Winter Storm Uri

11.9.21

Impacts on low-income Texans
Background

Extreme cold and snow

Skyrocketing heat demand

Power grid failures
Very low income / experiencing poverty
Low income / struggling to get by

Which of the following categories best describes your household's financial circumstances?

- Very low income / experiencing poverty
- Low income / struggling to get by

37.8% of respondents self-identify as low income or very low income

n = 953
Pre-storm conditions
Pre-storm conditions - electricity affordability

Q11

Before the winter storm, how concerned were you about being able to afford your electricity bill?

- **All respondents**
- **Low income respondents**
- **Medium and high income respondents**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of concern levels among different income groups before the winter storm.](chart_url)
Pre-storm conditions - utility debt

**Q21**

Before the storm event, did you have any household energy bill debt (outstanding past due amount) already?

- **All respondents**
- **Low income respondents**
- **Medium and high income respondents**
Immediate Impacts on Health and Safety
Never lost: 30%
< 2 hours: 20%
2-8 hours: 10%
8-24 hours: 0%
2-3 days: 20%
4+ days: 0%
Currently without: 0%

Outages - Electricity

- All respondents
- Low income respondents
- Medium and high income respondents

Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute
Outages – Natural Gas

- All respondents
- Low income respondents
- Medium and high income respondents

Never lost: 80%
< 2 hours: 60%
2-8 hours: 40%
8-24 hours: 20%
2-3 days: 0%
4+ days: 0%
Currently without: 0%
Property Damage
Property Damage

Burst Water Pipes: 40%
Fallen Trees: 30%
Damaged appliances: 20%
Roof Damage: 10%

All respondents vs. Low income respondents
Aftermath
Impacts on low-income respondents (Q30)

- Lost wages, reduced income (vs. 29% all respondents) - 37%
- Food spoilage (vs. 40%) - 44%
- Medical equipment malfunction (vs. 9%) - 14%
- Stress, mental anguish (vs. 55%) - 59%
- Health emergency (vs. 7%) - 10%
- Unaffordable electricity bill (vs. 21%) - 34%
- Unaffordable gas bill (vs. 8%) - 13%
Electricity bill affordability concerns

All respondents

- Not concerned: 22.8%
- Somewhat Concerned: 35.3%
- Very Concerned: 39.7%
- No Opinion: 2.2%

Low-income respondents

- Not Concerned: 7.9%
- Somewhat concerned: 34.7%
- Very Concerned: 56.8%
- No Opinion: 2.2%
Legislative and Regulatory Response

SB 3 (Regular Session, 2021)
Required the PUC to establish weather emergency reliability standards, created emergency alert system.

HB 4922 (Regular Session, 2021)
Allocated hundreds of millions of dollars in bonds from the state rainy day fund to support ERCOT’s operations through peak summer months as debt repayment was figured out.

Public Utility Commission/Railroad Commission
PUC requires the adoption of certain weatherization standards for some facilities, waiting on full report from ERCOT. RRC allows some natural gas facilities to opt out of "critical" designation and weatherization requirements.
Power bills to rise

32 extra hours of $9,000/MWh

Extra charges of $16 billion

Power bills to rise $18/year/pp

Source: Dallas Morning News