



# Addressing High Energy Burdens in Urban and Rural Communities

**Federal Programs for Energy and Housing: A Lifeline for  
America's Low-income Families**

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The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) founded in 1980. We act as a catalyst to advance energy efficiency policies, programs, technologies, investments, & behaviors.

Our research explores economic impacts, financing options, behavior changes, program design, and utility planning, as well as US national, state, & local policy. Our work is made possible by foundation funding, contracts, government grants, and conference revenue.

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# What is an energy burden?

Energy burden % =  
Annual energy costs/Annual household income

E.g. (\$200/month) x 12 months/\$60,000 = 4%

- Median energy burdens: Rural burden: 4.4%  
Metropolitan burden: 3.1%  
National burden: 3.3%
- **Drivers:** physical, economic, policy, behavioral
- **Impacts:** health, economic, social

APRIL 2016

# Lifting the High Energy Burden in America's Largest Cities: How Energy Efficiency Can Improve Low Income and Underserved Communities

Ariel Dreihobl and Lauren Ross



JULY 2018

# The High Cost of Energy in Rural America: Household Energy Burdens and Opportunities for Energy Efficiency

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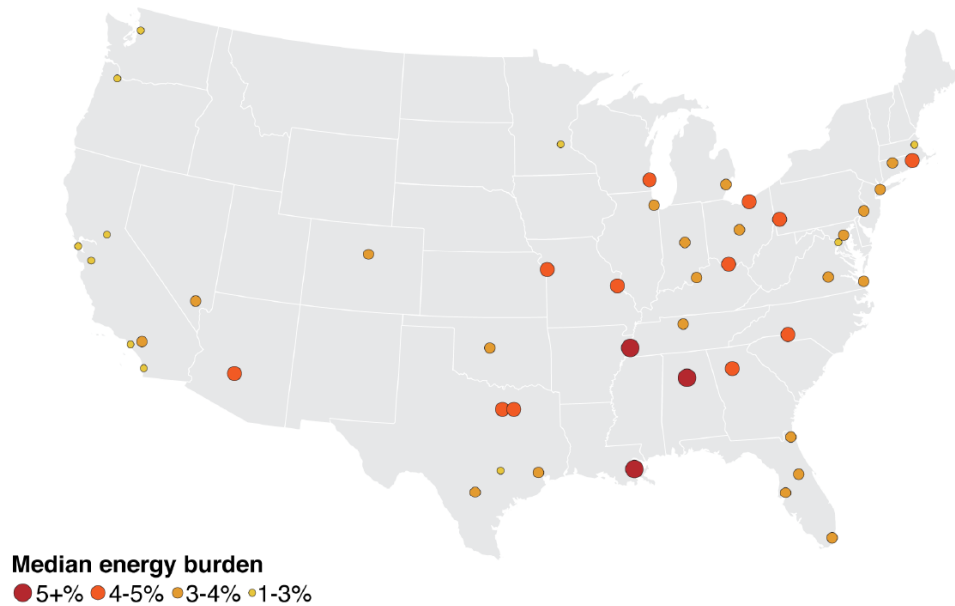
Urban Analysis, 2016:

[aceee.org/research-report/u1602](https://www.aceee.org/research-report/u1602)

Rural Analysis, 2018:

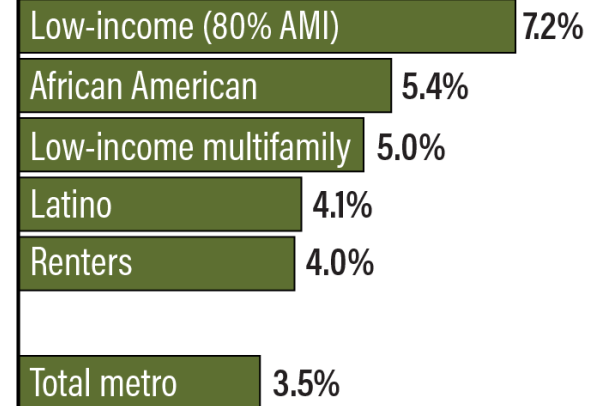
[aceee.org/research-report/u1806](https://www.aceee.org/research-report/u1806)

## Energy burden in largest metro areas



Energy burden: percent of income spent on energy bills

## Metro energy burden by demographic\*



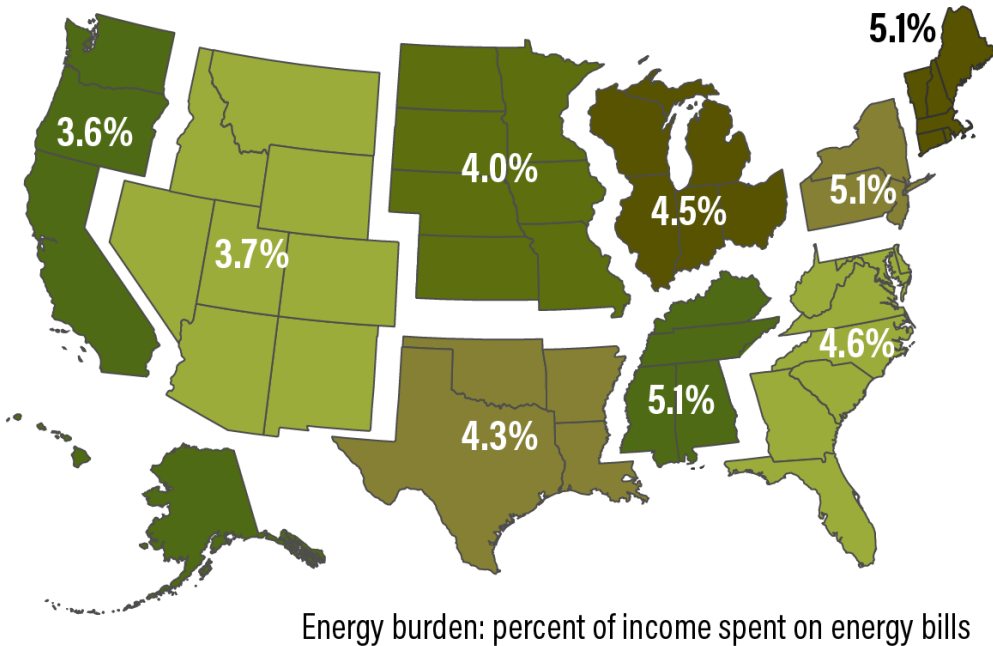
\*Based on median across selected cities.

# Urban energy burdens

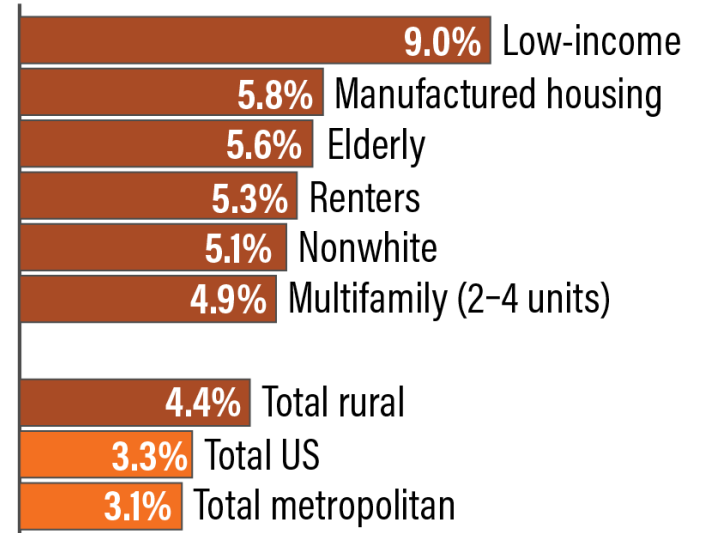


# Rural energy burden

## By region



## By demographic\*



\*Based on national figures.

# Rural energy burdens

# How does energy efficiency fit in?

- Long-term solution to high burdens
- Provide bill savings for households
  - Can lower burdens by **25%** and save households up to **\$400/year**
- Additional benefits such as health and job creation

Low energy prices do not equate to affordable bills!



# Policy recommendations

1. Expand federal weatherization assistance
2. States set low-income spending/savings targets for energy efficiency programs
3. States expand energy efficiency programs for low-income households
4. Support financing options for multifamily building owners and rural households
5. Collect and track demographic data on program participation





# Thank you!

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