

# **2012 AARP SURVEY OF WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENTS AGE 45 AND OLDER ON ELECTRIC UTILITIES**

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## 2012 AARP SURVEY OF WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENTS AGE 45 AND OLDER ON ELECTRIC UTILITIES

The AARP West Virginia State Office in response to its commitment to ensure affordable electric rates and consumer protections for all residents commissioned this survey to explore the views of residents 45 years and older regarding utility affordability, power restoration following storms and consumer protections.

These results are based on a telephone survey of West Virginia resident's age 45 years and older fielded November 30 to December 4, 2012. A total of 700 interviews were completed yielding a margin of error  $\pm 3.8$  percent. A detailed methodology is on page 3, and an annotated survey of the weighted responses begins on page 4.

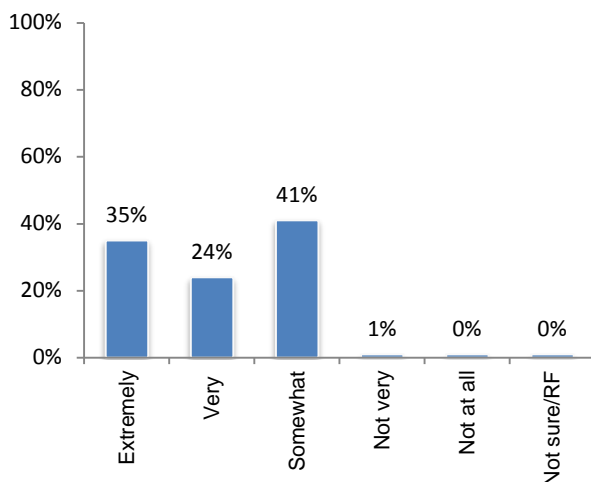
### SURVEY-IN-BRIEF

Like many others around the country, residents in West Virginia are concerned with the rising costs of heating and cooling their homes. When utility companies propose rate increases, consumers want their interest protected.

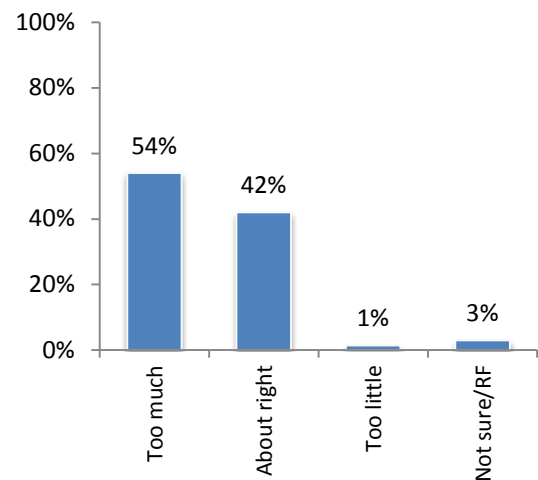
To heat or cool their homes, about half of residents age 45 and older in West Virginia utilize electricity or natural gas (42 percent utilize electricity only, 7 percent utilize natural gas only and 48 percent use both electricity and gas).

Nearly all residents age 45 and older report they are concerned about the rising costs of heating and cooling their homes. Fifty-eight percent say they are extremely or very concerned about the rising costs of heating and cooling their homes; and another 41 percent say they are somewhat concerned. In fact, only one percent says they are not very or not at all concerned. In addition, more than one-half of residents who use electricity or both electricity and natural gas, also believe they are paying too much for electricity.

**Concern About Cost of Cooling/Heating Home**  
n=700

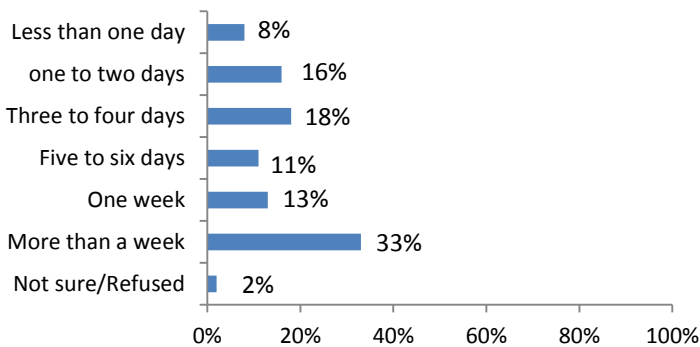


**Amount Paid for Electricity**  
n=630

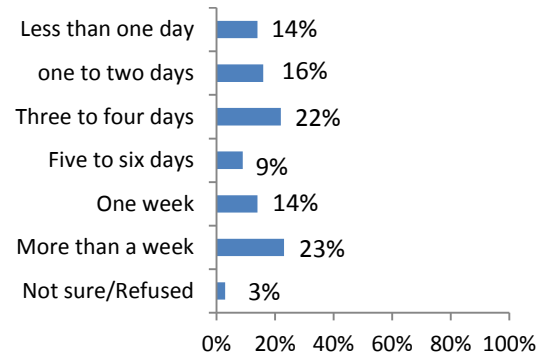


In the past year, West Virginia has experienced two major storms, a Derecho in June 2012 and Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. Eighty-five percent of residents age 45 and older say they or someone they know lost power in the Derecho, and 58 percent say they or someone they know lost power during Hurricane Sandy. Of these residents, nearly half say that during the Derecho, power was out for a week or more. Additionally, more than one-third (36%) of these residents indicate that during Hurricane Sandy, power was lost for a week or more.

**Days Without Power During Derecho in June 2012  
(n=591)**

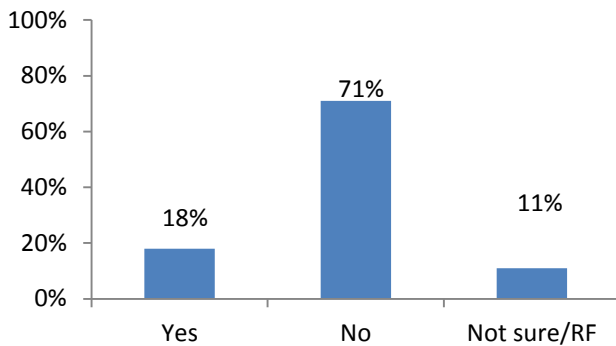


**Days Without Power During Hurricane Sandy in October 2012  
(n=406)**

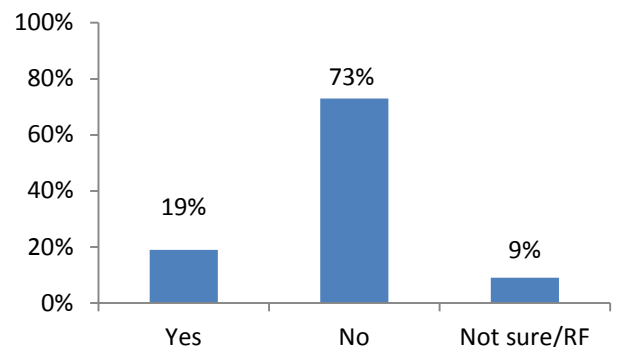


When there is a proposal to raise electricity or gas rates, most West Virginia residents age 45 and older believe their interests are not considered. Most residents age 45 and older don't believe their state elected officials are doing enough to help people affected by rising electricity costs. In addition, 68 percent support legislation that requires state regulators to consider reliability issues and storm recovery when making decisions about rate increases.

**Are Elected Officials Doing Enough to Help People Affected by Rising Electric Costs?  
(n=700)**



**Are the Interests of Residential Customers Represented and Taken Into Consideration When Rate Increases are Proposed  
(n=700)**



## **METHODOLOGY**

The 2012 AARP Survey of West Virginia Residents Age 45 and Older on Electric Utilities was a telephone survey of 700 West Virginia residents age 45 and older drawn at random. The survey examined public opinion about utility rates and services in West Virginia. The survey was approximately ten minutes in length. The interviews were conducted in English by Precision Opinion from November 30 to December 4, 2012. The sample was weighted by age and gender. The margin of error for the random sample of 700 West Virginia residents is +/-3.8%.

### **Response, Cooperation, and Refusal Rates**

The response rate for this study was measured using AAPOR's response rate 3 method. The cooperation rate was measured using AAPOR's cooperation rate 3 method. The refusal rate was measured using AAPOR's refusal rate 3 method. The table below contains these rates.

Response Rate	Cooperation Rate	Refusal Rate
39%	92%	0.49%

Source: AAPOR Outcome Rate Calculator Version 2.1 May 2003

Throughout the report, statistics representing survey responses are reported in percentages which may not add up to 100 due to rounding and non-response. Also due to rounding, the percent reported in the text may vary slightly from those in the annotation or in graphs.

**2012 West Virginia Utility Survey of Residents 45+  
N=700, Sampling Error = ± 3.8 percent**

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from \_\_\_\_\_, a national opinion research firm. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We are interested in your opinions on your home energy utility services. Your opinions are important, and we would greatly appreciate your participation. Your responses will be kept entirely confidential. We only need about 10 minutes of your time.

**SCREENING QUESTIONS**

**S-1. Our study is interested in the opinions of West Virginia residents age 45 and older who pay an electricity bill, or makes decisions regarding their household's electric and gas utility bills. Could you please tell me your age as of your last birthday? [IN YEARS] \_\_\_\_\_ [RECORD ACTUAL AGE AND USE THE AGE GROUPS BELOW TO KEEP TRACK OF HOW MANY RESPONDENTS WE ARE GETTING IN EACH GROUP]**

Younger than 45

[THANK AND TERMINATE]

45-49	15.9%
50-59	33.7%
60-74	34.5%
75 and older	16%
Mean=62	

**S-2. Does your household pay an electricity bill to a utility provider?**

Yes [CONTINUE]	100.0%
No [TERMINATE]	-
Don't know/Refused [THANK AND TERMINATE]	-

**S-3 Do you live in West Virginia?**

Yes [CONTINUE]	100.0%
No [TERMINATE]	-
Don't know/Refused [THANK AND TERMINATE]	-

**S-4 Do you use electricity, gas or both to heat and cool your home?**

Electricity	41.8%
Natural gas	6.5%
Both electricity and natural gas	48.2%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	3.3%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.2%

**MAIN QUESTIONS**

**1. How concerned are you about the costs of cooling your home or heating your home going up? Are you ...[READ ANSWERS]**

Extremely concerned	34.5%
Very concerned	23.5%
Somewhat concerned	41.4%
Not very concerned	0.6%
Not at all concerned	-
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	-
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**[ASK IF S-4 IS ELECTRICITY OR BOTH ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS]**

**2. Thinking about the amount you pay for electricity, is this amount too little, about right, or too much? N=630**

Too little	1.4%
About right	41.6%
Too much	54.3%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	2.6%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.1%

**[ASK IF S-4 IS NATURAL GAS OR BOTH ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS]**

**3. Thinking about the amount you pay for natural gas, is this amount too little, about right, or too much? N=383**

Too little	1.3%
About right	43.8%
Too much	44.5%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	7.7%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	2.7%

**4. When rate increases are proposed, do you believe the interests of residential customers like yourself are represented and taken into account?**

Yes	18.9%
No	72.6%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	8.6%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**5. Do you support legislation requiring state regulators to consider reliability issues and storm recovery when making decisions about rate increases?**

Yes	67.5%
No	21.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	10.5%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**6. Derechos are strong storms, similar to hurricanes on land. On June 29, 2012, West Virginia experienced a Derecho. Did your household lose power during this storm or did any of your friends or family members lose power during this storm?**

Yes, my household lost power	59.5%
Yes, family and/or friends I know lost power	25.0%
No, my household nor any family or friends I know lost power →GO TO Q8	13.6%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	1.9%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**7. How long did it take before power was restored? N=591**

Less than one day	7.9%
One to two days	10.1%
Two days	5.5%
Three to four days	17.7%
Five to six days	11.1%
One week	13.1%
More than one week	32.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	1.9%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**8. Hurricane Sandy hit West Virginia on October 29, 2012, did your household lose power during this storm or did any of your friends or family members lose power during this storm?**

Yes, my household lost power	34.5%
Yes, family and/or friends I know lost power	23.5%
No, my household nor any family or friends I know lost power →GO TO Q8	41.4%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.6%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**9. How long did it take before power was restored? N=406**

Less than one day	14.2%
One to two days	9.9%
Two days	5.8%
Three to four days	22.4%
Five to six days	8.6%
One week	13.5%
More than one week	22.6%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	3.0%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**10. How would you rate the performance of your electricity company in restoring electricity to those households who lost power during these recent storms? Would you say it was ... [READ ALL OPTIONS]**

Excellent	34.5%
Very good	23.5%
Good	41.4%
Fair	0.6%
Poor	-
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	-
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

**11. Do you feel your utility company is doing enough to maintain reliability of services?**

Yes	58.8%
No	34.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	6.3%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-



**12. Do you feel your elected officials are doing enough to help people affected by rising energy costs?**

Yes	17.7%
No	70.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	10.8%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.6%

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

**Our final set of questions is for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.**

**AGE: Could you please tell me your age as of your last birthday? [IN YEARS]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [RECORD ACTUAL AGE AND USE THE AGE GROUPS BELOW TO  
KEEP TRACK OF HOW MANY RESPONDENTS WE ARE GETTING IN EACH  
GROUP]**

**D-2 Gender [RECORD]**

Male	47.3%
Female	52.7%

**D-3 What is your 5-digit ZIP Code?**

Record ZIP Code	
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	
Refused [DO NOT READ]	

**D-4 Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Are you ...  
[READ OPTIONS, IF NECESSARY]**

Self-employed full-time	4.4%
Self-employed part-time	2.5%
Employed full-time	21.3%
Employed part-time	5.8%
Retired and not working at all	45.6%
Unemployed and looking for work	4.8%
Or are you not in the labor force for other reasons	14.3%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.8%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.4%

**D-5 What is the highest level of education that you completed? [READ OPTIONS, IF NECESSARY]**

0-12 <sup>th</sup> grade (no diploma)	18.0%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	36.7%
Post-high school education (no degree)	12.1%
2-year college degree	11.1%
4-year college degree	11.0%
Post-graduate study (no degree)	3.0%
Graduate or professional degree(s)	7.5%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	0.2%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.5%

**D-6 What is your current marital status? [READ OPTIONS, IF NECESSARY]**

Married	58.0%
Not married, living with your partner or significant other	1.9%
Separated	1.7%
Divorced	12.8%
Widowed	15.1%
Currently single <u>and</u> never married	9.8%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	-
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.8%

**D-7. IF D6=MARRIED, ASK “Are you or your spouse currently a member of A-A-R-P?” IF D6= PARTNER OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER, ASK “Are you or your partner or significant other currently a member of A-A-R-P?” IF D6=something else, ASK “Are you currently a member of A-A-R-P?”**

Yes	38.6%
No	60.4%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.5%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.6%

**D-8 Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?**

Yes	2.0%
No	96.1%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	0.9%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.9%

**D-9 What is your race? [READ OPTIONS IF NECESSARY]**

White or Caucasian	94.2%
Black or African American	2.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.4%
Asian	-
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	-
Other	1.0%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	0.1%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	1.0%

**D-10 Thinking about your state elections for West Virginia Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, how often would you say you vote? Would you say you ..... [READ OPTIONS] vote?**

Always	61.5%
Most of the time	13.4%
About half of the time	5.3%
Seldom	6.0%
Never	12.3%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	0.8%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.7%

**D-11 Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?**

Democrat	43.1%
Republican	22.8%
Independent	20.8%
Something else	7.1%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	2.2%
REFUSED [DO NOT READ]	4.0%

**D-12 Do you own or rent your primary residence?**

Own	87.0%
Rent	10.4%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	1.6%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	1.0%

**D-13 What type of home is your primary residence? Is it a ... [READ OPTIONS]?**

Single family home	78.3%
Mobile home	12.6%
Townhome or duplex	1.0%
Apartment	3.8%
Condominium or co-op	0.4%
Something else	2.3%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	0.8%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.8%

**D-14 We realize that income is a private matter and so rather than ask you anything specific about your income, I'd like to ask you to please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household's income before taxes in 2011?**

Less than \$10,000	12.0%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	13.7%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	14.3%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	15.7%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	8.8%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	8.1%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6.0%
\$100,000 or more	7.8%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	2.1%
Don't know [DO NOT READ]	2.5%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	9.1%

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org); AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a bilingual news source. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

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**Research and Strategic Analysis**  
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