

PRESS RELEASE



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Does the Smart Grid Create an “Energy Divide?”

National survey by SGCC explores smart grid awareness and digital accessibility among low-income consumers

ATLANTA, Apr. 10, 2014 –The smart grid can foster an “energy divide” for low-income consumers. With a substantial portion of the consumer benefit of smart grid coming from greater awareness of energy usage, many low-income consumers - particularly older consumers - lack access to utility web portals and other online resources, says a new research report published today by the Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative (SGCC). [The Spotlight on Low Income Consumers II report](#), the second part of a national study first conducted in 2012, provides smart grid stakeholders with an in-depth understanding of the needs of the low-income population.

The new study highlights the challenge low-income consumers face in accessing their energy usage information provided by new smart grid technologies, and how this impacts utilities’ ability to effectively engage and communicate smart grid data to the low-income population.

“Every consumer, regardless of socio-economic status, should be aware of the benefits the smart grid provides,” said SGCC Executive Director Patty Durand. “In order to increase awareness of a consumer-safe, consumer-friendly smart grid, utilities must be innovative and create a multi-channel approach to disseminating valuable smart grid data to low-income consumers.”

Additionally, the *Spotlight on Low Income Consumers II* findings illustrate that there is a significant gap between renters and homeowners around the ability to increase energy efficiency improvements within their places of residence. For example, 57 percent of renters say that they are not allowed to make changes to their home or appliances to increase overall energy efficiency.

To download a summary of the full report, visit: www.smartgridcc.org.

About Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative

Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative (SGCC), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission of accelerating the adoption of a consumer-friendly, consumer-safe and consumer-approved smart grid. Membership is open to advocacy groups, technology vendors, research laboratories and electric utilities for collaboration in research, best practices and consumer education.

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