Research Team

• Roger Colton with Fisher, Sheehan, and Colton (Belmont, MA)
• Erin Rose and Beth Hawkins with Three³, Inc. (Knoxville, TN)
• Forest Gregg with DataMade (Chicago, IL)
Research Methods

• KUB provided a complete record of disconnect and past due account data for census tracts in their service territory.

• Majority of findings are limited to the census tracts within Knoxville that receive all four KUB services: electric, gas, water, and sewer.

• Each researcher used KUB data supplemented by income, demographic, and other data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.

• For information on the methods used by each of the researchers, please visit [www.knoxvillewea.org/](http://www.knoxvillewea.org/)
Knoxville Utility Burden
A household is **utility burdened** if its KUB costs for **electric**, **gas**, **water**, and **sewer** are **greater than 10%** of the household’s **annual income**.

**Affordable**

- 4% of income on **water**
- 6% of income on **energy**

**Unaffordable**

- > 10% of income on **utilities**
Knoxville Households living below 150% poverty are likely utility burdened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty Level</th>
<th>Income (2020)</th>
<th>Utility Burden Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40-50%</td>
<td>$8,620</td>
<td>27-47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99%</td>
<td>$17,240</td>
<td>15-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-124%</td>
<td>$21,550</td>
<td>15-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125-149%</td>
<td>$23,791</td>
<td>10-21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-184%</td>
<td>$31,894</td>
<td>5-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185-199%</td>
<td>$34,840</td>
<td>5-15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23% of ALL Knoxville Households are utility burdened

20% of Knoxville Homeowners are utility burdened
28% of Knoxville Renters are utility burdened
By Race and Homeowner

40% of Black Households in Knoxville are utility burdened
Compared to
21% of White Households in Knoxville are utility burdened

28% of Black Homeowners in Knoxville are utility burdened
Compared to
19% of White Homeowners in Knoxville are utility burdened

Renters

50% of Black Renters in Knoxville are utility burdened
Compared to
23% of White Renters in Knoxville are utility burdened
KUB Past Due Accounts and Disconnections
Despite utility bill assistance, many low-income households remained PAST DUE on their KUB accounts when disconnections restarted in October 2020.

- 15% of households in higher poverty census tracks were past due
- 11% of households in poor majority White census tracks were past due
- 24% of households in majority Non-White census tracts were past due
PAST DUE: Average Percentage of Households in Census Tracts with PAST DUE KUB Accounts in October 2020 and January 2021

- KUB Average
- Point of Diversion
- October '20
- January '21

Census tracts with:
- Majority non-White population
- Black population above 17% (Knoxville population)
- Higher (above average) poverty rates
- Majority White population
- Lower (below average) poverty rates
  (Average Across KUB service territory)
Communities of Color owed 2 times more in past due accounts in October 2020.

On average, households in majority Non-White census tracts in Knoxville owed about $200,000 in collective debt to KUB in October 2020; compared to about $100,000 owed by poor, majority White population census tracts.
3,000

Knoxville homes were **DISCONNECTED** from water and energy after KUB lifted its moratorium on disconnections during the pandemic; between October 2020 and February 2021.
Across the KUB service territory, as the Black population in a census tract INCREASES, so does the disconnection rate. However, as the White population increases, the disconnection rate DECREASES.

KNOXVILLE Communities of Color are 200% more likely to be DISCONNECTED from power and water.
1 in 15 Homes

In the census tract with the highest disconnection rate of 6.8%, approximately 1 in 15 homes were disconnected from power and water.

(October 2020 – February 2021)
Save the date!
KWEA Summit
June 24th @ 5:30pm

Join us to discuss and advance affordable utilities for all of Knoxville. Discover how you can be part of the solution!

KnoxvilleWEA@gmail.com
KnoxvilleWEA.org
KnoxvilleWEA
@KnoxvilleWEA