2008
Energy Costs Survey

By

Energy Programs Consortium

and

National Energy Assistance Directors' Association

June 2008

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgments

The Energy Programs Consortium (EPC) and the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) appreciate the generous support of the Surdna Foundation in funding this survey. EPC and NEADA would also thank Jackie Berger and Erin Cochran of APPRISE for conducting the survey.

About EPC and NEADA

EPC is a nonprofit energy policy organization that conducts policy research and demonstration programs. It is sponsored by the four main organizations representing state energy and regulatory agencies: the National Association of State Energy Officials, representing state energy policy and program directors; National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, representing the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, representing the state public service commissioners; and National Association of State and Community Services Programs, representing the state Weatherization Assistance Program directors.

This survey is one of series of reports prepared by EPC and NEADA to better understand the impact of high energy prices on households across the United States. Other surveys conducted in 2008 have addressed rising residential utility arrearage rates, increasing numbers of households seeking energy assistance and rising prices for home energy.

A copy of this report, as well as other reports in this series, can be downloaded from the EPC website at www.energyprograms.org or the NEADA website at www.neada.org.

For additional information about EPC or NEADA, please contact:

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director
Energy Programs Consortium
National Energy Assistance Directors' Association
Suite 900, 1615 M Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 237-5199
mlwolfe@energyprograms.org

Executive Summary

Households in the U.S. have faced large increases in both home energy and gasoline prices over the past few years. Coupled with the recent economic downturn and increases in costs of food and many other necessities, it is expected that low- and moderate-income households are having an increasingly difficult time making ends meet. While some of these impacts have been documented anecdotally, a systematic study of the recent impacts of rising home energy and gasoline costs, and how these impacts vary with household income, has not been done. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the sacrifices and tradeoffs that low-, moderate-, and middle-income households have made in response to rising fuel costs.

Methodology

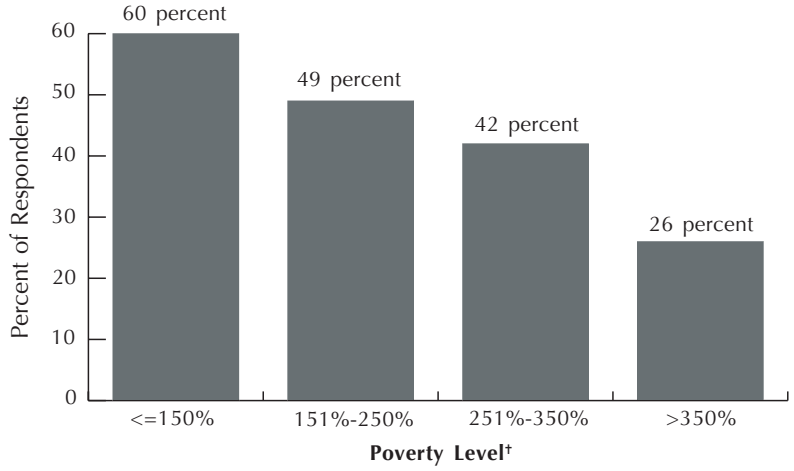
The sample, purchased from Genesys Sampling Systems, was developed from an unduplicated list of over 97 million households in the U.S. with listed telephone numbers. This survey attempted to collect data from lower- and middle-lower-income households. To accomplish that goal, the requested sample targeted households with estimated annual income at or below $60,000. However, households with income up to and over $100,000 were included in the survey.

Impact of Increased Home Energy and Gasoline Prices

Both energy and gasoline costs have increased dramatically over the past few years, placing an increased energy burden on households with constrained budgets. The survey posed several questions to assess the impact of these price increases and determine the types of sacrifices households have made to meet their energy needs.

The study showed that increased home energy and gasoline prices have had a large impact on households, especially those with low, moderate, and middle incomes. Figure 1 shows that 60 percent of low-income households, 49 percent of moderate-income households, and 42 percent of middle-income households said that it was more difficult for them to pay their energy bills than in the previous year.

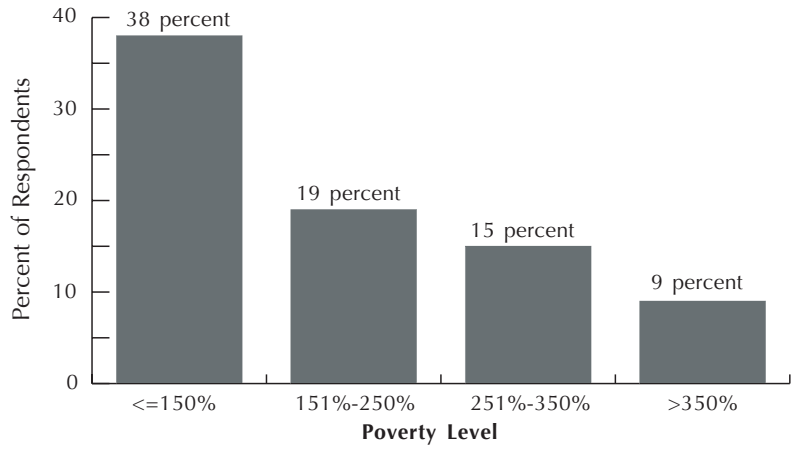
Figure 1. Percent of Respondents Who Said It Was More Difficult to Pay Energy Bill than in Previous Year



† = The data presented in this report is for families of all sizes. For illustrative purposes, the federal poverty level for a family of four is $33,300 at 150 percent, $55,500 at 250 percent and $77,700 at 350 percent. This information applies to all subsequent figures and tables in this report.

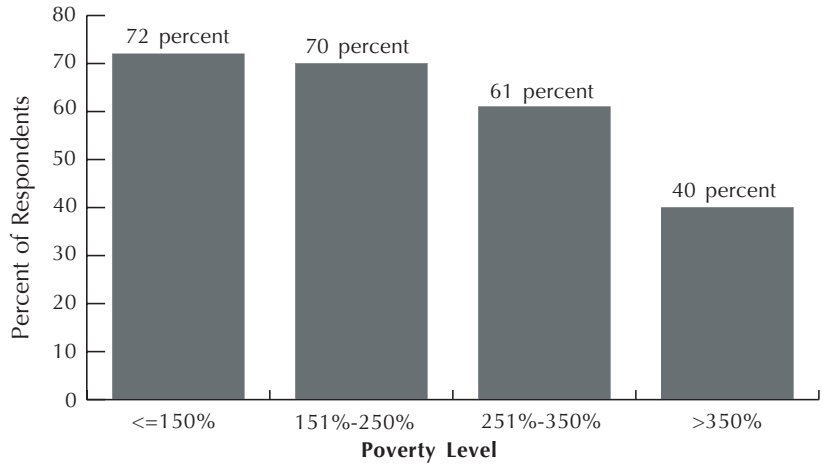
These respondents were also likely to report that the energy costs had a large impact on the household. Figure 2 shows that 38 percent of low-income households, 19 percent of moderate-income households, and 15 percent of middle-income households said that increased home energy costs had a large impact on the household.

Figure 2. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Energy Costs Had a Large Impact on the Household



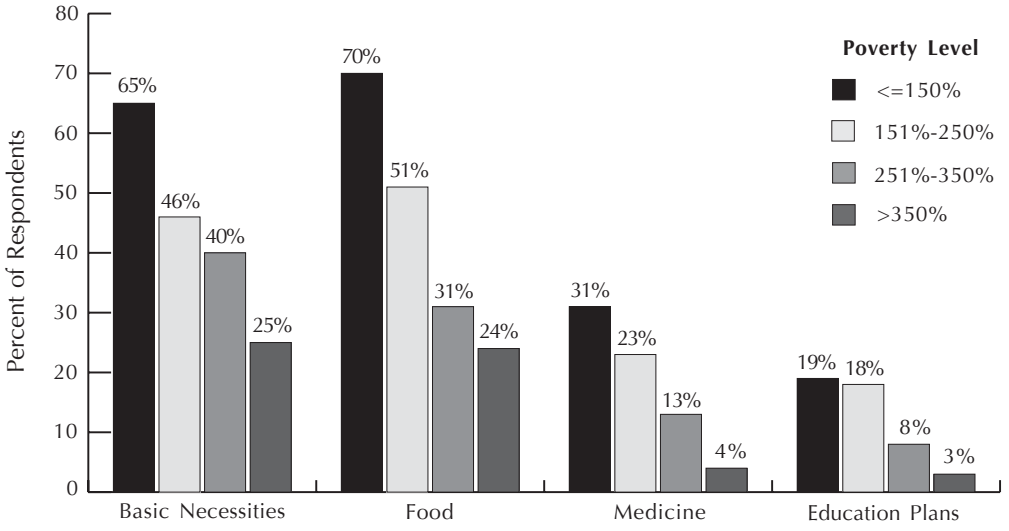
Households were more likely to report that increased gasoline prices had a large impact on the household. Figure 3 shows that 72 percent of low-income, 70 percent of moderate-income, and 61 percent of middle-income respondents said that increased gasoline costs had a large impact on their household.

Figure 3. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Gasoline Costs Had a Large Impact on the Household



Low-income households made many sacrifices to make up for increased home energy and gasoline costs. As shown in figure 4, 70 percent said they reduced purchases of food, 31 percent said they reduced purchases of medicine, and 19 percent said they changed plans for their education or their children's education.

Figure 4. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Purchases and Plans

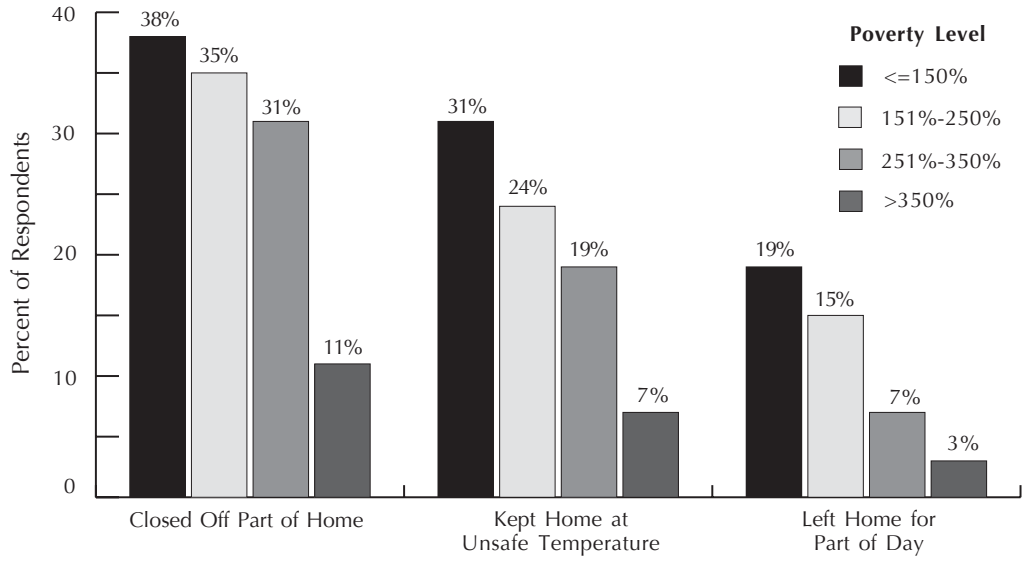


Low- to middle-income households were likely to report that they made compromises with their energy use.

- 37 percent of low-income, 35 percent of moderate-income, and 31 percent of middle-income households said they closed off part of their home because they could not afford to heat or cool it.
- 31 percent of low-income, 24 percent of moderate-income, and 19 percent of middle-income households said they kept their home at a temperature they felt was unsafe or unhealthy.
- 19 percent of low-income, 15 percent of moderate-income, and 7 percent of middle-income households reported that they left their home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold.

High-income households were much less likely to report that they made these kinds of sacrifices.

Figure 5. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Energy Behavior

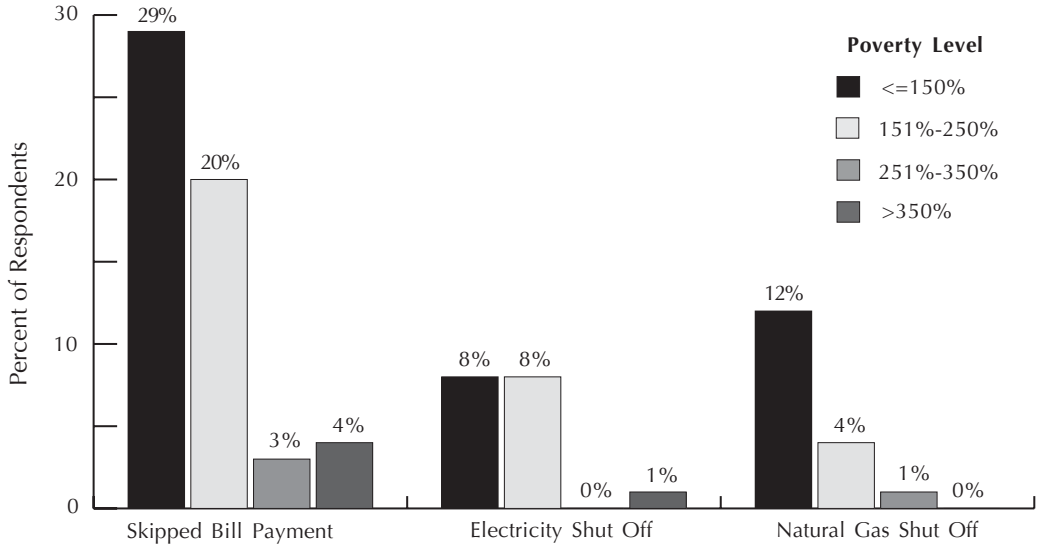


Despite these sacrifices, many low- and moderate-income households were still unable to afford their energy needs.

- 29 percent of low-income and 20 percent of moderate-income households said that they skipped paying their home energy bill or paid less than the full bill.
- 8 percent of low-income and 8 percent of moderate-income households said they had their electricity shut off.
- 12 percent of low-income and 4 percent of moderate-income households said they had their natural gas shut off.

Middle and high-income households were much less likely to report that they faced these problems.

Figure 6. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Energy Payment

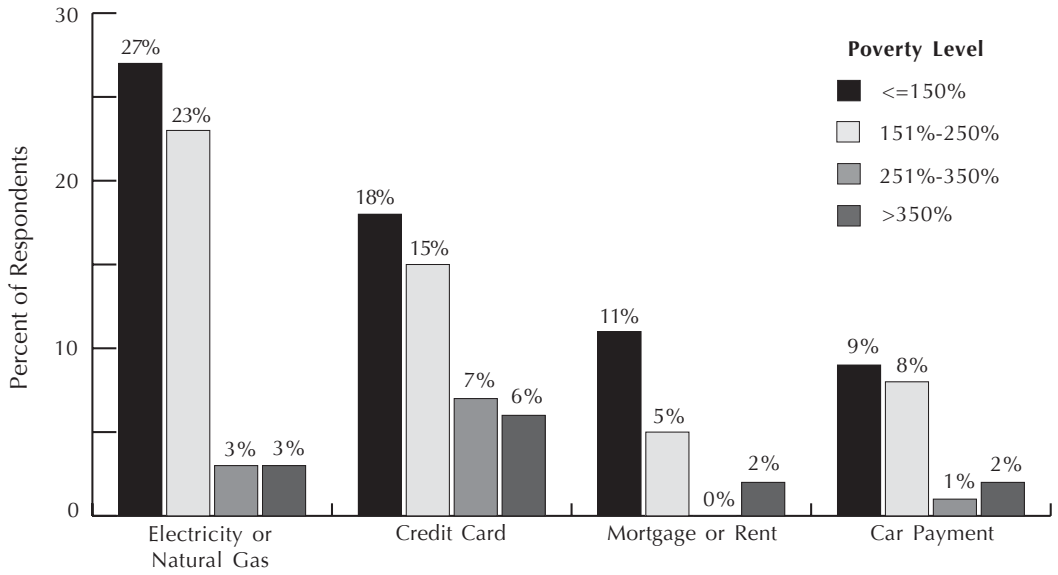


Low- and moderate-income households were behind on other bills as well.

- 18 percent of low-income and 15 percent of moderate-income households said they were behind on credit card bills.
- 11 percent of low-income and 5 percent of moderate-income households said they were behind on their mortgage or rent.
- 9 percent of low-income and 8 percent of moderate-income households said they were behind on their car payments.

Again, middle and high-income households were much less likely to report that they were behind on the payment of these bills.

Figure 7. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Are Behind on Bills Due to Increased Energy and Gas Costs



Increases in home energy and gasoline prices have led all income groups to attempt to reduce their expenses and to conserve.

Figure 8 shows that all income groups reported that they bought less expensive products, reduced purchases of clothing, and ate out less frequently in restaurants.

Figure 8. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Purchases

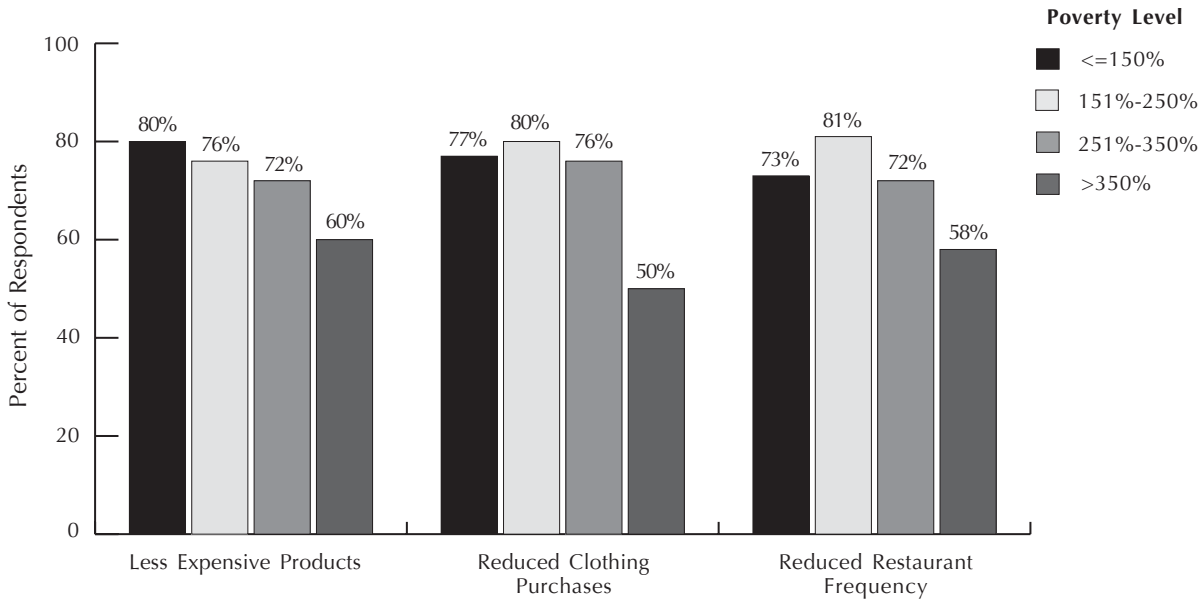
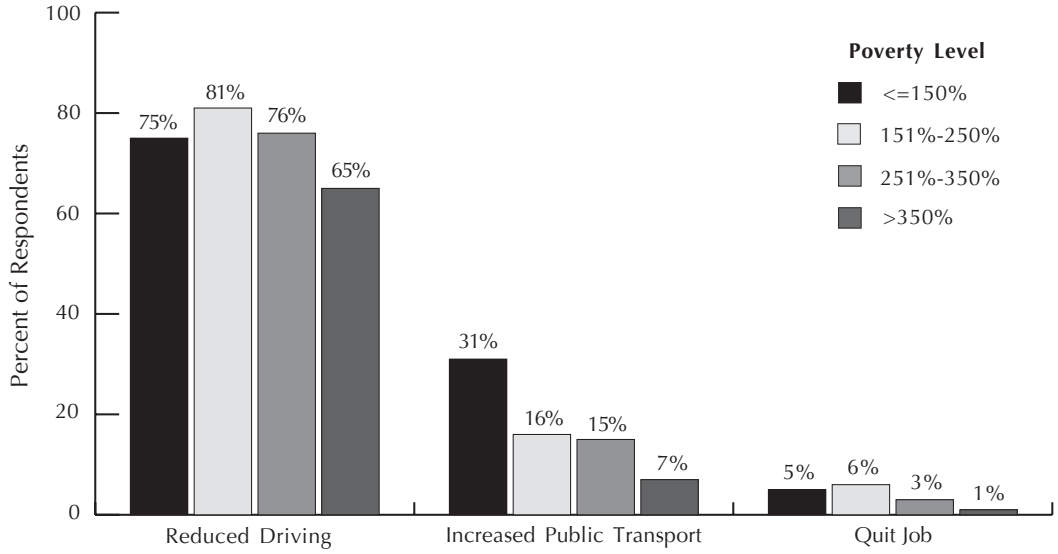


Figure 9 shows that all income groups reported that they reduced the use of their cars. However, the low-income households were much more likely than the other groups to report that they increased use of public transportation and ride sharing.

Figure 9. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Driving



Actions Taken to Reduce Home Energy and Gasoline Costs

Many households reported that they were conserving energy in an effort to reduce their home energy and gasoline costs. Figure 10 shows that all income groups reported that they turned down their heat at night and lowered their heating temperature.

Figure 10. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Changed Heating Usage to Reduce Heating Bills

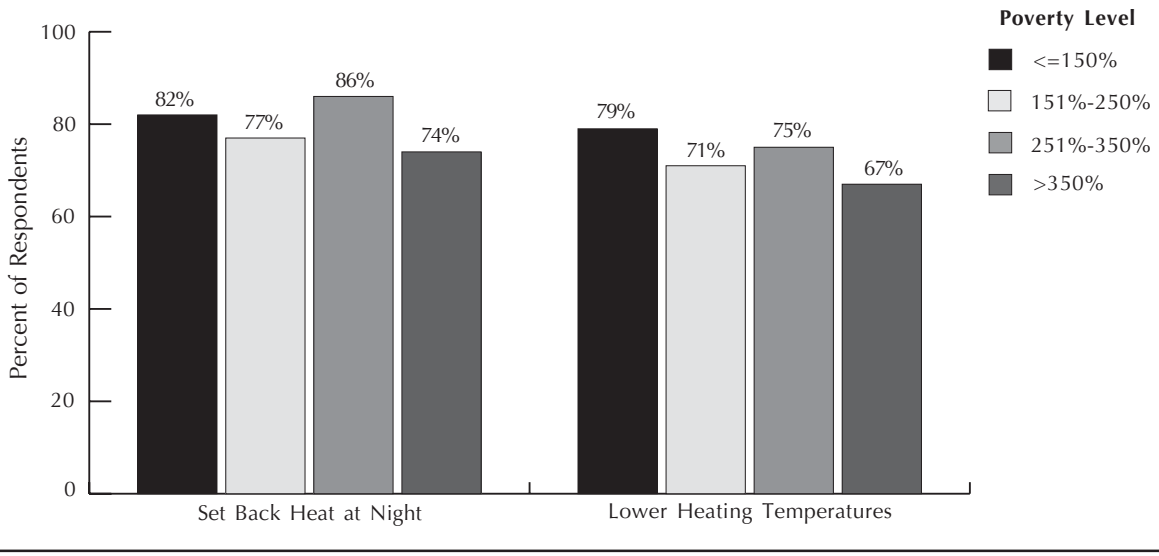
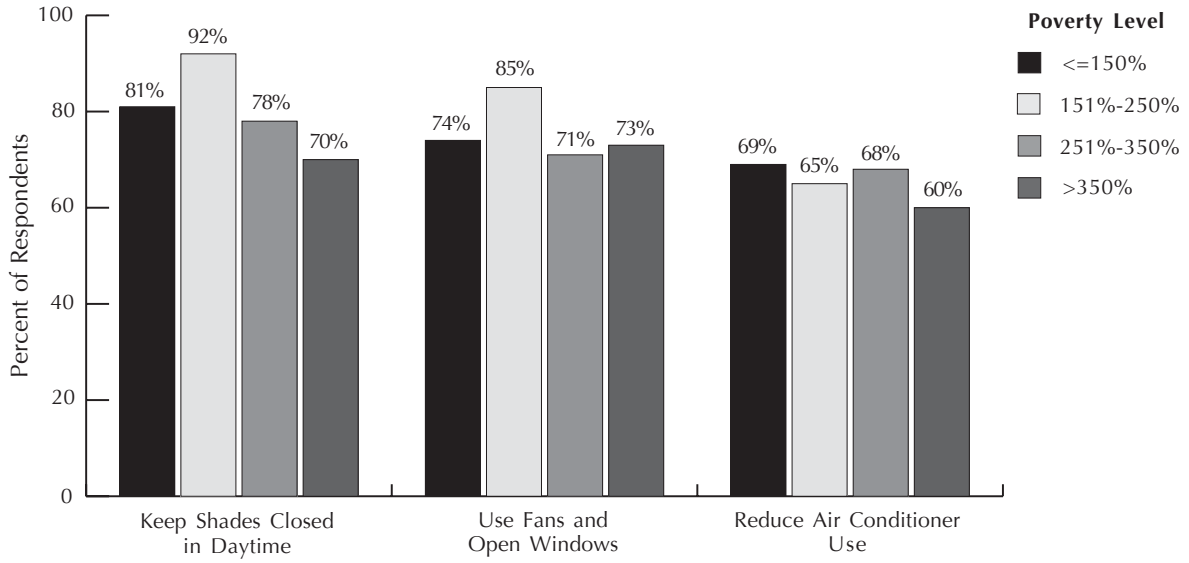


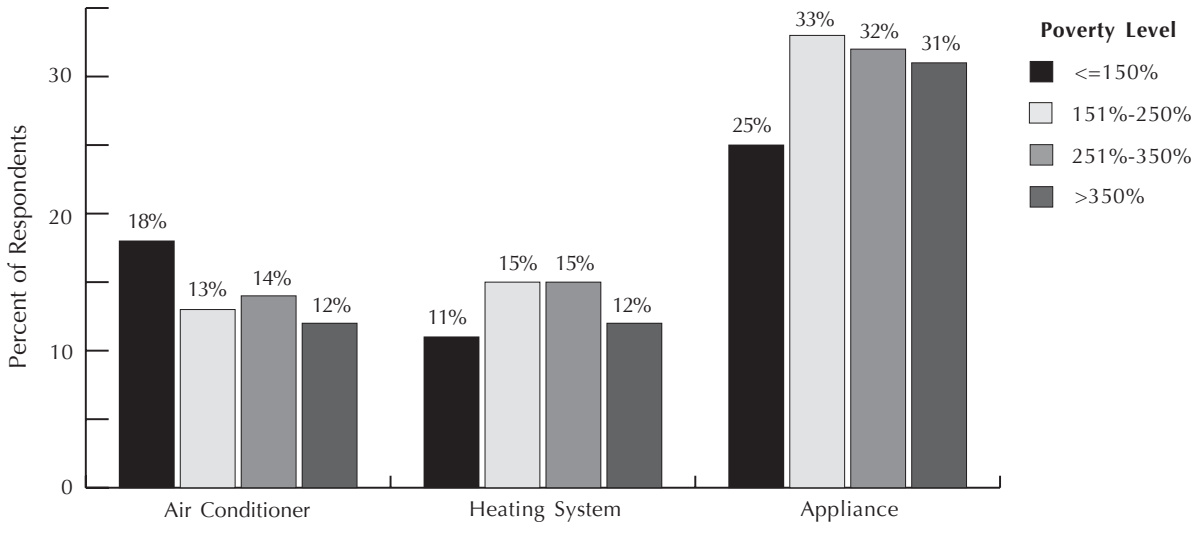
Figure 11 shows that all income groups reported that changed their cooling behaviors to reduce their cooling bills.

Figure 11. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Changed Cooling Behavior to Reduce Cooling Bills



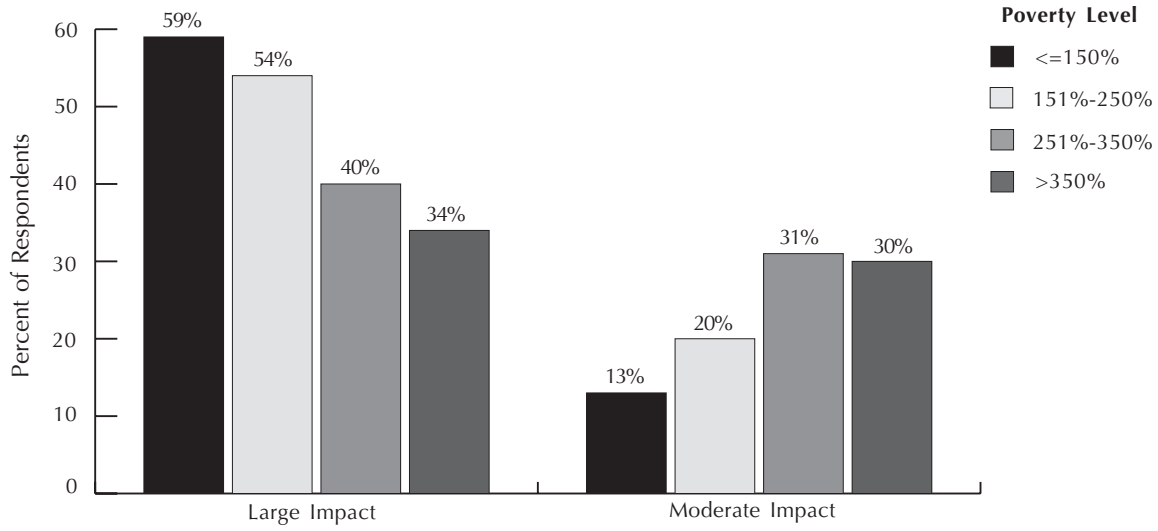
The increased prices have also led all income groups to make investments. Figure 12 shows that households in all income levels bought more efficient air conditioners, heating systems, and appliances.

Figure 12. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Made Home Investments to Reduce Energy Costs



Low- and moderate- income households were most likely to say that increased home energy and gasoline costs had a large impact on their confidence about the future. Figure 13 shows that 59 percent of low-income households said that these price increases had a large impact on their confidence about the future and 54 percent of moderate-income households said that these price increases had a large impact on their confidence about the future.

Figure 13. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Changed Heating Usage to Reduce Heating Bills



Summary

This study showed that increased home energy and gasoline costs have impacted households at all income levels. Low-income households, as expected, have sacrificed the most as a result of these price increases. Low- to middle-income households are likely to have gone without food and medicine and to have compromised their energy usage. Low- to moderate-income households are likely to have missed energy bill payments and even have their service terminated. They are also likely to have gotten behind on credit card bills, mortgage or rent, and car payments. All income groups however, have reduced discretionary spending, driving, and heating and cooling usage. All income groups have also made investments in more energy efficient heating, cooling, and appliances to bring down their costs.

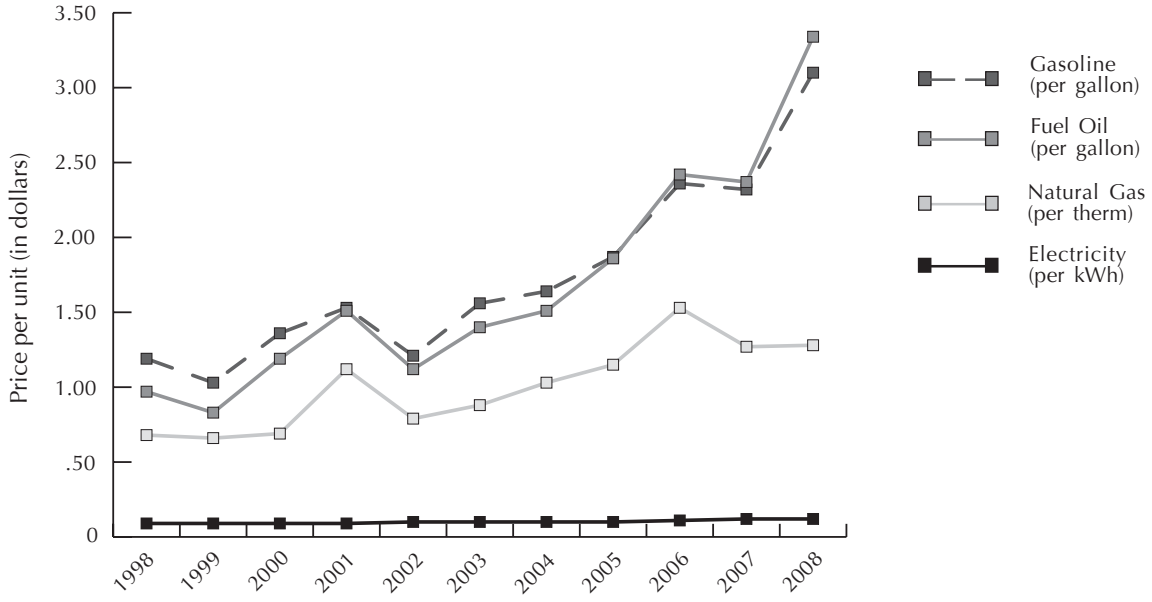
I. Introduction

Households in the U.S. have faced large increases in both home energy and gasoline prices over the past few years. Coupled with the recent economic downturn and increases in costs of food and many other necessities, it is expected that low- and moderate-income households are having an increasingly difficult time making ends meet. While some of these impacts have been documented anecdotally, a systematic study of the recent impacts of rising home energy and gasoline costs, and how these impacts vary with household income, has not been done. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the sacrifices and tradeoffs that low, moderate, and middle income households have made in response to rising fuel costs.

Energy Price Changes and Economic Condition

Home energy and gasoline prices have increased rapidly over the past few years. Figure 14 shows especially large increases in the price of fuel oil and gasoline. Fuel oil prices increased by over 40 percent in the past year and gasoline prices increased by over a third. Low-income energy assistance programs and hardship funds have reported large increases in the number of households applying for assistance and have had difficulty meeting the expanding need.

Figure 14. U.S. City Average Energy Prices, January 1998-January 2008

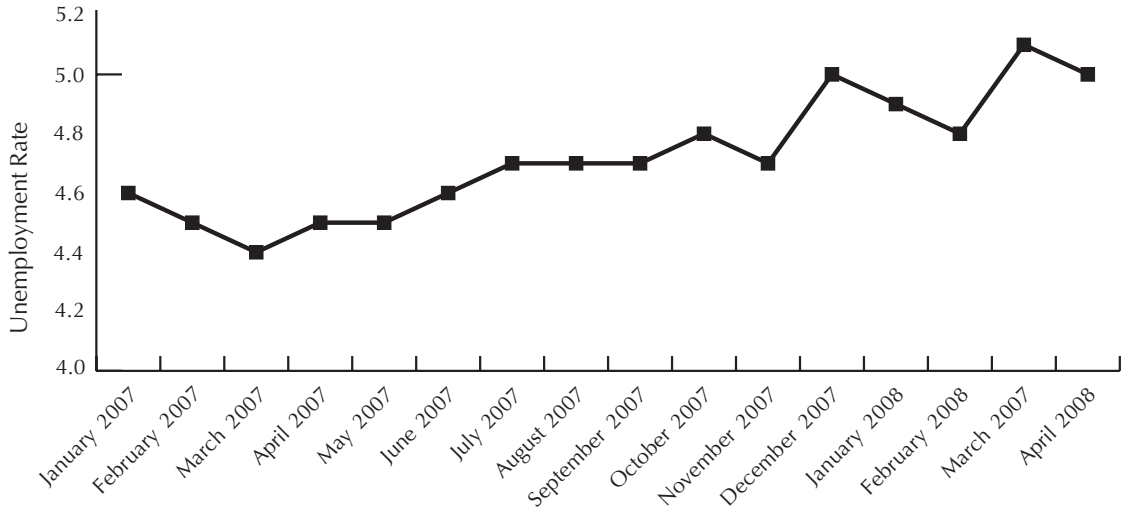


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/CPI/#data

The economy has weakened in the past year, placing further burdens on the most financially vulnerable households. Figure 15 shows that the civilian unemployment rate increased to five percent. The consumer confidence index declined by 14 percent in February, its largest decline since 1987. Decline home values and increasing mortgage foreclosure rates have increased consumer fears about the economy.[1]

1. "Consumer Confidence Slips as Home Prices Drop," *New York Times*, April 29, 2008.

Figure 15. U.S. City Average Energy Prices, January 1998-January 2008



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/cps/#empstat_m

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how rising home energy and gasoline prices have impacted low- and moderate-income households in the U.S. The study examines the extent to which households have been impacted by the higher prices and how they have coped with these increased prices. Households were asked about beneficial behaviors such as energy conservation and investment in more efficient appliances, and about dangerous sacrifices such as going without food and medicine, and keep the home at an unsafe temperature.

Organization of the Report

This report has five sections that follow this introduction.

- *Section II—Survey Methodology*: Presents the methodology used for sample development and survey implementation.

- *Section III—Respondent Demographics:* Presents information on the demographics of the survey respondents.

- *Section IV—Impact of Increased Home Energy and Gasoline Prices:* Presents findings on energy and gasoline price impacts by household characteristics.

- *Section V —Actions Taken to Reduce Home Energy and Gasoline Costs:* Presents findings on actions taken by household characteristics.

- *Section VIII—Conclusion:* Presents a summary of the key findings in this report.

II. Survey Methodology

This section describes the methodology for the survey, including procedures for sample development, survey implementation, and response rates.

Sample Development

The sample, purchased from Genesys Sampling Systems, was developed from an unduplicated list of over 97 million households in the U.S. with listed telephone numbers. The list was developed from multiple sources to increase coverage rates, including telephone directories, automobile and motorcycle registrations, real estate listings, and driver's license data. The database is updated bi-monthly to provide current data on active households.

This survey attempted to collect data from lower- and middle-lower-income households. To accomplish that goal, the requested sample targeted households with estimated annual income at or below $60,000. The sample income data were developed by the sample vendor from self reports to a panel survey within the past two years and through multiple regression analysis using home value, occupation, and automobile data, as well as other variables as predictors.

The listed sample does not include households without telephones or with unlisted telephone numbers.

Survey Implementation

APPRISE retained Braun Research to conduct the telephone survey through its call center. A researcher from APPRISE trained Braun's employees on the survey instrument and monitored survey implementation. Braun's manager in charge of the survey instructed interviewers how to use the computerized version of the survey to record customer responses.

Interviewer training provided interviewers with an overview of the project, purpose behind questions asked, and strategies to provide accurate clarification and elicit acceptable responses through neutral probing techniques.

Interviewer monitoring allowed APPRISE researchers to both listen to the way interviewers conducted surveys and see the answers they chose on the computerized data entry form. Braun's manager facilitated open communication between the monitors and interviewers, which allowed the monitors to instruct interviewers on how to implement the survey and accurately record customer responses.

Telephone interviews were conducted between May 9, 2008 and May 22, 2008. During this time period, 503 interviews were completed.

Response Rates

Table 1 details the number of households in the survey sample, number of completed interviews, cooperation rates, and response rates for the sample. The table presents the following information:

- **Number selected**: The sample consisted of 3,500 listed telephone numbers with estimated income at or below $60,000.

- **Unusable:** There were 686 cases deemed unusable because no one was present in the home during the survey who was able to complete the survey, or because phone numbers were unavailable, disconnected, or incorrect. These households are not included in the denominator of the response rate or the cooperation rate.

- **Non-Interviews:** There were 1,361 cases classified as non-interviews because the qualified respondent refused to complete the interview, or because the respondent asked the interviewer to call back to complete the interview at a later time, but did not complete the interview during the field period. These households are included in the denominator of the cooperation rate and the response rate.

- **Unknown eligibility:** There were 950 cases that were determined to have unknown eligibility to complete the interview, due to answering machines, no answers, and language barriers. These households are not included in the denominator of the cooperation rate. They are included in the denominator of the response rate.

- **Completed interviews**: The completed telephone interviews are households that were reached and that answered the full set of survey questions. 503 interviews were completed.

- **Cooperation rate**: The cooperation rate is the percent of eligible households contacted who completed the survey. This is calculated as the number of completed interviews divided by the interviews plus the number of non-interviews (refusals plus non-completed callbacks[2]). Overall, this survey achieved a 27 percent cooperation rate.

- **Response rate:** The response rate is the number of completed interviews divided by the number of completed interviews plus the number of non-interviews (refusals plus non-completed call backs) plus all cases of unknown eligibility (due to answering machines and language barriers). This survey attained an 18 percent response rate.

Table 1. Sample and Response Rates

	Total Sample
Number Selected	3,500
Unusable	686
Non-Interviews	1,361
Unknown Eligibility	950
Completed Interviews	503
Cooperation Rate	27%
Response Rate	18%

2. Non-completed callbacks include respondents who asked the interviewer to call back at a later time to complete the interview, but did not complete the interview by the end of the field period.

III. Respondent Demographics

This section describes the demographic and income characteristics for survey respondents. Tables presented in this section may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 2 presents the percentage of households by number of total household members. Seventy-three percent have two or more household members. The mean number in the household is 2.3.

Table 2. Number of Household Members

Number of Household Members	Percent
1	27%
2	41%
3	15%
4	10%
5	5%
6 or more	2%
Mean Number in Household	2.3

Table 3 displays the percentage of households that have one or more household members particularly vulnerable to unaffordable energy bills. Fifty-seven percent reported that they have one or more household members age 60 or older, and 25 percent have one or more children age 18 or younger.

Table 3. Vulnerable Groups

	Household With Elderly (Age 60 or older)	Household With Child (Age 18 or under)
Yes	57%	25%
No	42%	74%
Don't Know / No Answer	<1%	1%

Respondents were asked to report their household's annual income. Table 4 displays information provided in narrow income ranges. Thirty percent of respondents did not provide this information, 32 percent reported an annual income at or below $30,000, 21 percent reported income between $30,000 and $60,000, 13 percent reported an income between $60,000 and $100,000, and 6 percent reported income above $100,000.

Table 4. Annual Income

Income Range	Percent
≤ $ 10,000	8%
$ 10,001 - $ 20,000	13%
$ 20,001 - $ 30,000	11%
$ 30,001 - $ 40,000	10%
$ 40,001 - $ 50,000	6%
$ 50,001 - $ 60,000	5%
$ 60,001 - $ 70,000	4%
$ 70,001 - $ 80,000	6%
$ 80,001 - $ 90,000	1%
$ 90,001 - $ 100,000	2%
More than $ 100,000	6%
Don't Know	13%
Refused	17%

Respondents who did not provide a response to the first income question were given an opportunity to report whether their income was below $25,000, between $25,000 and $50,000, or above $50,000. An additional 15 percent of respondents provided an answer to this question. Table 5 shows that 32 percent reported income below $25,000, 27 percent reported income between $25,000 and $50,000, and 25 percent report income above $50,000.

Table 5. Annual Income

Income Range	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
< $ 25,000	32%	36%	33%
$ 25,000 - $ 50,000	27%	26%	28%
> $50,000	25%	19%	30%
Don't Know	4%	6%	2%
Refused	11%	14%	8%

Table 6 displays respondents' incomes as a percentage of the Federal Poverty Level. Twenty-eight percent of respondents reported annual household income at or below 150 percent of the poverty level, 18 percent reported income between 151 and 250 percent of the poverty level, 14 percent reported income between 251 and 350 percent of poverty, and 24 percent reported income above 350 percent of the poverty level. Households with children were more likely to report income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

Table 6. Poverty Level

Income Range†	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
0%-150%	28%	29%	38%
151%-250%	18%	16%	24%
251%-350%	14%	17%	12%
>350%	24%	19%	17%
No Income Information Provided	15%	19%	10%

Respondents were asked whether in the 12 months preceding the survey their household received:

- Income from employment
- Any form of retirement income including Social Security, pensions, and other funds
- Public assistance benefits from Temporary Assistance For Needy Families, Social Security Insurance, or general or public assistance
- Non-cash benefits, including food stamps and public or subsidized housing.

Table 7 shows that 40 percent of respondents reported that they received wages or self-employment income, 54 percent said they received retirement income, 15 percent said they received public assistance, and 10 percent said they received non-cash benefits.

Table 7. Types of Income and Benefits Received

	Wages or Self-Employment Income	Retirement Income	Public Assistance	Non-cash Benefits
Yes	40%	54%	15%	10%
No	59%	45%	85%	90%
Don't Know/Refused	1%	1%	1%	1%

Table 8 shows that 17 percent of respondents reported that at least one member of their household was unemployed and looking for work in the 12 months preceding the survey. Households with children were more likely to report that someone had been unemployed in the past year.

Table 8. Unemployed During the Year

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Yes	17%	10%	34%
No	83%	90%	65%
Don't Know/Refused	<1%	0%	1%

† = The data presented in this report is for families of all sizes. For illustrative purposes, the federal poverty level for a family of four is $33,300 at 150 percent, $55,500 at 250 percent and $77,700 at 350 percent. This information applies to all subsequent figures and tables in this report.

Table 9 displays the percentage of households that reported someone was unemployed during the past year by annual income and poverty level. Households with lower annual income and with lower poverty levels were more likely to report that someone in the household was unemployed. Twenty-five percent of households with income below $25,000 reported that someone had been unemployed, and 28 percent of households with income below 150 percent of the poverty level reported that someone had been unemployed.

Table 9. Unemployed During the Year by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Yes	25%	21%	8%	28%	27%	10%	6%	5%
No	75%	79%	92%	72%	73%	90%	94%	92%
Don't Know/ Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%

Table 10 shows that 80 percent of the households reported that they own their home and 19 percent reported that they rent their home. Households with elderly members were more likely to report that they own their home, and households with children were less likely to report that they own their home.

Table 10. Home Ownership

Income Range	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Own	80%	89%	68%
Rent	19%	10%	32%
Other	1%	1%	0%
Don't Know/Refused	1%	1%	0%

Table 11 shows the relationship between income and home ownership. While 67 percent of households with income below 150 percent of poverty reported that they own their home, 92 percent with income above 350 percent of poverty reported that they own their own home.

Table 11. Home Ownership by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Own	69%	77%	94%	67%	75%	88%	92%	86%
Rent	29%	22%	6%	32%	25%	11%	7%	12%
Other	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Don't Know/ Refused	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%

Table 12 displays reported total annual energy costs. The table shows that 14 percent reported energy costs below $1,000, 26 percent reported costs between $1,000 and $2,000, 20 percent reported costs between $2,000 and $3,000, and 18 percent reported costs of over $3,000. Households with children are more likely to report energy costs over $3,000.

Table 12. Annual Energy Costs

Annual Energy Costs	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
≤$1,000	14%	14%	13%
$1,001-$2,000	26%	28%	19%
$2,001-$3,000	20%	18%	23%
$3,001 or more	18%	15%	32%
Don't Know	22%	25%	11%
Refused	1%	1%	2%

Table 13 displays reported annual energy costs by reported income and poverty level. Higher- income and higher poverty level households are most likely to report the highest energy costs.

Table 13. Annual Energy Costs by Income and Poverty Level

Annual Energy Costs	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
≤$1,000	18%	10%	14%	16%	11%	15%	14%	9%
$1,001-$2,000	25%	26%	28%	25%	23%	29%	29%	22%
$2,001-$3,000	18%	26%	17%	17%	22%	21%	18%	17%
$3,001 or more	15%	19%	28%	17%	23%	25%	24%	8%
Don't Know	25%	19%	13%	25%	20%	14%	15%	37%
Refused	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	7%

Table 14 displays responses to the survey question, "Which fuel is used most for heating your home?" Nearly half of the respondents reported that they use natural gas as their primary heating fuel, 27 percent reported electricity, 10 percent reported bottle gas, 8 percent reported fuel oil or kerosene, and 6 percent reported wood.

Table 14. Primary Fuel Used for Home Heating

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Natural Gas	47%	46%	47%
Electricity	27%	26%	31%
Bottled Gas (LPG or Propane)	10%	10%	8%
Fuel Oil or Kerosene	8%	9%	5%
Wood	6%	5%	6%
Coal or Coke	1%	1%	1%
Other Fuel	1%	1%	0%
No Fuel	1%	1%	2%
Don't Know	1%	1%	1%

Table 15 displays primary heating fuel by income and poverty level. Higher income households are more likely to report that they use natural gas to heat their homes.

Table 15. Primary Fuel Used for Home Heating by Income and Poverty Level

Primary Heating Fuel	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Natural Gas	48%	44%	54%	45%	49%	43%	55%	39%
Electricity	29%	27%	22%	31%	25%	25%	23%	29%
Bottled Gas (LPG or Propane)	9%	9%	11%	9%	11%	8%	11%	12%
Fuel Oil or Kerosene	9%	9%	5%	9%	6%	10%	5%	8%
Wood	4%	8%	4%	4%	8%	8%	3%	9%
Coal or Coke	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Other Fuel	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%
No Fuel	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%

Table 16 shows that the costs for heat are included in the rent for 4 percent of respondents.

Table 16. Heat Included in Rent

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Yes	4%	4%	5%
No	14%	6%	27%
Own Home/Do Not Pay Rent	81%	90%	68%
Don't Know/Refused	<1%	0%	0%

Table 17 shows that higher-income households are less likely to have heat included in their rent.

Table 17. Primary Fuel Used for Home Heating by Income and Poverty Level

Heat Included in Rent	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Yes	9%	2%	1%	7%	4%	1%	2%	4%
No	21%	19%	5%	25%	20%	8%	5%	7%
Own Home/ Do Not Pay Rent	71%	79%	93%	68%	75%	91%	93%	87%
Don't Know/ Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%

Table 18 displays responses to the survey question, "What is the main way that you cool your home on the hottest days of the summer?" Sixty-two percent said they use central air conditioning, 17 percent said they use a window or wall air conditioner, 14 percent said they use fans, and 1 percent said evaporative or swamp cooling. Five percent reported that they do not use any method to cool their home on the hottest days of the summer.

Table 18. Primary Method of Summer Cooling

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Central Air Conditioning	62%	62%	60%
Window or Wall Air Conditioning	17%	17%	20%
Fans	14%	15%	13%
Evaporative or Swamp Cooling	1%	<1%	2%
No Cooling Method Used	5%	5%	6%
Don't Know	<1%	1%	0%

Table 19 shows that higher-income households are more likely to use central air conditioning. Eighty percent of households with income above 350 percent of poverty reported that they use central air conditioning as their primary source of cooling, compared to 47 percent with income below 150 percent of the poverty level.

Table 19. Primary Method of Summer Cooling by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Central Air Conditioning	48%	61%	77%	47%	55%	64%	80%	68%
Window or Wall Air Conditioning	25%	14%	13%	23%	22%	18%	7%	16%
Fans	20%	16%	7%	21%	16%	13%	7%	12%
Evaporative or Swamp Cooling	0%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%	2%	0%
No Cooling Method Used	7%	7%	1%	9%	4%	6%	2%	4%
Don't Know	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%

Respondents were asked whether someone in their household utilized any necessary medical equipment that uses electricity in the 12 months prior to the survey. Table 20 shows that 14 percent of respondents said that someone in their household did use this type of equipment. Households with children 18 or younger were more likely to report use of medical equipment that requires electricity. Twenty-one percent of households with children reported that someone in the household uses medical equipment that requires electricity.

Table 20. Someone in the Household Utilizes Necessary Medical Equipment that Uses Electricity

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Yes	14%	15%	21%
No	86%	85%	79%
Don't Know/No Answer	1%	<1%	1%

Lower-income households were more likely to report that there was someone in the household who used medical equipment that requires electricity. Twenty-one percent of households with income below 150 percent of the poverty level reported that they use this medical equipment, compared to 7 percent of households with income above 350 percent of poverty.

Table 21. Someone in the Household Utilizes Necessary Medical Equipment that Uses Electricity by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	**$25,000-$50,000**	**>$50,000**	**≤150%**	**151-250%**	**251-350%**	**>350%**	
Yes	20%	11%	10%	21%	15%	10%	7%	11%
No	80%	89%	89%	79%	84%	90%	93%	87%
Don't Know/ No Answer	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%

IV. Impact of Increased Home Energy and Gasoline Prices

Both energy and gasoline costs have increased dramatically over the past few years, placing an increased energy burden on households with constrained budgets. The survey posed several questions to assess the impact of these price increases and determine the types of sacrifices households have made to meet their energy needs.

Respondents were asked how their home energy bills compare to last year. Table 22 shows that 57 percent said their energy bills were higher compared to the previous year, 31 percent said they were the same, and 7 percent said they were lower.

Table 22. Change in Home Energy Bills Compared to Last Year

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Same	31%	32%	26%
Lower	7%	6%	9%
Higher	57%	58%	58%
Don't Know	5%	4%	7%

Figure 16 shows that lower income households were more likely to report that their energy bills had increased. While 63 percent of low-income households reported that their home energy bills had increased, 47 percent of high-income households reported that their home energy bills had increased.

Figure 16. Percent of Responders Who Said Home Energy Bills Have Increased in the Past Year

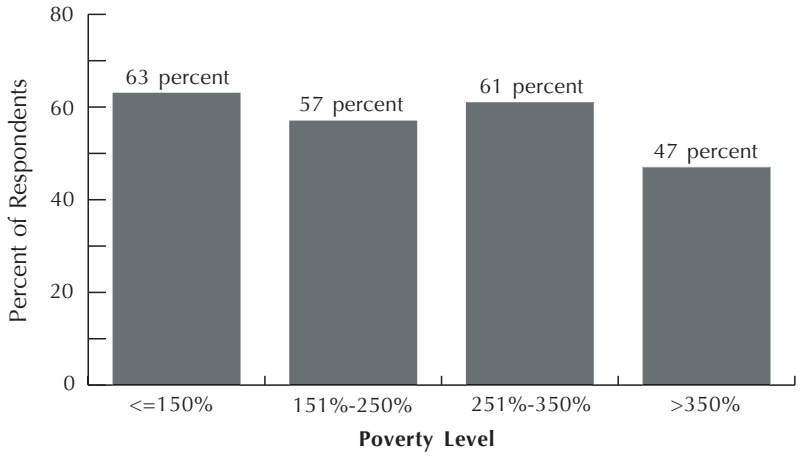


Table 23 provides additional detail on how perceived home energy bill costs are related to respondent income and poverty level.

Table 23. Change in Home Energy Bills Compared to Last Year by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Same	26%	31%	37%	23%	33%	29%	39%	31%
Lower	9%	6%	5%	8%	6%	7%	6%	7%
Higher	60%	59%	51%	63%	57%	61%	47%	57%
Don't Know	6%	4%	7%	6%	3%	3%	8%	5%

Respondents who reported that their energy bills were higher at the time of the survey than they were in the previous year were asked why they thought that their energy bills were higher. Table 24 shows that 44 percent of respondents said that their energy bills were higher due to higher prices, and 6 percent said their energy bills were higher due to colder winter weather. Other reported reasons for higher energy bills included a warmer summer, politicians and oil companies, and the economy.

Table 24. Why Energy Bills Are Higher (Unprompted)

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Higher Prices	44%	47%	42%
Colder Winter	6%	7%	2%
Warmer Summer	2%	2%	2%
Politicians/ Oil Companies	2%	2%	1%
Economy / Value of the Dollar	2%	1%	2%
Use More Energy	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	2%
Don't Know	4%	2%	8%
Did Not Report Energy Bills Were Higher	43%	42%	42%

Note: Answers total to more than 100 percent because respondents could provide more than one answer.

Respondents were asked, "How does your financial situation this year compare to last year?" Table 25 shows that 42 percent said it was worse, 45 percent said it was the same, and 11 percent said it was better than the previous year.

Table 25. Change in Financial Situation Compared to Last Year

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Same	45%	49%	39%
Worse	42%	43%	48%
Better	11%	7%	12%
Don't Know/Refused	2%	<1%	1%

Figure 17 shows that lower-income households were more likely to report that their financial situation was worse than the previous year. While 56 percent of low-income households reported that their financial situation had worsened, 53 percent of moderate-income households, 40 percent of middle-income households, and 28 percent of high-income households reported that their financial situation had worsened.

Figure 17. Percent of Responders Who Said Financial Situation Has Worsened in the Past Year

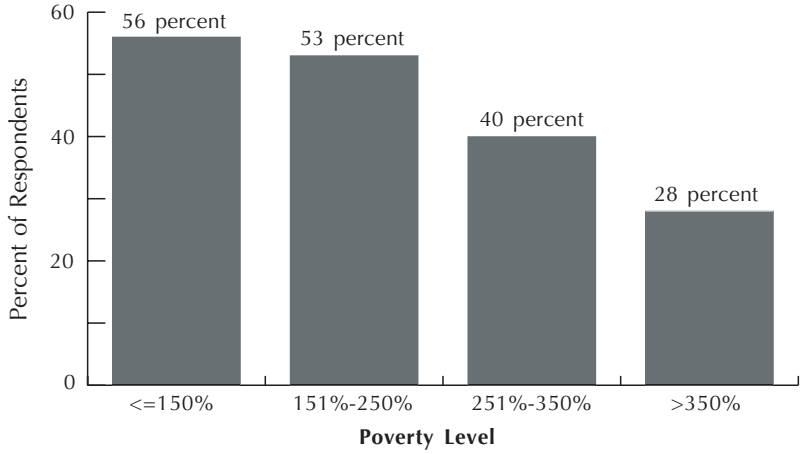


Table 26 provides additional detail on how perceived financial situation is related to respondent income and poverty level.

Table 26. Change in Financial Situation Compared to Last Year by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Same	36%	48%	47%	36%	41%	49%	50%	45%
Lower	55%	45%	32%	56%	53%	40%	28%	42%
Better	8%	6%	21%	7%	5%	10%	21%	11%
Don't Know/ Refused	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%

Respondents were asked, "How difficult is it for you to pay your energy bills compared to last year?" Table 27 shows that about half of respondents reported that they experienced the same level of difficulty in paying their energy bills at the time of the survey as they did in the previous year. Forty-three percent of respondents said that it was more difficult to pay their energy bills at the time of the survey, compared to the previous year, and 5 percent said it was less difficult.

Table 27. Change in Difficulty in Paying Energy Bills Compared to Last Year

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Same	51%	52%	40%
More Difficult	43%	43%	52%
Less Difficult	5%	4%	6%
Don't Know	2%	1%	2%

Figure 18 shows that lower-income households were more likely to report that they had more difficulty paying their energy bills than in the previous year. While 60 percent of low-income households reported that they had more difficulty paying their energy bill, 49 percent of moderate-income households, 42 percent of middle-income households, and 26 percent of high-income households reported that they had more difficulty paying their energy bill than in the previous year.

Figure 18. Percent of Responders Who Said It Was More Difficult to Pay Energy Bill than in Previous Year

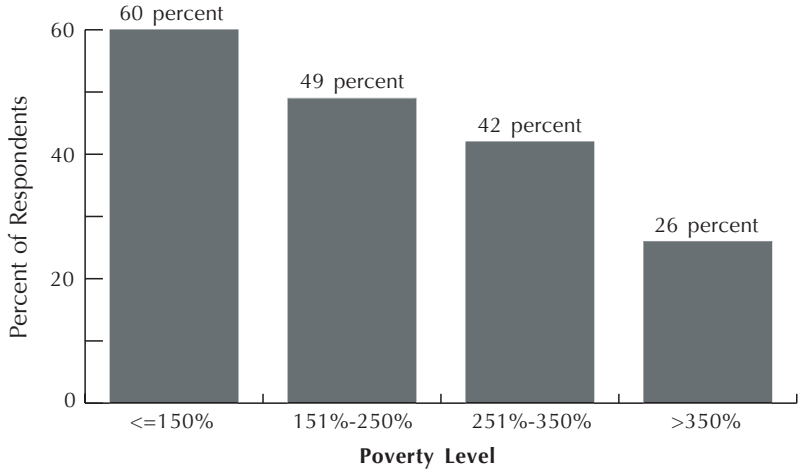


Table 28 provides additional detail on how change in difficulty paying energy bills is related to income and poverty level.

Table 28. Change in Difficulty in Paying Energy Bills Compared to Last Year by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Same	36%	50%	62%	33%	43%	52%	67%	66%
More Difficult	55%	47%	29%	60%	49%	42%	26%	30%
Less Difficult	5%	3%	7%	4%	4%	4%	7%	3%
Don't Know	4%	0%	2%	4%	3%	0%	1%	1%

Respondents who reported that it was more difficult to pay their energy bills at the time of the survey, compared to the previous year, were asked what the main reason was that it was more difficult for them to pay their energy bills. As shown in Table 29, 20 percent of respondents said that an increase in their energy bill was the main reason that it was more difficult to pay their energy bills, 10 percent said that the main reason was a worse economic situation, six percent said the main reason was an increase in other bills, and three percent said the main reason was politicians and oil companies.

These respondents were then asked whether the following issues contributed to their increased difficulty in paying their energy bills: increased energy bill, worse economic situation, increased cost of driving, increased prescription drug costs, increased property taxes, increased medical expenses, and increased mortgage or rent. Table 29 shows that 39 percent of respondents reported that an increased energy bill was a reason that they had more difficulty paying their energy bills, 28 percent said that a worse economic situation was a factor, 37 percent said the increased cost of driving was a factor, 26 percent said increased prescription drugs, 22 percent said increased property taxes, 27 percent said increased medical expenses, and 13 percent said increased mortgage or rent.

Table 29. Reasons for Increased Difficulty in Paying Energy Bills

	Main Reason (Unprompted)	Reasons (Prompted)
Increased Energy Bill	20%	39%
Worse Economic Situation	10%	28%
Increased Other Bills	6%	——
Politicians/Oil Companies	3%	——
Increased Cost of Driving	2%	37%
Increased Cost of Food	1%	——
Increased Prescription Drugs	<1%	26%
Increased Property Taxes	<1%	22%
Increased Medical Expenses	0%	27%
Increased Mortgage or Rent	0%	13%
Other	1%	——
Don't Know/Refused	2%	——
Did Not Say More Difficult to Pay Energy Bills	58%	——

Respondents were asked how large of an impact increased energy costs had on their household. Table 30 shows that 22 percent reported that the increased costs had a large impact and 17 percent reported that the increased costs had a moderate impact. Respondents with children were more likely to report that the increased costs had a large impact on the household.

Table 30. Impact of Increased Home Energy Costs on Household

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Large Impact	22%	23%	29%
Moderate Impact	17%	16%	18%
Small Impact	4%	3%	5%
No Impact	<1%	0%	2%
Don't Know	<1%	1%	0%
Did Not Say More Difficult to Pay Energy Bills	58%	57%	48%

Figure 19 shows that lower income households were more likely to report that increased energy bills had a large impact on their household. While 38 percent of low-income households said that increased energy costs had a large impact on the household, 19 percent of moderate-income households, 15 percent of middle-income households, and 9 percent of high-income households said that increased energy costs had a large impact on the household.

Figure 19. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Energy Costs Had a Large Impact on the Household

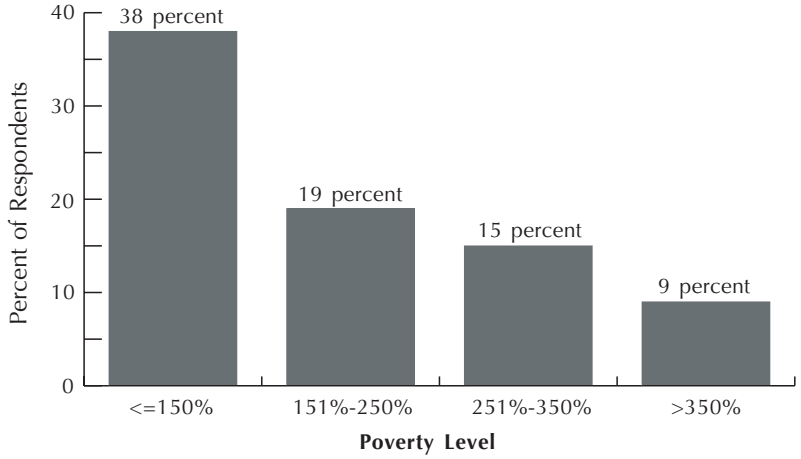


Table 31 provides additional detail on the impact of increased energy costs on the household by income and poverty level.

Table 31. Impact of Increased Home Energy Costs on Household by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Large Impact	36%	15%	12%	38%	19%	15%	9%	21%
Moderate Impact	18%	25%	11%	18%	26%	22%	10%	17%
Small Impact	1%	6%	6%	2%	4%	4%	6%	4%
No Impact	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Don't Know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Did Not Say More Difficult to Pay Energy Bills	45%	53%	71%	40%	51%	58%	74%	57%

Respondents were asked what impact increased gasoline costs had on the household. Table 32 shows that 58 percent said increased gasoline costs had a large impact on the household, 23 percent said they had a moderate impact on the household, 11 percent said they had a small impact on the household, and 6 percent said they had no impact on the household. Households with children were more likely to say that increased gasoline costs had a large impact on the household.

Table 32. Impact of Increased Gasoline Costs on Household

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Large Impact	58%	56%	71%
Moderate Impact	23%	22%	19%
Small Impact	11%	11%	8%
No Impact	6%	9%	2%
Don't Know/Refused	1%	2%	0%

Figure 20 shows that lower income households were more likely to report that increased gasoline costs had a large impact on their household. While 72 percent of low-income households said that increased gasoline costs had a large impact on the household, 70 percent of moderate-income households, 61 percent of middle-income households, and 40 percent of high-income households said that increased gasoline costs had a large impact on the household.

Figure 20. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Gasoline Costs Had a Large Impact on the Household

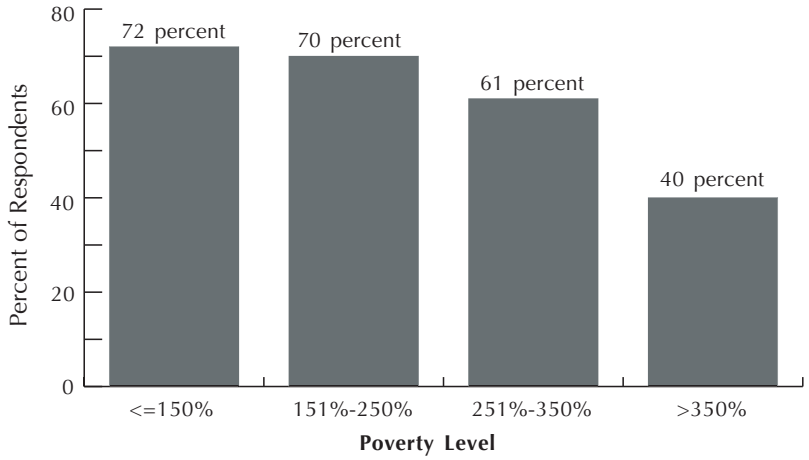


Table 33 provides additional detail on the impact of increased gasoline costs on the household by income and poverty level.

Table 33. Impact of Increased Gasoline Costs on Household by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Large Impact	69%	64%	45%	72%	70%	61%	40%	58%
Moderate Impact	15%	23%	29%	12%	26%	25%	29%	23%
Small Impact	6%	7%	19%	6%	3%	10%	21%	11%
No Impact	7%	4%	7%	7%	1%	3%	11%	6%
Don't Know/ Refused	2%	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	1%

Respondents were asked whether they had taken several actions related to their basic needs as a result of increased home energy or gasoline costs. Table 34 shows that many households reported major sacrifices due to these increased costs. The table shows that 43 percent reported that they reduced purchases of basic household necessities, 43 percent reported that they reduced purchases of food, 18 percent reported that they reduced purchases of medicine, and 11 percent said that they changed plans for their education or their children's education. Respondents with children were more likely to report that they had taken all of these actions.

Table 34. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Basic Needs

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Reduced purchases of basic household necessities	43%	43%	52%
Reduced purchases of food	43%	42%	56%
Reduced purchases of medicine	18%	17%	24%
Changed plans for your education or your children's education	11%	5%	25%

Figure 21 shows that lower-income households were more likely to report that increased home energy and gasoline costs impacted their purchases of basic necessities, food, medicine, and education plans. While 70 percent of low income said that they reduced purchases of food due to these increased costs, 31 percent said that they reduced purchases of medication, and 19 percent said that they had changed plans for their education or their children's education. Even high-income households said that these increased costs impacted their behavior. One-quarter of households with income above 350 percent of poverty said that they reduced purchases of basic necessities.

Figure 21. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Purchases and Plans

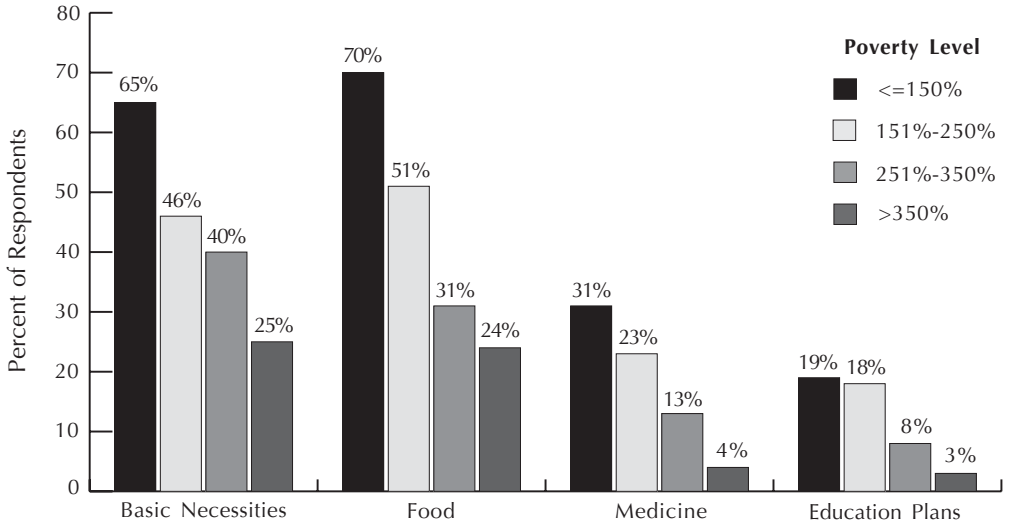


Table 35 provides additional detail on actions households have taken by income and poverty level.

Table 35. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Basic Needs by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Reduced purchases of basic household necessities	61%	43%	28%	65%	46%	40%	25%	32%
Reduced purchases of food	64%	39%	30%	70%	51%	31%	24%	26%
Reduced purchases of medicine	29%	16%	7%	31%	23%	13%	4%	14%
Changed plans for your education or your children's education	15%	15%	6%	19%	18%	8%	3%	4%

Respondents were also asked about the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on their energy usage. Table 36 shows that large percentages of households made sacrifices due to increased energy costs.

- 28 percent said they had closed off part of their home because they could not afford to heat or cool it
- 19 percent said that they kept their home at a temperature they felt was unsafe or unhealthy
- 11 percent said that they left the home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold

Table 36. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Energy Usage

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Close off part of your home because you could not afford to heat or cool it	28%	28%	26%
Keep your home at a temperature you thought was unsafe or unhealthy at any time of the year	19%	19%	20%
Leave your home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold	11%	8%	15%

Figure 22 shows that lower-income households were more likely to report that they had changed their behavior related to energy use due to increased home energy and gas costs. Thirty-eight percent of low-income households said that they closed off part of their home, 31 percent said they kept their home at an unsafe temperature, and 19 percent said that they left their home for part of the day.

Figure 22. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Energy Behavior

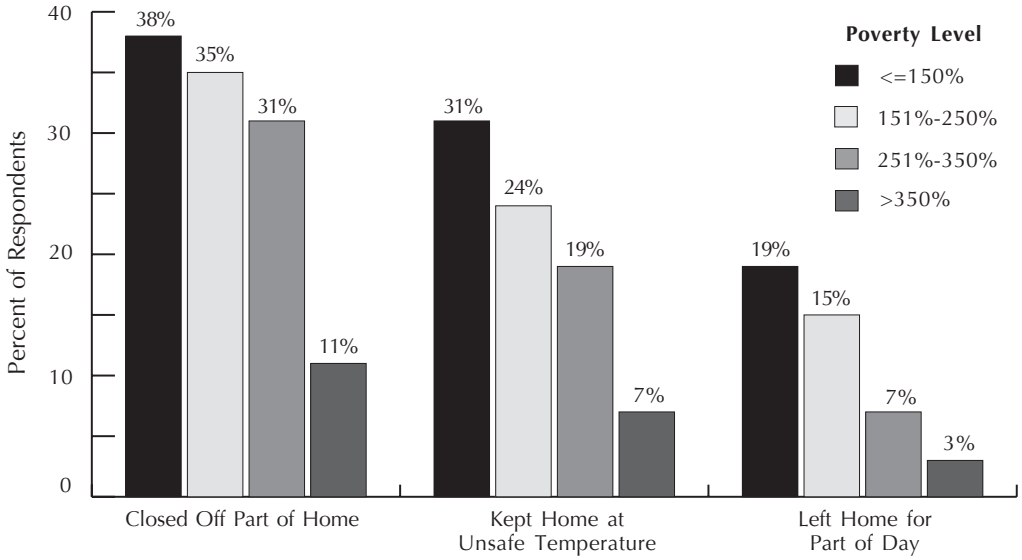


Table 37 provides additional detail on energy-related actions households have taken due to increased home energy and gasoline costs by income and poverty level.

Table 37. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Basic Needs by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Close off part of your home because you could not afford to heat or cool it	37%	33%	13%	38%	35%	31%	11%	22%
Keep your home at a temperature you thought was unsafe or unhealthy at any time of the year	30%	22%	6%	31%	24%	19%	7%	12%
Leave your home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold	17%	12%	5%	19%	15%	7%	3%	4%

Respondents were also asked about the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on their energy bill payment. Table 38 shows that households were unable to pay energy bills and had their service terminated due to increased costs.

- 15 percent said that they skipped paying or paid less than a full home energy bill.
- 4 percent said that they had their electricity shut off.
- 5 percent said that they had their natural gas shut off.

Households with children were more likely to experience all of these.

Table 38. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Energy Bill Payment

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Skip paying your home energy bill or pay less than your full home energy bill	15%	9%	29%
Have your electricity shut off because you were unable to pay your bill	4%	2%	10%
Have your natural gas shut off because you were unable to pay your bill	5%	2%	11%

Figure 23 shows that for the most part it is low- and moderate-income households who sacrifice their energy bill payment when home energy and gasoline costs increase.

- 29 percent of low-income and 20 percent of moderate-income households skipped paying or paid less than a full energy bill.
- 8 percent of low-income and 8 percent of moderate-income households had their electricity shut off.
- 12 percent of low-income and 4 percent of moderate-income households had their natural gas shut off.

Figure 23. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Energy Payment

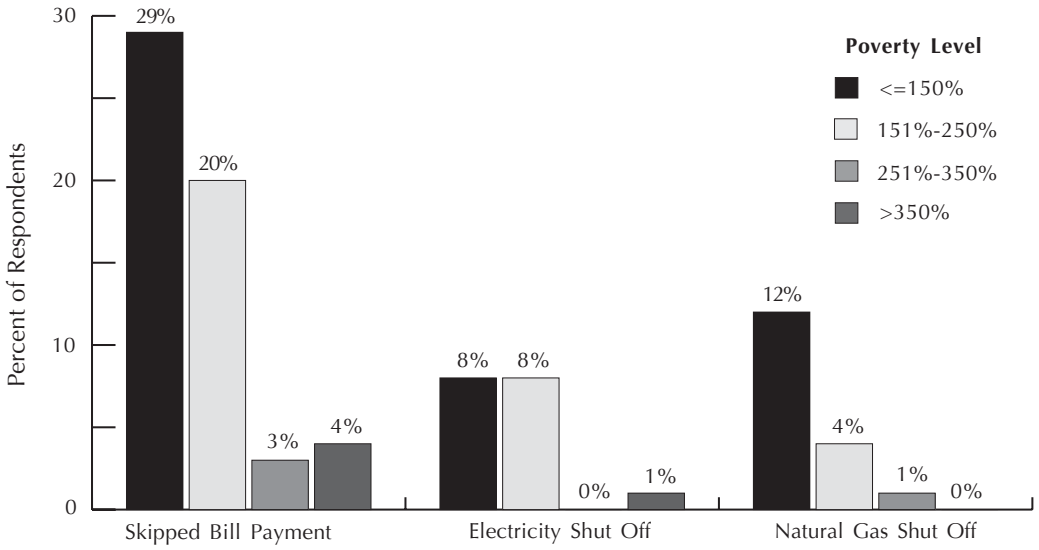


Table 39 provides additional detail on energy bill payment actions households have experienced due to increased home energy and gasoline costs by income and poverty level.

Table 39. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Energy Bill Payment by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Skip paying your home energy bill or pay less than your full home energy bill	25%	14%	6%	29%	20%	3%	4%	8%
Have your electricity shut off because you were unable to pay your bill	6%	4%	2%	8%	8%	0%	1%	3%
Have your natural gas shut off because you were unable to pay your bill	10%	3%	2%	12%	4%	1%	0%	0%

Respondents were also asked about the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on their use of cars. Table 40 shows that 72 percent said that they reduced use of their cars, 17 percent said that the increased the use of public transportation or ride sharing, and 3 percent said that they quit their job so they would not have to drive to work.

Table 40. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Driving

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Reduced use of your car	72%	73%	79%
Increased use of buses, trains, ride sharing	17%	15%	23%
Quit your job so you don't need to drive to work	3%	2%	3%

Figure 24 shows that all income groups reported that they had reduced the amount of driving that they do as a result of increased home energy and gasoline costs. This is the one activity that had a major impact on all four income groups. High-income households were less likely than the other groups to report that they have reduced their driving, but a full 65 percent of this group reported a reduction in driving. However, it appears that the low-income households are most likely to have reduced use of essential driving and replaced this driving with public transportation. While 31 percent of low-income households said that they increased their use of public transportation or ride sharing, 16 percent of moderate-income households, 15 percent of middle-income households, and 7 percent of high-income households said that they increased their use of public transportation or ride sharing.

Figure 24. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Driving

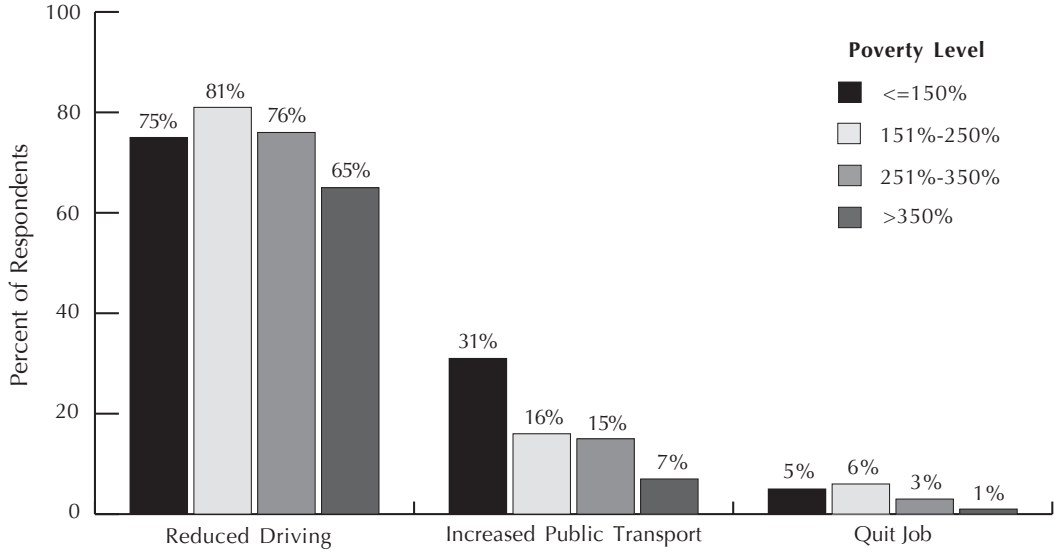


Table 41 provides additional detail on the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on actions related to driving.

Table 41. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Driving by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Reduced use of your car	75%	76%	70%	75%	81%	76%	65%	63%
Increased use of buses, trains, ride sharing	29%	12%	11%	31%	16%	15%	7%	7%
Quit your job so you don't need to drive to work	6%	4%	1%	5%	6%	3%	1%	1%

Respondents were asked about the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on work and savings. Nearly one quarter said that they thought about taking on an additional job, 10 percent said they took on an additional job, and over half said that they reduced the amount they put into savings.

Table 42. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Work and Savings

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Thought about getting an additional job	24%	16%	41%
Taken on an additional job	10%	5%	18%
Reduced the amount of money you put into savings	55%	52%	60%

Figure 25 displays the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on work and savings by poverty level. The chart shows that a significant percent of respondents in all income groups reported that they reduced the amount that they saved as a result of these increased costs. While 58 percent of low-income and moderate-income households said that they reduced savings, 64 percent of middle-income, and 47 percent of high-income households said that they reduced savings.

Figure 25. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Work and Savings

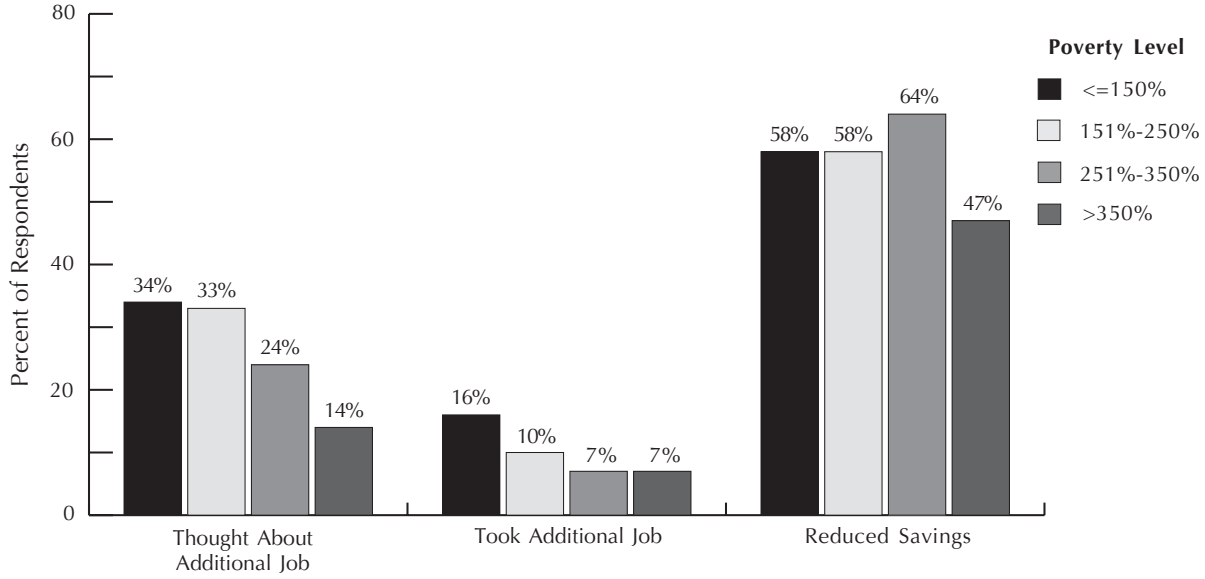


Table 43 provides additional detail on the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on actions related to work and savings.

Table 43. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Driving by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Thought about getting an additional job	29%	31%	18%	34%	33%	24%	14%	7%
Taken on an additional job	14%	29%	8%	16%	10%	7%	7%	5%
Reduced the amount of money you put into savings	58%	60%	50%	58%	58%	64%	47%	46%

Respondents were asked about the impact of increased home energy and gasoline costs on purchases and eating in restaurants. The majority of respondents said that these cost increases had impacted all of these behaviors.

- 71 percent said that they bought less expensive products.
- 68 percent said that they reduced their clothing purchases.
- 68 percent said that they reduced the frequency with which they eat in restaurants.

Table 44. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) Actions Related to Purchases

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Bought less expensive products	71%	69%	81%
Reduced clothing purchases	68%	64%	83%
Reduced frequency of eating in restaurants	68%	63%	83%

Figure 26 shows that most low-, moderate-, and middle-income households reduced their purchases and their frequency of eating out due to increased home energy and gasoline costs.

- 80 percent of low-income households said that they bought less-expensive products, 77 percent said that they reduced clothing purchases, and 73 percent said that they reduced the frequency with which they ate out in restaurants.

- 76 percent of moderate-income households said that they bought less-expensive products, 80 percent said that they reduced clothing purchases, and 81 percent said that they reduced the frequency with which they ate out in restaurants.

- 72 percent of middle-income households said that they bought less-expensive products, 76 percent said that they reduced clothing purchases, and 72 percent said that they reduced the frequency with which they ate out in restaurants.

Figure 26. Percent of Respondents Who Said Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs Impacted Purchases

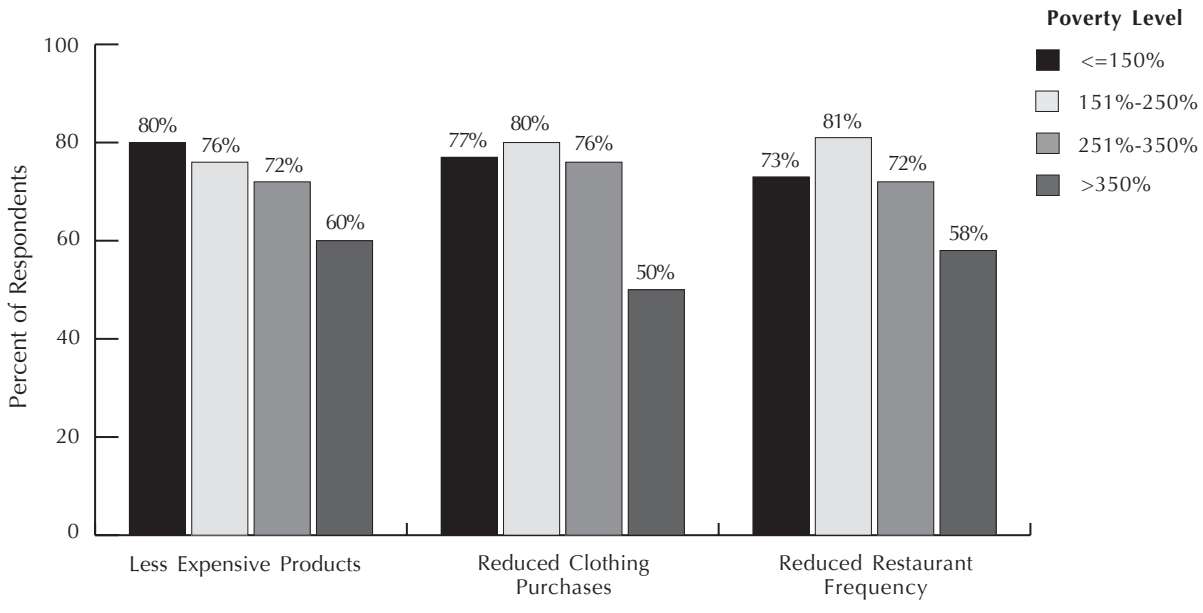


Table 45 provides additional detail on actions taken due to increased home energy and gasoline costs by income and poverty level.

Table 45. Actions Taken as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted)
Actions Related to Purchases by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Bought less expensive products	77%	76%	63%	80%	76%	72%	60%	62%
Reduced clothing purchases	75%	77%	55%	77%	80%	76%	50%	57%
Reduced frequency of eating in restaurants	72%	77%	61%	73%	81%	72%	58%	57%

Respondents were asked whether they were behind on several types of bills and payments due to increased home energy and gasoline prices. Table 46 shows that 14 percent said they were behind on electricity or natural gas bills, 11 percent said they were behind on credit card payments, 5 percent said they were behind on their mortgage or rent, and 2 percent said they were behind on their home equity loan payments.

Table 46. Bills Behind On as a Result of Increased Home Energy and Gasoline Prices (Prompted)

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Electricity and/or natural gas	14%	8%	30%
Credit card	11%	8%	18%
Mortgage or rent	5%	2%	11%
Car payment	4%	3%	7%
Home equity loan	2%	1%	2%

Figure 27 shows that low- and moderate-income households were most likely to be behind on these bills and payments. While 27 percent of low-income households and 23 percent of moderate-income households said that they were behind on their electricity or natural gas bills, 3 percent of middle- and high-income households said that they were behind on these bills. While 18 percent of low-income households and 15 percent of moderate-income households said that they were behind on their credit card payments, 7 percent of middle-income households and 6 percent of high-income households said that they were behind on these payments.

Figure 27. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Are Behind on Bills Due to Increased Energy and Gas Costs

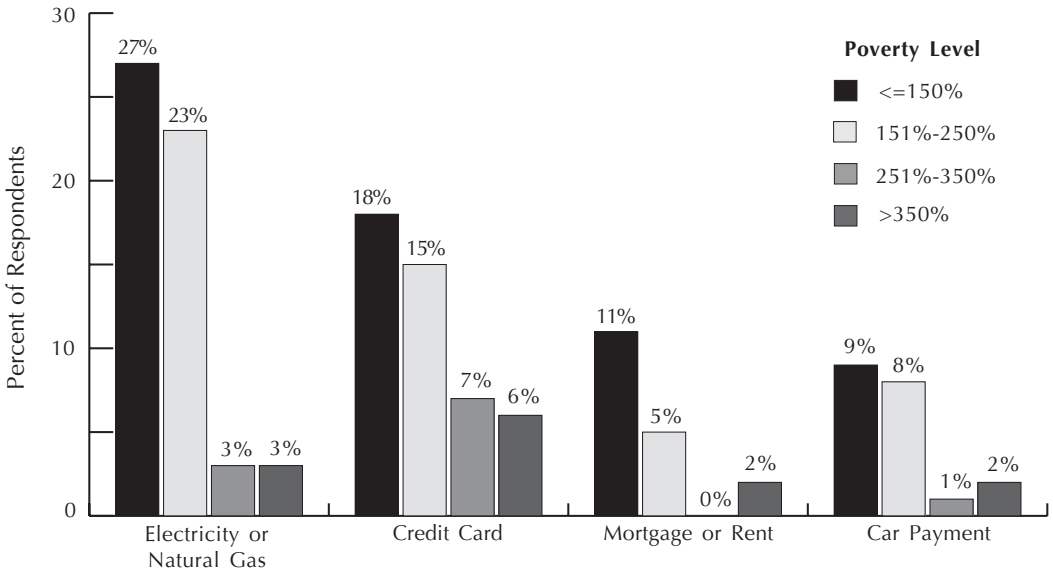


Table 47 provides additional detail on bill payment by income and poverty level.

Table 47. Bills Behind On as a Result of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs (Prompted) by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Electricity and/or natural gas	23%	16%	5%	27%	23%	3%	3%	5%
Credit card	17%	9%	8%	18%	15%	7%	6%	4%
Mortgage or rent	10%	3%	3%	11%	5%	0%	2%	1%
Car payment	7%	5%	2%	9%	8%	1%	2%	0%
Home equity loan	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	0%	2%	1%

Households were asked whether increased home energy and gasoline costs impacted their confidence about the future. Table 48 shows that 47 percent said they had a large impact on their confidence, 23 percent said they had a moderate impact on their confidence, 5 percent said they had a small impact on their confidence, and 25 percent said they had no impact on their confidence.

Table 48. Impact of Increased Home Energy Costs and Gasoline Costs on Confidence About the Future

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Large Impact	47%	45%	58%
Moderate Impact	23%	22%	20%
Small Impact	5%	5%	5%
No Impact	25%	27%	18%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%

Figure 28 shows that lower-income households were more likely to say that increased home energy and gasoline costs had a large impact on their confidence about the future and higher-income households are more likely to say that these increased costs had a moderate impact on their confidence about the future. While 59 percent of low-income households said that increased home energy and gasoline costs had a large impact on their confidence about the future, 54 percent of moderate-income households, 40 percent of middle-income households, and 34 percent of high-income households said that these increased costs had a large impact on their confidence about the future. While 13 percent of low-income households said that increased home energy and gasoline costs had a moderate impact on their confidence about the future, 20 percent of moderate-income, 31 percent of middle-income, and 30 percent of high-income households said that these increased costs had a moderate impact on their confidence about the future.

Figure 28. Impact of Increased Home Energy and Gas Costs on Confidence About the Future

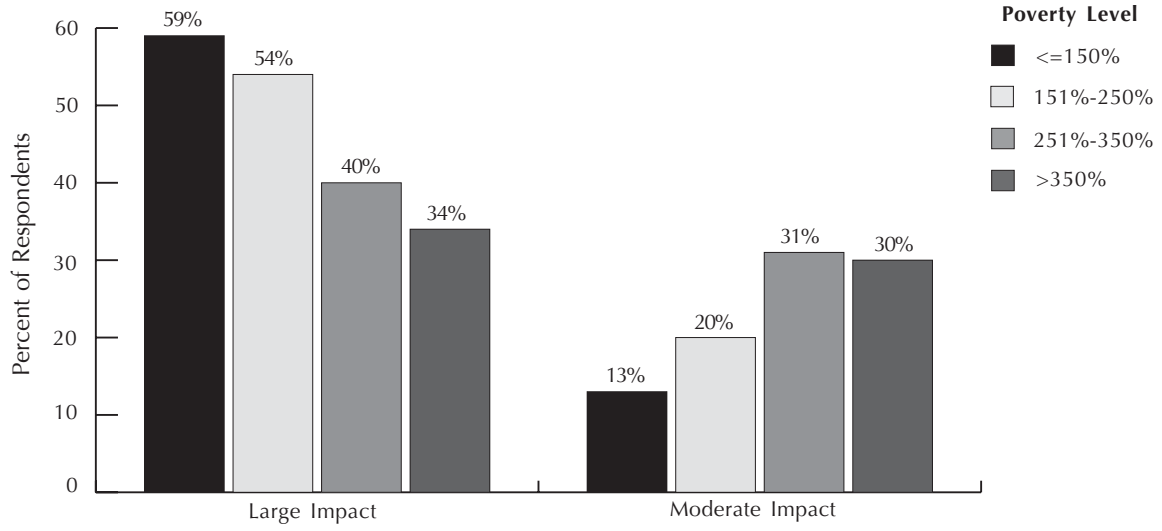


Table 49 provides additional detail on the relationship between income, poverty level, and confidence about the future.

Table 49. Impact of Increased Home Energy or Gasoline Costs on Confidence About the Future by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Large Impact	60%	44%	36%	59%	54%	40%	34%	41%
Moderate Impact	15%	26%	28%	13%	20%	31%	30%	22%
Small Impact	1%	7%	9%	1%	2%	10%	10%	7%
No Impact	23%	23%	26%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	26%	24%	19%	26%	29%

V. Actions Taken to Reduce Home Energy and Gasoline Costs

The previous section of this report examined sacrifices that households have made to compensate for increased home energy and gasoline costs. The survey also addressed energy conserving behaviors and investments that households may have made to reduce the impact of increased energy and gasoline prices.

Table 50 shows responses that households provided when asked whether they had changed their heating usage during the past year to bring down their heating bills. The table shows that 78 percent said that they had turned down their heat when they go to bed and 70 percent said that they kept their heat at a lower temperature.

Table 50. Changed Heating Usage During Past Year to Reduce Heating Bills (Prompted)

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Turn down the heat when you go to bed?	78%	74%	81%
Keep your heat at a lower temperature?	70%	66%	75%

Figure 29 shows that all income groups were likely to take these actions to reduce their heating usage.

Figure 29. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Changed Heating Usage to Reduce Heating Bills

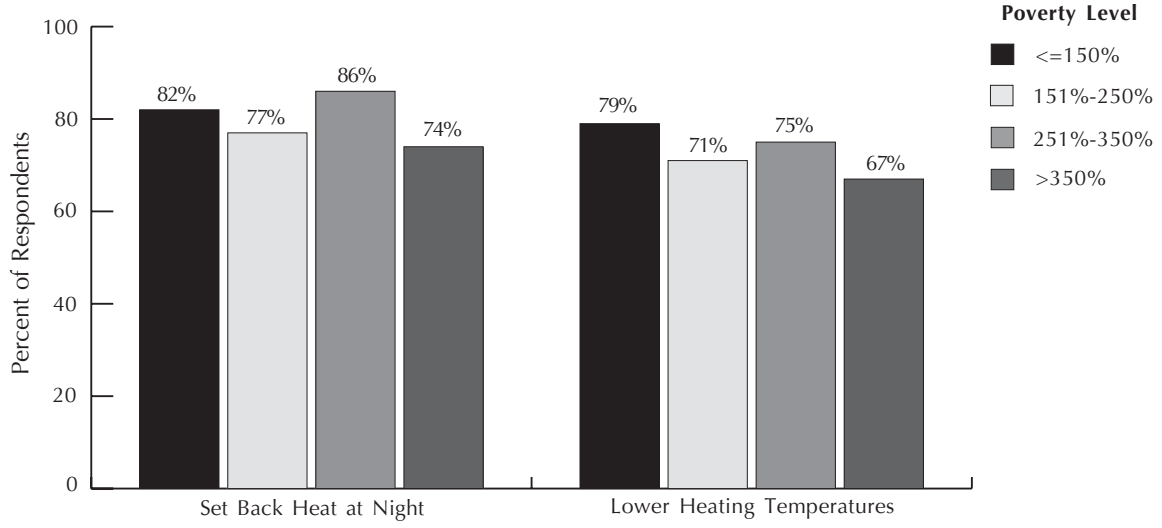


Table 51 provides additional detail about the relationship between actions taken to reduce heating costs and income and poverty level.

Table 51. Changed Heating Usage During Past Year to Reduce Heating Bills (Prompted) by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Turn down the heat when you go to bed?	82%	79%	78%	82%	77%	86%	74%	67%
Keep your heat at a lower temperature?	77%	73%	69%	79%	71%	75%	67%	50%

Respondents were asked about repairs made to the home to reduce heating bills. Table 52 shows that 60 percent said they sealed up leaks in the home, 50 percent had their furnace tuned up, and 40 percent sealed their windows.

Table 52. Made Home Repairs to Reduce Heating Bills (Prompted)

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Seal up leaks where heat can escape from your home?	60%	58%	66%
Have your furnace tuned up?	50%	55%	45%
Seal your windows?	40%	39%	48%

Figure 30 shows that low- and moderate-income households were most likely to report that they sealed leaks in their home and sealed their windows.

Figure 30. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Made Home Repairs to Reduce Heating Bills

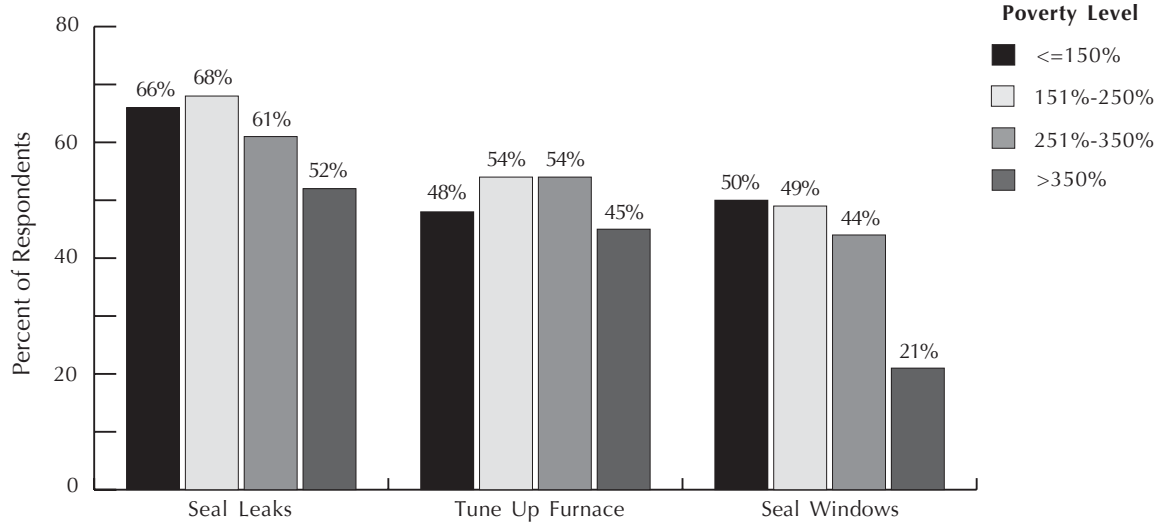


Table 53 displays additional information on the relationship between home repairs to reduce heating usage and household income and poverty level.

Table 53. Made Home Repairs to Reduce Heating Bills (Prompted) by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Seal up leaks where heat can escape from your home?	64%	62%	57%	66%	68%	61%	52%	50%
Have your furnace tuned up?	51%	50%	48%	48%	54%	54%	45%	49%
Seal your windows?	48%	45%	28%	50%	49%	44%	21%	34%

Respondents were asked whether they kept shades and curtains closed in the daytime, used fans and open windows, and reduced use of the air conditioner in the past year to reduce cooling bills in the summer. As shown in Table 54, 78 percent of respondents reported that they keep shades and curtains closed in the daytime, 74 percent of respondents said that they use fans and open windows, and 62 percent said that they reduced use of their air conditioner to reduce cooling bills in the summer. Households with children were more likely to report that they made these changes, and households with older members were less likely to report that they did so.

Table 54. Changed Cooling Behavior to Reduce Cooling Bills (Prompted)

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Keep shades and curtains closed in daytime?	78%	73%	86%
Use fans and open windows?	74%	66%	87%
Reduce use of your air conditioner?	62%	56%	79%

Figure 31 shows that households in all income groups were likely to take these actions to save energy. While 81 percent of low-income households reported that they kept shades and curtains closed during the daytime, 92 percent of moderate-income households, 78 percent of middle-income households, and 70 percent of high-income households reported that they did so. While 74 percent of low-income households reported that they used fans and opened windows, 85 percent of moderate-income households, 71 percent of middle-income households, and 73 percent of high-income households reported that they did so.

Figure 31. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Changed Cooling Behavior to Reduce Cooling Bills

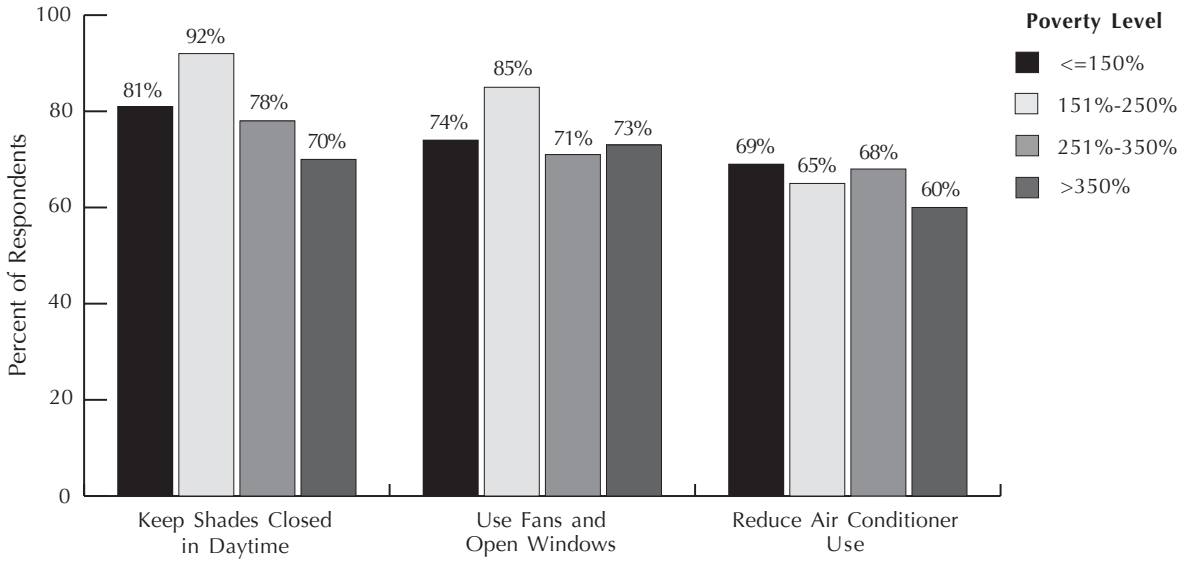


Table 55 provides additional information on the relationship between actions taken to reduce cooling costs and household income and poverty level.

Table 55. Changed Cooling Behavior to Reduce Cooling Bills (Prompted) by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Keep shades and curtains closed in daytime?	82%	82%	74%	81%	92%	78%	70%	66%
Use fans and open windows?	76%	74%	76%	74%	85%	71%	73%	64%
Reduce use of your air conditioner?	66%	68%	61%	69%	65%	68%	60%	46%

Respondents were asked whether they took other specific energy-saving actions in the past year to reduce their energy bills. Table 56 shows that 69 percent of respondents reported that they use CFLs, and 66 percent reported that they wash their clothes in cold water.

Table 56. Other Energy Saving Actions Taken (Prompted)

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Use compact fluorescent light bulbs?	69%	69%	73%
Wash your clothes in cold water?	66%	64%	65%

Figure 32 shows that all income groups were likely to take these actions to reduce their energy bills. Moderate-income households were most likely to report that they used CFLs. High-income households were less likely to report that they washed clothes in cold water.

Figure 32. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Took Other Actions to Reduce Energy Bills

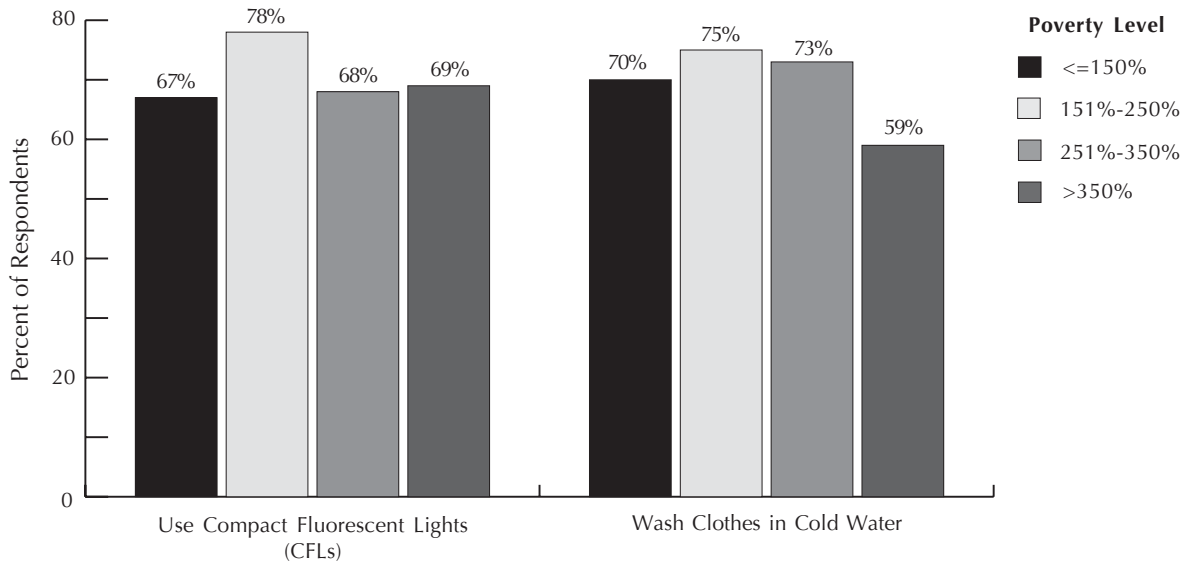


Table 57 provides additional information on the relationship between these energy-saving behaviors and household income and poverty level.

Table 57. Other Energy Saving Actions Taken (Prompted) by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Use compact fluorescent light bulbs?	67%	72%	73%	67%	78%	68%	69%	64%
Wash your clothes in cold water?	69%	74%	61%	70%	75%	73%	59%	51%

Households were asked whether they made investments in efficient air conditioners, heating systems, and appliances during the past year to reduce their energy costs. Table 58 shows that 15 percent reported that they bought a more efficient air conditioner, 14 percent reported that they bought a more efficient heating system, and 28 percent reported that they bought a more efficient appliance.

Table 58. Home Investments to Reduce Costs for Home Energy

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Buy a more efficient air conditioner?	15%	13%	18%
Buy a more efficient heating system?	14%	13%	13%
Buy a new energy efficient refrigerator, freezer, washer, dryer or other appliance?	28%	24%	39%

Figure 33 shows that there are not large differences in the percentage of households who reported that they made these investments by income level.

Figure 33. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Made Home Investments to Reduce Energy Costs

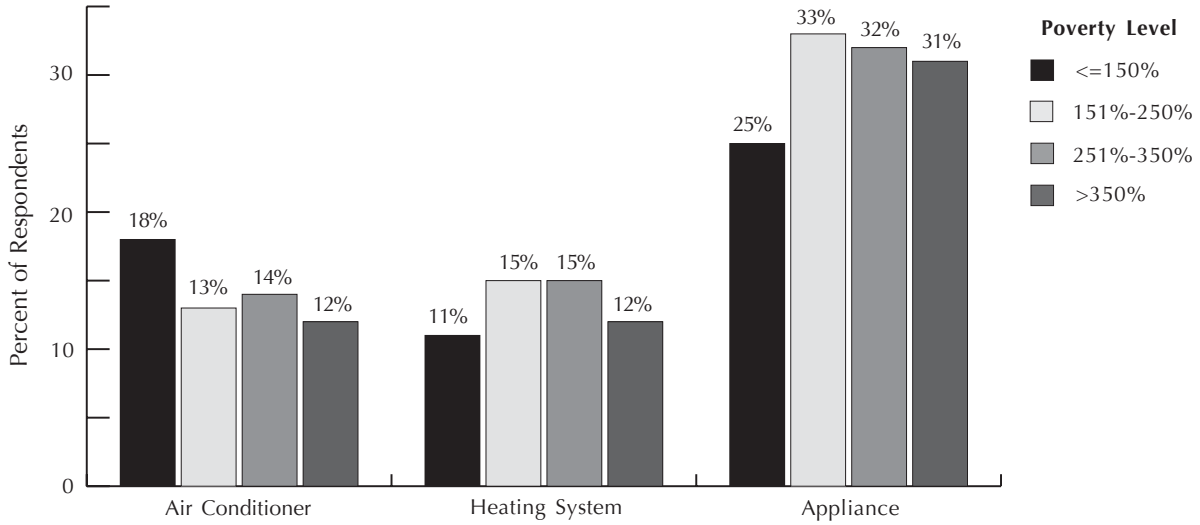


Table 59 provides additional detail on the relationship between home investments taken to reduce energy costs and household income and poverty level.

Table 59. Home Investments to Reduce Costs for Home Energy by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Buy a more efficient air conditioner?	17%	12%	14%	18%	13%	14%	12%	18%
Buy a more efficient heating system?	13%	14%	12%	11%	15%	15%	12%	18%
Buy a new energy efficient refrigerator, freezer, washer, dryer or other appliance?	23%	33%	35%	25%	33%	32%	31%	16%

Households were asked whether they made automobile investments to reduce costs for gasoline.

Table 60. Automobile Investments to Reduce Costs for Gasoline

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Buy a more efficient car?	18%	17%	29%
Tune up your car?	68%	66%	71%

Figure 34 shows that there are not large differences in the percentage of households who reported that they purchased a new car to reduce gasoline costs by poverty level. However, moderate- and middle-income households were more likely to report that they tuned up their car to reduce gasoline costs than low- and high-income households. While 58 percent of low-income households reported that they tuned up their car, 82 percent of moderate-income, 81 percent of middle-income, and 69 percent of high-income households reported that they tuned up their car.

Figure 34. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Made Automobile Investments to Reduce Gasoline Costs

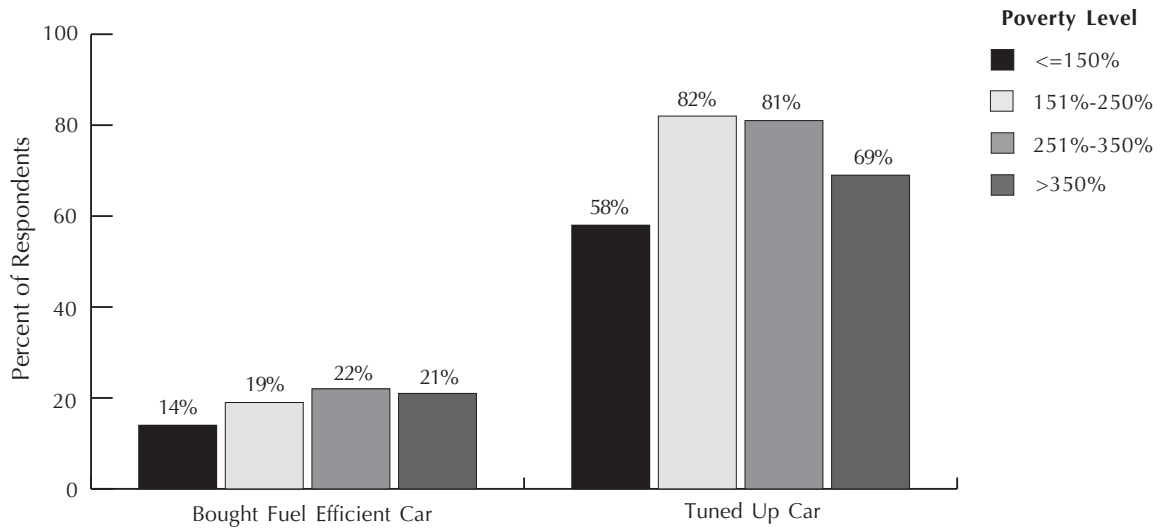


Table 61 shows additional detail on the relationship between automobile investments and household income and poverty levels.

Table 61. Automobile Investments to Reduce Costs for Gasoline by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Buy a more efficient car?	14%	17%	26%	14%	19%	22%	21%	14%
Tune up your car?	60%	81%	72%	58%	82%	81%	69%	58%

Beginning in May 2008, the IRS sent tax rebates to over 130 million households as part of an economic stimulus measure. Households received up to $600 for single individuals and $1,200 for married couples, and parents received an additional $300 for each child under 17. The payment was reduced by 5 percent of income over $75,000 for individuals and $150,000 for households.

As part of this survey, households were asked whether they were expecting a tax rebate as part of this economic stimulus package. Table 62 shows that 75 percent of the respondents reported that they were expecting a rebate.

Table 62. Expecting Tax Rebate as Part of Economic Stimulus Package

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Yes	75%	77%	77%
No	14%	10%	17%
Don't Know	10%	12%	5%
Refused	1%	1%	2%

Figure 35 shows that middle-income households were most likely to report that they expected a tax rebate. While 69 percent of low-income households reported that they expected a rebate, 84 percent of moderate-income, 89 percent of middle-income, and 78 percent of high-income households reported that they expected a rebate.

Figure 35. Percent of Respondents Who Said They Are Expecting a Tax Rebate

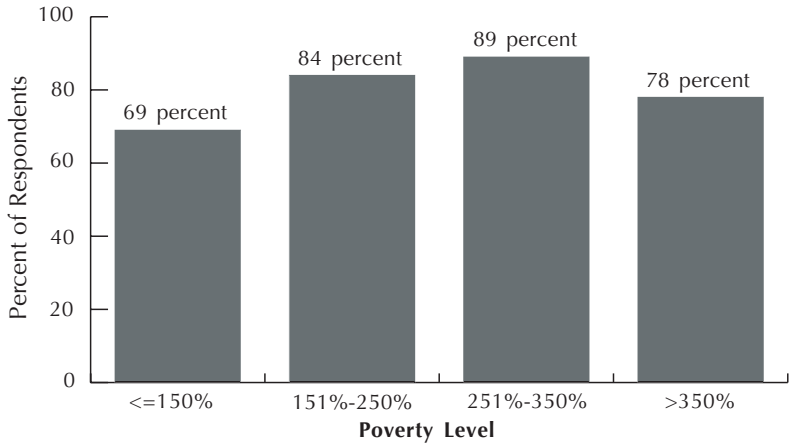


Table 63 provides additional information on the relationship between expectations for a tax rebate and household income and poverty level.

Table 63. Expecting Tax Rebate as Part of Economic Stimulus Package by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Yes	72%	84%	80%	69%	84%	89%	78%	61%
No	20%	7%	14%	21%	10%	7%	14%	9%
Don't Know	8%	9%	6%	10%	6%	4%	8%	21%
Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%

Table 64 shows household reports on their plans for the tax rebate. The greatest percentage of households reported that they planned to use the rebate to meet their current needs or planned to save the money. Other common responses were that they would use it to pay down debt, purchase new items, or pay off energy bills. A few percent reported that they would use the money to pay for increased gasoline costs, make home repairs, or go on vacation.

Table 64. Plans to Use Tax Rebate

	All Respondents	Households with Members 60 or Older	Households with Children 18 or Younger
Meet current needs	18%	19%	17%
Save	18%	15%	19%
Pay down debt	14%	10%	20%
Purchase new items	10%	10%	9%
Pay off energy bills	5%	6%	4%
Pay for increased gasoline costs	3%	4%	2%
Make home repairs	3%	4%	2%
Go on vacation	3%	3%	2%
Help others	1%	1%	1%
Pay taxes	<1%	1%	0%
College tuition	<1%	0%	2%
Other	1%	<1%	1%
Don't Know	11%	13%	10%
Refused	1%	1%	0%
Not Expecting Rebate	25%	23%	23%

Figure 36 shows that higher income households were more likely to report that they planned to save the rebate. While 11 percent of low-income households reported that they planned to save the rebate, 19 percent of moderate-income, 22 percent of middle-income, and 23 percent of high-income households reported that they planned to save the rebate.

Figure 36. Plans to Use Tax Rebate

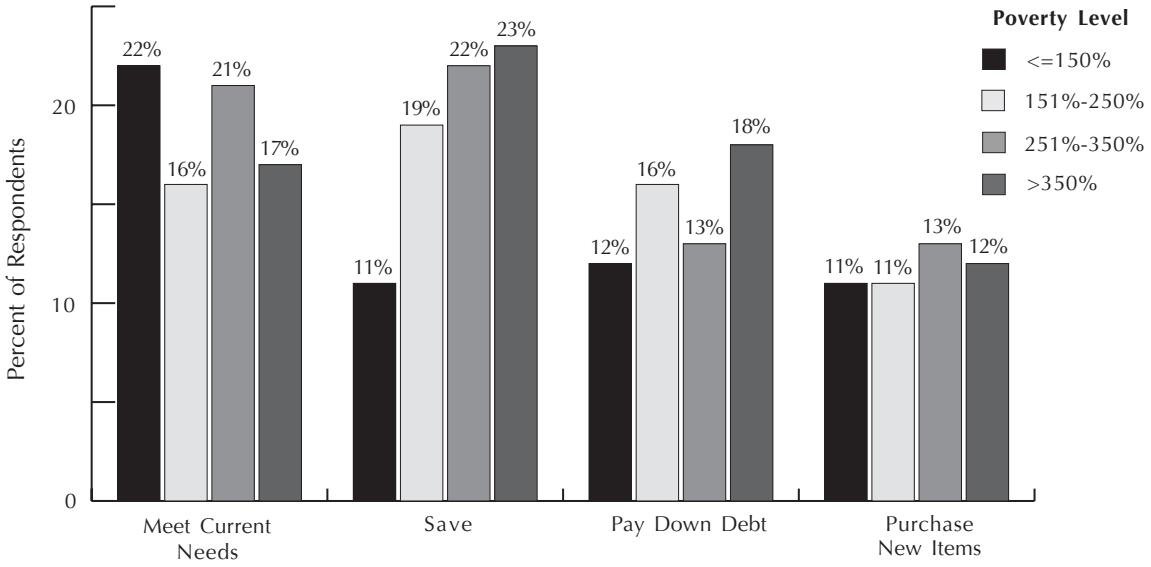


Table 65 provides additional information on the relationship between plans for the tax rebate and household income and poverty level.

Table 65. Plans to Use Tax Rebate by Income and Poverty Level

	Annual Income			Poverty Level				No Income Provided
	<$25,000	$25,000-$50,000	>$50,000	≤150%	151-250%	251-350%	>350%	
Meet current needs	21%	19%	17%	22%	16%	21%	17%	9%
Save	14%	19%	24%	11%	19%	22%	23%	13%
Pay down debt	12%	15%	18%	12%	16%	13%	18%	11%
Purchase new items	10%	12%	11%	11%	11%	13%	12%	0%
Pay off energy bills	7%	4%	3%	7%	4%	7%	2%	1%
Pay for increased gasoline costs	4%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%
Make home repairs	2%	7%	2%	2%	3%	11%	2%	1%
Go on vacation	3%	1%	4%	2%	3%	0%	4%	3%
Help others	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	3%
Pay taxes	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
College tuition	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't Know	11%	8%	9%	9%	14%	8%	7%	17%
Refused	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%
Not Expecting Rebate	28%	16%	20%	31%	16%	11%	22%	39%

VI. Conclusion

Increased home energy and gasoline prices have had a large impact on households, especially those with low and moderate incomes. The study found that 60 percent of low-income households, 49 percent of moderate-income households, and 42 percent of middle-income households said that it was more difficult for them to pay their energy bills than in the previous year. Additionally, 38 percent of low-income households, 19 percent of moderate-income households, and 15 percent of middle-income households said that increased home energy costs had a large impact on the household. Households were more likely to report that increased gasoline costs had a large impact on the household. The study found that 72 percent of low-income households, 70 percent of moderate-income, and 61 percent of middle-income households said that increased gasoline costs had a large impact on their household.

Low-income households made many sacrifices to make up for increased home energy and gasoline costs.

- 70 percent said they reduced purchases of food
- 31 percent said they reduced purchases of medicine
- 19 percent said they changed plans for their education or their children's education

Low- to middle-income households were likely to report that they made compromises with their energy use.

- 37 percent of low-income, 35 percent of moderate-income, and 31 percent of middle-income households said they closed off part of their home because they could not afford to heat or cool it.
- 31 percent of low-income, 24 percent of moderate-income, and 19 percent of middle-income households said they kept their home at a temperature they felt was unsafe or unhealthy.
- 19 percent of low-income, 15 percent of moderate-income, and 7 percent of middle-income households reported that they left the home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold.

High-income households were much less likely to report that they made these kinds of sacrifices.

Despite these sacrifices, many low- and moderate-income households were still unable to afford their energy needs.

- 29 percent of low-income and 20 percent of moderate-income households said that they skipped paying their home energy bill or paid less than the full bill
- 8 percent of low-income and 8 percent of moderate-income households said they had their electricity shut off
- 12 percent of low-income and 4 percent of moderate-income households said they had their natural gas shut off

Middle- and high-income households were much less likely to report that they faced these problems.

Low- and moderate-income households were behind on other bills as well.

- 18 percent of low-income and 15 percent of moderate-income households said they were behind on credit card bills.
- 11 percent of low-income and 5 percent of moderate-income households said they were behind on their mortgage or rent.
- 9 percent of low-income and 8 percent of moderate-income households said they were behind on their car payments.

Again, middle and high-income households were much less likely to report that they were behind on the payment of these bills.

Increases in home energy and gasoline prices have led all income groups to conserve.

- All income groups reported that they bought less expensive products, reduced purchases of clothing, and ate out less frequently in restaurants.
- All income groups reported that they reduced the use of their cars. However, the low-income households were much more likely than the other groups to report that they increased use of public transportation and ride sharing.
- All income groups reported that they turned down their heat at night and lowered their heating temperature.

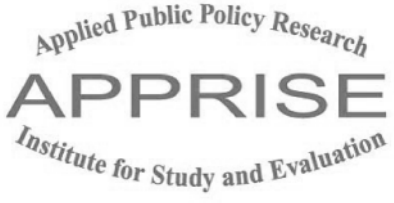
The increased prices have also led all income groups to make investments.

- 28 percent said they had bought a more efficient appliance
- 18 percent said they bought a more efficient car
- 68 percent said that they had their car tuned up.

Low- and moderate- income households were most likely to say that increased home energy and gasoline costs had a large impact on their confidence about the future. 59 percent of low-income households said that these price increases had a large impact on their confidence about the future and 54 percent of moderate-income households said that these price increases had a large impact on their confidence about the future.

This study showed that increased home energy and gasoline costs have impacted households at all income levels. Low-income households, as expected, have sacrificed the most as a result of these price increases. Low- to middle-income households are likely to have gone without food and medicine and to have compromised their energy usage. Low- to moderate-income households are likely to have missed energy bill payments and even have their service terminated. They are also likely to have gotten behind on credit card bills, mortgage or rent, and car payments. All income groups however, have reduced discretionary spending, driving, and heating and cooling usage. All income groups have also made investments in more energy efficient heating, cooling, and appliances to bring down their costs.

Appendix. Telephone Survey Instrument



EPC 2008 Energy Costs SURVEY
Final INSTRUMENT
May 2008

Introduction

Hello. This is (INTERVIEWER) from Braun Research calling. We would like to conduct an interview with an adult in your household about the impact of energy costs on your household. This survey is being done on behalf of the Energy Programs Consortium (If asked, a group that does research on energy costs and energy affordability.)

Your responses will help us better understand the need for government policy on energy costs. All your responses will be kept confidential.

A. Change and Impact of Energy Costs

A1. How do your home energy bills this year compare to those last year? (DO NOT READ LIST EXCEPT TO PROMPT) **VARY THE ORDER OF RESPONSES

01 SAME
02 LOWER
03 HIGHER
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

(Ask A2 if A1=3 "Higher")

A2. Why do you think your home energy bills are higher than last year? (DO NOT PROMPT. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.)

01 PRICES WERE HIGHER
02 WINTER WAS COLDER
03 SUMMER WAS WARMER
04 OTHER_____
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

A3. How does your financial situation this year compare to last year? (DO NOT READ LIST EXCEPT TO PROMPT)

(OPTIONAL INTERVIEWER NOTE: I WOULD LIKE YOU TO THINK ABOUT HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO PAY ALL YOUR BILLS WITH YOUR CURRENT INCOME, COMPARED TO HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS LAST YEAR.) **VARY THE ORDER OF RESPONSES

01 SAME
02 WORSE
03 BETTER
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

A4. How difficult is it for you to pay your home energy bills compared to last year? (DO NOT READ LIST EXCEPT TO PROMPT) **VARY THE ORDER OF RESPONSES

01 SAME
02 MORE DIFFICULT
03 LESS DIFFICULT
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

(Ask A5, A6, and A7 if A4=02, "More difficult")

A5. What do you feel is the main reason that it is more difficult to pay your home energy bills this year? (DO NOT PROMPT.)

01 INCREASED ENERGY BILL
02 INCREASED OTHER BILLS
03 INCREASED PROPERTY TAXES
04 INCREASED RENT or MORTGAGE
05 INCREASED MEDICAL EXPENSES
06 INCREASED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
07 INCREASED COST OF DRIVING
08 INCREASED COST OF FOOD
09 LOWER INCOME/LOST JOB/WORSE ECONOMIC SITUATION
95 OTHER_____
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

A6. Which of the following are reasons that you feel it is more difficult to pay your home energy bills this year?

		01	02	97	98
A6a.	Increased energy bill	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A6b.	Increased property taxes	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A6c.	Increased mortgage or rent	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A6d.	Increased medical expenses	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A6e.	Increased prescription drugs	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A6f.	Increased cost of driving	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A6g.	Lower income or worse financial situation	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

{Use the following prompt on each of the individual question screens:

[READ IF NECESSARY: Is this a reason you feel it is more difficult to pay for your home energy bills this year?] }

A7. How large of an impact have increased home energy costs had on your household? Would you say it has had a large impact, a moderate impact, a small impact, or no impact on your household? **VARY THE ORDER OF RESPONSES

01 LARGE IMPACT
02 MODERATE IMPACT
03 SMALL IMPACT
04 NO IMPACT
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

A8. How large of an impact have increased gasoline prices had on your household? Would you say it has had a large impact, a moderate impact, a small impact, or no impact on your household? **VARY THE ORDER OF RESPONSES

01 LARGE IMPACT
02 MODERATE IMPACT
03 SMALL IMPACT
04 NO IMPACT
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

A9. Which of the following actions have you taken or events have you experienced as a result of increased home energy and/or gasoline prices? Have you…

		01	02	97	98
A9a.	Reduced use of your car	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9b.	Increased use of buses, trains, ride sharing	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9c.	Quit your job so you don't need to drive to work	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9d.	Thought about getting an additional job	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9e.	Taken on an additional job	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9f.	Reduced the amount of money you put into savings	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9g.	Bought less expensive products	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9h.	Reduced clothing purchases	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9i.	Reduced frequency of eating in restaurants	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9j.	Reduced purchases of basic household necessities	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9k.	Reduced purchases of food	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9l.	Reduced purchases of medicine	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9m.	Changed plans for your education or your children's education	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9n.	Skip paying your home energy bill or pay less than your full home energy bill	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9o.	Close off part of your home because you could not afford to heat or cool it	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9p.	Keep your home at a temperature you thought was unsafe or unhealthy at any time of the year	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

A9q.	Leave your home for part of the day because it was too hot or too cold	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9r.	Have your electricity shut off because you were unable to pay your bill	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A9s.	Have your natural gas shut off because you were unable to pay your bill	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

{Use the following prompt on each of the individual question screens:

[READ IF NECESSARY: Is this an action you have taken or event you have experienced as a result of increased home energy and/or gasoline prices?] }

A10. Which of the following bills are you behind on as result of increased home energy and/or gasoline prices?

		01	02	97	98
A10a.	Electricity and/or natural gas	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A10b.	Mortgage or rent	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A10c.	Home equity loan	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A10d.	Car payment	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
A10e.	Credit card	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

{Use the following prompt on each of the individual question screens:

[READ IF NECESSARY: Is this a bill you are behind on as a result of increased home energy and/or gasoline prices?] }

A11. Have increased home energy and/or gasoline prices changed how confident you feel about the future?

01 YES
02 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

(Ask A12 if A11=1, YES)

A12. How large of an impact have increased home energy and/or gasoline prices had on your confidence about the future?

01 LARGE IMPACT
02 MODERATE IMPACT
03 SMALL IMPACT
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

B. Energy Efficiency Actions taken to meet energy expenses

During the past year, which of the following actions did you take to bring down your heating bills in the winter:

		01	02	97	98
B1.	Seal your windows?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B2.	Turn down the heat when you go to bed?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B3.	Have your furnace tuned up?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B4.	Seal up leaks where heat can escape from your home?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B5.	Keep your heat at a lower temperature?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

{Use the following prompt on each of the individual question screens:

[READ IF NECESSARY: Did you do this in the last year to bring down your heating bills in the winter?] }

During the past year, which of the following actions did you take to bring down your cooling bills in the summer?

		01	02	97	98
B6.	Keep shades and curtains closed in daytime?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B7.	Use fans and open windows?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B8.	Reduce use of your air conditioner?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

{Use the following prompt on each of the individual question screens:

[READ IF NECESSARY: Did you do this in the last year to bring down your cooling bills in the summer?] }

During the past year, which of the following other energy-saving actions did you take?

		01	02	97	98
B9.	Wash your clothes in cold water?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B10.	Use compact fluorescent light bulbs?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

{Use the following prompt on each of the individual question screens:

[READ IF NECESSARY: Did you do this in the last year to save energy?] }

During the past year, which of the following purchases or investments have you made to reduce costs for gasoline or home energy? Did you…

		01	02	97	98
B11.	Buy a more efficient air conditioner?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B12.	Buy a more efficient heating system?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B13.	Buy a new energy efficient refrigerator, freezer, washer, dryer or other appliance?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B14.	Buy a more fuel efficient car?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED
B15.	Tune up your car?	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	REFUSED

{Use the following prompt on each of the individual question screens:

[READ IF NECESSARY: Did you do this in the last year to reduce costs for gasoline or home energy?] }

C. Demographics

C1. Do you own or rent your home?

01 OWN
02 RENT
03 OTHER_____
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C2. Including yourself, how many people normally live in this household? (Interviewer instruction: if someone asks if a child who is away at college should be included, instruct them that the child should only be included if he/she is listed as a dependent on the household's tax form.) (USE CODES 97 FOR 'DON'T KNOW' AND 98 FOR 'REFUSED')

1. _____ OCCUPANTS
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C3. How many are 60 or older? (USE CODES 97 FOR 'DON'T KNOW' AND 98 FOR 'REFUSED')

1. _____ OCCUPANTS AGE 60 OR OLDER
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C4. How many are 18 or under? (USE CODES 97 FOR 'DON'T KNOW' AND 98 FOR 'REFUSED')

1. _____ CHILDREN 18 OR UNDER
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C5. WHICH FUEL IS USED MOST FOR HEATING YOUR HOME? (DO NOT READ LIST EXCEPT TO PROMPT)

01 GAS; FROM UNDERGROUND PIPES SERVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD
02 GAS: BOTTLED, TANK OR LPG, OR PROPANE
03 ELECTRICITY
04 FUEL OIL, KEROSENE, ETC.
05 COAL OR COKE
06 WOOD
07 SOLAR ENERGY
08 OTHER FUEL
09 NO FUEL USED
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

(**ASK IF C1 '" 01**)
C6. Is heat included in your rent?

01 YES
02 NO
03 DO NOT PAY RENT
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C7. What is the main way that you cool your home on the hottest days of the summer? (DO NOT READ LIST EXCEPT TO PROMPT)

01 CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONER
02 WINDOW OR WALL AIR CONDITIONER
03 EVAPORATIVE COOLING OR SWAMP COOLERS
04 FANS
05 NONE
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C8. In the past 12 months, what was the cost of electricity, gas, and other fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) for your home? (give option to provide monthly cost) (DO NOT READ LIST EXCEPT TO PROMPT.)

01 $500 OR LESS
02 $501 - $1,000
03 $1,001 - $1,500
04 $1,501 - $2,000
05 $2,001 - $2,500
06 $2,501 - $3,000
07 $3,001 - $3,500
08 $3,501 OR MORE
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C9. In the past 12 months, did any member of your household have any necessary medical equipment that uses electricity?
(OPTIONAL INTERVIEWER NOTE: I WOULD LIKE YOU TO THINK ABOUT ANY NECESSARY MEDICAL EQUIPMENT THAT USES ELECTRICITY, SUCH AS AN OXYGEN MACHINE OR A NEBULIZER.)

01 YES
02 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C10. In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household receive employment income from wages and salaries or self-employment income from a business or farm?

01 YES
02 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C11. In the past 12 months, was any member of your household unemployed and looking for work?

01 YES
02 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C12. In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household receive retirement income from Social Security or pensions and other retirement funds?

01 YES
02 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C13. In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household receive benefits from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or general assistance or public assistance?

01 YES
02 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C14. In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household receive Food Stamps or live in public or subsidized housing?

01 YES
02 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C15. What is your household's annual income? (give option to provide monthly income) (DO NOT READ LIST EXCEPT TO PROMPT.)

01 $5,000 OR LESS
02 $5,001 - $10,000
03 $10,001 - $15,000
04 $15,001 - $20,000
05 $20,001 - $25,000
06 $25,001 - $30,000
07 $30,001 - $35,000
08 $35,001 - $40,000
09 $40,001 - $45,000
10 $45,001 - $50,000
11 $50,001 - $60,000
12 $60,001 - $70,000
13 $70,001 - $80,000
14 $80,001 - $90,000
15 $90,001 - $100,000
16 >$100,000
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

(ASK C16 IF C15=97, DON'T KNOW OR 98, REFUSED)

C16. Was your household's income last year less than $25,000, between $25,000 and $50,000, or more than $50,000?

01 LESS THAN $25,000
02 $25,000 TO $50,000
03 MORE THAN $50,000
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

C17. Are you expecting a tax rebate this year (as part of the economic stimulus package)?

02 YES
03 NO
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

(ASK C18 IF C17=1, YES)

C18. What are you expecting to do with the tax rebate? (DO NOT PROMPT. MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

01 MEET CURRENT NEEDS
02 PAY FOR INCREASED GASOLINE COSTS
03 PAY OFF ENERGY BILLS
04 PAY DOWN OTHER DEBT
05 PURCHASE NEW ITEMS
06 GO ON VACATION
95 OTHER _____
97 DON'T KNOW
98 REFUSED

That was my last question. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Have a pleasant day/evening.