

HOW BUILDINGS AFFECT YOUR WALLET

UNDERSTAND YOUR ENERGY BILL.

Utility bills add up quickly. The cost of both gas and electricity in your building depends on how **energy-efficient** your building is. Below is a breakdown of typical energy use in a typical household. ([EIA](#))

SOURCE	% OF YOUR BILL
Dryers	5
Refrigeration	7
TVs and related	7
Lighting	10
Appliances	13
All other misc.	13
Water heating	14
Heating and cooling	31

What is energy efficiency?

Energy efficiency is the use of less energy to perform the same task or produce the same result.

Energy-efficient homes and buildings use less energy to heat, cool, run appliances and electronics. ([DOE](#))

The energy efficiency of buildings depends on many factors like when the building was constructed, size, appliance updates, and building maintenance.

In frontline communities, less energy-efficient buildings can lead to high **energy burden**. Energy burden is the percentage of available household income spent on energy costs. ([DOE](#))

energy burden

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$\frac{\text{cost of energy}}{\text{household income}}$

WHY IS ENERGY BURDEN IMPORTANT?

- Low-income households face **3x higher energy burden** compared to non-low-income households. ([DOE](#))
- When a household experiences high energy burden, that household has less available income to spend on necessities such as healthy food, and healthcare.
- As the climate warms, Americans are expected to use more energy to cool down their homes, increasing energy costs for all households. ([EPA](#))

HOW DO YOU REDUCE ENERGY BURDEN?

It is difficult to change how we use energy because we need it for daily functions, but **we can change how our building uses energy.**

1

Ask questions. *Why is my energy bill so high? Why is my building drafty? How old is my stove? Why is my water always cold? Why do my vents smell bad?* These are all good questions to ask about your building and possible upgrades it may need. Many upgrades like new water heaters, AC/heating units, lights and appliances can reduce your energy bill because there are more available energy-efficient products compared to 20, 10 and even 5 years ago.

2

Share the conversation. Bring your energy efficiency questions to your landlord, HOA, or a community organization to continue the conversation. When more people are thinking about your energy burden, the more likely there will be solutions.

