E Source commits to helping utilities address energy affordability and equity challenges for vulnerable customers

Affordability and Equity practice will help utilities better serve at-risk customers and communities
By Sannie Sieper
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E Source is pleased to announce the launch of its Affordability and Equity practice. This new and unique offering merges best-in-class research and advisory capabilities with extensive, hands-on expertise. It also marshals the collective resources of the company, including breakthrough data science and implementation services, to help utilities navigate complex affordability and equity challenges and better serve vulnerable customers and communities.

The E Source Affordability and Equity practice leverages E Source's data science, market research, and management consulting capabilities to provide holistic research and advice on affordability and equity.

The practice builds on the affordability and equity services the company currently offers through the E Source Low Income Energy Issues Forum, which seeks to close the widening gap between what utilities charge and what vulnerable energy consumers can pay, and the E Source Equity in a Clean Energy Economy collaborative, which ensures an equitable clean energy transition for at-risk customers and communities. In addition, the practice leverages E Source's data science, market research, and management consulting capabilities to provide holistic research and advice on affordability and equity.

Energy affordability and equity challenges are not new. Millions of low-income households in the US face a high energy burden, with some paying more than 20% of their income to utilities, according to the Alliance to Save Energy's Energy Efficiency Impact Report. While many utilities and public assistance agencies have been tasked with helping these customers pay their bills or lower their energy use and costs, these assistance programs have typically been underutilized, reaching just a fraction of eligible households.

In fact, E Source has identified several proven strategies to streamline access to assistance and make it much easier for vulnerable customers to prove eligibility and enroll in these programs. The company has issued an open letter to the energy industry to raise awareness of and foster commitment to solving

these problems once and for all. Interested parties are encouraged to read and sign the petition.

“Energy affordability and equity are fundamentally different challenges, but they intersect as we transition to a clean energy economy.” —Jamie Wimberly, E Source

In addition to the ongoing energy affordability crisis, the negative effects of our energy systems—including disconnections and cost burdens—and the positive benefits of weatherization, energy-efficient upgrades, distributed and stored energy resources, and transportation electrification aren’t evenly distributed among utility customers and communities.

The E Source Affordability and Equity practice provides utility clients with extensive and timely research into utility programs; innovative approaches and tools like the E Source Audience of One solution; an extensive database for benchmarking, research, and ideation; access to E Source experts, workshops, and events; and E Source’s unequaled utility and partner community. Research and advisory services include:

- Engagement strategies to identify the most effective messages, channels, and practices
- Voice-of-the-customer data to help better understand and serve customers
- Program design inspiration to guide and enhance affordability and equity efforts

“Energy affordability and equity are fundamentally different challenges, but they intersect as we transition to a clean energy economy,” says Jamie Wimberly, senior vice president of Customer Strategy at E Source. “The clean energy investments we make today must be focused on delivering positive outcomes to all communities, but particularly underserved and vulnerable communities that are already suffering negative impacts from legacy energy, building, and transportation infrastructure. We’ve never had a better opportunity than we have now to create real, meaningful change in our communities, and this is precisely the goal of the E Source Affordability and Equity practice.”

E Source is hosting a free webinar on November 7, 2023, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. EST, Fostering energy affordability and equity in the utility space, to discuss energy affordability and equity challenges and to share strategies for better serving vulnerable customers and communities.

About E Source

E Source blends industry-leading research, predictive data science, and solution services to help utilities make better decisions to support their customers, their bottom line, and our planet. With a data-first approach and a commitment to practical innovation, we use more than three decades of utility-focused experience and our unique solution set to help clients achieve their goal of becoming a Sustainable Utility. E Source is headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, with offices across the US.

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