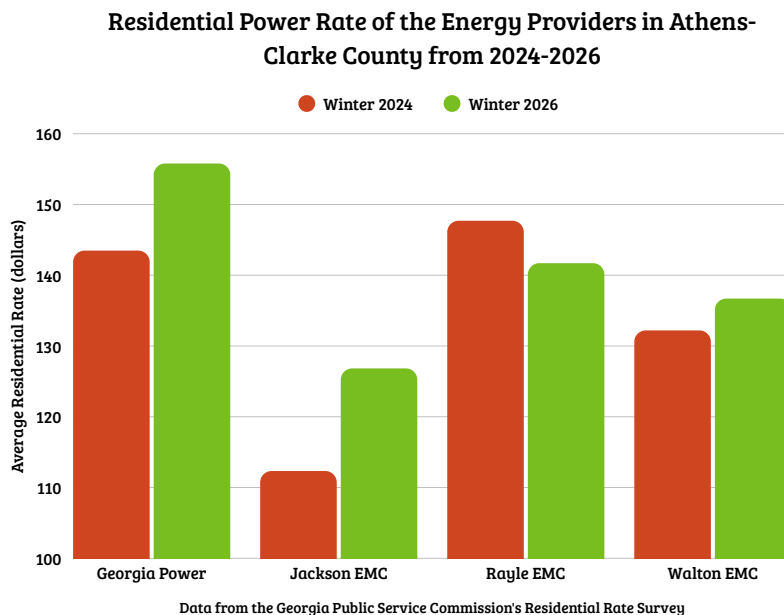
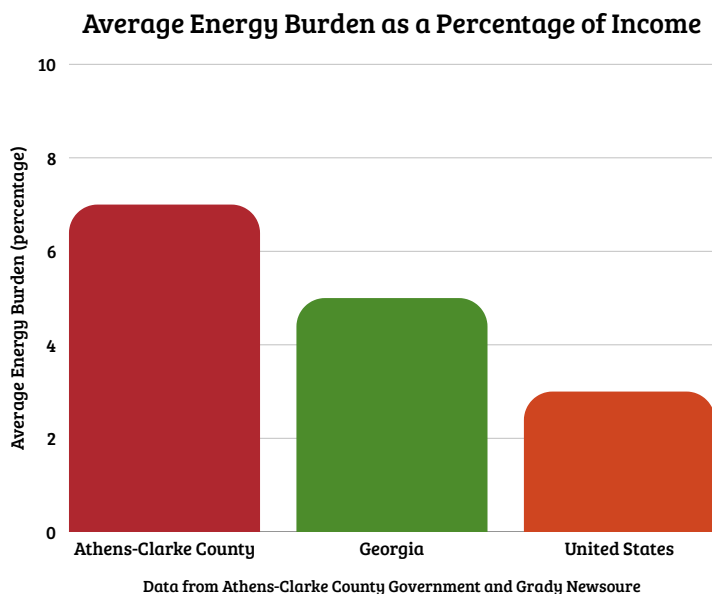


Energy Insecurity in Athens, Georgia

In a survey conducted from Fall 2024-Winter 2025, **57%** of Athens households reported difficulty paying utility bills, compared to 33.5% in Georgia and 27.2% nationally¹⁻². Rising energy costs are forcing more Athens residents into **energy poverty**. Energy poverty occurs when a household **cannot afford adequate energy services**, due to their energy burden, which is the proportion of household income spent on energy costs.



Households spending more than 6% of their income on energy costs are considered energy burdened. The average Athens household spends **7% of its income on energy costs**³⁻⁴.

In just one year, electricity rates in Athens **increased by 7.7%**. Over the past two years, some power companies have raised rates by **as much as 13%**⁵.



The Hidden Costs of Energy Insecurity

Highly energy-burdened families often make **financial tradeoffs between basic necessities**, such as medication, food, or enduring extreme weather with little heating or cooling.

Energy burdened households are more likely to have adverse outcomes in **mental health, respiratory health, sleep quality, and child health and development**.

Children experiencing energy insecurity are **more likely to also face food insecurity**, and those affected by both are at significantly higher risk of depression, poor health, and behavioral issues⁶.



Renewables Can Help Energy Security!

Renewable fuel use for electricity generation has **dropped by 34.72% in the past year**⁷. Yet renewable energy remains reliable, abundant, and often more affordable than fossil fuels.

Expanding its use in Athens would **strengthen energy security** for more families.

For more information, questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to reach out to us at info@athensareacf.org.

Local Philanthropy in Action

Fund for Clean Energy



A strategic initiative helping nonprofits advance clean energy solutions in our community. This fund supports nonprofit organizations aligned with Athens-Clarke County's clean and renewable energy goals, contributing to a more equitable and resilient community.

Habitat for Humanity's Bright Homes Energy Initiative



The Bright Homes Energy Initiative is a pioneering partnership dedicated to bringing solar power to 63 homes at Micah's Creek while delivering in-depth energy-efficiency education to residents. Its mission goes beyond clean energy installation, promoting community resilience, financial empowerment, and long-term sustainable homeownership.

Athens Energy Opportunity Program



The Athens Energy Opportunity Program is a collaborative initiative focused on educating community members about weatherization, energy use, home repairs, and related services. It aims to reduce energy burdens in historically underinvested neighborhoods while empowering residents to take active leadership roles in advancing sustainability initiatives.

The Ark



The Ark delivers emergency financial assistance, financial education, and asset-building programs to low-income working families facing unexpected financial crises. It also supports energy-burdened households by helping them stay current on their utility bills.

¹Adams and Baskam, "4.0 Data Report Fall 2025" Athens Wellbeing Project (2025)

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "State-Level Household Energy Insecurity and Diabetes Prevalence Among US Adults" Preventing Chronic Disease (2024)

³Chapman and Hall, "A Perfect Storm: Athenians Carry the Weight of the Energy Burden" Grady Newsource (2023)

⁴Athens-Clarke County Unified Government, "Clean and Renewable Energy Plan" (2022)

⁵Georgia Public Service Commission, "Residential Rate Survey" (2026)

⁶Cook et al, "A Brief Indicator of Household Energy Security: Associations With Food Security, Child Health, and Child Development in US Infants and Toddlers" Pediatrics (2008)

⁷Find Energy, "Electricity Rates in Georgia" (2025)