The next step forward for affordable energy: Advancing the Southeast Energy Insecurity Initiative

Monday, May 16, 2022
The Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance (SEEA) promotes energy efficiency as a catalyst for economic growth, workforce development and energy security across 11 southeastern states including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.
Our Core Services

**Research**
We conduct research and provide contextualized analysis to increase understanding of regional issues and inform effective strategies.

**Consultation and Education**
We provide technical expertise, market intelligence, strategic guidance and educational resources to help people solve problems, navigate change, and increase impact.

**Program Management**
We collaborate with partners to devise, develop, and manage innovative energy projects, programs, and service models.

**Facilitation**
We plan, develop, organize, and manage execution of structured processes or meetings that help collaborators and teams make progress toward their goals.

**Financial Services**
We seek, retain, and provide financial services to expand access to capital for energy efficiency investments in the Southeast.
Energy insecurity was common in the South, even before COVID-19.

The dark blue section in these pie charts demonstrates the need among Southern households (millions of households.)

Data: U.S. Energy Information Agency (EIA), Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS)
Stakeholder Initiative Phase I & II

- Measure and characterize the causes and impacts of energy burden and insecurity in the Southeast;
- Devise sustainable, regional solutions to address energy insecurity; and
- Foster collaboration between leaders across sectors to address energy insecurity in the region.
# Timeline for Phase I & II

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- **Worked to understand gaps**
- **Completed household energy burden survey**
- **Started household energy burden mapping**

- **Created a shared understanding of energy insecurity**
- **Identified challenges and solutions**
- **Worked to foster a community of stakeholders focused on reducing energy insecurity in the Southeast**

- **Six working groups met every 2 - 4 weeks**
- **Developed draft recommendations to address energy insecurity in the Southeast**

- **Reviewed, clarified and refined final recommendations**
- **Generated additional insights and data**
- **Began thinking through implementation**
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SEEA’s Energy Insecurity Portfolio
Key Findings

- Millions of Southerners struggle to pay their monthly electric and gas bills. More customers are cost-burdened in the South than in any other part of the country, and one out of every three people in the region has trouble paying their energy bills.
- SEEA believes "energy insecurity" is a vital framework for understanding how the benefits and burdens of generating, transmitting, and consuming energy are distributed across communities in the Southeast.
- Energy insecurity is the product of multiple factors, including the lack of access to efficient housing and advanced building technologies, low household incomes, high energy costs, and coping behaviors that can place residents at a higher risk of health and safety threats.
- The physical, economy, and behavioral dimensions of energy insecurity cannot be fully captured by a single metric like energy burden. Rather, energy insecurity is most accurately measured through a combination of metrics and approaches.
- Energy cost burden is a valuable metric to understand the economic dimensions of energy insecurity, but it has limitations and should not be used as a stand-in for energy insecurity.

Energy Insecurity Fundamentals in the Southeast:
https://issuu.com/seealliance/docs/report_energyinsecurity_02_15_2021_v1

The hidden costs of affordable housing:
Recommendations

*The recommendations reflect input from a diverse group of stakeholders but may not necessarily reflect full consensus of all stakeholders.
Systemic Change

• Develop a regional coordinating committee to facilitate cross-sector collaboration among stakeholders working to address energy insecurity.

• Identify and address health and safety challenges that prevent access to energy assistance and identify weatherization cost savings.

• Expand community engagement opportunities and reduce barriers to representation in energy decision-making processes.

• Create workforce development plans to ensure the clean energy transition provides opportunities for energy insecurity communities.
Housing

• Improve housing codes and renter programs to lower energy costs without harmfully raising the costs of affordable housing.

• Increase access to weatherization and clean technologies in rental properties through existing home energy programs.

• Utilize existing and encourage new electric utility appliance programs to overcome barriers to affordable energy efficient appliances.
Awareness and Community Engagement

• Develop a public-facing one-stop-shop that outlines which programs individuals are eligible for, houses a centralized application for aid, and provides collaborative program implementation.

• Develop a database of programs addressing energy insecurity in the Southeast.

• Develop one centralized application for aid starting with weatherization and urgent repair programs.

• Launch an awareness campaign to educate energy insecure individuals and decision makers.
Data Access and Improvement

• Require electric and gas utilities to collect, track, and report detailed data such as arrearages, late fees, and shut-offs.

• Develop a “data dictionary” to facilitate data requests for uses addressing energy insecurity.

• Establish data sharing programs and develop a standard practice manual to guide/govern how data will be shared, what information can be shared, and how it will be used.

• Develop a process for community participation in identifying energy insecurity data needs.

• Require utility data collection and disparity gap analysis.
Programs and Access to Financing

• Review **existing financial programs** to make recommendations for revising or expanding.

• Follow existing **financial program best practices** to accelerate energy efficiency and security.

• Create programs specifically designed to **help renters** achieve energy security.
Utility Solutions

• Implement **inclusive energy efficiency utility investments** with robust consumer protections, such as Pay As You Save (PAYS).

• Implement strong procedural protections, seasonal shutoff moratoria, protections for the socially vulnerable, and payment **assistance programs to prevent disconnection** from essential utility service.

• Expand and implement **non-energy benefits** in energy efficiency cost effectiveness tests.

• Reduce future capacity needs through aggressive pursuit of **energy efficiency and peak demand reduction**.
Next Steps
Stakeholder Recommendations for Reducing Energy Insecurity in the Southeast United States

Allie Garrett, Stacey Washington, and Will Bryan

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Develop a regional coordinating committee to facilitate cross-sector collaboration among stakeholders working to address energy insecurity.

Summary

The Southeast Energy Insecurity Collaborative initiative places the implementation of new, this group advocate as key advisors to help more recommendations focused through engagement with decision makers.

Pitfalls

High, Requires substantial time for coordination. This working group should be initiated at and facilitated by a neutral convenor. Solutions would require funding from government

Next Steps

Determine entities who will serve on the commission, develop a convenor. Create a framework to assess the broad impacts of energy insecurity, including development of appropriate tools for assessing the impacts of energy insecurity.

WebVision for Environmental Policy Solutions, Duke University | 20
Q&A
Southeast Energy Summit
October 3-5, 2022 | Atlanta, GA

After a two-year hiatus, the Southeast Energy Summit is returning to Atlanta for three days to reconnect with friends and colleagues, explore innovative efficient energy solutions, and plan for a brighter, more prosperous future in the Southeast.

Tickets and sponsor opportunities are available now! Learn more at southeastenergysummit.com
Thank you!

We’d like to hear from you. Please let us know how you would like to be involved with the initiative. [https://forms.office.com/r/rTQfjxiNTM](https://forms.office.com/r/rTQfjxiNTM)

**Take the survey!**

Stay informed about future virtual and in-person events, including the Southeast Energy Summit, October 3-5, 2022 in Atlanta, GA

[Sign up for email updates](#)

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Thank You