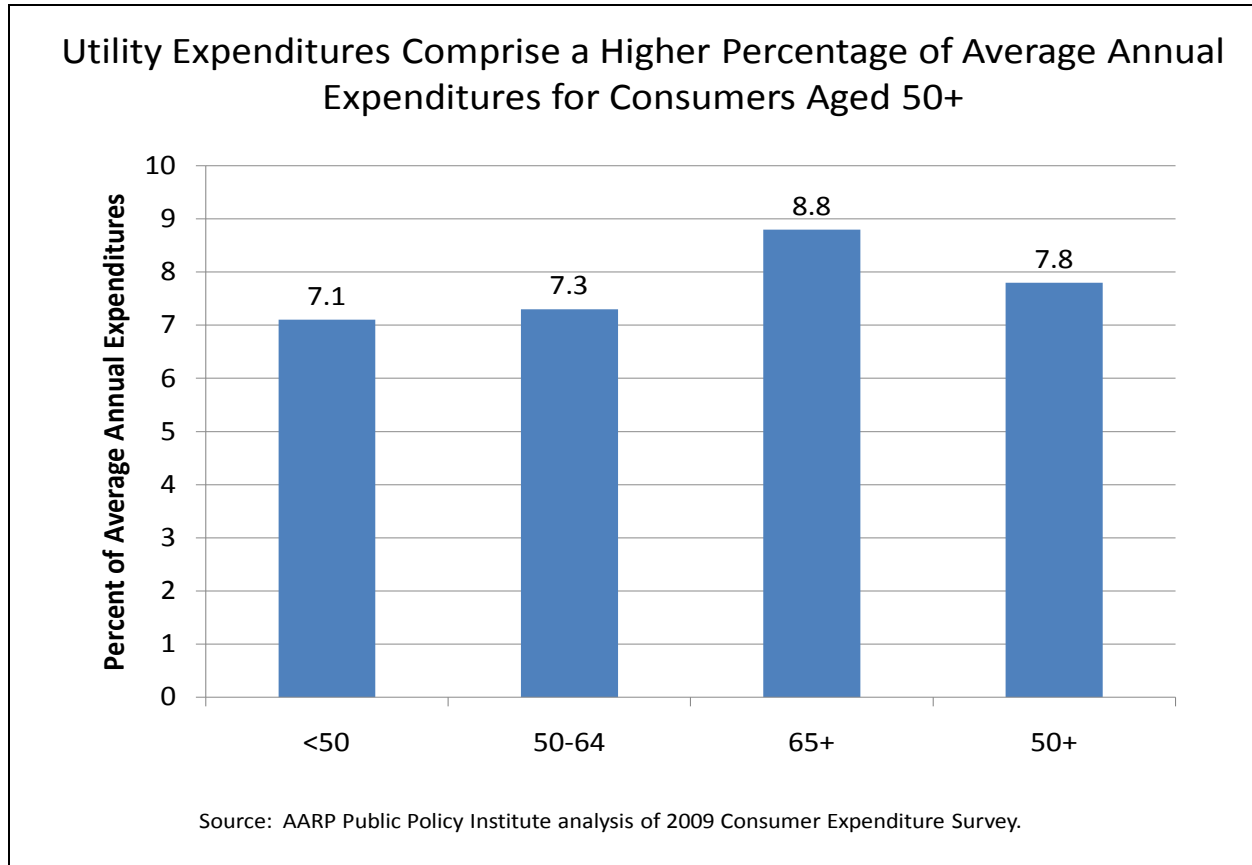


## A Snapshot of 2009 Utility Expenditures by Older Consumers

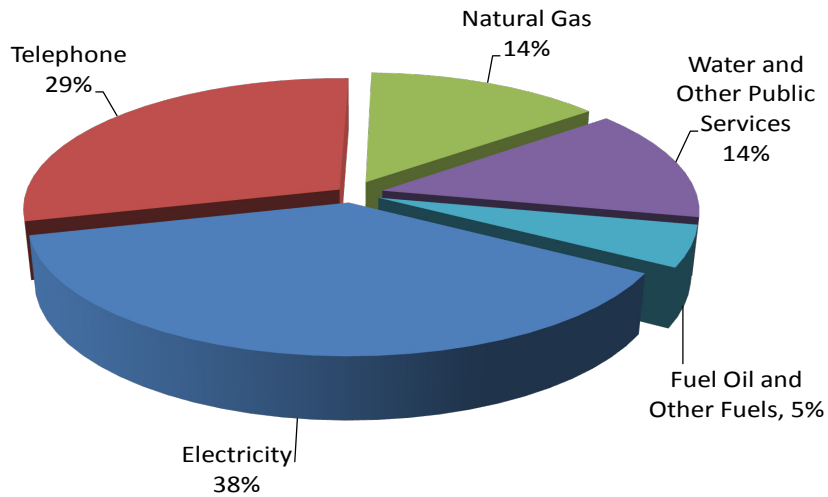
Neal Walters  
AARP Public Policy Institute

Demographic analysis of the 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey to identify trends in consumer spending on utilities shows variation by age, income, geographic region, and household size.



Overall, expenditures on utilities comprised a larger percentage of overall expenditures for consumers aged 50+. Utility expenditures were highest for the 65+ age group and lowest for the under 50 age group.

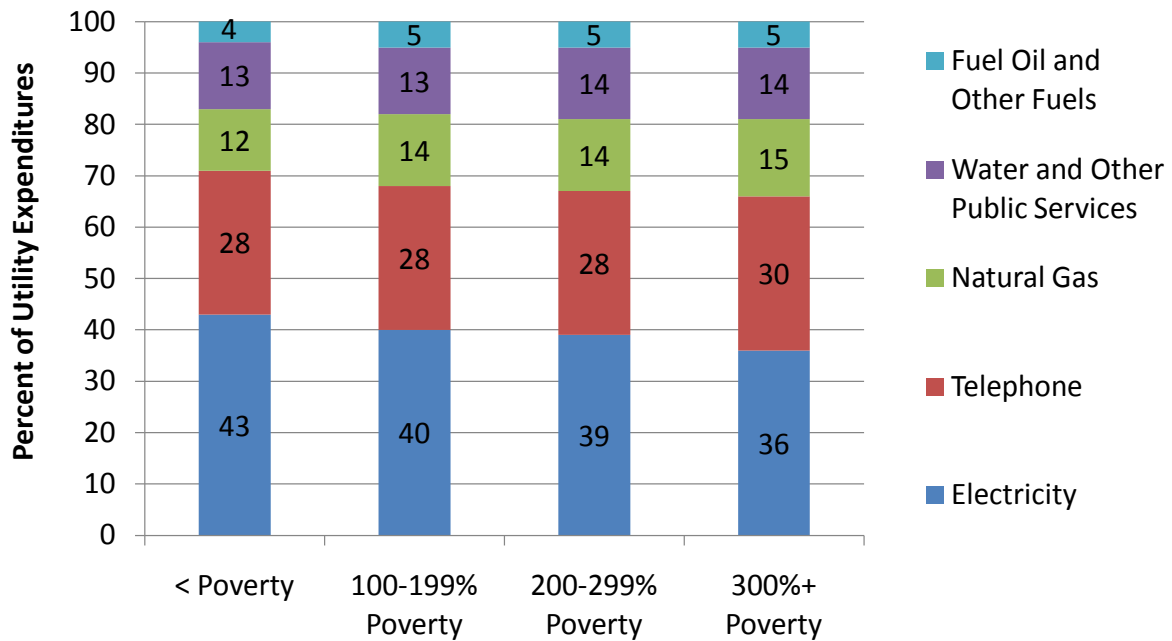
## Expenditures on Electricity Comprise the largest Portion of Utility Expenditures for 50+ Consumers



Source: AARP Public Policy Institute analysis of 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey.

Expenditures on electric utilities accounted for over a third of all utility expenditures by consumers aged 50+ in 2009. Telephone utilities represented the second highest category of utility expenditures for this age group.

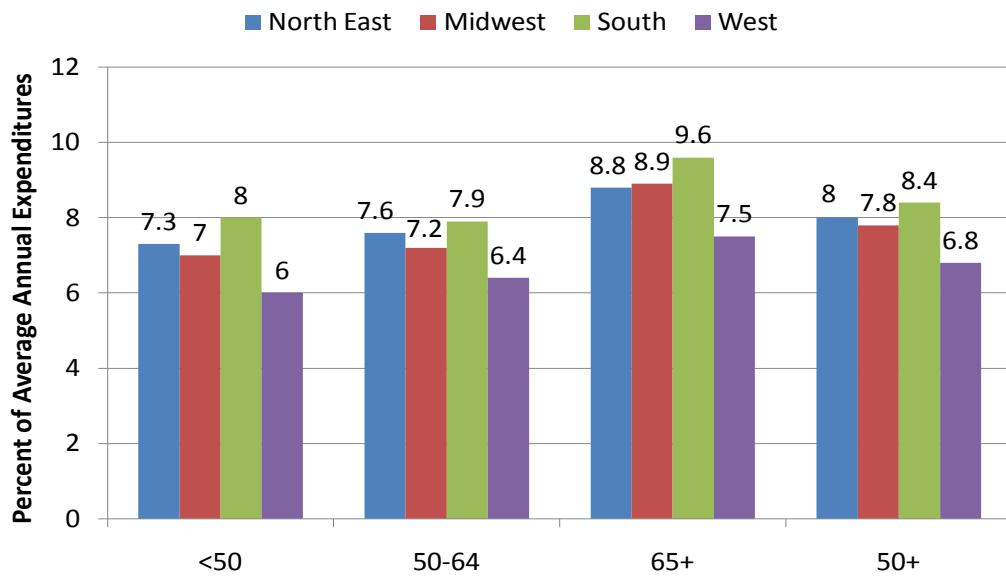
## Expenditures on Electricity Comprise a larger Portion of Utility Expenditures for lower income 50+ Consumers



Source: AARP Public Policy Institute analysis of 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey.

As income level declined, expenditures on electric utilities became a larger portion of overall utility expenditures for consumers aged 50+. Expenditures on electric utilities accounted for 43 percent of utility expenditures for consumers aged 50+ below the poverty line, compared to 36 percent for those with incomes over 300+ percent of poverty.

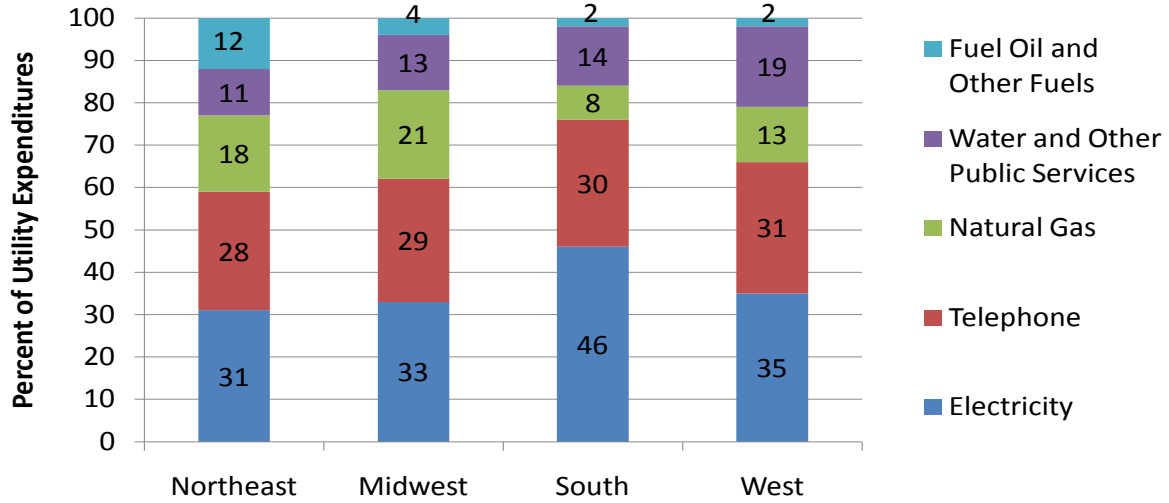
### Utility Expenditures As a Percentage of Average Annual Expenditures Varies by Region



Source: AARP Public Policy Institute analysis of 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey.

The southern region of the United States had the highest overall utility expenditures as a percentage of annual expenditures for all age groups, while the West had the lowest utility expenditures.

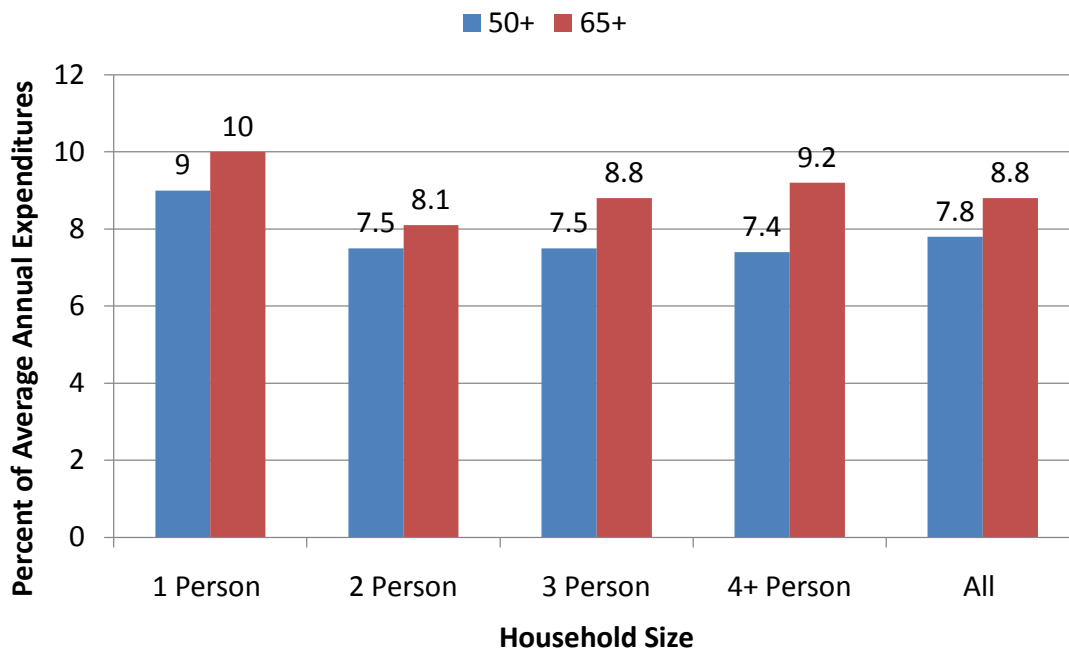
### Expenditures Within Utility Categories Varied by Region for 50+ Consumers



Source: AARP Public Policy Institute analysis of 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey.

Expenditures on electric utilities comprised 46 percent of all utility expenditures for consumers aged 50+ living in the South, while expenditures on electric utilities were 31 percent of all utility expenditures for this same age group living in the Northeast.

## Utility Expenditures Comprise a Higher Percentage of Average Annual Expenditures for Older Consumers Living Alone



Source: AARP Public Policy Institute analysis of 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey.

Overall, expenditures on utilities comprised a larger percentage of overall expenditures for consumers aged 50+ living alone. Utility expenditures as a percentage of overall expenditures were highest for those aged 65+ living alone.

### Consumer Expenditure Data

This report is based on an analysis of 2009 Consumer Expenditure Survey data reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>i</sup> These data allow the analysis of utility expenditures as a portion of overall annual household expenditures; as well examine expenditures by type of utility service (electric, water, natural gas, etc.). The data permit demographic factors such as household income, household size, age of head of household, and geographic location to be analyzed. Although expenditures on utilities vary substantially among individual households, these data reveal general trends among expenditures on utilities for consumers aged 50+.

<sup>i</sup> Detailed information on the Consumer Expenditure Survey can be found at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).