



Energy, Faith, and Vulnerable Communities

How Houses of Faith and Vulnerable Communities Can Save Money and Improve Lives



Energy-saving technologies keep improving faster than they're applied, so efficiency is an ever larger and cheaper resource. ~Amory Lovins

The Problem: Energy Inequity and Vulnerable Communities

According to Habitat for Humanity's 2015 Shelter Report — "Less is More: Transforming Low-Income Communities Through Energy Efficiency,"

- Low-income families in the U.S. spend anywhere from 17 percent to 50 percent of their incomes on household energy, whereas others spend an average of 4 percent.
- Residential energy use represents 22 percent of total energy consumption in the United States, and Americans spend 230 billion annually on home energy.
- Higher energy performance standards mean better health. Older homes in low-income communities often have outdated heating and cooling equipment, and the families who live in them suffer much higher incidences of respiratory and cardiac problems. The American Medical Association estimates inferior indoor air quality results in 15 billion in productivity losses every year.

Here in Alabama, AL.com reports that "residents, on average, [spent more on electricity than any other state except South Carolina](#)... with the average residential customer in Alabama spending \$1,747 per year on electricity, or \$145.58 every month." According to ACEEE, Birmingham tops the nationwide list of 25 cities for energy costs relative to pay, and the median energy burden of Black households in Birmingham is 46% higher than that of non-Hispanic white households.

For more information, call or text (678) 913-7477 / Email info@thepeoplesjusticecouncil.org

To make matters worse, according to [ACEEE's 2020 Energy Efficiency Scorecard](#), *none* of the utilities in the Southeast is ranked in the top 20 for promoting energy efficiency, and Alabama Power is ranked *dead last* in the country (52 of 52). To see where your state ranks, view ACEEE's [State Energy Efficiency Scorecard](#).

One Solution: “Negawatts” via Energy Efficiency & Weatherization

Negawatt is a term coined by Rocky Mountain Institute physicist Amory Lovins in his 1989 “[The Negawatt Revolution](#)” keynote address to the Green Energy Conference in Montreal:

Think of such a compact bulb, with 14 watts replacing 75, as a 61 negawatt power plant. By substituting 14 watts for 75 watts, you are sending 61 unused watts -- or negawatts -- back to Hydro, who can sell the electricity saved to someone else without having to make it all over again. It is much cheaper to save the electricity than to make it -- and not only in thermal stations. It is cheaper for society to use these bulbs than to operate a Hydro plant, even if building the dam were to cost nothing. Each bulb has a net cost of minus several cents per kilowatt- hour, and no dam can compete with that! ~Amory Lovins

The cheapest energy is the energy that does not have to be generated. Weatherizing homes, combined with energy-efficient appliances, generate these *negawatts* of energy, saving money and avoiding greenhouse gas and other toxic emissions from power generation.

I am a man without a furnace. My windows are insulated by 19 sheets of glass which cost less than installing a heating system. ~Amory Lovins

According to [ACEEE](#), home weatherization:

- Provides a long-term, much-needed solution for energy affordability for many low-income families who live in older buildings with less-efficient appliances and equipment.
- Improves comfort and health at a time when more people are staying home during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Creates jobs, which are badly needed now.

ACEEE warns that even though weatherization reduces energy bills and provides health benefits, such as reduced asthma risk, funding from the Department of Energy's [Weatherization Assistance Program](#) doesn't currently meet the demand and needs of low-income households.

WERISE: The People's Justice Council Wants to Help You

What if we could make energy do our work without working our undoing?
~Amory Lovins

Weatherizing Every Residence in the South East (WERISE) is a program of [The People's Justice Council](#) (PJC). The PJC builds power by fighting for justice at the policy level. WERISE is part of a larger PJC policy reform campaign, [Energizing the South for Energy Justice](#), and **Energizing Alabama**, in partnership with [Alabama Interfaith Power & Light](#) (ALIPL). Together, PJC and ALIPL want to help you generate *negawatts*, saving \$\$\$ and improving health in your home.

We can help weatherize your house of faith or residence. [Learn more here!](#)

<http://bit.ly/ES-WERISE>

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