# How Canadian utilities can help their low-income customers

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According to data from the 2021 E Source Canadian Residential Customer Insights Survey, which feeds the E Source Canadian Residential Customer Insights Center, 26% of Canadian customers reported that they were very concerned with the affordability of their home's electricity costs.

When segmenting this data by region, customers in the eastern region, Quebec included, were more likely to say they were very concerned compared to the overall sample. Regarding Quebec, it's important to note the province offers the lowest electricity rates in Canada. But most Quebec residents heat their homes using electricity instead of natural gas, so they'll still experience high winter bills despite low rates.

### About the Canadian Residential Customer Insights Center

Members of the E Source Residential Marketing Service can use the E Source Canadian Residential Customer Insights Center to better understand residential customers' attitudes and behaviors around energy and energy-related technologies. You can filter the data by customer demographics, geography, and utility company.

As the level of income increases, concerns about affordability decrease. Those with incomes less than C$20,000 were notably more likely than customers in other income groups to say they were very concerned about affordability. What does this mean? Focus your marketing campaigns on low-income customers to help alleviate affordability concerns.

### Education and awareness are crucial to promoting programs

More than two-thirds of Canadian customers (67%) said they didn't use any programs or services provided by their utility in the past 12 months. This group cited lack of awareness and information as the top reason for not participating in programs: 29% said they weren't aware that their utility offered any programs or services and 7% said they couldn't find any information about the programs offered by

their utility.

While low-income customers tend to be more concerned about affordability and have more of a need to participate in programs to help lower the cost of energy usage, there's room for improvement in program awareness among all customer groups.



### Need help reaching low-income customers?

For campaign advice and utility examples, check out our report The essentials for marketing to low-income customers.

Read the report

### Enrollment in paperless billing could improve with more utility promotion

For 2021, 63% of Canadian customers reported being enrolled in paperless billing with their electricity provider and 61% reported being enrolled in paperless billing with their natural gas provider. In both cases, respondents cited concern for the environment and a desire to cut waste as the top reason for enrolling in paperless billing, followed by convenience and ease of access, and reducing the amount of clutter in the home. While the top reason for not enrolling in paperless billing with electricity or natural gas providers was related to wanting a hard copy of the bill, just under one-fifth of respondents mentioned lack of awareness and motivation.

Want to learn more about increasing paperless billing adoption? Utilities can use our research, including our report How to get customers to participate in paperless billing, to make sure they're communicating effectively with residential customers and making it easy for them to access their bills online.

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