

Protecting Utility Consumers in Today's Energy Market: The Role of Weatherization Agencies

Hosted By: The Weatherization Leveraged Partnerships Project

Funded by the Department of Energy to offer training and assistance to WAP subgrantees and their associations in designing private partnerships and programs that leverage the WAP.



Protecting Utility Consumers in Today's Energy Market: **The Role of Weatherization Agencies**

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Why is Utility Affordability Important?

- Safety
- Economic Independence
- Financial Stability
- Health / Healthcare
- Child Custody / Dependency
- Retain Housing
- Ability to Afford Other Life Necessities

Energy Burdens

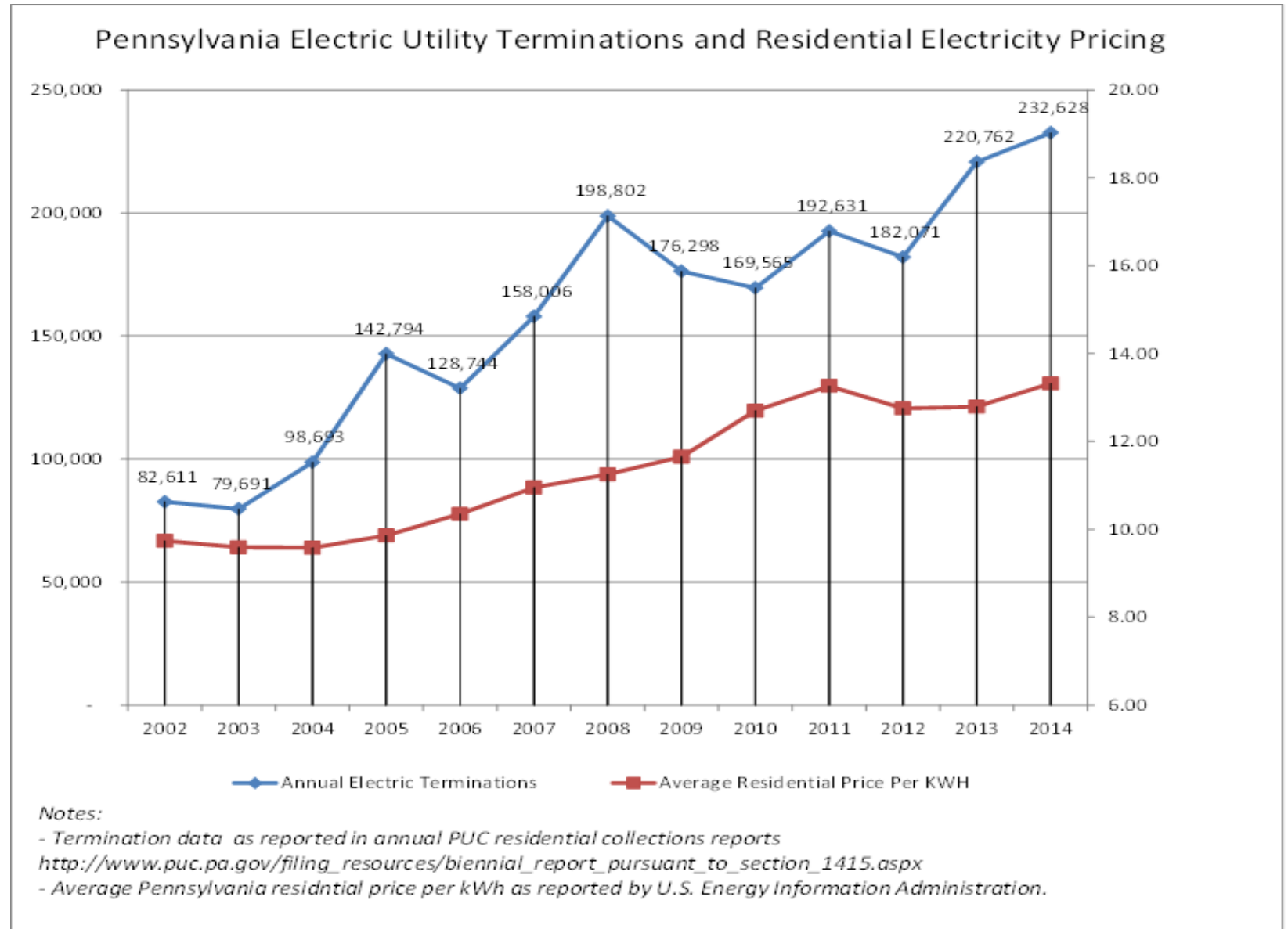
(Pennsylvania)

An “energy burden” is the percentage of annual income that goes toward paying energy bills.

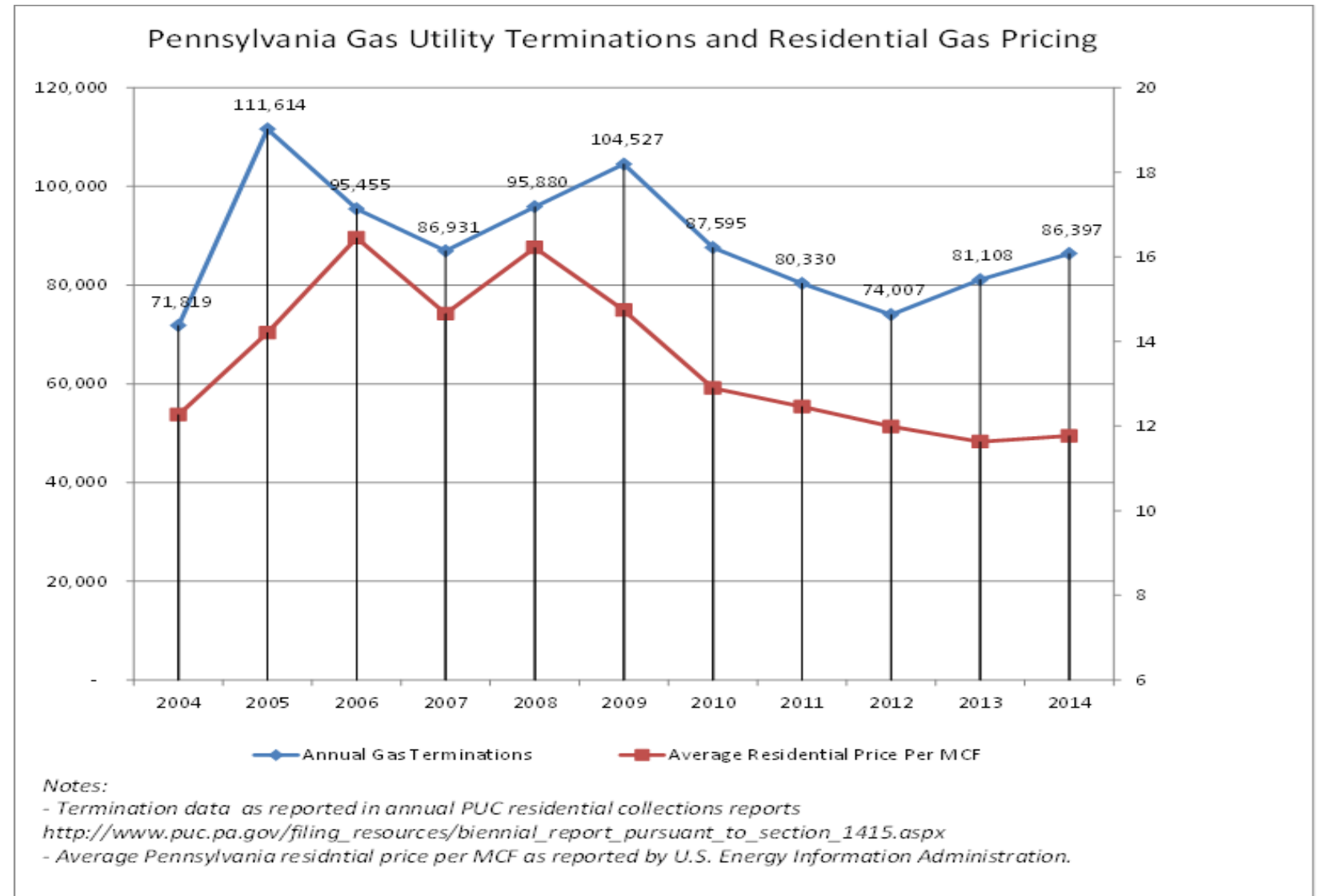
Poverty Level	2015 Pennsylvania Home Energy Burdens	Number of Households
Below 50%	30%	299,673
50-100%	16%	371,656
100-125%	11%	205,521
125-150%	9%	215,664
150-185%	7%	307,011
185-200%	7%	131,879

Middle to High Income Households = 3% to 5%

Electric / Gas Terminations: Price of Commodity (Pennsylvania)



Electric / Gas Terminations: Price of Commodity (Pennsylvania)



Why engage in state utility commission proceedings?

- The low-income households are profoundly affected by state utility commission decisions.
- Other interests may say they are acting in the interest of low-income consumers.

Different Types of Proceedings

- Adjudicatory
 - Litigated or Comment-Only Proceedings
- Rulemaking
- Generic / Statewide Investigations
- Informal

What is Involved with Intervention?

Different levels of engagement

- Track Issues
- Provide Informal Feedback
- Participate in Stakeholder Meetings
- Serve on Advisory Panels
- Submit Comments / Letters
- Intervene as a Party
- Work with a Coalition

Factors to Consider

- Impact on Low Income Households
 - Leverage program dollars
 - Improve program policies
 - Streamline administrative requirements
 - Coordinate program requirements
- Likelihood of Success
- Resources
 - Staff Time
 - Funding
 - Attorneys / Experts
- Coalition Building

Building Partnerships

- Legal Services Programs
- AARP
- NAACP
- Local / Statewide Domestic Violence Coalitions
- Disability Rights Groups
- Area Aging Agencies
- Homeless Service Providers
- Veterans Groups
- Housing Providers
- Unions
- Environmental Justice Advocates
- Food Assistance Organizations / Food Banks

Funding Opportunities

- WAP & LIHEAP Leveraging Funds
- Community & Economic Development Grants
- State Intervenor Funds
- Collaborative Projects with Legal Services Agencies
- Foundations

Common Issues

- **Universal Service / Low Income Programs**
 - Creation
 - Design
 - Implementation
 - Coordination
- **Types of Programs**
 - Energy Efficiency / Weatherization
 - Bill Payment Assistance Programs
 - Percentage of Income Programs
 - Credit / Discount Based Programs
 - Arrearage Management

Common Issues

- **Base Rate Proceedings**
 - Fixed Charge Proposals
 - Inclining / Declining Block Rates
 - Low Income Programming
 - Allocation of Ratepayer Funded Programming
 - Reconnection Costs
 - Identification Requirements
 - Payment Agreement Terms
 - Disconnection Terms

Common Issues

- **Deregulation Dockets**
 - Marketing Regulations
 - Customer Privacy
 - Notice Requirements
 - Cost-Control Measures
 - Low Income Shopping Protections

Common Issues

- **Credit / Collections / Billing Standards**
 - Security Deposit Standards
 - Payment Arrangement Standards
 - Termination Process / Procedures
 - Medical Certification
 - Winter Terminations

Common Issues

- **Alternative Energy Issues**
 - Cost of Solar / Net Metering
 - Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Common Issues

- **Other Common Proceedings**
 - Smart Meter Proceedings
 - prepay service, remote termination
 - Energy Procurement (Default Service)
 - Mergers / Acquisitions

Next Steps

- Review Client Files / Cases for Recurring Utility-Related Issues
- Familiarize Yourself with Current Utility Laws / Policies
- Check out the Commission Website
 - Commissioners, hot topics, open proceedings, schedule
- Reach Out to Potential Partners
 - Locate Partners with Subject Matter Expertise
 - Discuss Shared Training Opportunities
 - Identify Pending Issues & Opportunities to Participate



Questions / Comments?

Thank you!

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Thank You For Joining Today's Webinar!

For more resources from the
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