Solutions to Reduce Energy Insecurity: Building a Better System

Thursday June 29th, 2023
OUR MISSION
To optimize the use and impact of energy to enhance the quality of life in the Southeast.

OUR VISION
All people in the Southeast live and work in healthy and resilient buildings, utilize clean and affordable transportation, and thrive in a robust and equitable economy.

OUR VALUES

**Take Initiative**
We take responsibility for realizing a better quality of life in the Southeast.

**Earn Trust**
We pursue our work with benevolence, competence, and reliability.

**Value Others**
We seek, respect, and promote diverse perspectives.

**Pursue Equitable Solutions**
We recognize, acknowledge, and account for a history of prejudice and inequality in Southeastern communities.
OUR CORE SERVICES

- Research
- Facilitation
- Consultation & Education
- Program Management & Financial Services
Upcoming Events

SOUTHEAST ENERGY SUMMIT
Loews Hotel - Midtown
Atlanta, GA
October 25-27, 2023
southeastenergysummit.com
Stakeholder Recommendations for Reducing Energy Insecurity in the Southeast United States

**SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

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

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

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

04. Create **workforce development plans** to ensure the clean energy
Today's Speakers

Nekesha Whitaker  
Cole Thaler  
Bryan Cordell
ROOM TO BREATHE: HELP FOR TENANTS

Nekesha Whitaker and Cole Thaler
Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
AGENDA

About AVLF and our clients
Energy justice initiatives and funding
Mold inspections
SEEA / SK Collaborative audits
Resources for clients
Conclusion
ABOUT AVLF

Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation provides free legal help to low-income tenants in Fulton and Clayton Counties (Georgia). We recruit, train, and support volunteer attorneys throughout the city to help tenants.
ABOUT AVLF

A large percentage of our clients are living in poor conditions due to their landlords’ **failure to make repairs.**
OUR CLIENTS’ HOMES
Our Clients’ Homes

RE: Lease Termination

This letter is to inform you that you are in violation of your Lease Agreement and your lease is hereby terminated as of April 5, 2021, thirty (30) days from the date of this letter for not maintaining gas. Refer to Lease Agreement No. 14 and Rules and Regulations, page 4, which reads in part:

Lease Agreement, Section 14 Rules: The Tenant agrees to obey the House Rules which are Attachment No. 3d to this Agreement.

Rules and Regulation - Utilities: You are responsible for contacting the appropriate utility company and arranging for service to be turned on immediately and effective the date you vacate. The service MUST be placed in your name immediately and prior to move in. Failure to have the service transferred into your name in a timely manner is a lease violation that may result in termination of the lease agreement.

More particular, on Friday, February 26, 2021, upon completing work in your unit as requested, noted that your gas was disconnected. A “Warning Notice” was sent to you to have your gas restored by the date of today, the gas is still off and your work order could not be completed. Please remove all items from the unit and return keys to the office on or before April 5, 2021. You may request a walk-through to understand any/all charges for damages outside normal wear and tear. If you would like to discontinue, you must submit your request in writing within 10 days from the date of this notice.

If you’re a person with a disability, you have a right to request reasonable accommodations to participate in the hearing process. You have a right to defend this action in court.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]
FUNDING FOR HEALTHY HOMES

- The Kresge Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- CareSource

Why expanding access to legal counsel is crucial to improving affordable housing conditions and health outcomes

Atlanta Business Chronicle, 4/18/23
Partnering with climate and energy justice organizations and advocates, AVLF and their partners will work as a collaborative team to identify and provide services to communities experiencing high utility bill costs. The areas of focus are:

- Education
- Resources
- Advocacy
- Research
MOLD INSPECTIONS

Our partnership with Air Allergen & Mold Testing allows us to pay for mold inspections for clients living with the effects of leaks and floods. We have provided over 350 tests since 2018.

![Lab Analysis Summary Chart](chart.png)

* Red = Above Average  
* RH = Relative humidity  
** = Overloaded  
* ND = None Detected
**SEEA / SK COLLABORATIVE AUDITS**

Our partnership with SEEA and SK Collaborative allows us to provide energy audits for clients experiencing high utility bills. AVLF’s database alerts staff when a case with high utility bills has been opened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long have you lived in this home?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of home do you live in? [multifamily, single-family, duplex]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the primary fuel used for space heating? [natural gas, oil, electric, wood, don’t know]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the primary fuel used for water heating? [natural gas, oil, electric, wood, don’t know]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your primary means of cooling? [none, windows, central AC, window AC, fans]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does any part of your home ever feel extremely cold or hot?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you pay your utility bills or are they included in your rent? [Confirm for all utilities - gas, electric, and water/sewer]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, around how much do you pay in electric, gas, and water/sewer bills each month?</td>
<td>[Give range]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

##

- Have you had new carpets, paint, floor refinishing, or other changes at your house in the past year?
- Does your home sometimes smell stuffy, stale or musty?
- Have you had water damage, leaks, or a flood in your home?
- Does your home have mold growing anywhere?
- Are all your windows sealed shut or don’t open?
- When was the last time you saw any evidence of pests in your home?
SEEA / SK COLLABORATIVE AUDITS

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Summary of Findings - Include Elevation Photo

SK Collaborative performed the home assessment for [redacted] residence. The residence's main issues are water leaks, plumbing issues, possible microbial growth, excessive dust, and water intrusion. Envelope Air Leakage Test results were 12 ACH50. Total Duct Leakage results were 30% and Duct Leakage to Outside results were 20%. See report below for additional information.
Our partnership with SEEA and SK Collaborative allows us to provide energy audits for clients experiencing high utility bills. AVLF’s database alerts staff when a case with high utility bills has been opened.

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SEEA / SK COLLABORATIVE

AUDITS

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Duct Testing

- **Needs Attention** Total Duct Leakage [11.33]
  - Total Duct Leakage results were 527cfm at 25Pa for a result of 30% Duct leakage

- **Needs Attention** Leakage to Outside [11.34]
  - Duct Leakage to Outside results were 350cfm at 25Pa for a result of 20%

- **Needs Attention** Duct Condition - Record Areas of Significant Leakage [11.35]
  - Georgia energy code requires that new duct systems contain less than 8% duct leakage to the outside.

- Most duct leakage is concentrated in the attic ductwork.
RESOURCES FOR CLIENTS

- Assist with reporting a problem to utility companies
- Utility company bill adjustment services
- Provide a list of utility assistance organizations
- Resources for Landlords who are willing to make repairs (Solar and Energy Loan Fund)
- AVLF purchases Health & Safety Products (light bulbs, weather stripping, etc.)
CONCLUSION

Energy justice is a key part of advocacy for healthy housing! You can do this work in your community to help ensure more equitable living conditions for all.
THE SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE
Sustainable communities. One person at a time.
The Sustainability Institute

Mission:
Advancing resilient, sustainable and equitable communities while building the next generation of conservation leaders.
The Sustainability Institute

- **Home Performance, Weatherization & Critical Home Repair**
  - Strong focus on low-income and energy insecure households in underserved communities
  - Goals include utility bill savings; health, safety and “pre-weatherization” repairs; electrification; skill-building for families; durability of structure; and more
  - 1000+ homes audited, 400+ homes retrofitted, 10,000+ families train

- **Green Building Certification & Consultation**
  - Charleston RISES certification program for commercial & multifamily buildings
  - Advise municipal climate action plans and sustainability investments
  - 1.3 million sf of buildings being certified with 1 million+ sf in pipeline; portfolio of climate action and sustainability plans

- **Habitat Restoration & Green Infrastructure**
  - Environmental Conservation Corps (AmeriCorps) service-learning and workforce training program - accredited Corps of Excellence through Corps Network
  - Restoration work that supports coastal resilience - including saltmarsh restoration, water quality testing & monitoring, forest/ trail conservation work, and more
  - 170 AmeriCorps members, 124,000+ hours of conservation service
DEEP HOME PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

• Home performance training for building professionals since 2001; Energy conservation trainings for families since 2003

• One of first Clean Energy Corps AmeriCorps programs in 2009 - start of weatherization work

• Pathways Out of Poverty Green Jobs Training Program in 2010
  ~200 individuals trained in BPI

• Sustainable Cities Institute Pilot Program from 2010-2012
  125 homes retrofitted, historic structures curriculum + intentional learning process

• DOE Better Neighborhood Buildings Program - Charleston WISE from 2011-2017
  1000+ customers, energy audits, direct install program, access to utility rebates

• Home Energy Savers pilot program with SCE&G from 2016-2018
  88 homes weatherized

• Charleston County Critical Home Repair program from 2022 - current
PROBLEM FACTORS

Climate
• Hot humid climate, high HVAC use
• High air conditioning demand contributes to high consumption
• Many living without access to adequate cooling

Housing stock
• Older housing stock - most homes constructed pre-1980, lots of historic homes, over 30,000 homes in Charleston metro area in need of energy upgrades
• Super leaky building envelopes
• Thousands of homes with critical repair needs - structural, plumbing, electrical, etc
• Outdated and inefficient systems
PROBLEM FACTORS

Energy burden
• Cost of energy often largest household expense and threatens ability of families to afford other critical expenses, continual utility rate increases
• More than 400,000 households in North and South Carolina live at 50 percent of the poverty line, and face average energy burdens of 30% (NC) and 37% (SC) ... significantly above the affordable energy threshold of 6%

Inadequate resources for help
• No one-stop-shop - confusing marketplace
• Only two agencies doing weatherization in tri-county area - one nonprofit (us) and one Community Action Agency
• Under-resourced home repair agencies working in silos - long waiting lists for help

Trust
• Home performance contractors not trusted,
• Low trust in historically marginalized communities
OUR SOLUTIONS

• Establishing & maintaining trust is first and highest priority
  • Intense community outreach and relationship building
  • Lifelong relationship with client
  • Be homeowner advocate
  • Quality workmanship; strong quality assurance
  • Be connector to other resources

• Performance-based model
  • Follow industry best practices/ protocols - “own” this expertise
  • Up-front, midstream and post diagnostic testing - blower door, duct blaster, IR camera, and combustion testing
  • Health and safety highest priority
  • Seek highest returns on investment
  • Work with subs and trade allies that understand home performance
  • Track energy savings whenever possible
OUR SOLUTIONS

• Pair weatherization with critical home repair
  • Think holistically - don’t leave problems and opportunities on the table
  • Address “pre-weatherization” repairs
  • Advance one-stop-shop model, but also build collaborations/ partnerships with repair agencies

• Place strong emphasis on homeowner education/ skill-building
  • Retrofit programs produce best outcomes when paired with client education
  • EMPOWER families
  • Transfer of skills/ knowledge
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Look for opportunities to leverage resources

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

• Identify and address health and safety challenges that prevent access to energy assistance

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

• Understand community level data and trends

• Create workforce development plans to ensure clean energy transition provides opportunities for energy insecure communities
Sustainable communities. One person at a time.
Questions?
Thank You

SMART ENERGY. STRONG ECONOMY. FOR ALL.

WWW.SEEALLIANCE.ORG