

Household electricity affordability

Overview: Household electricity affordability

As of early 2026, household electricity prices are the most expensive they've been in at least 25 years, even after adjusting for inflation. And yet, electricity use per home has declined. As data centers, electric vehicles, and other new technologies demand more from the electricity grid, questions about electricity supply and costs become more pressing.

The federal government has taken several actions related to electricity supply and grid reliability in recent years. The 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) changed the eligibility timeline for several clean energy tax credits established by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.ⁱ Separately, the Trump administration declared a national energy emergency in January 2025 and directed faster permitting reviews for energy projects.ⁱⁱ An April 2025 executive order also directed the Department of Energy (DOE) to identify at-risk grid regions and use its emergency authority to keep some electricity plants operating.ⁱⁱⁱ

This brief explores trends in household electricity prices and bills, support programs for households such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and the demand and supply dynamics shaping costs.

Data summary

- In March 2026, residential electricity rates reached their highest inflation-adjusted level since at least 2001, and the average monthly bill rose for 16 straight months (Dec. 2024–March 2026). In 2024, 22.7% of US households were “energy burdened.” Five states had rates above 31%.
- US electricity demand, which was flat from 2007 to 2020, is growing. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects total demand will grow between 23% and 49% by 2050, with electric vehicle (EV) charging and data centers driving most of that growth. Combined, they comprise about 3% of total demand today and could make up as much as 30% of electricity demand by 2050, according to the EIA.
- The EIA projects the nation’s electricity grid’s capacity to grow 40% to 80% by 2050. Its reliability depends not only on capacity, but also on where new resources are built, how much electricity is available during peak demand, transmission, and other factors.

Household electricity costs

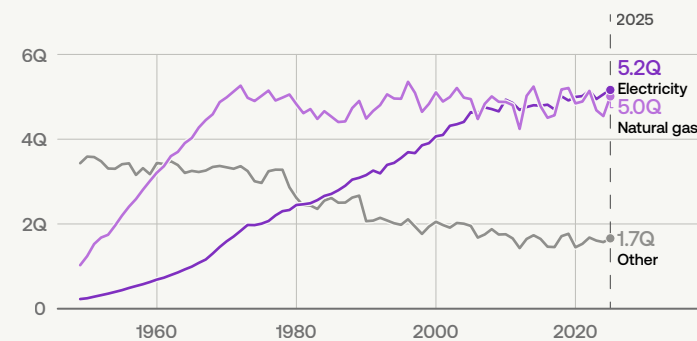
On average, households spend more on electricity than on any other home energy source. Understanding what households pay for electricity, and how those bills have changed over time, is foundational for assessing affordability.

What types of energy power US households?

Electricity and natural gas supplied similar shares of household energy in 2025. However, households spend more on electricity: an average of \$2,676 annually compared to \$1,848 in 2024.^{iv}

Residential energy consumption (quadrillion BTUs)

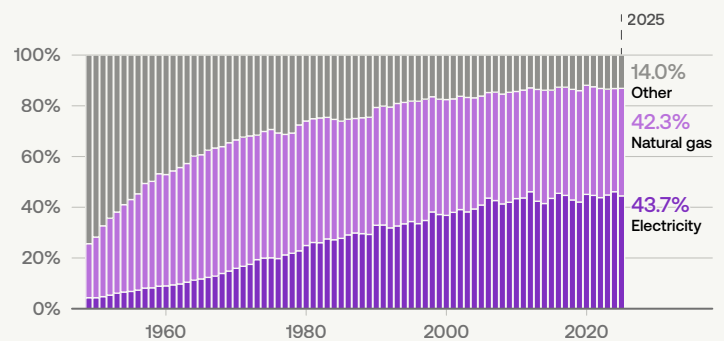
By energy type



Source: Energy Information Administration
Note: A BTU, or British Thermal Unit is a standard unit of measurement of heat energy. It is the amount of heat needed to raise one pound of water by one degree.

Share of residential energy consumption

By energy type



Source: Energy Information Administration

How much does residential electricity cost?

Between April 2025 and March 2026, average residential electricity prices hit an inflation-adjusted 18 cents per kilowatt-hour, the highest level since at least 2001. Residential consumers pay more per unit of electricity than commercial and industrial customers, largely due to the higher cost of delivering electricity to individual homes.

Residential electricity rate per kilowatt-hour

12-month rolling average

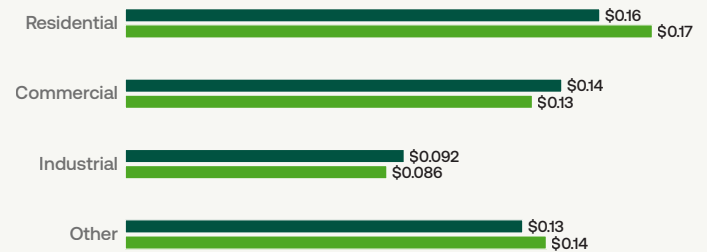


Source: Energy Information Administration
Note: Adjusted for inflation (March 2026 dollars).

Average electricity rate per kilowatt-hour (2001 vs. 2025)

By sector

● 2001 ● 2025



Source: Energy Information Administration
Note: Adjusted for inflation (2025 dollars).

What units are used to measure electricity?

There are two basic units of measurement that are important for understanding electricity:
power (watts), and **energy (watt-hours)**.

Understanding the basics



Power (watts)

Power is measured in watts (W), and describes electricity in a given moment: how much is needed to turn on a lightbulb or hair dryer, or how much is produced by a hydroelectric dam.

A **kilowatt (kW)** is a measurement of **power**
 A hair dryer requires **1 kW** of **power** to run



Energy (watt-hours)

Energy consumption, or production, is measured in watt-hours and incorporates time — if a 1 kW hair dryer runs for 6 minutes, that's one-tenth of a kilowatt-hour (kWh), if it runs 6 minutes every day for a month, that would be 3 kWh of energy.

A **kilowatt-hour (kWh)** is a measurement of **energy**
 A hair dryer that runs for **3 hours** each month uses **3 kWh** of **energy**

How are they related?

Power (watts)

×

Time (hours)

=

Energy (watt-hours)

About how much power does it take to run?

An LED nightlight

1 W

1 watt

x 1 hour

1 Wh

1 watt-hour

A microwave oven

1 kW

1 thousand watts

x 1 hour

1 kWh

1 thousand watt-hours

200 Texas homes
at peak demand

1 MW

1 million watts

x 1 hour

1 MWh

1 million watt-hours

100 million
LED lightbulbs

1 GW

1 billion watts

x 1 hour

1 GWh

1 billion watt-hours

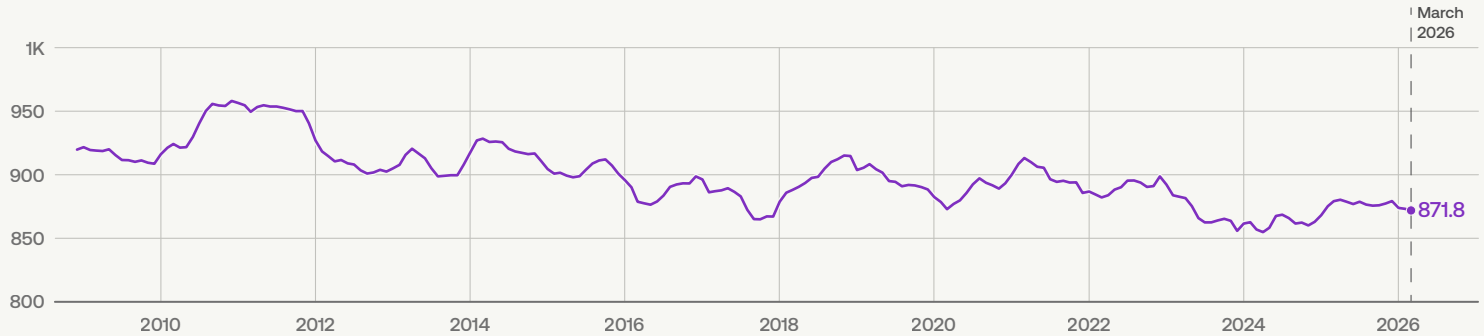
Your monthly electric bill is measured in kWh and is the sum of all the electricity you've used to make coffee, cook food, do laundry, or cool your home.

How much electricity do households use?

Average household electricity use fell 11% from December 2010 (when usage reached a high) to December 2023 (a usage low). There are several possible reasons for falling energy usage: improvements in building insulation, more efficient appliances, and populations moving to areas with lower heating needs.^v However, household electricity use has edged up about 2% since late 2023.

Average electricity use per residential customer (kWh)

12-month rolling average



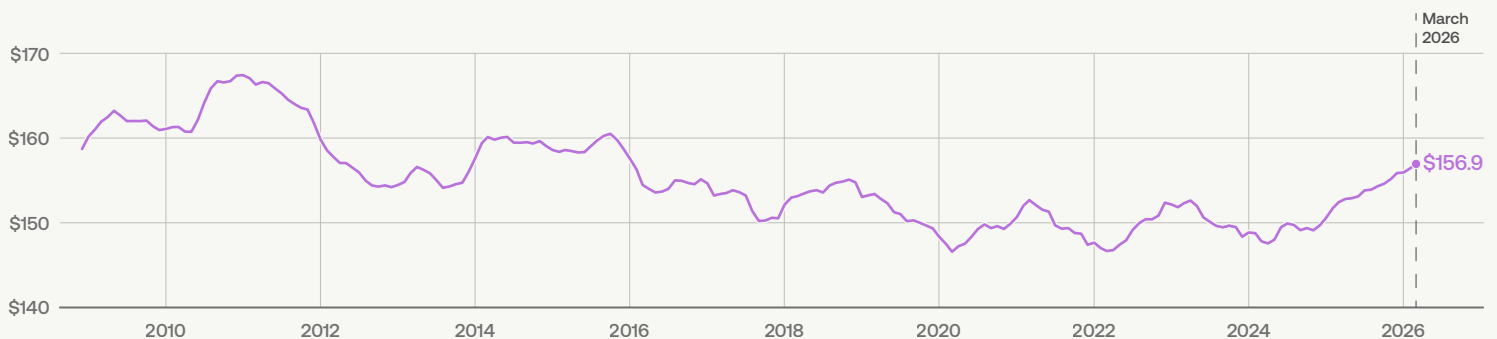
Source: Energy Information Administration

How have monthly electricity bills changed for households?

Household electricity bills are a product of electricity rates and household usage. Average monthly bills fluctuated but generally got less expensive (in inflation-adjusted terms) between 2010 and 2023 as households used less electricity. However, the 12-month average cost per household recently increased for 16 consecutive months (December 2024–March 2026), the longest period of increase since at least 2008 (the first year of available data).

Average monthly electric bill per residential customer

12-month rolling average



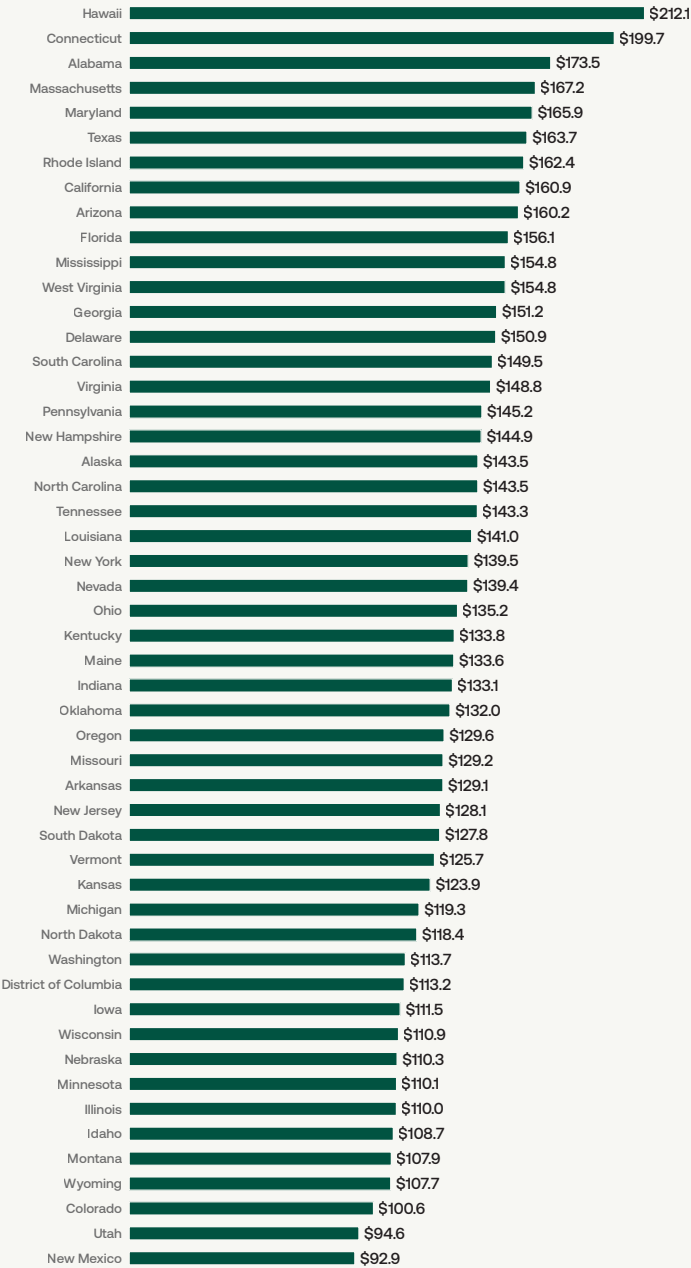
Source: Energy Information Administration

Note: Adjusted for inflation (March 2026 dollars).

How do electricity bills vary across the country?

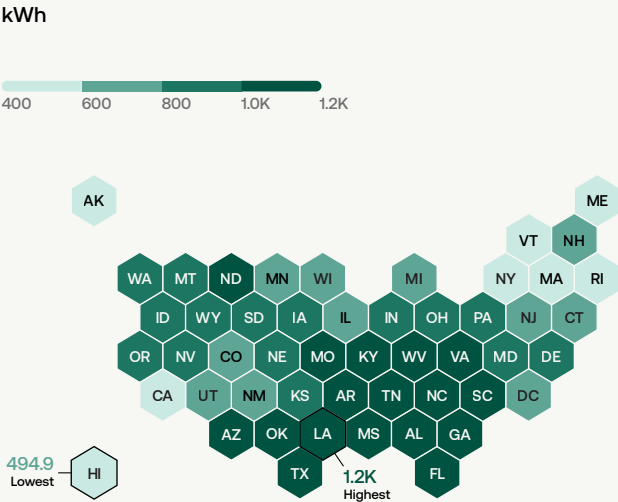
Electricity prices vary based on local fuel availability, electricity generation fuel mix, infrastructure costs, and electricity market regulation. In 2024, retail prices per kWh ranged from 11.5 cents in North Dakota and Nebraska, where there are abundant local energy resources, to 42.9 cents in Hawaii, where most electricity comes from imported petroleum.^{vi} Among the contiguous US, average electricity bills were highest in New England despite having the lowest average monthly consumption.

Average monthly electricity bill (2024)



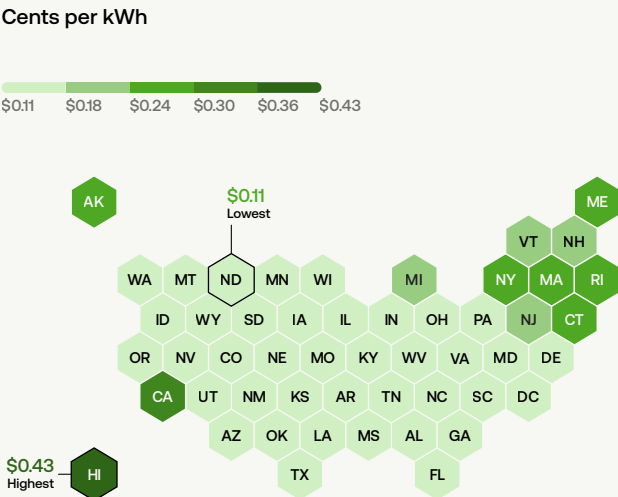
Source: Energy Information Administration

Average monthly electricity consumption (2024)



Source: Energy Information Administration

Average residential electricity price (2024)



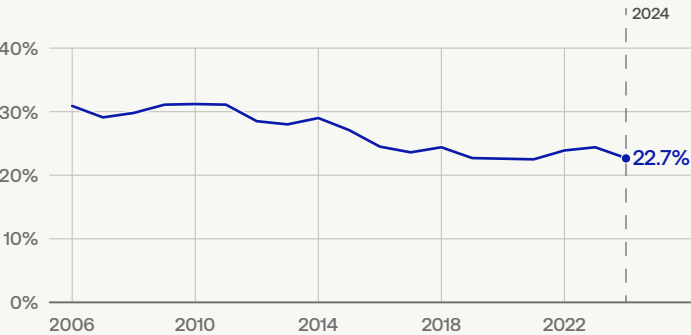
Source: Energy Information Administration

How many households are considered “energy burdened”?

The DOE defines “energy burdened” as when a household spends more than 6% of its gross income on home energy costs, including electricity, natural gas, and other energy. In 2024, 22.7% of US households were energy burdened. This is among the lowest shares since at least 2006, with the lowest level in 2021. The share of energy-burdened households in 2024 exceeded 31.2% (the previous national high) in Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

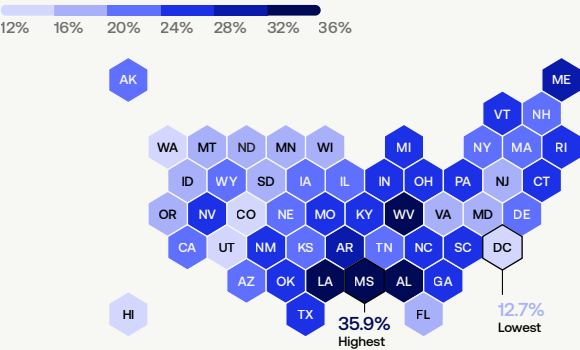
Share of households spending more than 6% of income on energy (2024)

Overall



Source: Census Bureau
Note: Households where energy costs are bundled into rent, a common situation for renters, are excluded from this analysis.

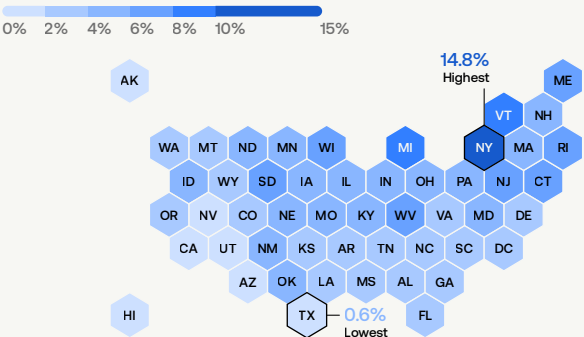
By state



What federal programs address household electricity costs?

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low-income households pay heating and cooling costs, whether they use electricity, natural gas, or other energy types, like oil. It also helps low-income people in energy-related emergencies such as electricity shutoffs. Congress appropriated \$4.045 billion to the program for FY 2026.^{vii} DOE also runs the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). WAP reduces household energy use by funding physical improvements and weatherization for low-income households. The program received \$326 million in FY 2025.

Share of households receiving LIHEAP benefits (FY 2025)



Source: Administration for Children and Families and Census Bureau
Note: Data is preliminary. Share reflects FY 2025 recipient households as a share of 2024 total households.

Electricity demand

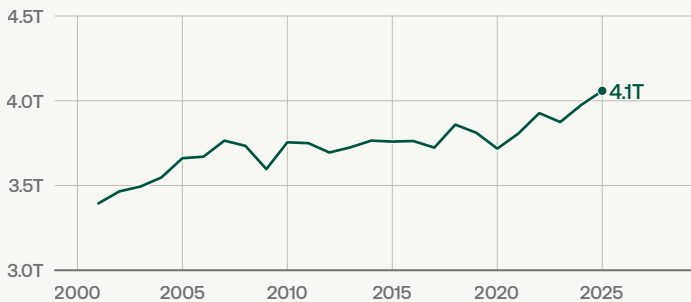
US electricity demand across all industries — including residential, commercial, and industrial demand — was relatively flat between 2007 and 2020 as efficiency gains offset population and economic growth. That shifted around 2020, and electricity sales have grown since then. Understanding what is driving that growth matters for household affordability: when demand outpaces the grid's ability to supply it, utilities must build new infrastructure and generation capacity. These costs may flow back to electricity consumers through higher rates.

How much electricity does the US use?

Electric utilities sold 4.1 trillion kilowatt-hours of electricity in 2025, 19.5% more than in 2001. The residential and commercial sectors accounted for the largest of these shares, 37.3% and 36.8% of total demand, respectively. While residential customers consume electricity in homes, the commercial sector includes offices, retail stores, schools, hospitals, warehouses, and data centers. The industrial sector includes manufacturing, mining, and construction.

Annual electricity sales (trillion kWh)

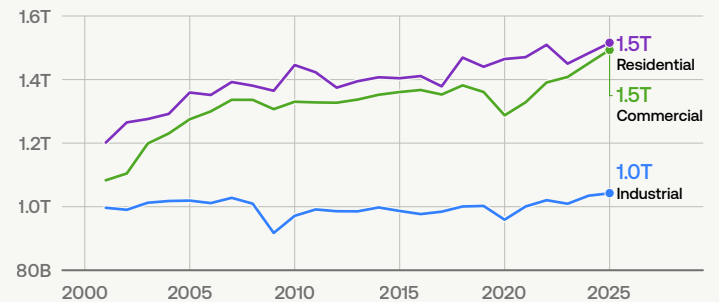
Total



Source: Energy Information Administration

Annual electricity sales (trillion kWh)

By sector



Source: Energy Information Administration

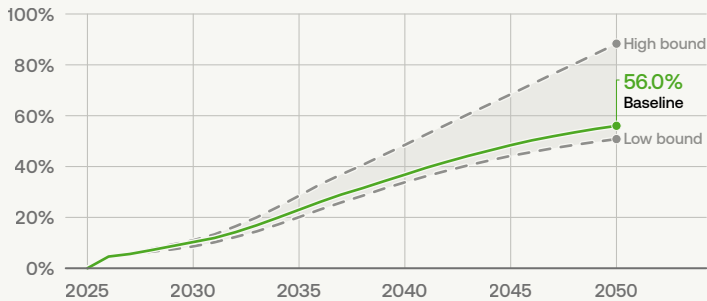
Note: The transportation sector also purchases electricity. Sales to the sector were less than 0.25% of the total each year.

How is commercial electricity demand changing?

Commercial electricity demand increased by about 10% from 2015 to 2025. EIA's baseline projection expects this will grow 56% from 2025 to 2050, the largest projected increase of any sector. In EIA's baseline projection, data center servers account for approximately 41% of commercial demand growth through 2050 — largely due to AI — and EV public charging stations account for 48%, together explaining nearly all projected commercial demand growth.

Projected percent change in commercial electricity demand from 2025

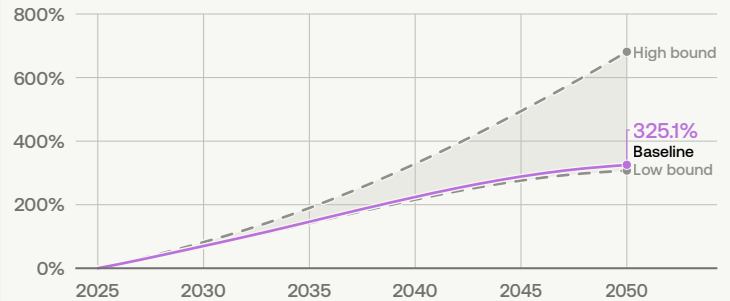
Projection range



Source: Energy Information Administration

Projected percent change in data center server electricity demand from 2025

Projection range



Source: Energy Information Administration

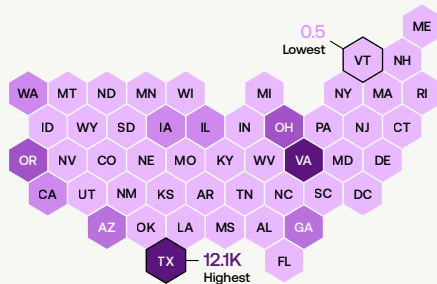
Where are data centers located, and where are they expanding?

Data center capacity, measured by the maximum megawatts a facility can draw at any moment, is highly concentrated in Texas and Virginia. Together, these two states account for 41% of the country's data center capacity. The capacity of planned or under-construction facilities is more than four times the current capacity with a similar concentration in Texas and Virginia.

Data center capacity (2025)

Existing (MW)

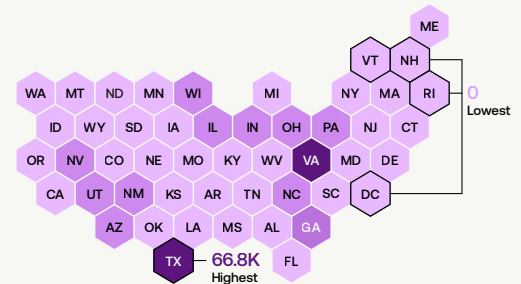
0 1K 2K 3K 9K 12.2K



Source: National Laboratory of the Rockies

Planned or under construction (MW)

0 5K 10K 20K 67K

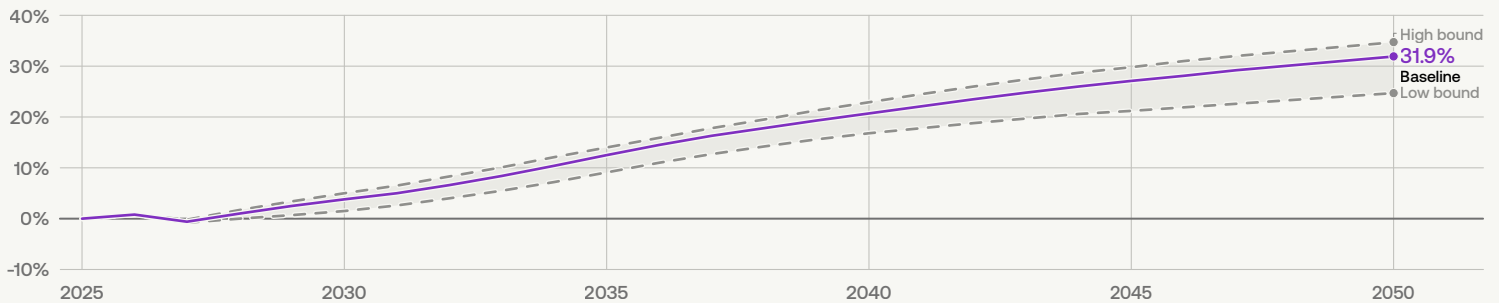


How is residential electricity demand changing?

Residential electricity demand increased 7.9% between 2015 and 2025. This was slower than the 10.3% growth in the number of residential customers over roughly the same period.^{viii} EIA projects residential demand will rise approximately 32% by 2050, largely from increased demand for EV charging. Excluding EV charging, residential electricity use is projected to increase less than 7%, and in some scenarios, actually decline, by 2050. Meanwhile, the number of households is expected to increase by roughly 22%, from 130.7 million to about 159 million.

Projected percent change in residential electricity demand from 2025

Projection range



Source: Energy Information Administration

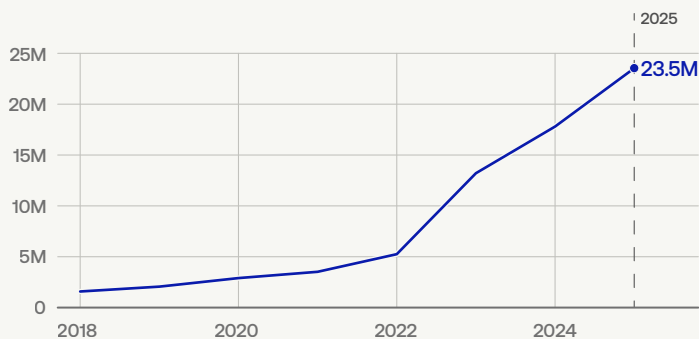
Note: Excludes electricity residential consumers may produce and use onsite.

How do electric vehicles affect electricity demand?

EV electricity use grew from 1.6 million megawatt-hours in 2018 to 23.5 million megawatt-hours in 2025, a nearly 15-fold increase. Even with that growth, EV charging accounted for about 0.5% of all electricity sales in 2025. EIA projects that EV charging will increase between 9.5 and 28 times current levels by 2050.

Estimated electric vehicle electricity consumption

MWh

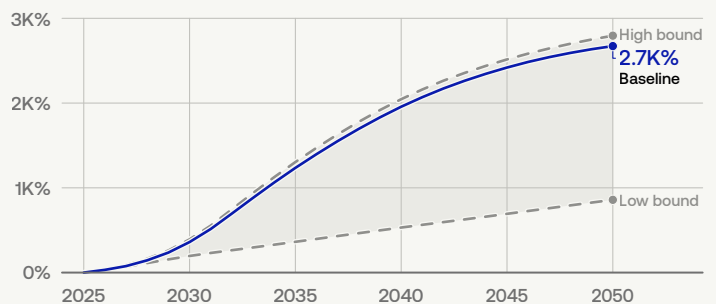


Source: Energy Information Administration

Note: Includes commercial and residential charging.

Projected percent change in electric vehicle electricity demand from 2025

Projection range



Source: Energy Information Administration

Note: Includes commercial and residential charging.



Who pays for new large electricity loads?

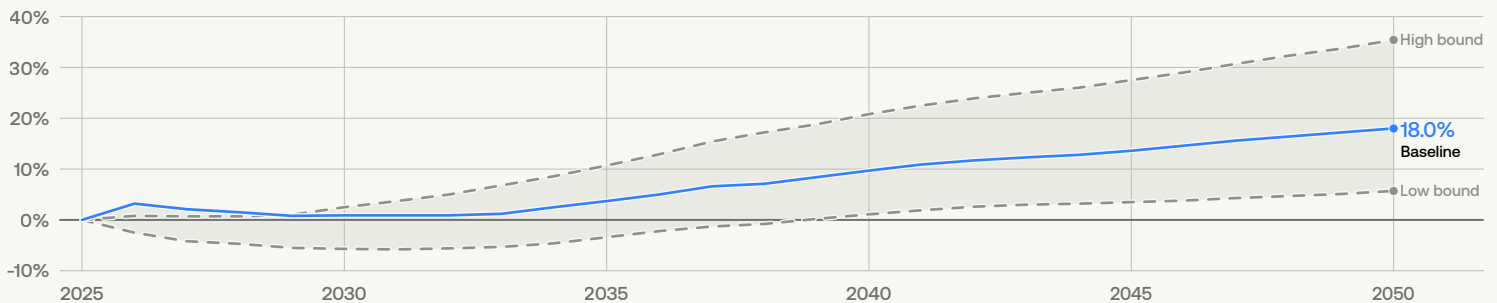
New data centers, large industrial facilities, and EV charging stations can require new generation, transmission, or distribution upgrades. Absent specific rules, the cost of upgrades triggered by a single large customer may be recovered through utility rates paid by all customers.^x In June 2026, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission directed all six regional grid operators under its jurisdiction to justify or reform their rules governing the connection of new large-load customers, including how infrastructure costs are allocated and how potential cost-shifting is addressed.^x

How is industrial electricity demand changing?

Industrial electricity purchases rose 5.6% from 2021 through 2025 after years of remaining relatively flat. This was due to the increased demand from domestic manufacturing.^{xi} In its 2026 energy outlook, EIA projects demand will increase by 5.7% to 25.3% between 2025 and 2050.

Projected percent change in industrial electricity demand from 2025

Projection range



Source: Energy Information Administration

Note: Excludes electricity the sector may produce and use onsite.

How is electricity demand overall expected to change?

EIA projects total US electricity demand will grow between 23.2% and 48.6% by 2050, depending on economic conditions, technology adoption, and energy policy. In EIA's baseline projection, electric vehicle charging and data center servers together account for approximately 76% of that growth.

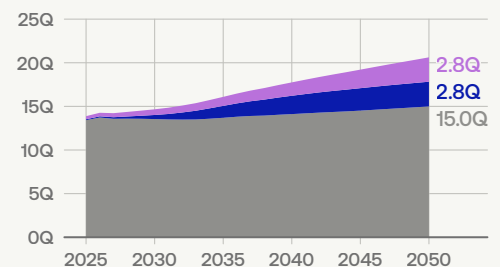
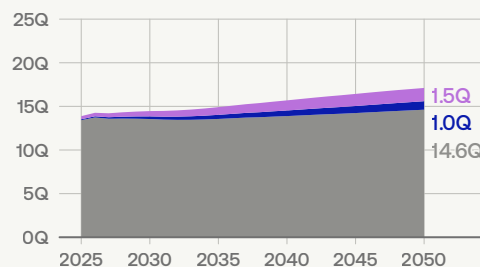
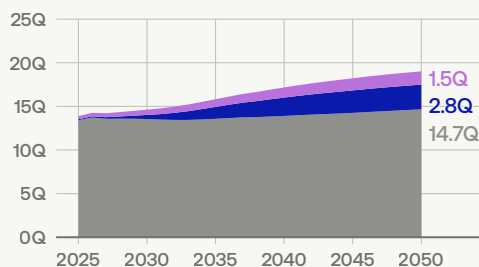
Projected purchased electricity demand compared to 2025, quadrillion BTUs (quads)

Baseline

Low bound

High bound

● Data center servers ● Electric vehicle charging ● Other uses



Source: Energy Information Administration

Electricity supply and generation

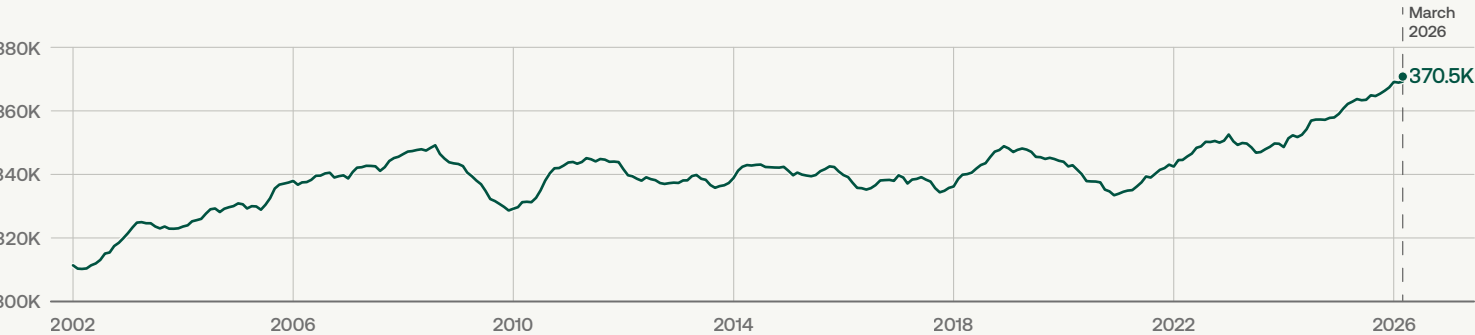
Whether electricity costs more for households in the future depends partly on whether new supply keeps pace with demand growth. The cost of building, fueling, and operating power plants also impacts the prices customers pay.

How much electricity does the US produce?

As of March 2026, the US produced an average of 370.5 thousand gigawatt-hours of electricity each month, up 19% from 2002. Electricity generated on the grid is distributed across residential, commercial, industrial, and transportation uses.

Net monthly generation of electricity (GWh)

12-month rolling average



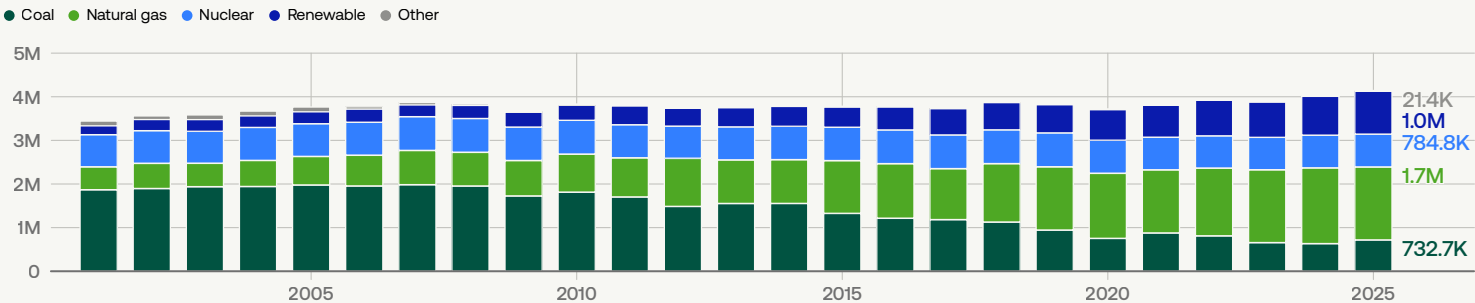
Source: Energy Information Administration

What energy sources fuel the electric grid?

In 2025, natural gas accounted for 40.0% of generation by electric utilities and independent power producers. Renewables were the next largest fuel source, followed by nuclear and coal. This is much different than the fuel mix 20 years ago, when coal supplied about half of US electricity.

Net electricity generation (GWh)

By fuel source



Source: Energy Information Administration

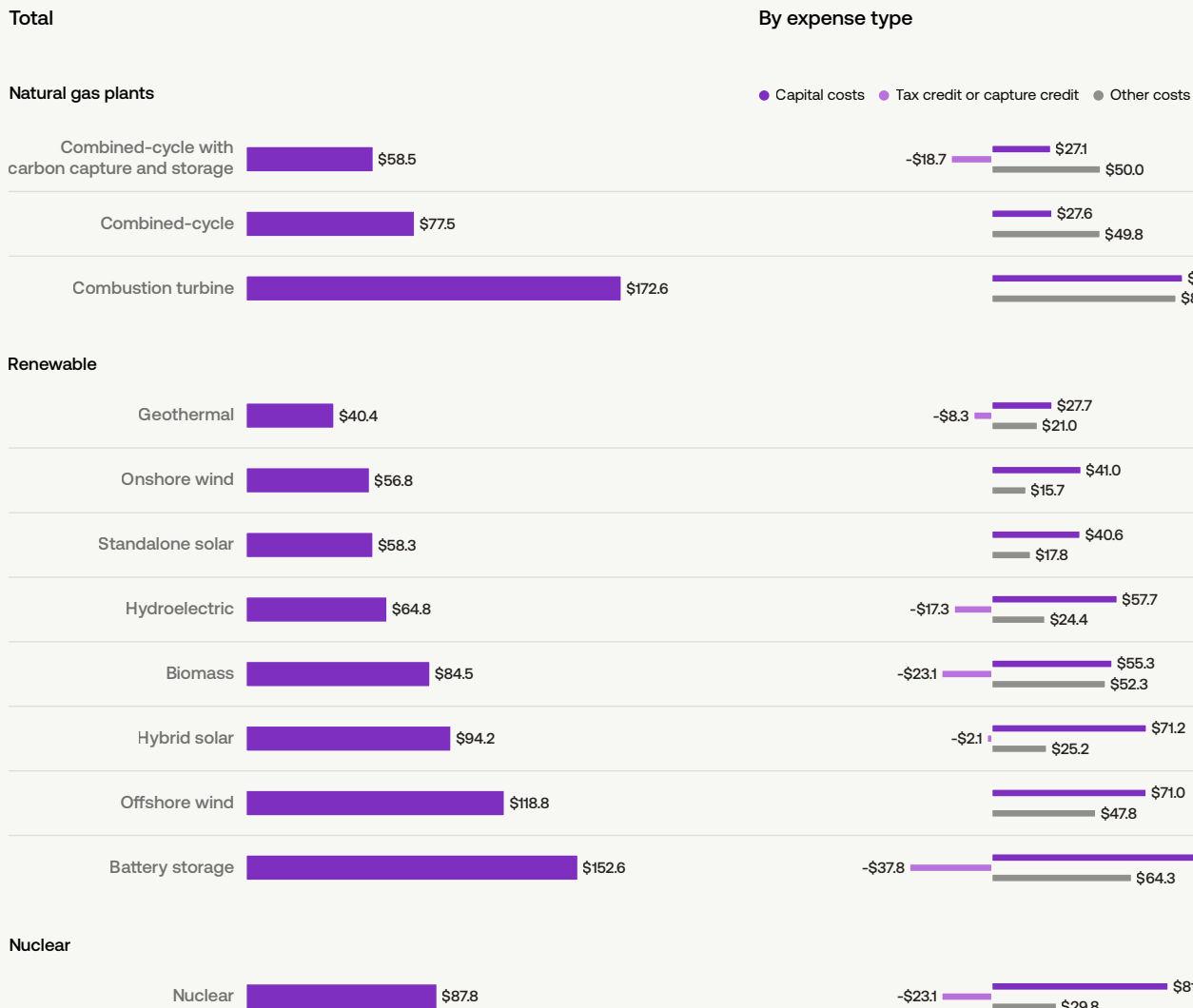
Note: Includes electricity generated by electric utilities and independent power producers.

What do different sources of electricity cost?

Fuel, construction, financing, and maintenance costs vary widely by electricity source, making them difficult to compare. One common metric is the levelized cost of electricity (LCOE), which estimates the average cost to build and operate a power plant over its lifetime divided by the electricity it produces. For some energy types, such as solar energy plants, most of the cost is incurred in construction rather than operations and fuel. Others, such as natural gas plants, have lower capital costs and variable fuel costs over their lifetimes.

The latest EIA data estimates that, among new power plants expected to enter service in 2031, the lowest-cost technologies are geothermal (\$40.38 per megawatt-hour of electricity), onshore wind (\$56.75), and standalone solar (\$58.33).

Levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) per megawatt-hour for new generators entering service in 2031

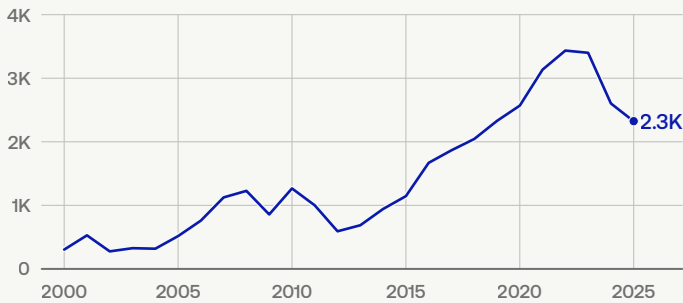


Source: Energy Information Administration

What types of power plants are planned?

There have been about the same number of new grid interconnection requests from proposed power plants in the last six years as there were from 2006 through 2019 combined. A grid interconnection request is an application a power plant or storage project developer files with a transmission provider, like a utility or regional grid operator, asking to connect to the grid. As of March 2026, there were 2,356 new electricity-generating units planned, awaiting regulatory approvals, or under construction. These would add 297 gigawatts, or 21.6%, to existing grid capacity, though historically, most planned capacity is not built. One analysis found 13% of submitted interconnection requests between 2000 and 2020 were online by 2025, with three-quarters of requests being withdrawn.^{xii} Solar accounts for 42.0%, or 125 gigawatts, of the new planned capacity additions, while natural gas accounts for 23.0%. Grid operators often use a combination of generation sources and storage technologies to help maintain a reliable electricity supply.

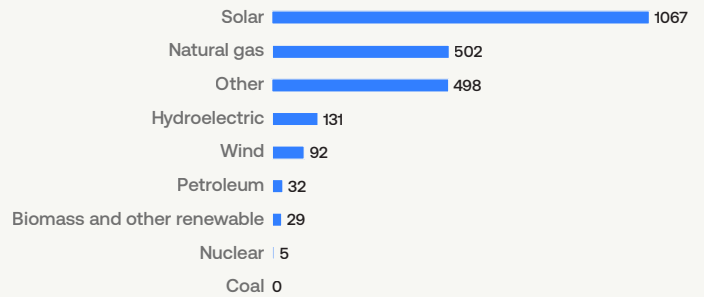
New grid interconnection requests



Source: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Generator units under construction or planned as of March 2026

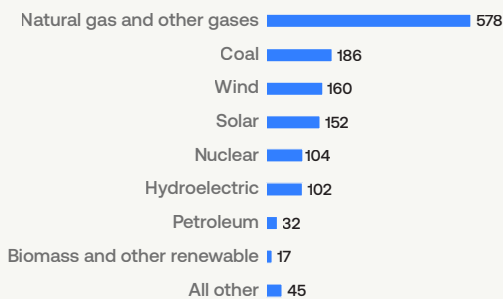
By technology



Source: Energy Information Administration

Nameplate GW capacity of existing generators by energy type (December 2025)

By technology

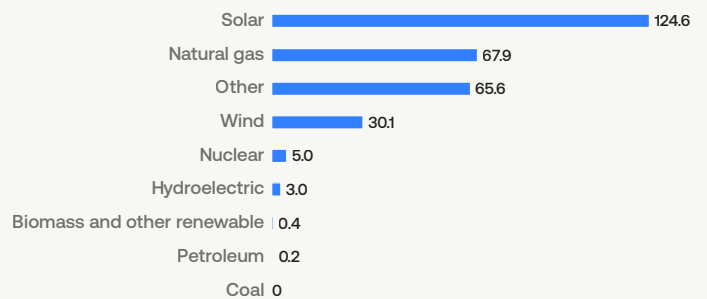


Source: Energy Information Administration

Note: Nameplate capacity is the maximum rated electricity output possible under ideal conditions.

Nameplate capacity of generators under construction or planned as of March 2026 (GW)

By technology



Source: Energy Information Administration

Note: Nameplate capacity is the maximum rated electricity output possible under ideal conditions.



Federal renewable energy incentives

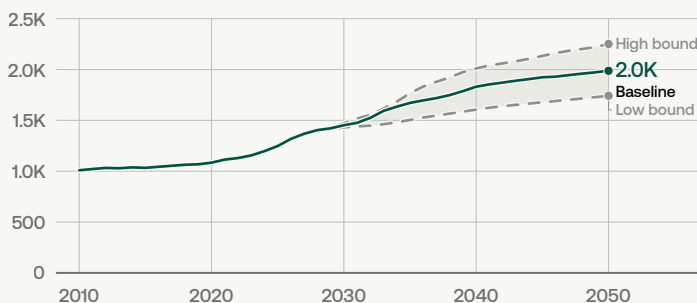
The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 extended the long-standing Production Tax Credit and Investment Tax Credit for renewable electricity through 2024, and then for newer projects, replaced them with technology-neutral credits available to zero-emissions power sources, including nuclear. The OBBBA, signed into law on July 4, 2025, left the original credits untouched for facilities that began construction before 2025. For the newer credits, it requires wind and solar facilities to either begin construction before July 5, 2026, or begin producing electricity before January 1, 2028. Other zero-emissions technologies have until 2033 to begin construction.^{xiii}

What's the US power grid's capacity?

The US electricity generation sector had the capacity to generate 1,248 gigawatts of electricity in 2025, 20% more than in 2008. EIA's baseline projection anticipates 59.4% growth by 2050. This could vary from 1,742 to 2,251 gigawatts, which would mean growth of 39.7% to 80.7%. In practice, power plants rarely operate at their maximum output and do not all run simultaneously. Excess capacity allows the grid to respond efficiently to peak periods of demand.

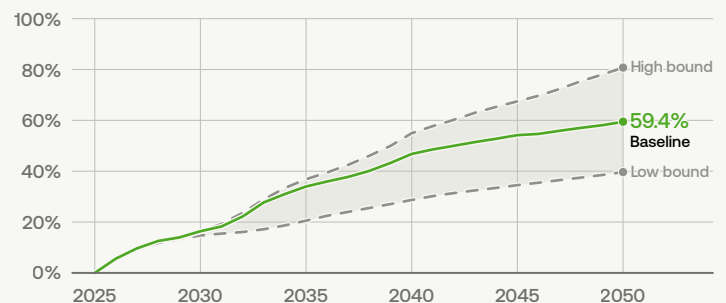
Electric power sector nameplate capacity

GW



Source: Energy Information Administration

Percent change from 2025



What is the federal government's role in permitting power plants and other electricity infrastructure?

States hold primary authority over permitting power plants and most transmission and distribution lines. Federal agencies become involved when projects sit on federal land or waterways, affect interstate electricity markets or wholesale rates, require federal environmental review, involve hydropower or nuclear licensing, or cross certain jurisdictional boundaries.

Congress and multiple administrations have targeted the federal government's permitting process for reform in recent years in an effort to streamline the process and reduce review timelines. Examples include the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023^{xiv}, the establishment of the Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits Program^{xv}, and the issuance of executive orders directing federal agencies to shorten environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act.^{xvi}

Chapter sources and data timeliness

Publishing agency	Program	Publication	Release date	Most recent period in the data
Administration for Children and Families (HHS)	Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program Performance Management	Data Warehouse		FY 2025 (preliminary data)
National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR), US Department of Energy — formerly the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)	Speed to Power Initiative	Interactive data viewer/ data library — existing and planned data center capacity	September 2025, removed in early 2026	2025
Census Bureau	American Community Survey	1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample	December 2025	2024
US Energy Information Administration	Total Energy Statistics	Monthly Energy Review	Updates monthly with data through three months prior	
	Electricity	Electric Sales, Revenue, and Average Price	October 2025	2024
		Electricity generation & consumption	Updates monthly with data through two months prior	
		Monthly Electric Power Industry Report	Updates monthly with data through two months prior	
		Electric Power Monthly	Updates monthly with data through two months prior	
		Electric Power Annual	October 2025	2024
	Analysis & Projections	Annual Energy Outlook	April 2026	Baseline/historical year 2025; projections run through 2050

See sources and notes section at the end of this report for detailed citation information.

Endnotes

- i. US Congress (2025). *Public Law 119–21*. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1>.
- ii. National Archives (2025). *Declaring a National Energy Emergency*. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/29/2025-02003/declaring-a-national-energy-emergency>.
- iii. National Archives (2025). *Strengthening the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid*. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/14/2025-06381/strengthening-the-reliability-and-security-of-the-united-states-electric-grid>.
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