southwest CDC
6328 Paschall Ave.
215-729-0800
Southwest Philadelphia

Strawberry Mansion
2829 W. Diamond St.
215-235-7505
North Philadelphia, West of Broad Street

United Communities
2029 S. 8th St.
215-468-1645
South Philadelphia, East of Broad Street

We Never Say Never
4427 Lancaster Ave.
215-452-0440
West Philadelphia, Overbrook, & West Park

Coalition for Black Trans Liberation

The Coalition for Black Trans Liberation was created to redistribute wealth, in its many forms, from non-Black people everywhere to Black LGBTQIA+ people in our historical community. The purpose of this group is to be a continuous source of monetary, physical,

and material resources for Black members based on the leadership of Black administrators. If you are a member of the Black LGBTQIA+ community in Philadelphia and are in need of monetary assistance (for utility bills, rent assistance, medical bills, food/grocery expenses), directly message **@cbtel2020 on instagram**, email coalition4blacktranslib@gmail.com, or call (267) 666-0157.

Mutual Aid Philly

Mutual Aid Philly offers support for cash assistance, grocery shopping, prescription pickup, masks, prepared meals, emotional support, transportation, and other items. The group was created to provide support in response to COVID-19 and prioritizes outreach to groups most affected by the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. They primarily focus on disabled and chronically ill, undocumented, people of color, LGBTQ, and low-income individuals and families.

They open their form for requests Monday at 12pm. They can only take a limited number of requests each week. They close their form once they have gotten the requests they can take for the week, usually within an hour. You can also request by phone at **215-798-0222** on Monday beginning at 12pm.

Mutual Aid Request Form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScsU0_uCacAAp3_9fHXvINkuB8zVH9sMpcUdBiLWjN-c8yow/closedform

Visit <https://mutualaidphilly.com/en/> for more information

Map of Community Fridges in Philadelphia

Community fridges are a form of mutual aid. Mutual aid is when people from a community support people who are in need in their community. Anyone is welcome to visit these fridges and take whatever food items that their household is in need of.

COMMUNITY FRIDGES IN PHILLY



NORTHWEST

GERMANTOWN FRIDGE

20 W. Armat St (Greene St Friends School)
19 E High St (Germantown Ave & High St - FUMCOG)

MAMATEE

234 W Winona St.

EAST FALLS COMMUNITY FRIDGE

3507 Midvale Ave (Vault + Vine)

WEST

MAMATEE

2929 Walnut St (Walnut St Cafe)
319 N 39th St

THE PEOPLE'S FRIDGE

511 S 52nd St (Mina's World)

NORTH

MAMATEE

6410 Rising Sun Ave (Restoration Church)
2400 Coral St (Franny Lou's Porch)
1255 E Palmer St (Castellino's)
635 W Girard Ave (Ambassador)
915 Spring Garden St (Triple Bottom Brewing)
2821 W Girard Ave (SPOT Burger)

SOUTH+CENTER

MAMATEE

1180 Ludlow St (Canopy Hotel)
22nd between Washington ave & Ellsworth St (Porcos)

PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY FRIDGE

1229 S 6th St (Alliance Medical Group)
1901 S 9th St (BOK)