

# Study helps Californians save electricity—and money—this summer

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Participants in the study can monitor their household's energy usage via a smartphone application. Credit: UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

Electricity demand fluctuates each day, and consumers who want to unplug during peak times to save money and help the environment now

have a new tool at their disposal. Chai Energy, a partner of the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation, is making real-time energy information a reality for electricity consumers who want to reduce or shift their electricity usage during peak periods when electricity is the most expensive.

In a pilot study funded by a California Energy Commission grant of more than \$2 million, UCLA is seeking to understand and identify the most effective demand response program designs for different types of households across the state, depending on social characteristics.

"We want to provide a comprehensive tool that will help customers save money while improving grid reliability, reducing pollution during peak hours, and maybe even preventing blackouts," said J.R. DeShazo, director of the Luskin Center for Innovation at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs.

The UCLA researchers have partnered with a clean technology company named Chai Energy.

"Chai developed a free smartphone application that displays your home daily electricity consumption and provides you with tips on how to better manage your electricity bill," DeShazo said. This could include knowing when it makes financial sense to replace an old appliance, or simply what time to use it based on [electricity prices](#). Chai has also developed a gateway device that establishes communication between a participant's smartphone and the smart-meter already installed in his or her house, allowing users to see real-time [energy](#) consumption by individual household appliances.

The Luskin Center for Innovation is delivering and testing messages designed to inform Californians about their [electricity](#) consumption and provide tips for reducing it. About 10,000 Californians are expected to

download the app and participate in the study.

"This large sample will enable researchers to identify the most effective format, timing and content of messages," said Julien Gattaciecca, project manager and one of the researchers.



Researchers working on the demand response study at the UCLA Luskin Center of Innovation include project manager Julien Gattaciecca, Constance Vance, Jason Karpman and Kelly Trumbull. Credit: UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation

### **How can Californians participate?**

The free Chai Energy application can be found by searching for Chai Energy in your Android or iOS app store or by visiting [chaienergy.com](http://chaienergy.com). Those who install the app are automatically enrolled in the study. A free Chai gateway device with a market value of \$75 is being randomly distributed to 5,000 participants.

The study is currently available only for customers of Pacific Gas and Electricity, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas and

Electricity.

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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