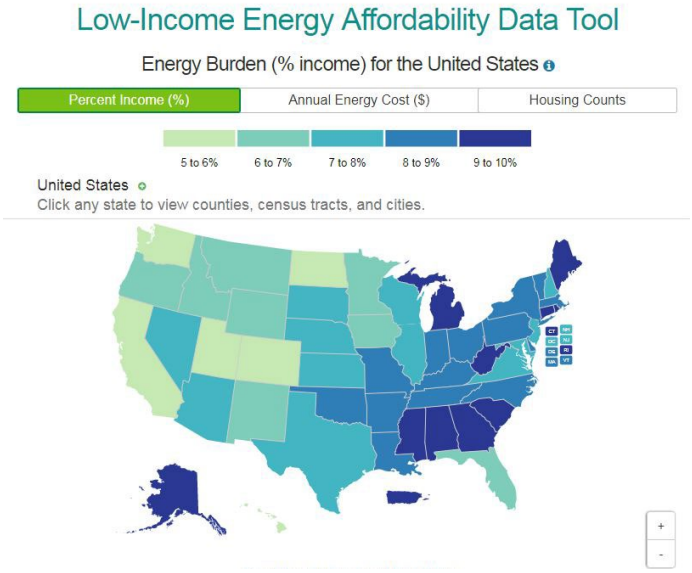
Low-income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool

CLEAN ENERGY FOR LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES ACCELERATOR



Explore the LEAD Tool here:
https://www.energy.gov/eere/slsc/maps/lead-tool

Overview

State and local governments, utilities, non-profits, and weatherization stakeholders often lack easy access to data to help inform decision making and increase their knowledge of the area they serve. The Low-income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool helps stakeholders make data-driven decisions on energy goals and program planning by improving their understanding of low-income and moderate-income household energy characteristics.

What is the LEAD Tool?

The Low-income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool is an online, interactive platform that allows users to build their own national, state, city, county, or census tract profiles. LEAD provides estimated low-income household energy data based on income, energy expenditures, fuel type, and housing type. . Users can create their own profile and create side-by-side comparisons of other areas. Users can also save their profiles and download visuals and data.

The LEAD Tool provides interactive maps, graphs, and data for the following categories:

Geographic levels:

- National
- 50 States plus D.C. and Puerto Rico
- County
- City
- Census tract

Households at different income levels:

- Area Median Income: 0-30%, 30-60%, 60%-80%, 80-100%, and 100%+
- Federal Poverty Level: 0-100%, 100-150%, 150%-200%, 200-400%, 400%+

Number of occupied housing units and energy expenditures by:

- Tenure (homeowners versus renters)
- Building year of first construction
- Number of units in the building
- Housing unit primary heating fuel type

Cost of energy:

- Average monthly energy expenditures
- Average energy burden as a percentage of income spent on energy

Where does the data come from?

LEAD Tool data comes primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2016 Public Use Microdata Samples (5-Year Average, 2012-2016) and are calibrated to U.S. Energy Information Administration's electric utility (Survey Form-861) and natural gas utility (Survey Form-176) data.

How should I use the LEAD Tool?

The LEAD Tool has been used by stakeholders to improve understanding of the low-income and moderate-income characteristics in their area, identify target areas, start new low-income programs, and use the information for outreach or communication purposes. The tool can also be used to inform strategic planning or to support independent research.

This tool is not meant to be used as a substitute for program or policy evaluations, or to track the impact of a program or policy. It should not be used as a program management tool, and it will not provide information on year to year changes given it is based on five year running averages.

Other Resources

- Better Buildings Initiative's Clean Energy for Low Income Communities Accelerator (CELICA)
- Cities Leading through Energy Analysis and Planning (Cities-LEAP), City Energy: Data to Decisions Series
- Low-Income Energy Library: Federal Resources and Tools
- Low-Income Household Energy Burden Resource Summary