



NOVEMBER 2024

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GCEA OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

GCEA's Rebate Program Helps You Save

BY ALLIY SAHAGUN

MEMBER RELATIONS SUPERVISOR

As the demand for energy-efficient solutions continues to grow, GCEA's rebate program provides education and incentives to help you save money while reducing emissions. As you consider home improvements to reduce energy consumption and lower your monthly GCEA bill, be sure to call or check our website for all the available rebate options. Below are just a few examples of energy-efficiency improvements you can make, with information about available rebates.

Brr, it's cold in here!

Winter is upon us and electric bills can rack up when a home is not properly sealed and insulated. GCEA offers weatherization rebates for insulation, air sealing, doors, and windows. Once the home is tightly sealed, it may be time to look at replacing the heating system and/or the water heater. Home heating accounts for up to 54% of electricity costs and water heating up to 15%.

Heat pumps and heat pump water heaters provide energy-efficient, long-term cost savings; and they qualify for generous rebates and tax credits. If you have concerns about high upfront costs, our new Electrify and Save® on-bill repayment program helps connect you with a qualified contractor to complete the work while you pay off the project over time with monthly payments on your GCEA bill. More information is available at www.gcea.coop/electrify-and-save.

Sick of gas fumes and filling up at the pump?

Whether it's your gas stove, internal combustion vehicle, or gas-powered outdoor power equipment, we have a rebate for you when you fuel switch and power these items



ALLIY SAHAGUN

with electricity. The cost of electricity compared to gas is much less volatile over time and plugging in rather than fueling up is getting cleaner and cleaner as more renewable energy is integrated onto the grid. GCEA provides rebates on outdoor power equipment such as mowers, leaf blowers, trimmers and chainsaws, as well as e-bikes, electric vehicles, and EV charging stations. When you replace a gas stove with an electric induction stove or install an electric clothes dryer, we have rebates for those items too.

Last chance for LEDs!

GCEA has offered LED rebates for years and now that light bulb technology has become more accessible and less expensive, our residential LED bulb rebate will be discontinued in 2025; the commercial LED rebate will end in 2026. If you've been aiming to replace your incandescent bulbs with LEDs, there's still a bit of time before the end of the year to take advantage of our rebate of 50% of lamp/fixture cost capped at \$8 per lamp. LEDs must be 500 lumens or greater and there is a maximum of 50 bulbs/fixtures per year, per account.

These are just a few of the many rebates available to you as part of your GCEA membership. In many cases, there are also tax incentives and other rebates available to stack on top of the GCEA rebates.

Please visit www.gcea.coop or call 970-641-3520 to learn more about our rebate program.

SmartHub • AT HOME OR ON THE GO

Avoid the walk to your mailbox and view your electric bill from the comfort of your home!

SmartHub allows you to manage all aspects of your electric account from your computer, tablet or phone.

- Make a payment
- Check energy use
- Report an outage



Scan the QR code with your phone to sign up for SmartHub.

For more information, please call 970-641-3520.



Energy Evaluation Q&A with Energy Use Advisor Alantha Garrison

BY ALLIY SAHAGUN MEMBER RELATIONS SUPERVISOR

GCEA offers free, on-site energy evaluations to provide members energy efficient solutions to help them save money on their monthly electric bill. GCEA values member education and is dedicated to being a trusted source of information when making decisions related to energy usage. I sat down with GCEA's Energy Use Advisor Alantha Garrison to learn more about the energy evaluation program.

Q: Alantha, why would a GCEA member want to take advantage of the energy evaluation program? What services do you provide?

A: The on-site energy evaluation program is a great way to learn how to save money; there are more ways to save than most people realize. I begin each evaluation visit by taking an electrical energy inventory of the appliances, heating, lighting, and other electric uses of the home. As I go, I use an infrared camera to look deeper into the building envelope to identify areas of inadequate insulation, and to find leaky points of connection between windows, doors, and walls.

Q: Wow, that's an amazing service! What are typical next steps after your evaluation is complete?

A: After my investigation, I return to my office to run rate comparisons to see if another GCEA rate — such as Time-of-Use — would be more beneficial. Next, I create a report of suggested changes the member could make to improve the energy efficiency of their home and how those improvements could help save money. Some members are interested in information about solar installation, and I run estimates for solar system sizes based on their current electricity usage. Finally, I compile all the information along with rebate and tax credit details and send it to the member for review. If they need help locating a contractor or are worried about how to pay for energy efficiency projects, I educate them about our new Electrify and Save® program that pays the upfront project costs, connects them with a certified contractor, and adds a monthly charge to the bill so they can pay the project cost over time.

Q: How much money could a member save by implementing recommended measures from their energy evaluation?

A: It depends on my recommendations, but members could save hundreds of dollars. I help by identifying how they can change the current — and sometimes inefficient — ways they are using energy; we discuss weatherization opportunities; and sometimes we find a rate that better fits their electricity usage.

Q: Is this program strictly for residential properties?

A: No. GCEA also offers evaluations for commercial properties and large power accounts. I'll visit and perform an energy evaluation on any building — small homes to large hotels.

Q: How does the energy evaluation program tie into GCEA's other programs?

A: The energy evaluation program is an opportunity to learn about all the other programs GCEA offers, including rebates, on-bill repayment, EV loaner program, and the net-metering program.

If you are interested in scheduling a free energy evaluation with Alantha, visit www.gcea.coop/energy-efficiency/energy-evaluations/ or call 970-641-3520.



▲ GCEA Energy Use Advisor Alantha Garrison uses an infrared camera to evaluate a GCEA member's home for inadequate insulation and air leaks.



▲ Alantha Garrison checks door seals and other places for air leaks during an energy evaluation at homes and commercial buildings.



▲ After the energy evaluation is complete, Alantha Garrison shows property owners the results and problem areas picked up from the infrared camera scan.



Renting? You Can Save, Too!

BY ALLIY SAHAGUN MEMBER RELATIONS SUPERVISOR

Renters often overlook weatherization, assuming it's the landlord's responsibility. However, there are several simple and cost-effective improvements renters can make to reduce energy bills and enhance comfort without major alterations to the property.

1. **Seal drafts.** The most significant energy loss in a rental home often comes from drafts around windows and doors. Using weather stripping or draft stoppers can prevent cold air from seeping in during the winter and keep cool air inside during the summer. Window insulation film is another easy-to-install option that reduces heat loss through windows.
2. **Use thermal curtains.** Thick thermal curtains help maintain the indoor temperature. During winter, these curtains keep the warmth inside, while in summer, they block out heat, reducing the need for excessive cooling.
3. **Install energy-efficient bulbs.** Switching to LED bulbs is a simple way to cut down on electricity usage. LED bulbs use up to 75% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs and last much longer, making them a smart investment for renters.
4. **Use a programmable thermostat.** If allowed, renters can install a programmable thermostat, which can be set to reduce heating or cooling when not at home. Even if installing a new thermostat isn't an option, manually adjusting the temperature during the day can still lead to savings.
5. **Cover unused vents.** If your rental home has central heating or cooling, cover vents in unused rooms to help redirect air flow to where it's needed most.

By taking these simple steps, renters can significantly reduce their energy consumption and save money, all while making their living spaces more comfortable. These improvements are affordable, easy to implement, and most importantly, can be taken with you when you move.



▲ A successful cold climate air-source heat pump installation at a home in Gunnison County is made possible in part by funds donated by GCEA and Tri-State G&T.

Powering Possibilities One Heat Pump at a Time

BY ALANTHA GARRISON ENERGY USE ADVISOR

GCEA is proud to partner with Tri-State Generation & Transmission, Western Colorado University, the University of Colorado, the Gunnison Valley Home Energy Advancement Team, and Energy Outreach Colorado to complete a cold climate air-source heat pump system installation in an income-qualified home in GCEA's service territory.

WCU/CO mechanical engineering students Miles Murphy and Connor Hayes completed an implementation guide for ccASHP installations in Gunnison County as part of their senior capstone project in 2024 and identified five income-qualified homes as good candidates for ccASHP systems, but lack of funding prevented the completion of the first installation until this fall.

GCEA was able to donate funds awarded from Tri-State for a different heat pump pilot project to finally help make the project a reality. In early October, Alspach Refrigeration installed the heat pump to provide an energy-efficient and clean heating and cooling option for the home while reducing indoor air contaminants and greenhouse gas emissions through reduction of the use of a propane furnace. The heat pump will offset the usage of the furnace that has been expensive to operate — the family will save \$1,200 to \$2,400 per year in heating costs. As a bonus, the heat pump can run in reverse and provide cooling in the summer.

Congratulations to Miles and Connor on the successful completion of their project.



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES
YOU ARE THE FUTURE!

POWERING STUDENTS' FUTURES

GCEA has offered FREE student opportunities for decades! As your local electric cooperative, we are here to help enrich the lives of all our members.



WASHINGTON D.C. YOUTH TOUR JUNE 16-22, 2025

The Washington D.C. Youth Tour introduces students to the nation's capital with tours of museums and historic monuments, meetings with Colorado congressional delegations, and fun-filled activities.

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP JULY 12-17, 2025

Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp is a weeklong adventure in Steamboat Springs. At CYLC, you develop leadership skills, learn about cooperatives, and have lots of FUN!

Requirements

- High school juniors and seniors
- Must be 16 at the time of the tour or camp
- Must be a GCEA Member

Application Due **DECEMBER 2**

APPLY AT
[GCEA.COOP](https://www.gcea.coop)



SCAN ME