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Background

These instructions are to help guide you through the utility data tool as part of compliance with RCW [19.405.120](#). The data being collected includes both utility run programs and those administered by third parties that use utility funds. These instructions include a list of frequently asked questions, details on which programs should be included, all relevant definitions, authorization and provisions and other information necessary to complete this survey. Please read through the entire instructions before starting and note the data necessary to complete this survey. You will not be able to exit the survey once you have started. However, you will be able to edit questions within the survey before you have submitted the survey. The link to the survey and a full list of questions can be found on the energy assistance website (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/ceta-2/>).

This data collection is brand new for our state and this process may be iterative to ensure clean and comprehensive data collection. We encourage feedback as we develop this process. This survey is the product of several stakeholder sessions, public comments, individual conversations and voluntary contributions of time and commentary from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). For more information on the TAG see the energy assistance website (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/ceta-2/>). We thank everyone for their time to create a process that works for our many utilities across the state.

Please send any questions or comments to Sarah Vorpahl, State Energy Office, (360) 688-6000, sarah.vorpahl@commerce.wa.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

What time period should I report data for on these surveys?

You should report on data from January 2019 through December 2019.

How long do I have to submit data?

The timeline for this data collection is July 31, 2020 through November 13, 2020.

Which programs should I report on for this data collection?

Please submit a utility energy assistance program survey for **EACH** program that your utility administers. If you administer a program for another utility, such as a natural gas utility, please fill out a survey for that program.

For all programs run by a third party using utility funds or for funds passed through from organizations to individuals or specific households please fill out the Excel document that can be found on the energy assistance website.

What is considered “low-income” for this data collection?

For the purposes of this data collection, Commerce will accept information on any program that is at or below either the 200 percent federal poverty level (FPL) or 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold.

All relevant definitions for this survey and authorization and provisions relating to this work can be found below.

Should I report data for a program that serves both low-income and other households? Should I report data for a program that serves all customers without discerning low-income households?

Yes. Programs need not exclusively serve low-income households to be reported on this survey. Please report all data for programs that serve low-income households, even if you are not able to discern how many low-income households. We will ask you to report on all participants if you are unable to separate low-income household data.

Should I report data for a program that serves only a targeted income bracket?

Yes. All programs that serve households below the low-income thresholds (80% AMI and 200% FPL) are eligible low-income programs.

Should I report Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) data?

No. Commerce will pull this data from its own records.

Can I get a copy of my survey once it is completed?

Unfortunately, Survey Monkey does not all respondents to have their responses sent to them. If you would like your responses please email Sarah Vorpahl (sarah.vorpahl@commerce.wa.gov). Commerce will also provide a word document so that respondents can fill out their responses prior to filling out the survey and save a copy for their records.

Where will this data be posted?

The aggregated data from all electric utilities will be made available on the Commerce energy assistance website along with all other data required by 19.405.120(3) and (4).

Definitions

Low Income

[RCW 19.405.020\(25\)](#) states:

Low-income means household incomes as defined by the department or commission, provided that the definition may not exceed the higher of eighty percent of area median household income or two hundred percent of the federal poverty level, adjusted for household size.

Commerce will require a definition for low-income under this provision to implement the requirement that utilities offer energy assistance to make programs and funding available for energy assistance to low-income households by July 31, 2021 [\[RCW 19.405.120\(2\)\]](#).

For the purposes of this data collection, Commerce will accept information on any program that is at or below either the 200 percent federal poverty level (FPL) or 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold.

Energy Assistance Need

Pursuant to [RCW 19.405.020\(16\)](#), Commerce and the Commission determine the threshold for energy assistance need at six percent energy burden. This definition comes from a widely accepted principle that total shelter costs should not exceed 30 percent of income and that utility costs should not exceed 20 percent of those shelter costs, leading to the conclusion that an affordable energy burden should be at or below six percent of household income (20% x 30% = 6%).

Energy Burden

Energy burden is defined in [RCW 19.405.020\(17\)](#) as follows: "Energy burden" means the share of annual household income used to pay annual home energy bills.

Energy burden for the purposes of RCW 19.405.120 RCW can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{energy burden} = \frac{\text{annual home energy bills}}{\text{annual household income}}$$

Energy burden is limited to expenses for residential or domestic purposes. This includes any fuel source for energy (i.e. electricity, natural gas, propane, wood, etc.) and excludes non-energy utilities and transportation-related energy expenses. To the extent feasible, it excludes electricity expenses for electric vehicle charging, home businesses, and agricultural or irrigation purposes.

Authorization and Provisions

RCW [19.405.120](#)

Energy assistance for low-income households.

(3) Beginning July 31, 2020, the department must collect and aggregate data estimating the energy burden and energy assistance need and reported energy assistance for each electric utility, in order to improve agency and utility efforts to serve low-income households with energy assistance. The department must update the aggregated data on a biennial basis, make it publicly accessible on its internet web site and, to the extent practicable, include geographic attributes.

[...]

(b) Each utility must disclose information to the department for use under this subsection, including:

(i) The amount and type of energy assistance and the number and type of households, if applicable, served for programs administered by the utility;

(ii) The amount of money passed through to third parties that administer energy assistance programs; and

(iii) Subject to availability, any other information related to the utility's low-income assistance programs that is requested by the department.

(c) The information required by (b) of this subsection must be from the electric utility's most recent completed budget period and in a form, timeline, and manner as prescribed by the department.

Survey Questions

A full list of questions can be found on the energy assistance website, including a word version. Please note that you will need to fill out a survey for each program that is administered by your utility and complete the Excel file for all programs administered by a third party using utility funds or pass through dollars from third parties to individuals.

Please note the questions numbers can vary from your survey depending on which questions you need to answer.

Utility Information

This page asks for identifying information for the utility and contact person. Please identify one person that will be the contact for this data collection. You will need to enter this information every time you complete a survey to help keep our data clean and organized.

You will need the following pieces of information to complete this portion of the survey:

* 1. Please enter utility Information

Contact Name	<input type="text"/>
Company	<input type="text"/>
EIA Identification Number	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
State/Province	<input type="text" value="-- select state --"/>
ZIP/Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

* 2. Please list zip codes served (e.g. for both fully and partially) separated by commas.

You can find you “EIA Identification Number” by referring to the table on the energy assistance website.

You should enter all zip codes, separated by commas, including those partially served by your utility.

Program Information

Program Name: Enter the name of the program (ex. Low-Income Rate Program).

3. Please enter Program Name (e.g. Low-Income Discount Rate)

Program Type:

Please select the description for the program type from the perspective of the customer.

“Short term Program” refers to monthly, bi-monthly or annual payments, or other offsets to billing.

“Long term Program” refers to measures that create sustained energy savings, such as heating, air-sealing, insulation, windows or other energy efficiency measures.

“Crisis/Emergency Program” is typically a one-time financial assistance or arrangement to prevent service shut offs or interruptions.

If none of these terms describe your program, please choose “Other” and provide a short description of your program.

* 4. Please select one program type. (See Instructions for program type descriptions).

☐ Short term Program

☐ Long term Program

☐ Crisis/Emergency Program

☐ Other (please specify)

Energy Assistance Type

This question asks you to describe the type of energy assistance this program provides. Please refer to the table below to see the all options for energy assistance types and sub-types.


Energy Assistance Type <i>(Sub-Types in Italics)</i>	
Energy Bill Assistance <i>Utility Payment</i> <i>Emergency Assistance</i> <i>Shut-Off Protection</i> <i>Other</i>	Rates <i>Utility Discount Rate</i> <i>Other</i> Renewables <i>Community Solar</i> <i>Other</i> Demand Response Program Arrearage Management Percentage of Payment Plan
Energy Efficiency <i>Rebate</i> <i>Grants</i> <i>Low-Income Weatherization</i> <i>Direct Install</i> <i>Loan</i> <i>Other</i>	

Depending on your selection you may be asked to provide a more specific type of program. If you do not see your program's type in the table, please select "Other" and the next question will prompt you to provide more information. Please only choose one energy assistance type and one sub-type for each program.

For example, if you select "Energy Bill Assistance" you will be directed to select a sub-type of that assistance for your next question:

First, choose energy assistance type:

* 5. Please select one energy assistance type.

- ☐ Energy Bill Assistance 
- ☐ Energy Efficiency
- ☐ Rates
- ☐ Renewable Energy
- ☐ Demand Response
- ☐ Arrearage Management
- ☐ Percent of Payment Plan
- ☐ Other

Second, choose energy assistance sub-type:

Energy Bill Assistance Type

6. Please select one energy bill assistance type.

- ☐ Utility Payment
- ☐ Emergency Assistance
- ☐ Shut-Off Protection
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If you choose "Other" as your energy assistance type, you will directed type in the assistance type:

Other Energy Assistance Type

6. Please enter the type of energy assistance covered by this program.

Energy Type

Energy Type: Choose the type of energy that the utility program is directed to assist. Select all that apply.

7. Please select all energy types that are covered by this program.

- ☐ Electricity
- ☐ Natural Gas
- ☐ Heating Oil
- ☐ Wood
- ☐ Propane
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Funding Pt. 1

The next several questions deal with funding for your program. [RCW 19.405.120](#) mandates that all electric utilities in Washington make programs and funding available for low-income households and prioritize those with high energy burden by July 31, 2021. Therefore, it will be important that utilities are able to identify how much money they spend specifically on low-income households. However, we recognize that all utilities may not be able to determine the amount of funds from a program going to low-income households at this time. Therefore, we intend to collect information on all programs that may service low-income households.

For the purposes of this data collection, Commerce will accept information on any program, or portion of a program, that is at or below either the 200 percent federal poverty level (FPL) or 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold. Programs exclusively serving households at income levels below these thresholds are considered low-income programs (ex. a program with an eligibility of 150% FPL). If the program you are reporting is specific to low-income households, or you can separate low-income participants, please select “Yes.”. Otherwise select “No” and you will be asked to report the total number of households in this program. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for further explanation of which programs you should report in this survey if you are unsure.

* 13. Does this program exclusively serve low-income households or are you able to separately identify funding for low-income households?

For the purposes of this data collection, Commerce will accept information on any program, or portion of a program, that is at or below either the 200 percent federal poverty level (FPL) or 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold. Programs exclusively serving households at income levels below these thresholds are considered low-income programs (ex. a program with an eligibility of 150% FPL). See Instructions for further details on these thresholds.

☐ Yes

☐ No

For either answer, you will be asked to report the amount of money in dollars per year (from January 2019 to December 2019) for the given program. We will also ask that you separate out funds spent on households or measures from the costs for operations and maintenance of the program. We also ask that you report all values in whole dollars and do not include any symbols such as the dollar sign. So if your program disburses \$2304.84, please report this value as “2305.”

For “Yes,” report on low-income funding:

14. Please report the amount of money in dollars per year for 2019 given to low-income households or spent on measures for this program for low-income households. Please enter operations and maintenance costs for this program separately on the indicated line.

Please report funding in whole dollars and do not include symbols (ex. \$2304.84 = 2305).

For the purposes of this data collection, Commerce will accept information on any program, or portion of a program, that is at or below either the 200 percent federal poverty level (FPL) or 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold. Programs exclusively serving households at income levels below these thresholds are considered low-income programs (ex. a program with an eligibility of 150% FPL). See Instructions for further details on these thresholds.

Funds Disbursed or
Spent on Program
Measures

Operations and
Maintenance Costs

For “No,” report on aggregated funding:

15. Please report the total money in dollars/year for 2019 given to all households or spent on this program. Please enter operations and maintenance costs for this program separately on the indicated line.

Please report funding in whole dollars and do not include symbols (ex. \$2304.84 = 2305).

Funds Disbursed or
Spent on Program
Measures

Operations and
Maintenance Costs

Funding Pt. 2

Funding Source: Please report funding from all sources used for this program.

* 16. Where does the funding come from for this program? Please enter total funds in whole dollars for each funding source that applies (e.x. \$2304.84 = 2305). If the funding source does not apply to this program, please leave box blank. If you receive funds from a source(s) not listed, please enter total amount of other sources under "Other".

Federal Program (i.e. LIHEAP)	<input type="text"/>
Utility Funds	<input type="text"/>
Bonneville Power Administration Energy Efficiency Incentive	<input type="text"/>
Commerce	<input type="text"/>
Ratepayer Donations	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

Number of Households Served

These questions ask you to identify how many households are served by this program. As with the funding section, if you cannot determine the number of low-income households served, please select "No" and report the total number of households served.

17. Are you able to determine the number of low-income households for this program?

For the purposes of this data collection, Commerce will accept information on any program, or portion of a program, that is at or below either the 200 percent federal poverty level (FPL) or 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold. Programs exclusively serving households at income levels below these thresholds are considered low-income programs (ex. a program with an eligibility of 150% FPL). See Instructions for further details on these thresholds.

☐ Yes

☐ No

For “Yes,” report on low-income households:

18. Please report the number of low-income households served by this program.

For the purposes of this data collection, Commerce will accept information on any program, or portion of a program, that is at or below either the 200 percent federal poverty level (FPL) or 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold. Programs exclusively serving households at income levels below these thresholds are considered low-income programs (ex. a program with an eligibility of 150% FPL). See Instructions for further details on these thresholds.

For “No,” report on all households:

19. Please report the total number of households served by this program.

Housing Type

This question asks for the number and type of housing served by this program. Please see the list of housing types in the table below. We understand that utilities may not have this information. If you collect any type of data on this category, even if only partially, check “Yes.” If you do not collect data on housing types for this program, check “No.”

For reporting any data on housing types, please enter what information you collect, utilizing the “Other” box if a category does not exist for your needs. If you have only one type of information and aggregate data for the rest, please report aggregate data under other. For example, if you only collected data in “Single Family” housing type for this program, report that under the appropriate line and report all other housing types as one value under “Other.”

If you do not collect data on housing types for this program, please report the number of housing types in your service territory using the Department of Energy’s Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (DOE LEAD) tool. See the end of this document for instructions for how to find your information for your utility using this tool.

Housing Type

Single family

2-4 family

5+ family

Manufactured
Homes

RV

Other

* 20. Can you provide the total number of households by housing type for this program (i.e. single family vs multifamily)? " If you collect any type of data on this category, even if only partially, check "Yes". If you do not collect data on housing types for this program, check "No".

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

21. Please enter the number of households for each housing type. If households are from a housing type not listed, please enter number of households under "Other".

If you can only identify certain household types, please enter the number of households under the appropriate type and enter the amount of all other households under "Other" (ex. The utility only identifies "Single Family" homes for a program. Enter the number of households for "Single Family" and all other households in the program that cannot be identified as "Other").

If there are no households from a particular housing type, please leave that line blank.

Single Family	<input type="text"/>
2-4 Family	<input type="text"/>
5+ Family	<input type="text"/>
RV	<input type="text"/>
Manufactured Homes	<input type="text"/>
Other Housing Type	<input type="text"/>

If no:

15. Please use the [DOE Low-Income Energy Affordability Data \(LEAD\) tool](#) to report number of household types in your service territory for each housing type below. (See Instructions for how to find this information using the DOE LEAD tool).

1 unit detached	
1 unit attached	
2 units	
3-4 units	
5-9 units	
10-19 units	
20-49 units	
50+ units	
Other	

Housing Status

This question asks for the number and status of housing served by this program. Please see the list of housing status in the table below. We understand that utilities may not have this information. If you collect any type of data on this category, even if only partially, check “Yes”. If you do not collect data on housing status for this program, check “No”. If you do not collect data on housing status for this program, we will ask you to report the number of renter-occupied and owner-occupied houses in your service territory using the Department of Energy’s Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (DOE LEAD) tool. See the end of this document for instructions for how to find your information for your utility using this tool.

Housing Status

Owner occupied
Renter occupied
Subsidized
Roomer/Boarder
Temp Housing
Other

* 23. Can you provide the total number of households by housing status for this program (i.e renter-occupied vs owner-occupied)? If you collect any type of data on this category, even if only partially, check "Yes". If you do not collect data on housing types for this program, check "No".

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

24. Please enter the number of households for each housing status. If households are from a housing status not listed, please enter number of households under "Other".

If you can only identify a certain household status, please enter the number of households under the appropriate status and enter the amount of all other households under "Other" (ex. The utility only identifies "Owner-Occupied" homes for a program. Enter the number of households for "Owner-Occupied" and all other households in the program that cannot be identified as "Other").

If there are no households from a particular housing status, please leave that line blank.

Owner-Occupied	<input type="text"/>
Renter-Occupied	<input type="text"/>
Subsidized	<input type="text"/>
Roomer/Boarder	<input type="text"/>
Temp Housing	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

If no:

25. Please use the [DOE Low-Income Energy Affordability Data \(LEAD\) tool](#) to report the number of households in your service territory for each housing status below. (See Instructions for how to find this information using the DOE LEAD tool).

Renter-Occupied	<input type="text"/>
Owner-Occupied	<input type="text"/>

Qualifications for this Program

This question asks for the type of qualifications for this program. We understand that utilities may not have this information.

For income qualification, please list all that apply separated by a comma. Please include thresholds, such as state median income, that may not be part of the low-income definition in CETA.

* 26. Please report the income level qualification for this program (e.g. 150% Federal Poverty Level). If there are multiple income level qualifications for this program (i.e. both FPL and AMI) please enter both separated by a comma. If there is no income qualification for this program please type "None". If you do not know please type "Unknown".

The next two questions ask about ways that households are qualified for this program other than income eligibility. Please choose all ways that households are qualified as eligible for this program. If a secondary metric is used to prioritize households after an initial eligibility requirement, please report that in the second question on priorities.

* 27. Do you use another program or method to qualify participants for this program? Choose all that apply. If you do not use a program to determine eligibility for this program please select "None". Selecting answers under this question can be in addition to the income qualifications entered above and are not meant to be an either or choice.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income Qualified Program (e.g. SNAP) <i>Please type which program(s) under "Other"</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Utility Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Self-Certification | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 28. Please select all other qualifications that are used to determine eligibility for this program. Choose all that apply.

If a qualification is used to prioritize households after an initial eligibility requirement, please enter those qualifications under the priority question below.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Type |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran Status | <input type="checkbox"/> Race/Ethnicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Burden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Census Tract | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 29. Please select all qualifications that are used to determine priority for this program. Choose all that apply. Priority is a qualification that is used after an initial eligibility determination. For example, if a program uses income to qualify households and then prioritizes veterans and seniors, please select "Age" and "Veteran Status" below. However, if those qualifications are used to initially qualify a household, please enter those under the eligibility question above.

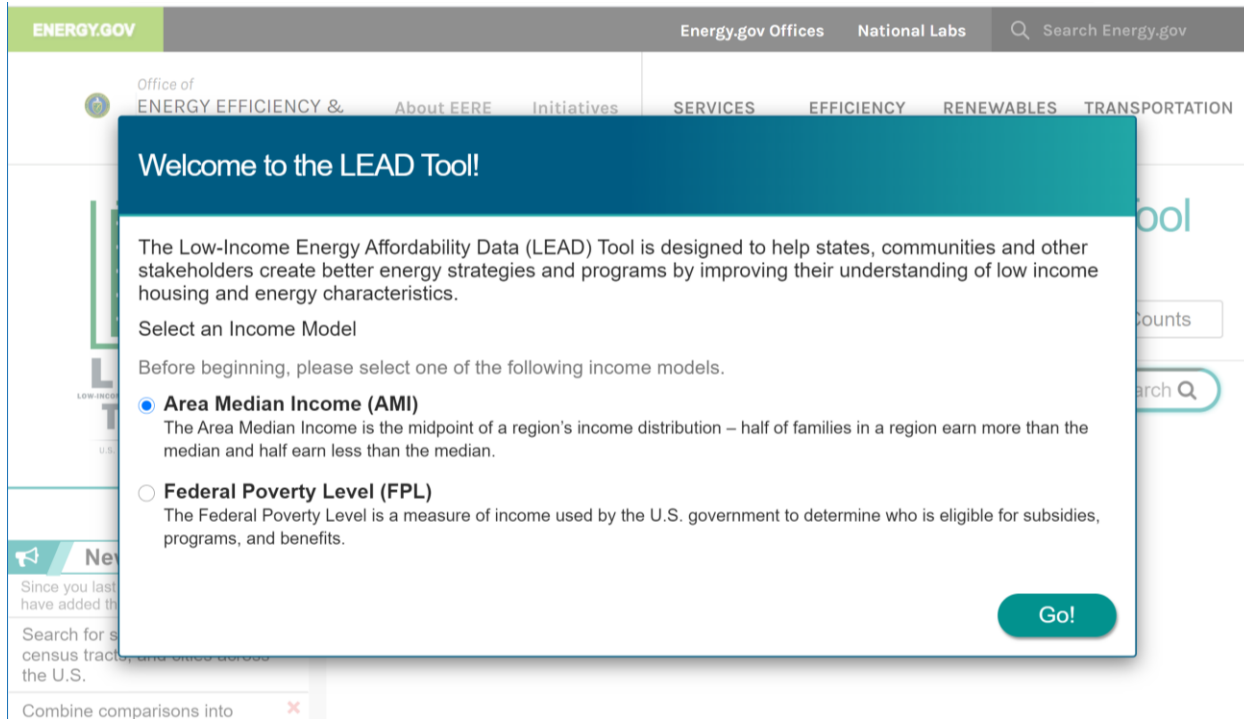
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Race/Ethnicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran Status | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Burden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> High Energy Users |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Census Tract | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Type | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

Congratulations, you have reached the end of the survey! If you would like a copy of your answers please email Sarah Vorpahl (sarah.vorpahl@commerce.wa.gov).

Instructions for DOE LEAD tool

Please follow the hyperlink or enter the website into our browser:

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/slsc/maps/lead-tool>. You will be prompted to choose an income model. You may select either federal poverty level or area median income to collect this data. It will not affect your results.



The screenshot shows the DOE LEAD Tool interface. At the top is the ENERGY.GOV logo and navigation links for Energy.gov Offices, National Labs, and a search bar. Below this is the Office of ENERGY EFFICIENCY & About EERE Initiatives. The main content area is titled "Welcome to the LEAD Tool!" and explains the tool's purpose: "The Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool is designed to help states, communities and other stakeholders create better energy strategies and programs by improving their understanding of low income housing and energy characteristics." It then prompts the user to "Select an Income Model" and provides two options: "Area Median Income (AMI)" and "Federal Poverty Level (FPL)". The AMI option is selected by default. A "Go!" button is located at the bottom right of the selection area.

Welcome to the LEAD Tool!

The Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool is designed to help states, communities and other stakeholders create better energy strategies and programs by improving their understanding of low income housing and energy characteristics.

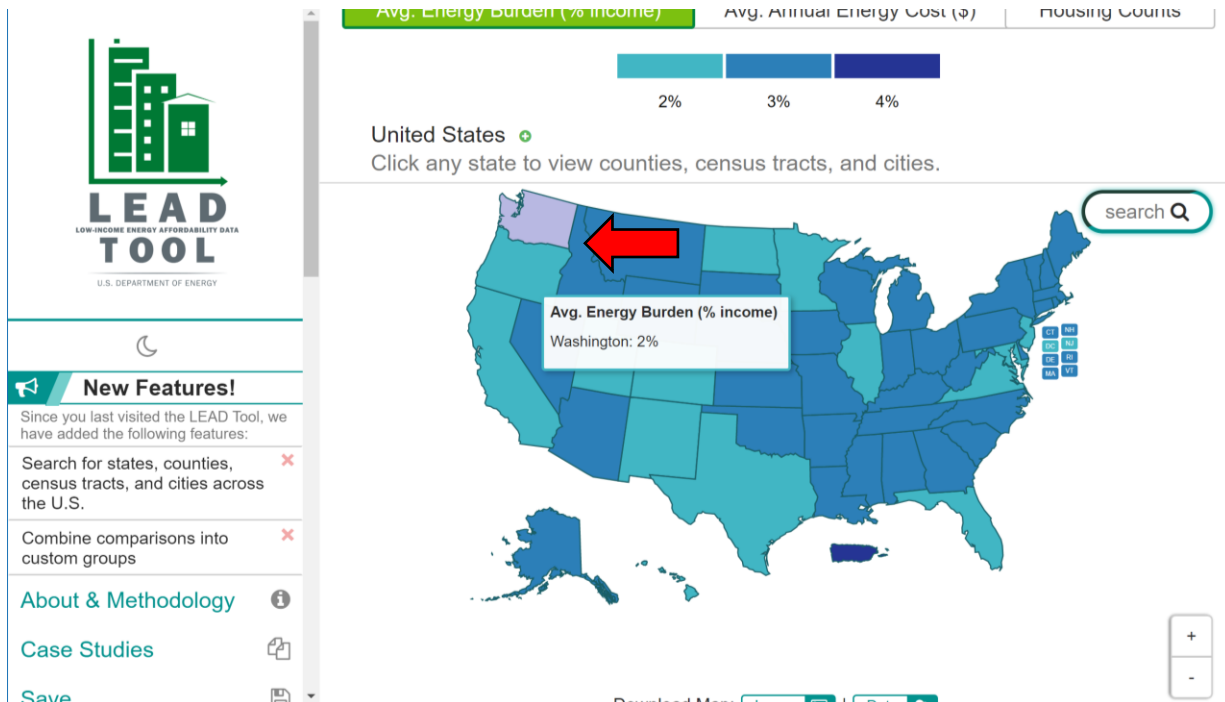
Select an Income Model

Before beginning, please select one of the following income models.

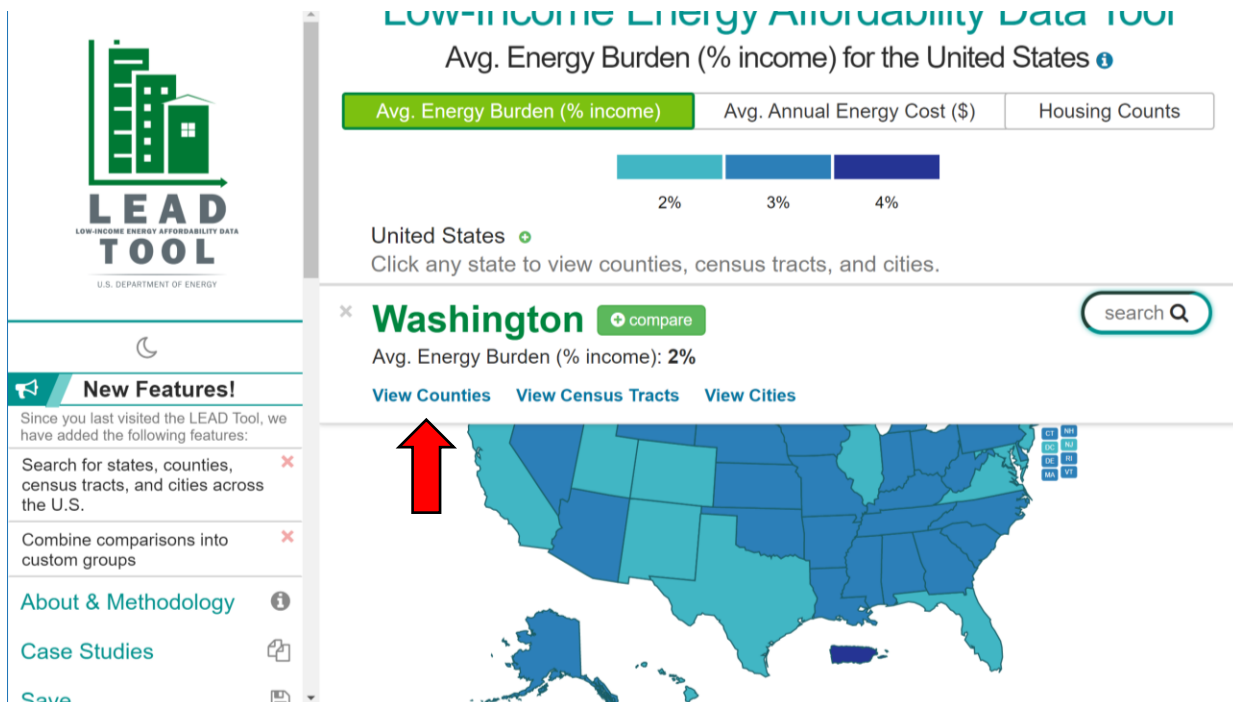
- ☒ **Area Median Income (AMI)**
The Area Median Income is the midpoint of a region's income distribution – half of families in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median.
- ☐ **Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**
The Federal Poverty Level is a measure of income used by the U.S. government to determine who is eligible for subsidies, programs, and benefits.

Go!

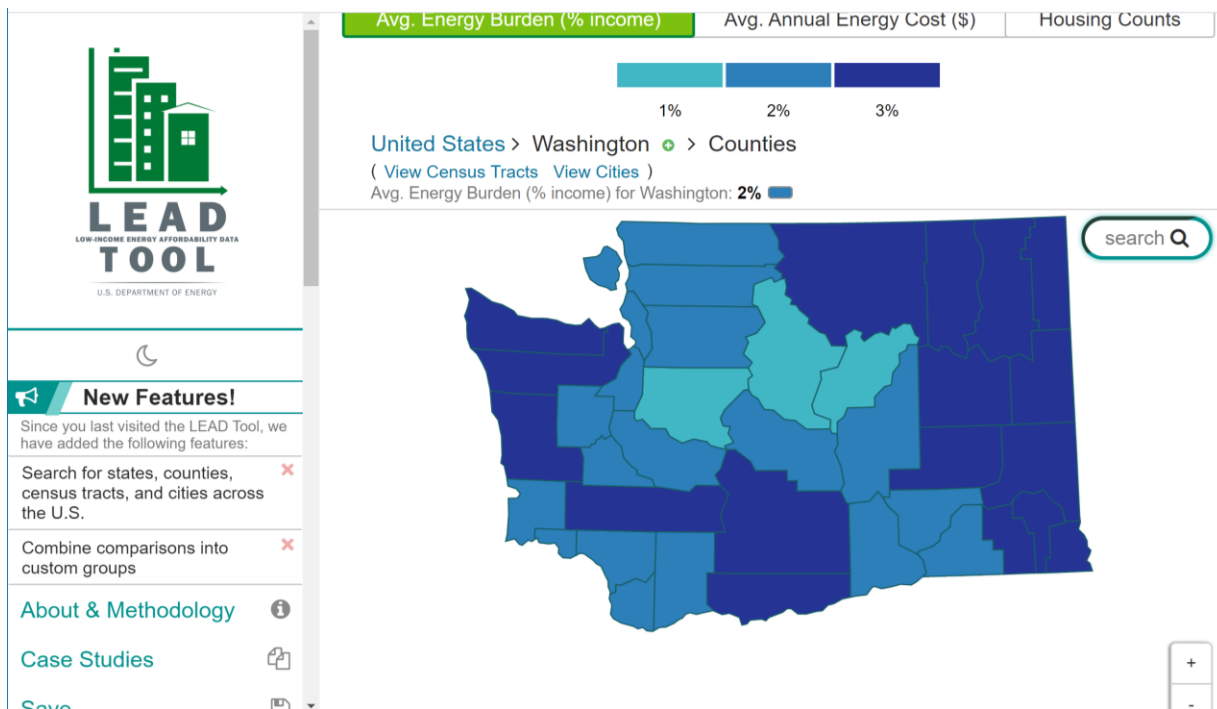
Select Washington State from the map:



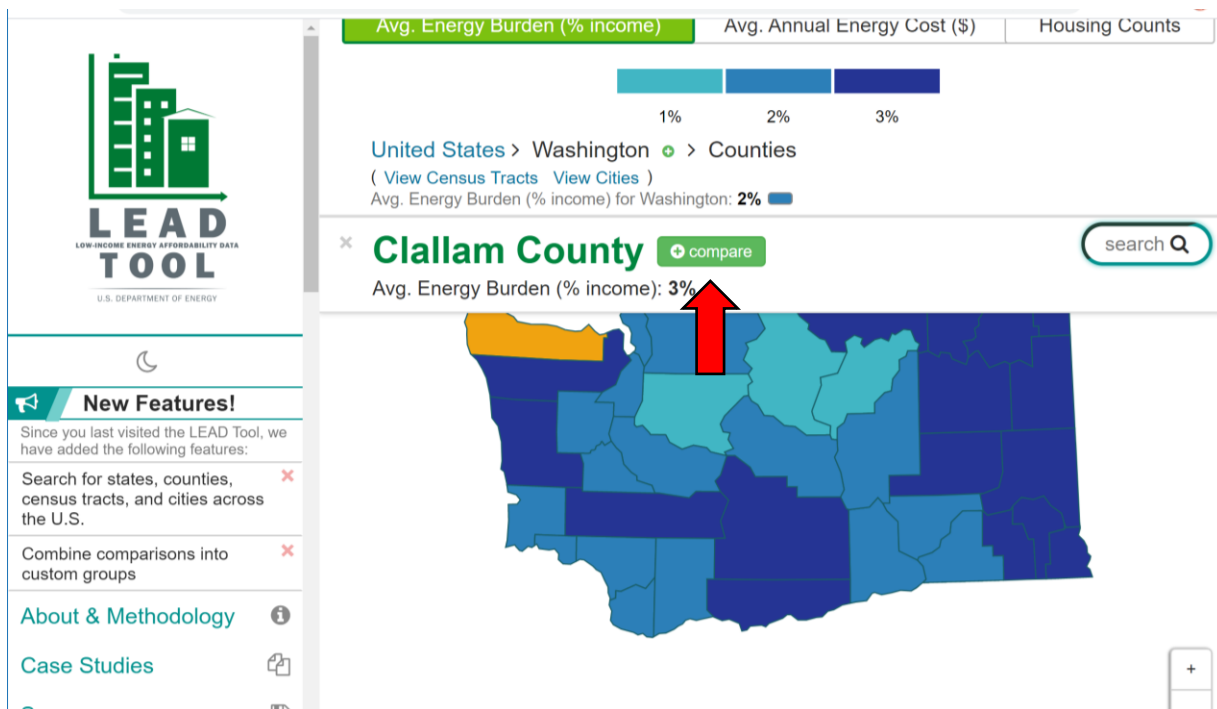
Choose the best jurisdictional boundary for your utility. I will use Clallam County PUD as an example here:



You should see a map of Washington broken down into the jurisdictional boundary you have chosen.



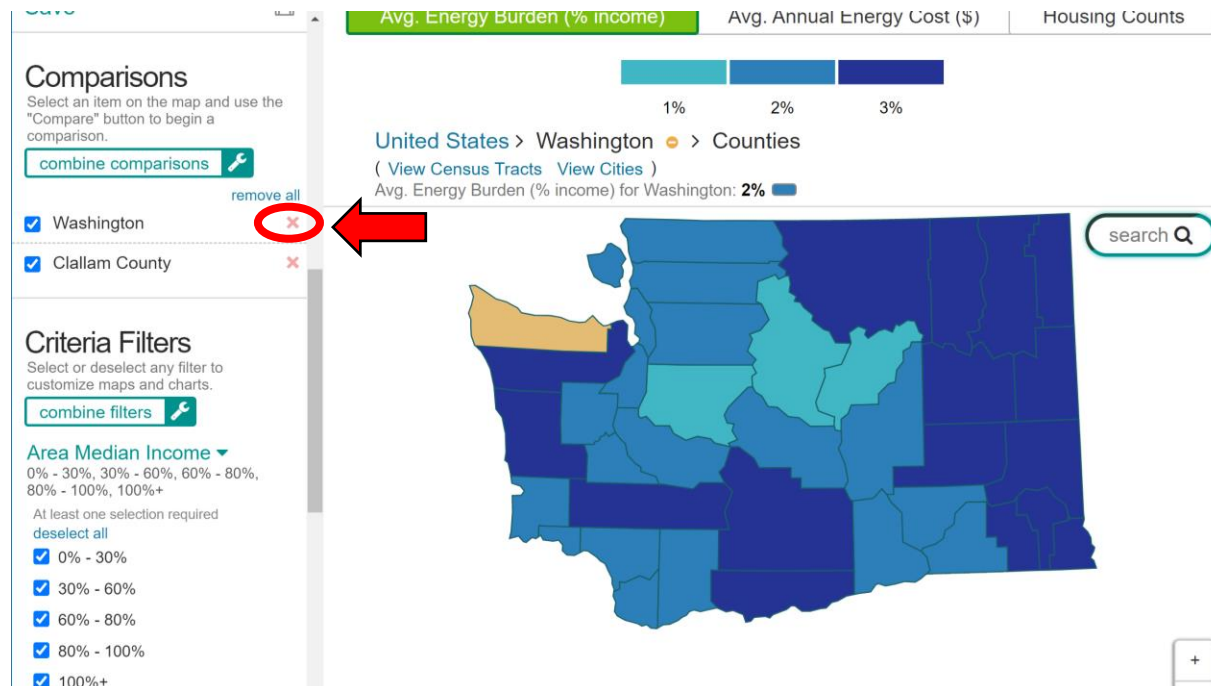
Select your service territory and click the green “compare” button.



Now look to the right hand scroll bar and scroll down to the section titled “Comparison”. De-select “Washington” from this column. You should now be only left with data for your jurisdiction. If you chose

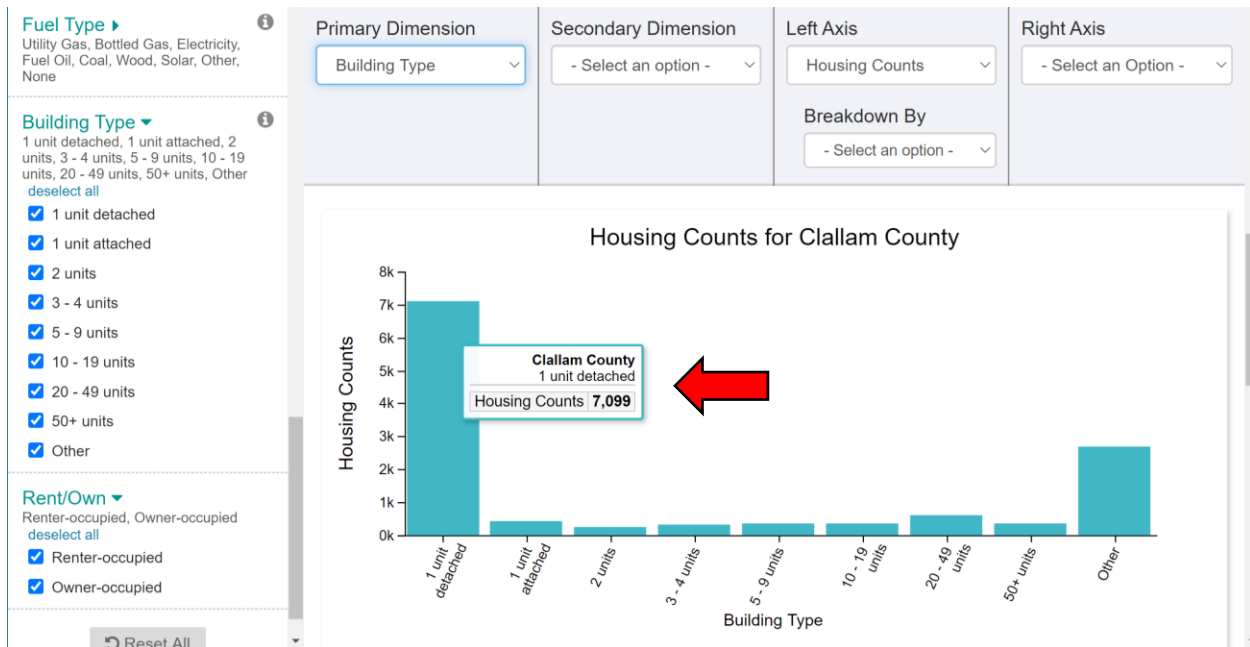
to use census tracts, you can select multiple census tracts to compare and see all the data at once. Or, you can choose to do one census tract at a time.

If you need to subtract an area from your service territory, you will need to collect the information for that jurisdiction and subtract from the value you record for the full area. For example, for Clallam PUD the City of Port Angeles would need to be subtracted. After recording the numbers for Clallam County, select “View Cities” and find Port Angeles. Record the values for Port Angeles and subtract from the values for Clallam County. A similar method can be used to add jurisdictions that may be part of the utilities service territory.



Now that you have selected the area you want to investigate, return to the main part of the page and scroll down below the map to the bar chart display.

Here you can choose which data you want to investigate. For housing type select “Building Type” as the Primary Dimension and “Housing Counts” as the left axis. You can toggle over each building type to see how many houses fall under that category. This is the number you will report for the survey. The survey categories match the DOE LEAD categories.



For housing status, you should select “Rent/Own” for the primary dimension and leave “Housing Counts” as the left axis. You can again toggle over each category to find the value you will report for the survey.

