

ON THE BRINK: 2006

THE HOME ENERGY AFFORDABILITY GAP APRIL 2007

Finding #1

Poverty Level	Home Energy Burden	
Below 50%	72.5%	Home energy is a crippling financial burden for low-income Delaware households. Delaware households with incomes of below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level pay 72.5% of their annual income simply for their home energy bills.
50 – 74%	29.0%	
75 – 99%	20.7%	Home energy unaffordability, however, is not simply the province of the very poor. Bills for households between 75% and 100% of Poverty take up 20.7% of income. Even households with incomes between 150% and 185% of the Federal Poverty Level have energy bills above the percentage of income generally considered to be affordable.
100 – 124%	16.1%	
125 – 149%	13.2%	
150% - 185%	10.8%	

Finding #2

Poverty Level	No. of Households	
Below 50%	13,119	The number of households facing these energy burdens is staggering. According to the 2000 Census, more than 13,000 Delaware households live with income at or below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level and thus face a home energy burden of 72.5%.
50 – 74%	6,798	
75 – 99%	7,573	Nearly 7,000 Delaware households live with incomes between 50% and 74% of Poverty (home energy burden of 29.0%). And nearly 8,000 <i>more</i> Delaware households live with incomes between 75% and 99% of the Federal Poverty Level (home energy burden of 20.7%).
100 – 124%	9,289	
125 – 149%	10,112	
150% - 185%	15,774	

Finding #3

	Home Energy Affordability Gap	Gross LIHEAP Allocation	
2002 (base year)	\$63,197,446	\$4,651,655	Existing sources of energy assistance do not adequately address the energy affordability gap in Delaware. Actual low-income energy bills exceeded affordable energy bills in Delaware by \$112 million at 2005/2006 winter heating fuel prices. In contrast, Delaware received a gross allotment of federal energy assistance funds of \$5.4 million for Fiscal Year 2006. Delaware's LIHEAP allocation has lost ground relative to its Home Energy Affordability Gap. From 2002 to 2006, the total Home Energy Affordability Gap increased by \$48.8 million. In comparison, the federal LIHEAP allocation to Delaware increased \$0.8 million.
2006 (current year)	\$111,967,705	\$5,431,321	
Change	\$48,770,259	\$779,666	

Finding #4

Home Energy Affordability Gap: 2002 (base year)	\$63,197,446	The Home Energy Affordability Gap Index in Delaware was 177.2 for 2006. This Index indicates that the Home Energy Affordability Gap has increased 77.2% between 2002 and the current year.
Home Energy Affordability Gap: 2006 (current year)	\$111,967,705	The Home Energy Affordability Gap Index uses the year 2002 as its base year. In that year, the Index was set equal to 100. A current year Index of more than 100 thus indicates that the Home Energy Affordability Gap for Delaware has increased since 2002. A current year Index of less than 100 indicates that the Home Energy Affordability Gap has decreased since 2002.
Home Energy Affordability Gap Index (2002 = 100)	177.2	

Finding #5

End Use	Average Annual Bill	
Electric	\$959	The energy affordability gap in Delaware is not created exclusively, or even primarily, by home heating and cooling bills.
Hot water	\$438	
Space heating	\$1,120	At 2005/2006 prices, while home heating bills were \$1,120 of a \$2,722 bill, electric bills (other than cooling) were \$959. Annual cooling bills represented \$205 in expenditures, while domestic hot water represented \$438 in expenditures.
Space Cooling	\$205	
Total annual bill	\$2,722	

Finding #6

Fuel	2004 Price	2005 Price	2006 Price	
Natural gas heating (ccf)	\$1.218	\$1.397	\$1.654	In Delaware, natural gas prices rose 18.4% during the 2005/2006 winter heating season. Fuel oil prices rose substantially (25.2%) while propane prices rose 20.2%.
Electric heating (kWh)	\$0.077	\$0.079	\$0.087	
Propane heating (gallon)	\$1.701	\$1.776	\$2.134	Heating season electric prices rose modestly (9.8%) in the same period while cooling season electric prices also rose (35.2%).
Fuel Oil heating (gallon)	\$1.506	\$1.872	\$2.343	
Electric cooling (kWh)	\$0.097	\$0.098	\$0.133	

Delaware Energy Gap Rankings (scale of 1-51)

A higher ranking indicates better conditions while a lower ranking indicates worse conditions relative to other states.

<p>AVERAGE DOLLAR AMOUNT BY WHICH ACTUAL HOME ENERGY BILLS EXCEEDED AFFORDABLE HOME ENERGY BILLS FOR HOUSEHOLDS BELOW 185% OF POVERTY LEVEL.</p> <p>\$1,787 per household</p> <p>RANK: #46</p>	<p>AVERAGE TOTAL HOME ENERGY BURDEN FOR HOUSEHOLDS BELOW 50% OF POVERTY LEVEL.</p> <p>72.5% of household income</p> <p>RANK: #46</p>
<p>PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS BELOW 100% OF POVERTY LEVEL.</p> <p>9.2% of all individuals</p> <p>RANK: #8</p>	<p>PORTION OF HEATING/COOLING AFFORDABILITY GAP COVERED BY FEDERAL HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE.</p> <p>8.6% of gap is covered</p> <p>RANK: #38</p>

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Each state (along with the District of Columbia) has been ranked (from 1 to 51) in terms of four separate measures of the extent of the energy affordability gap facing its low-income customers:

- (1) The percent of individuals with annual incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. This data is obtained directly from the 2000 U.S. Census.
- (2) The average total home energy burden for households with income at or below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level shows the percentage of income that households with these incomes spend on home energy. "Total home energy" includes all energy usage, not merely heating and cooling. A home energy bill is calculated on a county-by-county basis. The statewide average is a population-weighted average of county-by-county data.
- (3) The average affordability gap (in dollars per household) for all households with income at or below 185% of Poverty is the dollar difference between actual total home energy bills and bills that are set equal to an affordable percentage of income. Affordability for total home energy bills is set at 6% of household income.
- (4) The extent to which federal energy assistance covers the combined heating/cooling affordability gap for each state. The combined heating/cooling affordability gap is the difference between actual heating/cooling bills and bills that are set equal to an affordable percentage of income. Affordability for combined heating/cooling bills is set at 2% of income. This measure thus examines the proportion of the heating/cooling gap that is covered by the gross federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) allocation to the state assuming that the entire LIHEAP allocation is used for cash benefits.

In the state's rankings, a higher ranking indicates better conditions while a lower ranking indicates worse conditions relative to other states. Thus, for example:

- (1) The state with the rank of #1 has the lowest percentage of individuals living in households with income at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level while the state with the rank of #51 has the highest percentage.
- (2) The state with the rank of #1 has the lowest average home energy burden for households with income below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level while the state with the rank of #51 has the highest average home energy burden.
- (3) The state with the rank of #1 has the lowest average affordability gap (dollars per household) while the state with the rank of #51 has the highest dollar gap.
- (4) The state with the rank of #1 has the highest percentage of its heating/cooling affordability gap covered by federal energy assistance while the state with the rank of #51 has the lowest percentage of its heating/cooling gap covered.

All references to "states" include the District of Columbia as a "state." Low-income home energy bills are calculated using average residential revenues per unit of energy. State financial resources and utility-specific discounts are not considered.

Energy bills are a function of the following primary factors:

- Tenure of household (owner/renter)
- Housing unit size (by tenure)
- Heating Degree Days (HDDs) and Cooling Degree Days (CDDs) (by county)
- Household size (by tenure)
- Heating fuel mix (by tenure)
- Energy use intensities (by fuel and end use)

Bills are estimated using the U.S. Department of Energy's "energy intensities" published in the most recent DOE Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS). The energy intensities used for each state are those published for the Census Division in which the state is located. State-specific demographic data is obtained from the most recent Decennial Census of the U.S. Census Bureau. Heating Degree-Days (HDDs) and Cooling Degree-Days (CDDs) are obtained from the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center on a county-by-county basis for the entire country. State price data for each end-use is obtained from the Energy Information Administration's (EIA) fuel-specific price reports (e.g., Natural Gas Monthly, Electric Power Monthly).

Each state's Home Energy Affordability Gap is calculated on a county-by-county basis. Once total energy bills are estimated for each county, each county bill is weighted by the percentage of persons below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level in each county to the total statewide population below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level to derive a statewide result.

The Home Energy Affordability Gap Index uses 2002 as its base year. In that year, the Index was set equal to 100. A current year Index of more than 100 thus indicates that the Home Energy Affordability Gap has increased since 2002. A current year Index of less than 100 indicates that the Home Energy Affordability Gap has decreased since 2002.

The Home Energy Affordability Gap is a function of many variables. Increases in income, for example, result in decreases in the Gap while increases in energy prices result in an increase in the Gap. The Home Energy Affordability Gap Index allows the reader to determine the cumulative impact of these variables. Since the Gap is calculated assuming normal Heating Degree Days (HDDs) and Cooling Degree Days (CDDs), temperatures do not have an impact on the Affordability Gap or the Affordability Gap Index.

Price data for the various fuels underlying the calculation of the 2006 Home Energy Affordability Gap was used from the following time periods:

<i>Heating prices</i>	
Natural gas	February 2006
Fuel oil	February 2006
Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)	February 2006
Electricity	February 2006
<i>Cooling prices</i>	
	August 2006
<i>Non-heating prices</i>	
Natural gas	May 2006
Fuel oil	May 2006
Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)	May 2006
Electricity	May 2006