

Advancing Affordability

A Resource Toolkit from RMI | November 2026

Transmission Affordability

America's grid is aging rapidly. Modernizing the grid by upgrading old equipment and building new transmission lines will be essential to maintain reliable electricity service while keeping overall rates affordable. Ensuring that transmission investments are made in as affordable a manner as possible will be critical for making sure this buildout does not strain ratepayers' ability to pay.

RMI's new ***Transmission Affordability Resource Guide*** provides state and federal regulators and policymakers with eight tools that they can leverage to ensure transmission investments are made in an affordable manner. These tools can be grouped into four categories:

- **Get more out of the existing grid** by leveraging advanced transmission technologies (ATTs) and storage as a transmission asset (SATA) (Tools #1 and #2)
- **Conduct better planning and regulatory oversight** by closing the regulatory gap for local transmission projects and establishing a federal consumer advocate or independent transmission monitor (Tools #3 and #4)
- **Require cost containment provisions and variance analyses to keep costs low** when project plans or budgets may change (Tools #5 and #6)
- **Lower financing costs for transmission projects** by leveraging public financing opportunities and reforming return on equity (ROE) policy (Tools #7 and #8)

RMI technical experts remain ready to assist states with implementing these tools. If you are interested in free technical assistance, please email **electricity-contact@rmi.org.**

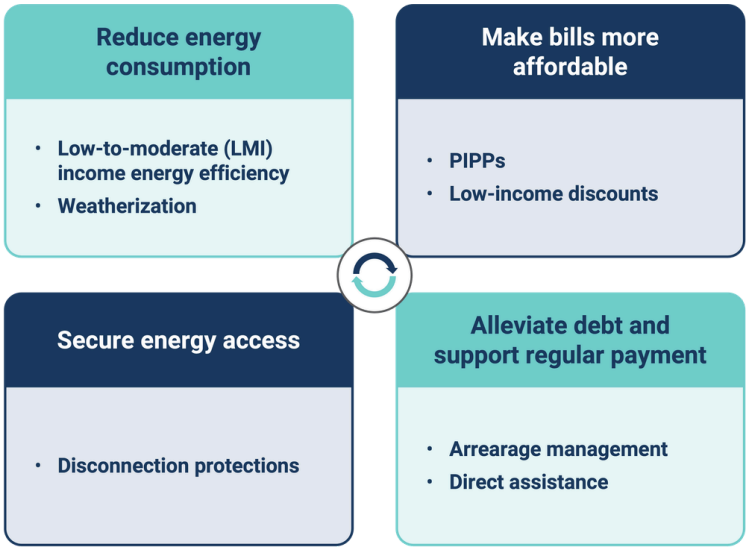
Scan to access ***Transmission Affordability Resource Guide***

A Practical Guide for Improving Energy Affordability

Millions of households across the United States struggle to afford the energy needed to safely power, heat, and cool their homes. Nearly one in three U.S. households experiences some form of energy insecurity, and an estimated one in six households is behind on utility bills.

RMI's upcoming ***Targeted Customer Affordability Programs*** report provides regulators and policymakers with a practical guide to policies that can help make bills more affordable, alleviate utility debt, protect access to electricity, and reduce household energy consumption.

Framework to Address Energy Affordability



The report examines three broad categories of approaches:

- **Bill assistance**, including recurring support such as flat and tiered discount rates, flat and tiered bill credits, bill caps, and arrearage management plans, as well as one-time bill credits and arrearage relief.
- **Complementary policies**, including shutoff protections, fee limitations, and income-qualified energy efficiency and weatherization.
- **Program implementation strategies**, including approaches to funding and cost recovery and strategies to expand access through data sharing, automatic enrollment, self-attestation, and targeted outreach.

Different program structures involve different tradeoffs. The report compares how these approaches vary in their ability to target assistance, reduce customer burdens, support participation, and manage administrative complexity and program costs.

The report also examines pathways to adoption, including the roles of legislatures, governors, public utility commissions, utilities, and other stakeholders. For commissions, it identifies regulatory venues that can be used to evaluate affordability challenges and advance reforms within existing authority.

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