

September 2026

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The Nebraska Energy Quarterly is funded, in part, by the [U.S. Department of Energy through the State Energy Program](#).

DWEE announces Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant awards

The Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) has announced the award of more than \$442,000 in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funding to seven Nebraska communities.

Nebraska received EECBG funds from the U.S Department of Energy (DOE) in 2024 and has [previously awarded](#) \$1.1 million in funding to 14 communities. This grant supports local communities in implementing high-impact, self-sustaining energy projects.

“Not only do these EECBG funds improve energy efficiency, they also provide community-wide benefits,” DWEE Director Jesse Bradley said.

Grant awards are:

Recipient	Grant Amount	Total Project Cost	Project Description
Arapahoe	\$85,983	\$90,479	Upgrade windows and the building envelope at the Ella Messing Community Center.
Cedar County	\$25,397	\$26,725	Upgrade to energy efficient lighting in the courthouse and associated buildings.
Dakota City	\$37,537	\$39,500	Upgrade to energy efficient lighting in four community buildings.
Fairbury	\$79,826	\$167,928	Upgrade to energy efficient lighting at the Quinn Baseball Field.
Oxford	\$90,716	\$95,460	Upgrade to energy efficient lighting at the George Mitchell Park Ball Field.
Talmage	\$32,479	\$38,178	Upgrade to energy efficient community streetlights.
Wayne	\$90,816	\$105,256	Upgrade to energy efficient park lights.

Eligible projects included improvements made to the building envelope of public structures; energy efficiency upgrades to existing heating, cooling, and ventilation systems; energy efficiency workforce development and training; and upgrades to energy efficient lighting.

More information can be found on DWEE’s [EECBG webpage](#).

EECBG in action

Since the first round of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants were awarded in August 2024, several projects have been completed or are underway. In total, DWEE has provided more than \$1.5 million among 21 Nebraska communities. Here are just a few projects that have been completed through the EECBG program.



Emerson

Project:

500Kw(AC)/650kW (DC) photovoltaic solar field at the village's waste-water treatment facility

Grant Award:

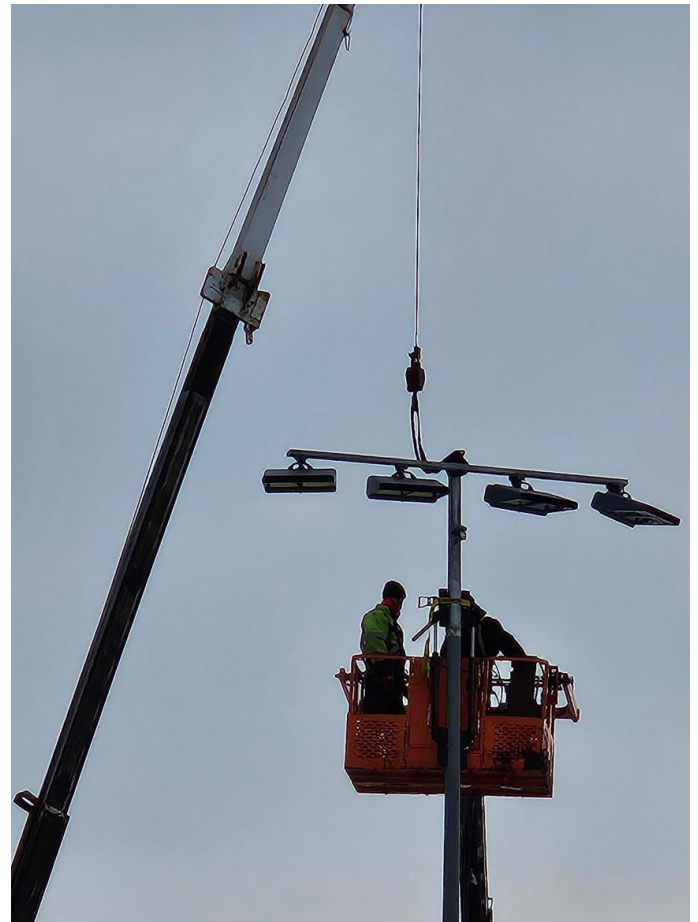
\$100,000



Nebraska City Utilities

Project: Energy efficient streetlights along main streets/entrances in Bennet, Douglas, Palmyra, Unadilla, Otoe, Lorton, Julian, and Brock.

Grant Award: \$100,000



South Sioux City

Project: Energy efficient lighting at the baseball field

Grant Award: \$100,000

Celebrate Energy Awareness Month and Weatherization Day in October

DWEE's energy team is abuzz with excitement as the first day of October draws near.

October has been an important month in the energy world for some time. Since 1991, it has been officially designated as Energy Awareness Month. This means that our energy folks get the opportunity to engage with the public and showcase some of the awesome work they do!

Energy Awareness Month aims to share information about energy efficiency and energy conservation and celebrates the economic and environmental benefits driven by a smaller energy footprint.

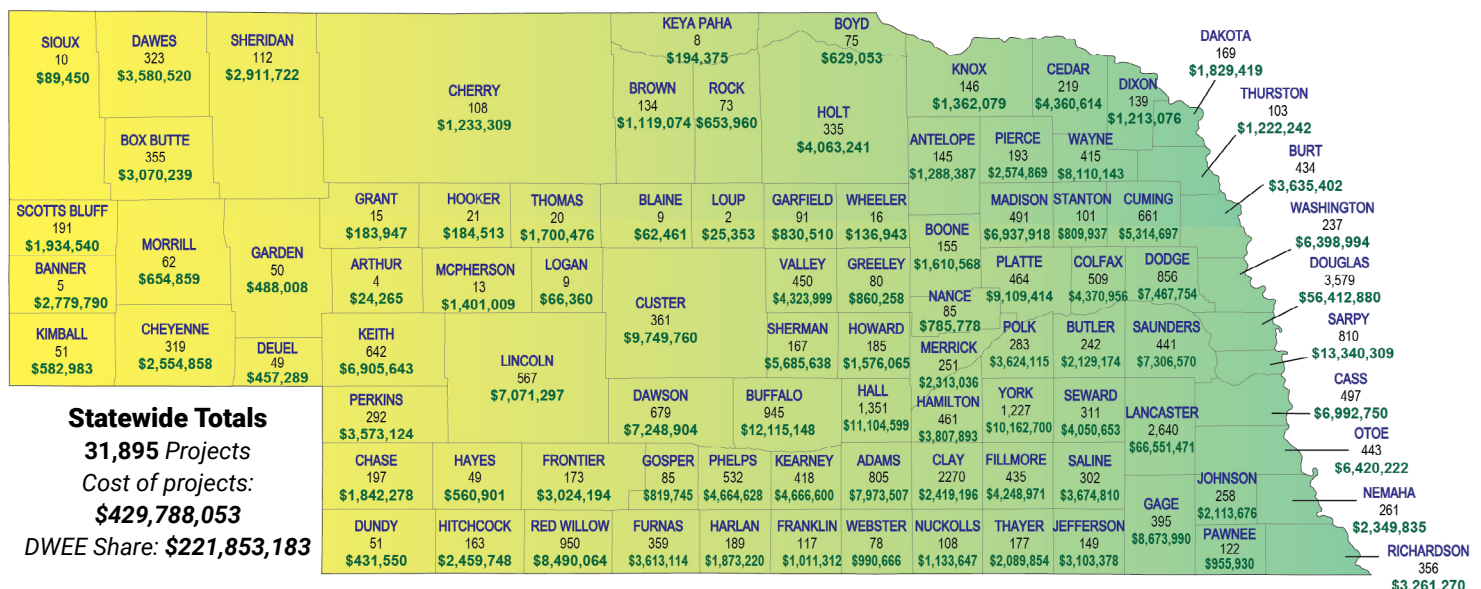
Weatherization Day, on October 30, highlights the Weatherization Assistance Program, which provides funding to states to weatherize homes for low-income households. This year marks the national program's 50th anniversary, and 49th for Nebraska!

Energy Efficiency vs. Energy Conservation

Energy efficiency is using technology that requires less energy to perform the same function, while **energy conservation** is any behavior that results in the use of less energy.

The Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) plays a critical role in the protection and improvement of human health, our environment, and its energy resources. DWEE's [Dollar and Energy Saving Loans Program](#) (DESL) has helped tens of thousands of Nebraska residents, local businesses, school districts and municipalities make their homes and buildings more energy efficient. Since March 1990, the DESL program has financed more than 31,000 energy saving projects totaling more than \$430 million.

Number of DESL Projects and Dollar Amount of Projects by County as of June 30, 2026



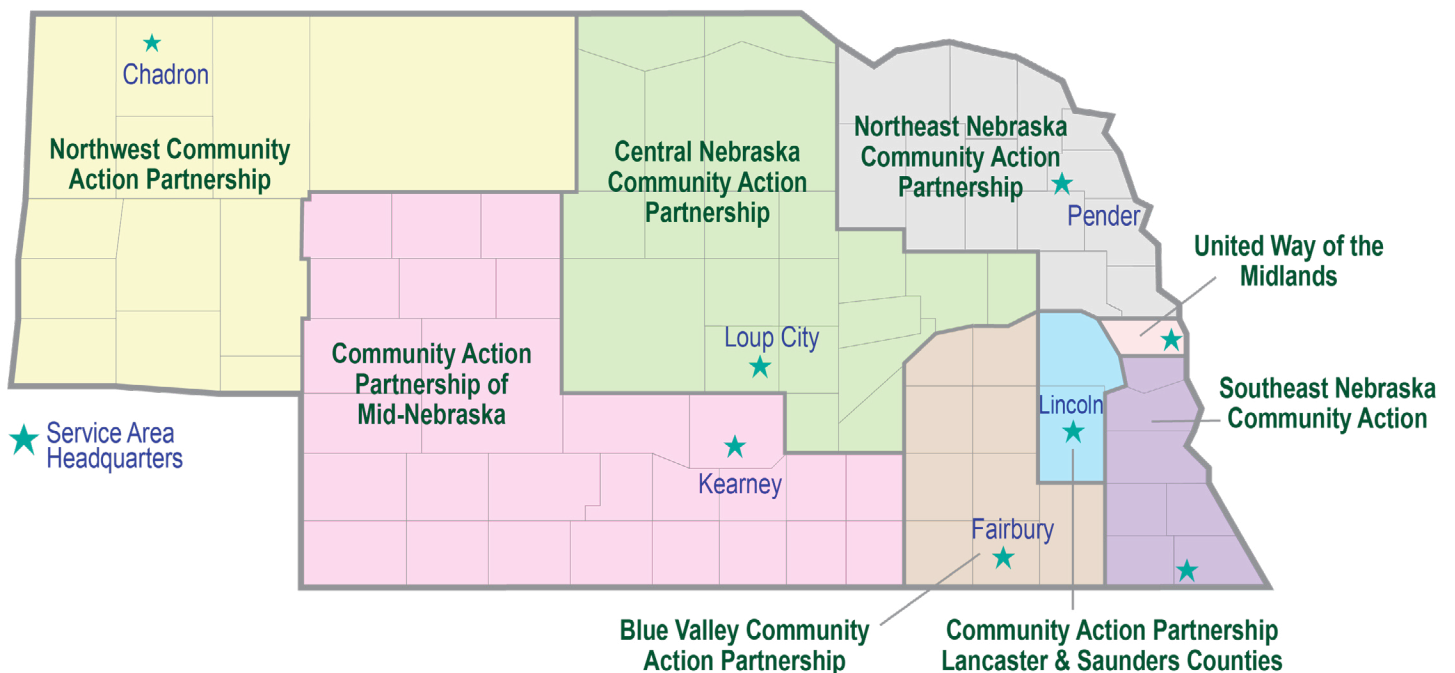
The department's [Weatherization Assistance Program](#) enables low-income families to make their homes more energy efficient, resulting in savings on their energy bills. Since 1977, the Weatherization program has spent more than \$247 million to make energy efficiency improvements in more than 72,000 homes.

Additional programs operated and administered via the state's energy office team include the [State Heating Oil and Propane Program](#), [Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants](#), [The Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid/Hazard Hardening](#) program, [Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund](#), the monitoring of the [International Energy Conservation Code](#) (IECC) and [State Energy Codes](#), and maintaining the state repository of [energy statistics](#).

The shared goal of Energy Awareness Month and Weatherization Day is to share tips, tools and stories that promote the multiple benefits of energy efficiency, from lower costs to healthier homes. It's important to implement actions to improve energy efficiency on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis. Energy impacts everyone.

Keep an eye on DWEE's [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Threads](#) accounts for fun energy facts and helpful energy-saving tips throughout October. Be sure to like and follow the agency's social media so you don't miss this important information!

Nebraska Weatherization Assistance Program Subgrantee Map



19th Annual Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference set for Oct. 20-21

The 19th annual [Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference](#) is set to take place on Oct. 20-21, 2026, at the Marriott Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. [Registration](#) closes on Sept. 30. Late registration runs until Oct. 12.

The conference presents information about all aspects of wind and solar development. DWEE State Energy Program and Dollar and Energy Saving Loan Program Supervisor Aaron Miller serves on the conference's planning committee.

"Energy and its technologies and policies rapidly change," Miller said. "The conference is a way for stakeholders to learn what's happening right now with wind and solar energy."

This year, the conference draft [agenda](#) includes the following presentations and breakout sessions:

- **Inside the Nebraska Legislature: Energy Issues and Updates**—Nicole Sedlacek, economic development manager, Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD); Randi Scott, government affairs specialist, Omaha Public Power District (OPPD); Candace Meredith, deputy director, Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO).
 - **Unprecedented Load Growth: Challenges and Opportunities**—Scott Benson director of strategy and innovation, Lincoln Electric System (LES); Devin Meisinger, OPPD.
 - **Regional Transmission: The Bigger Picture on What's Going On**—Steve Purdy, engineering director of technical policy, Southwest Power Pool (SPP).
 - **Nebraska Transmission: Bringing the Power Home**—Andrew Howard, LES; Kelsey Haas manager of delivery program management, OPPD.
 - **Policy and Legislative Update: State Senators Panel**—Sen. John Cavanaugh, Jr., District 9; Sen. Stan Clouse, District 37; Sen. Barry DeKay, District 40.
 - **Nebraska Lobbyist Panel**—Al Davis, Sierra Club; Tim Gay, president, Catalyst Public Affairs; Eric Gerrard, partner, American Communications Group; Mary Vaggalis, managing partner, Nebraska Strategies.
 - **Comparative State Policy and Renewable Siting**—Nelson Falkenburg, director, Siting Solutions Project, Clean Tomorrow; TBA, American Clean Power.
 - **Southwest Power Pool Queue and Congestion Overview**—Steve Purdy, engineering director of technical policy, SPP.
 - **Aurora Energy Findings and Other State Chamber Issues**—Hunter Traynor, executive vice president of legislation and policy, Nebraska Chamber.
- Keynote Luncheon
- **Nebraska Public Power Utilities CEO Luncheon**—Tom Kent, CEO, NPPD; Javier Fernandez, CEO, OPPD; Emeka Anyanwu, CEO, LES.
- First Breakout Session
- **Plug In Solar**
 - **You, Me, Us: Navigating Property Rights and Community Support for Renewable Energy Projects**
- Second Breakout Session
- **Future of Rural Nebraska**—Josi Gatti Schafer, Ph.D., director, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Bradley Lubben, Ph.D., Extension associate professor, policy specialist and director, North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
 - **Powering the Future: Energy Storage and Grid Innovation**—Scott Benson, director of strategy and innovation, LES; Justin Kotwicki, Sofos Power.
- Third Breakout Session
- TBA

Energy Statistics

How Nebraska's energy landscape contributes to 5th Best State ranking

Nebraska ranks as the [fifth best overall state](#), according to the U.S. World and News Report. So what contributed to Nebraska's high ranking? Here's how the state ranked in the eight categories analyzed by the news outlet:

- Crime & Corrections — 19th
- Economy — 15th
- Education — 11th
- Fiscal Stability — 8th
- Healthcare — 34th
- Infrastructure — 3rd
- Natural Environment — 11th
- Opportunity — 14th

While Nebraska ranked high in several categories, its 3rd place ranking in Infrastructure stands out. And within the [Infrastructure category](#), Nebraska ranks 3rd again in [Energy](#), which includes renewable energy usage, power grid reliability, and the average cost of electricity. Here's how Nebraska stacks up against other states

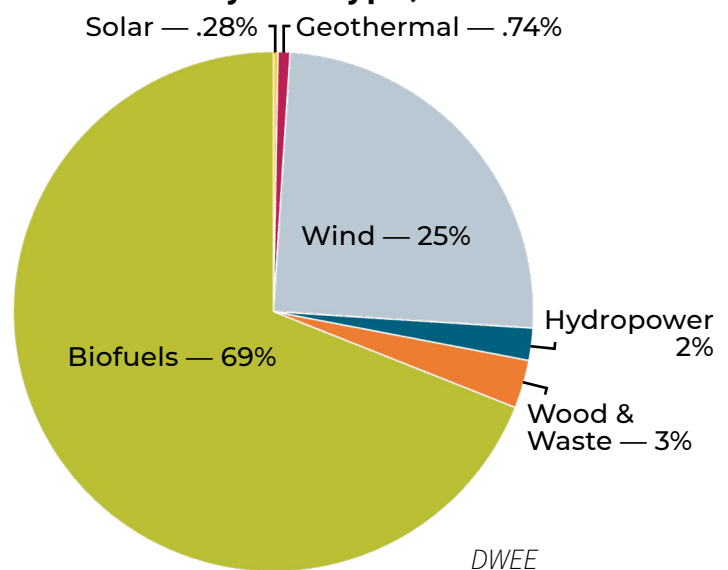
7th in Renewable Energy Usage

U.S. World and News Report looked at the percentage of a state's total energy use from renewable sources, including hydroelectric power, biomass, geothermal, solar power, and wind power. (U.S. Energy Information Administration; 2023) In 2023, 19% (164.5 trillion BTU) of Nebraska's energy use came from renewable sources.

10th in Power Grid Reliability

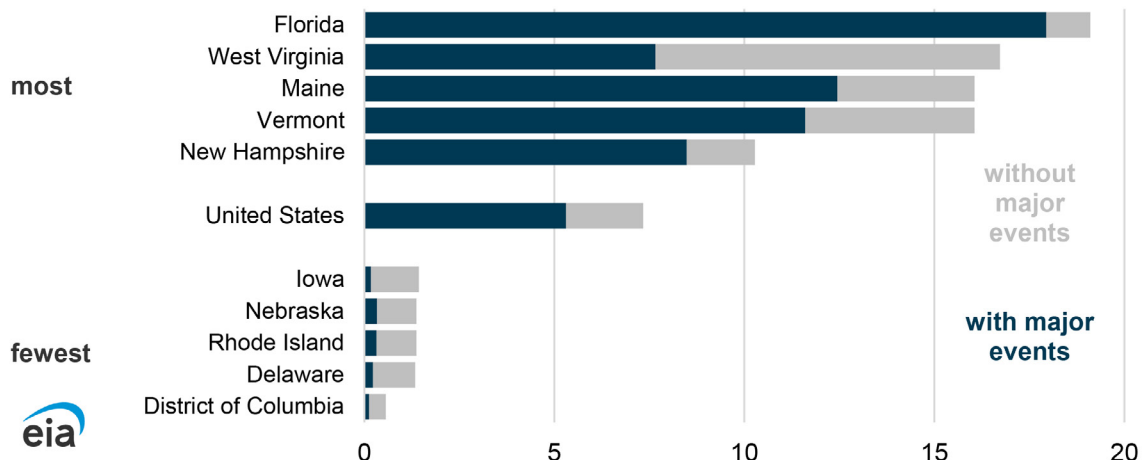
For this statistic, the news outlet considered the number of minutes of power outages the average customer experiences in a year, excluding major events. (U.S. Energy Information Administration; 2024)

Renewable energy consumption by fuel type, 2023



Average duration of annual electric power interruptions by select states (2022)

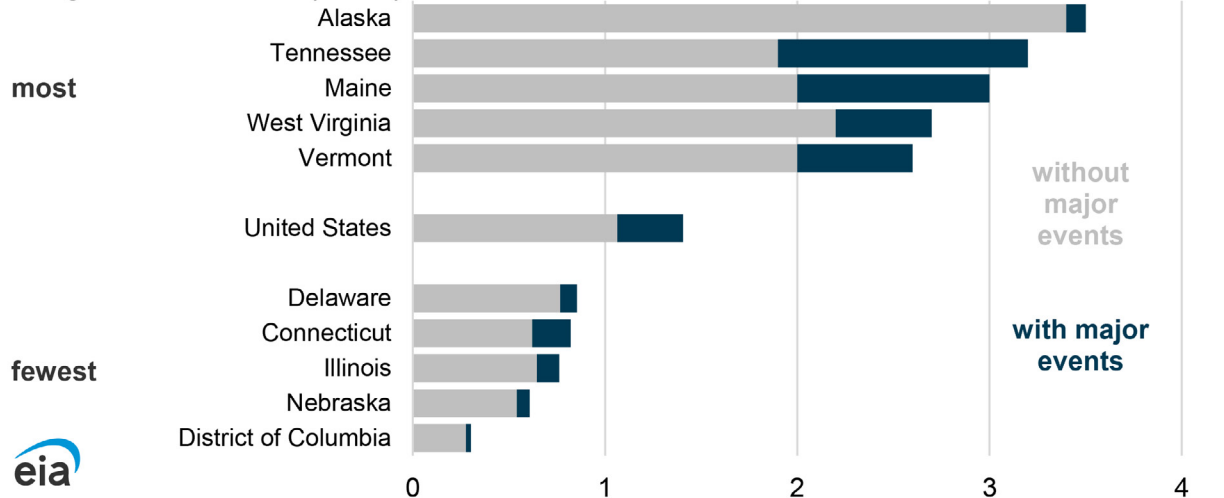
duration per customer in hours



Energy Statistics

Nebraska's energy landscape continued

Average frequency of annual electric power interruptions by select states (2022)
average number of interruptions per customer



4th in Average Cost of Electricity

U.S. World and News Report used each state's average retail price of electricity in centers per kilowatt-hour, including prices across residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, and other energy sectors. Nebraska's average retail price of electricity in the residential sector was 13.13 cents/kilowatthour. (U.S. Energy Information Administration; 2025)

Nebraska average retail price of electricity to residential sector, September 2025 (cents/kilowatthour)

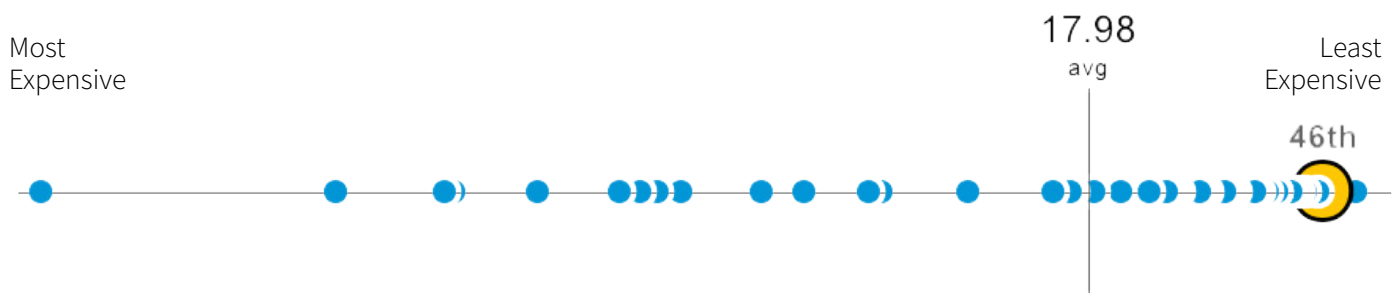


Image from the U.S. Energy Information Administration

5 tips for energy-saving renters

Information from the [U.S. Department of Energy](#)

Whether you're looking to reduce your carbon footprint or lower your utility bills, there are plenty of do-it-yourself (DIY) tips and tricks that can help you become an energy-efficient, cost-saving renter.

When renting your home, it may sometimes feel like shifting towards a clean energy home is outside your control. But whether you're looking to reduce your carbon footprint or lower your utility bills, there are plenty of do-it-yourself (DIY) tips and tricks that can help you become an energy-efficient, cost-saving renter.

1. Seal air leaks.

Drafty windows and doors can significantly contribute to energy waste. Use weatherstripping or caulking to seal any gaps or cracks around windows, doors, and vents. You can also use draft stoppers at the base of doors to prevent air from entering or escaping your living space.

2. Upgrade to LED lighting.

Replace traditional incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs, which use up to 80% less energy and last much longer. Additionally, don't forget to turn off lights when not in use to maximize energy savings.

3. Optimize heating and cooling.

Clean or replace air filters regularly to ensure proper airflow and improve the system's efficiency. Use window coverings such as blinds, curtains, or shades to block out direct sunlight during hot summer days and retain warmth during winter. If possible, consider using a programmable thermostat to regulate temperatures based on your schedule, further reducing energy waste.

4. Use power strips and smart plugs.

Many appliances and electronics consume energy even when they're turned off but remain plugged in.



Photo by Hucklebarry from Pixabay

Using power strips can reduce the standby power your electronics use and are an easy way for renters to reduce their energy use and save money.

By connecting these devices to power strips or smart plugs, you can turn them off completely when not in use. This practice, known as vampire power or standby power, can account for a significant portion of your energy bill. By cutting off the standby power, you can make a noticeable dent in your monthly consumption.

5. Consider energy-efficient appliances.

If you have the flexibility to replace outdated appliances, opt for energy-efficient models. Look for appliances with the [ENERGY STAR](#) label, which indicates superior energy performance. While purchasing new appliances may not be feasible for every renter, keep this tip in mind for future use or when purchasing smaller, counter-top appliances.

If you'd like to learn more about ways to save as a renter (or a homeowner), visit www.energy.gov/save.