

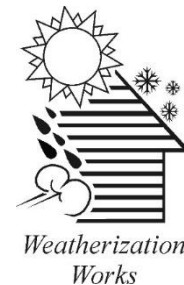


Utility Debt in the Pandemic: How to Change Shut-off and Collection Policy

National hub for the 1,000 Community Action Agencies and 700 Weatherization Subgrantees

Weatherization Leveraged Partnerships Project

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



What the Community Action Partnership can do for you

- Facilitate connections to experienced peers
- Assist in data collection, messaging, and getting things off the ground
- Applicable Resources, Tools, and Templates
 - [Funding Survey of Non-Leveraged Funds \(NASCSP and CAP Joint Report\)](#)
 - [Leveraging Your WAP: Why and How](#)
 - [Tips on Building Effective Relationships with Utility Regulators](#)
- Trainings and Webinars
 - Upcoming Convention: August 26-28 (TBD whether virtual or in person)
 - NREL/IREC -- Weatherization Administrative Training Modules
 - [Cap Solar – Financing Available to the CAP /WAP Networks](#)

Training & Technical Assistance

The Community Action Partnership offers a variety of Training & Technical Assistance (T/TA) to meet the needs of the national network. Topics include, but are not limited to:

Management & Operations

- Organizational Standards
- Community Needs Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Data Analysis
- Board Governance
- Succession Planning
- Customer Satisfaction

Innovative Practices

- Two-Generation Approaches
- Weatherization Leveraging
- Bundling Services
- Financial Empowerment
- Racial Equity
- Trauma Informed Approaches
- Health Intersections
- Homelessness Poverty Trends



We design and deliver trainings tailored to the needs of our Network:
Webinars | Workshops | 1-2 day In-Person Trainings





<https://communityactionpartnership.com/events/category/webinars/>

Advocacy to Manage Low-Income Utility Debt in the Age of Covid-19

NCAP – NCAF Webinar Series
May 26, 2020

John Howat – jhowat@nclc.org



National
Consumer Law
Center

*Fighting Together
for Economic Justice*

Energy Security

- Uninterrupted, affordable access to basic residential home energy services without
 - Disconnection notices
 - Involuntary disconnection of service
 - Foregoing other necessities to retain service
 - Maintaining unhealthy indoor temperature

Utility Service a Basic Necessity

- Consequences of energy insecurity include (but are not limited to):
 - Threats to health and safety
 - Illness, hospitalization
 - House fires
 - Loss of life
 - Inflated Covid-19 risk
 - Spoiled food
 - Eviction
 - Reduced academic and worker performance

Energy Security Disparities

- State
 - Consumer protections
 - Seasonal or temperature-based shutoff protections, serious illness and elderly protections, payment agreements, late payment fees and security deposit requirements
 - Bill assistance
 - Current bill reductions, arrearage management
 - Effective low-income energy efficiency programs
 - Whole house, deep retrofits, appliance and equipment replacement
 - Zero upfront payment for low-income customers
 - No financing that reduces cash flow benefit of low-income energy efficiency programming

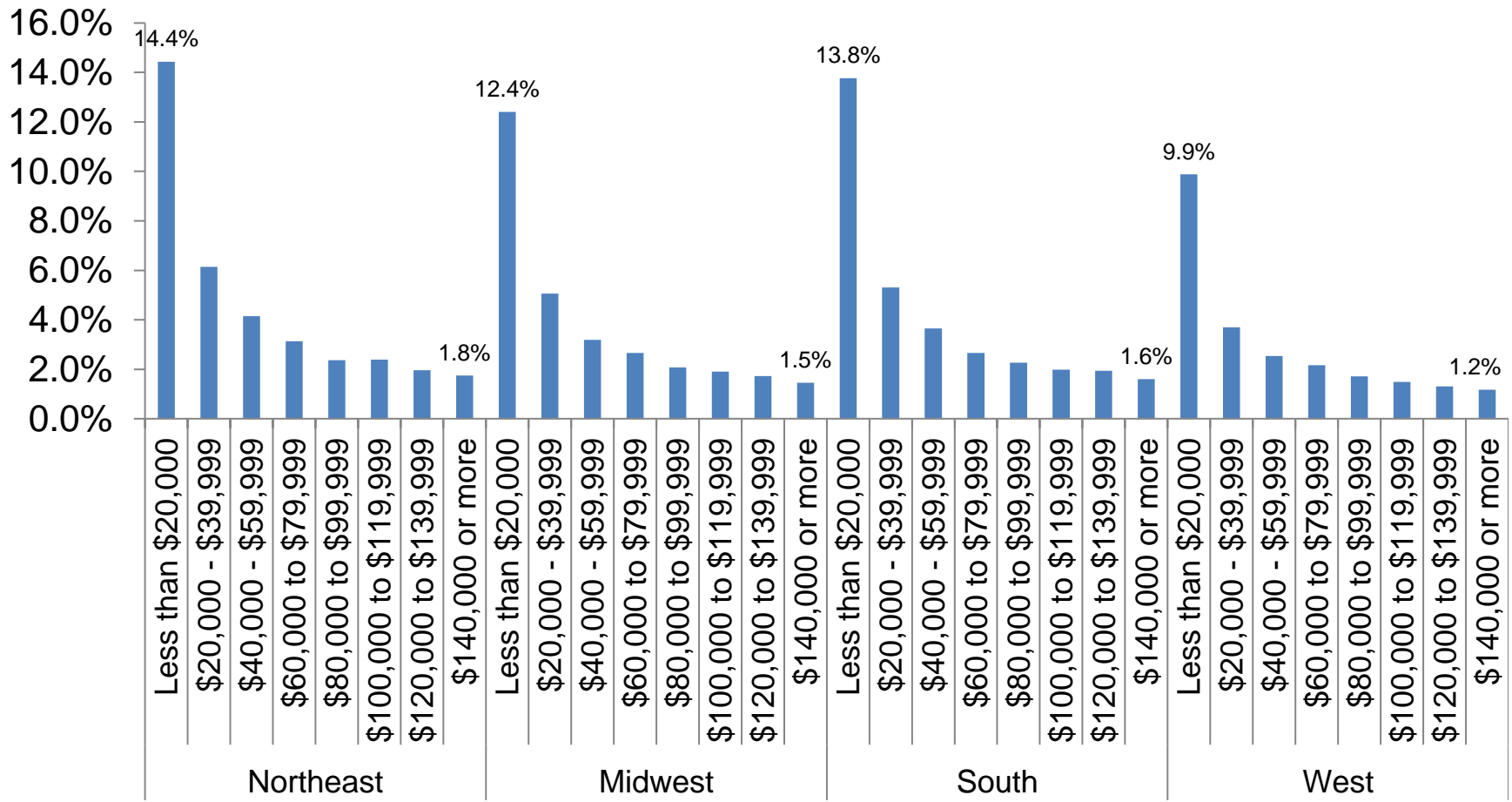
Energy Security Disparities

- Utility service territory
 - Rates and bills
 - Credit and collection protocols
 - **Reasonable** payment agreements
 - Rates of service disconnection
 - Willingness to work with cash-strapped customers
 - Account write-offs and referral to collection agencies
 - Prepaid service

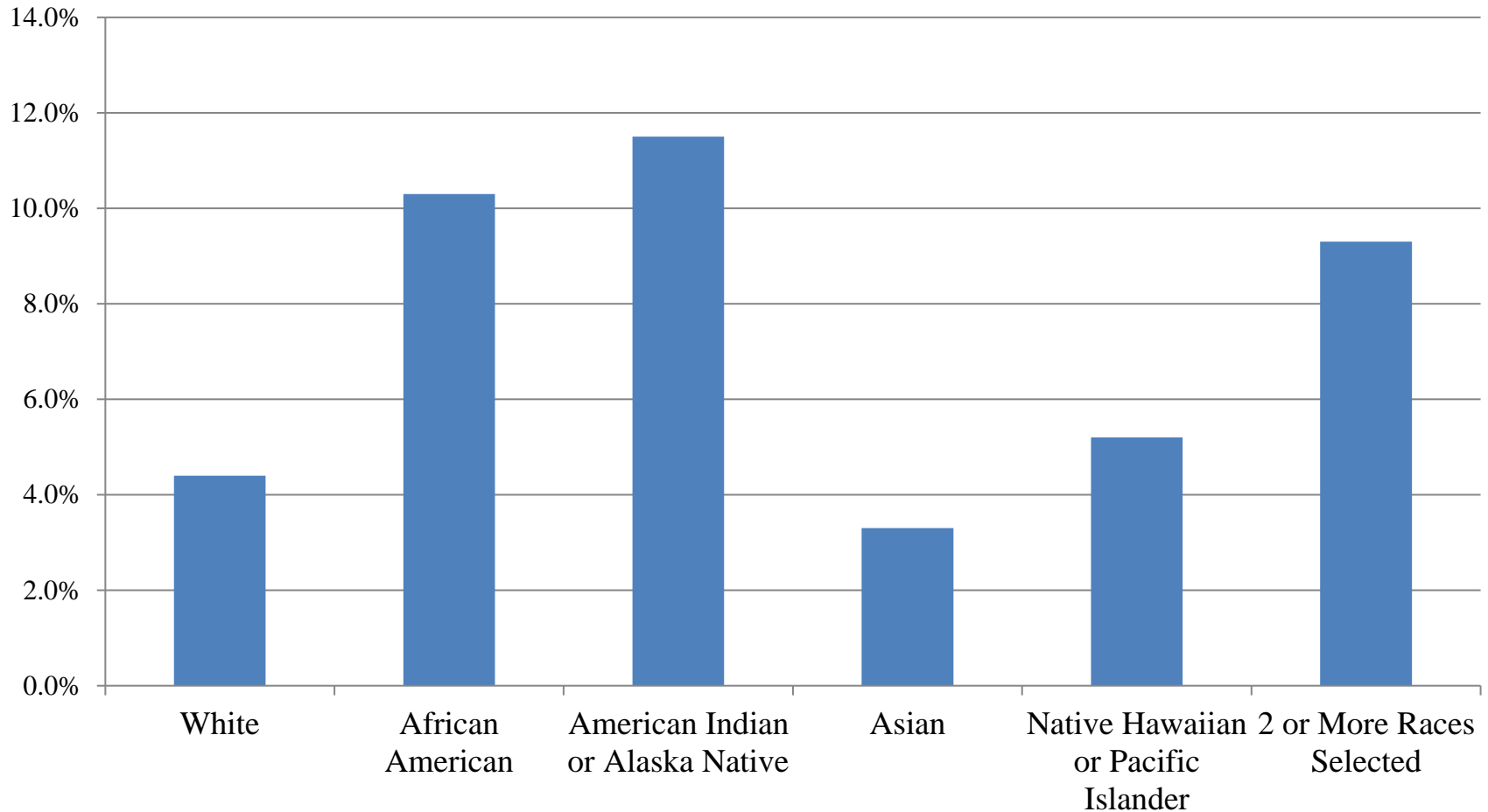
Energy Security Disparities

- Income
 - Low income
 - Insufficient income to pay for basic monthly necessities
 - Insecure income and benefits
 - Hourly wages
 - Poor health care and time off benefits
- Race
 - Even when controlling for income

Median 2015 Home Energy Burdens by Income Category and Census Region



Loss of Heat in the Past Year Due to Unaffordable Utility Service, Fuel or Heating System Repair by Race: 2015 - U.S.



Electricity Disconnected Inability to Pay * Race of Householder * Region: U.S. Household at or Below 150% Poverty in 2009

		Race and Latino Descent of Householder					
			White	African- American	Latino	2 or More Races	Total
Northeast	No	Count	2644306	725791	1094894	61542	3803830
		%	95.2%	94.2%	92.6%	76.0%	94.5%
	Yes	Count	108494	45005	61541	19410	197145
		%	3.9%	5.8%	5.2%	24.0%	4.9%
Midwest	No	Count	3419706	1341659	638667	104388	5194320
		%	93.1%	92.6%	95.9%	81.7%	93.1%
	Yes	Count	253091	107983	27431	23451	384525
		%	6.9%	7.4%	4.1%	18.3%	6.9%
South	No	Count	7077186	2183720	1840937	14125	9890996
		%	93.4%	83.9%	92.4%	100.0%	91.1%
	Yes	Count	503159	418555	152349	0	965375
		%	6.6%	16.1%	7.6%	0.0%	8.9%
West	No	Count	4035675	388463	2310679	78936	5012604
		%	96.3%	95.6%	96.8%	84.9%	96.4%
	Yes	Count	144626	18047	66223	14047	176720
		%	3.5%	4.4%	2.8%	15.1%	3.4%
Total	No	Count	17176873	4639633	5885177	258991	23901750
		%	94.3%	88.7%	94.5%	82.0%	93.1%
	Yes	Count	1009370	589590	307544	56908	1723765
		%	5.5%	11.3%	4.9%	18.0%	6.7%

Covid-19 Residential Utility Customer Credit and Collections Impacts Remain Uncertain

- The need for comprehensive monthly reporting of credit and collections data
- Data reporting lag
- Credit, collections and energy security outcomes to be determined by
 - Public health and economic crisis scenarios
 - Assistance and consumer protection funding
 - Credit and collection reforms

Post-moratorium Energy Security Programs and Policies

- During public health crisis, restore access to service for any utility customer whose service has been cut off without requiring a down payment
- Waive late payment fees and security deposit
- For past-due bills, provide deferred payment plan options that are affordable based on a household's actual income and expenses
- For households with low incomes, use debt forgiveness programs that avoid adding to current monthly bills.
- Expand bill payment programs that reduce monthly bills to an affordable level.
- As weatherization crews safely return to work, expand access to comprehensive whole-house energy efficiency and retrofit opportunities
- Require more comprehensive utility tracking and reporting of data on residential customer overdue bills, disconnections, and repayment efforts, while still respecting billpayer privacy.

Program and Policy Advocacy Basics

- Show Need
- Demonstrate Proposed Program Benefit and Relationship to Need
- Demonstrate Program Costs
- Describe Program Administration

Get in Touch!

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Some NCLC Tools

- Residential Electric Utility Arrearage Scenarios
 - <https://bit.ly/covid-state-electric-arrears>
- Data Collection
 - <http://bit.ly/brief-covid-19-data>
- Program Design Template
 - <https://bit.ly/RPT-covid-19-program-design>



Since 1969, the nonprofit **National Consumer Law Center® (NCLC®)** has worked for consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people, including older adults, in the U.S. through its expertise in policy analysis and advocacy, publications, litigation, expert witness services, and training. www.nclc.org