



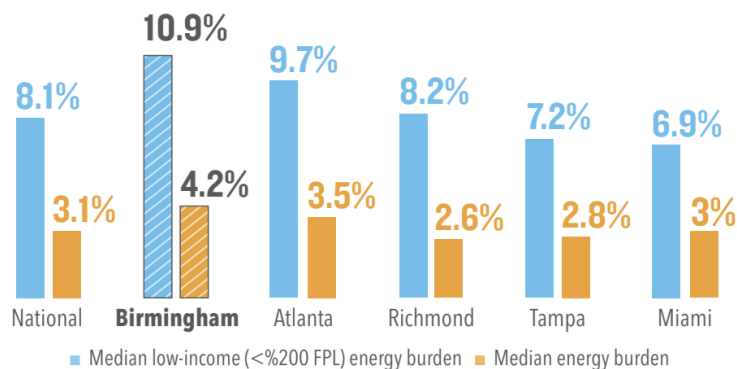
WERiSE:

Weatherizing Every Residence in the South East

Families who face higher energy burdens experience many negative long-term effects on their health and well-being. These families are at greater risk for respiratory diseases and increased stress, and they can experience increased economic hardship and difficulty in moving out of poverty. ~ACEEE

[Weatherizing Every Residence in the South East](#) (WERiSE) is a program of [The People's Justice Council](#) (PJC) and [Alabama Interfaith Power & Light](#) (ALIPL), part of our Energizing the South for Energy Justice campaign.

Birmingham Low-Income Residents Bear a Disproportionate Share of Energy Burden!



See ACEEE's 2020 report, *How High Are America's Residential Energy Burdens*, for a breakdown of median energy burdens for other groups nationally, regionally, and in 25 select metro areas: www.aceee.org/energy-burden.

The Need

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 Older homes in low-income communities often have outdated heating and cooling equipment, and the families who live in them suffer much higher incidences of respiratory and cardiac problems.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.

WERiSE answers this need, starting in our own backyard of Birmingham, AL.

Will you support us? Keep reading!



WERiSE Starts in Our Own Backyard (Birmingham, Alabama)

Here in Alabama, “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.” [AL.com] According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), Birmingham tops the nationwide list of 25 cities for energy costs relative to pay. The median energy burden of Black households in Birmingham is 46% higher than that of non-Hispanic white households. A quarter of low-income households have an energy burden above 18% in the Birmingham metropolitan area, which is more than four times higher than the median energy burden.

Leveraging Houses of Faith to Provide Solutions

Both ALIPL and PJC are interfaith organizations. Especially in the Southeast, *faith is a huge lever by which to move the world*. ALIPL/PJC has asked seven diverse houses of faith each to identify three priority residences in need of energy efficiency upgrades. ALIPL/PJC will provide up to \$1,200 per household for such improvements. But we are not simply providing direct assistance. As part of this process, we are recording our initial efforts and training residents so that communities can help themselves. Our “how-to” workshop recordings will be made available online via our [YouTube channel](#), as well as distributed as DVDs to those who may lack high-speed Internet access. **Your funding can greatly expand and enhance these direct weatherization improvements and trainings.**

Policy Plans: Addressing Systemic Problems

As important as direct weatherization and training are, ALIPL/PJC recognizes the systemic problem of energy injustice and seeks to remove barriers via policy. We will be happy to explain in more detail!

Where We Are

In October 2020, we officially launched our Energizing the South initiative with a [two-day Zoom spectacular](#) featuring many heroes of the environmental justice movement. In 2021 we identified seven diverse houses of faith, such as [Beloved Community Church](#) in Birmingham and asked them each to identify three priority residences in need of weatherization assistance. **We are treating each opportunity as a workshop, videoing and (with safe social distancing) training community residents in weatherization techniques.** Through these techniques, we aim to create the exponential growth required to Weatherize Every Residence in the South East: WERiSE!

Immediate Funding Need (Budget)

- **Initial weatherization/workshops** (21 residences x \$1,200/residence): **\$25,200.**
- A **living wage** for part-time five staff members driving this project: **\$13,300/yr**
- Additional **energy audit contractor** costs: **\$9,800.**
- **Admin, Supplies** (DVDs, printed materials, etc.), **8% contingency** buffer: **\$8,507.**
- **Initial contractors**, from whom we are learning with the goal of training others: **\$1,500.**

→ For a mere \$58,307, you can plant the vital seed to Weatherize Every Residence in the South East!