

## Summary

To increase Duke Energy customers' utilization of energy relief funds, the FCCP student team developed recommendations that addressed customer awareness of, and accessibility to, the relief funds.

## Project Snapshot

Focus: Marketing Strategy

Client: Duke Energy

Industry: Electric and natural gas utilities

Type: For-profit

HQ: Charlotte, NC, USA

## Challenge

Duke Energy is an electric and gas utility headquartered in Charlotte, NC. Duke Energy has a net-zero carbon emission goal by 2050 and an interim target to reduce at least 50% of its carbon emissions from its electricity sector by 2030. Duke Energy approached the Fuqua Client Consulting Practicum to ensure that as they work toward their clean energy goals, vulnerable customer populations aren't left behind.

Duke Energy asked students to identify and connect underlying issues of energy equity affecting the ability of customers to pay their energy bills. They also sought to understand the correlation between energy burden, energy poverty, and energy insecurity, and explore the potential benefits of energy efficiency and clean energy for their vulnerable customers.

## Approach

The FCCP student team began tackling Duke Energy's challenge by profiling existing energy assistance programs. They also conducted qualitative interviews to identify potential pain points in the funnel of the user journey, including the client's Environmental, Social, and Governance Policy Strategist along with key stakeholders who interact closely with the targeted end-users.

After learning about customer barriers, students took a quantitative approach, using internal data from the client's energy assistance portal and external data from government sources to verify their hypotheses. Students created a framework to evaluate their emerging recommendations on their potential effectiveness and feasibility. The team focused on three key recommendations and developed them into tangible steps for the client to implement.

**"The FCCP program allows students a window into how companies are creating value for customers and communities, while at the same time provide them an opportunity to grow their skills."**

Brittany Lyke, Energy Equity Strategy and Programs Manager, Duke Energy

## Recommendation



The FCCP student team identified bottlenecks in the current energy relief fund allocation process and delivered recommendations for streamlining online resources to be more user-friendly, improving customer outreach, identifying overburdened counties in both NC and SC, and expanding their partnerships with state social services agencies, especially in targeted counties.

The team also provided risks associated with key recommendations and suggested ways to mitigate them, identifying the next steps Duke Energy should take to implement them successfully.

"The next generation of workforce talent has a vested interest in helping companies create societal impact," said Brittany Lyke, Energy Equity Strategy and Programs Manager. "The FCCP program allows students a window into how companies are creating value for customers and communities, while at the same time provide them an opportunity to grow their skills."



*The Duke Energy project team: William Chen, Stephanie Kinser, Kush Gakhar, Grace Fernandez, Te-Sheng Hsu*

**"The FCCP team offered thoughtful solutions to a complex topic that caught the attention of senior leaders at our company. The team was great to work with and I would encourage others to engage with FCCP."**

Brittany Lyke, Energy Equity Strategy and Programs Manager, Duke Energy

## About FCCP

The Fuqua Client Consulting Practicum is a for-credit experiential learning course at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. In FCCP, students apply their business skills and relevant work experience to an active project engagement with an external client. Interested in engaging our students? Learn more at [www.fccp.fuqua.duke.edu](http://www.fccp.fuqua.duke.edu).