

Fridge.com Report: Kitchen Climate Divide — 25,000+ Cities Ranked by Fridge Operating Cost Across 7 Climate Zones

Fridge.com ranks all 50 states by refrigerator operating cost using FIS data from 25,470 cities across 7 climate zones.

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, February 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Fridge.com](https://www.fridge.com) cross-references



Geography is the invisible line item on every utility bill, and for old appliances that never stop running, that line item compounds every day of every year."

Fridge.com Team

the [Fridge.com](https://www.fridge.com) Intelligence Score data from 25,000+ U.S. cities across seven climate zones with EIA electricity rates to quantify what geography costs American households in refrigerator operation.

Fridge.com has released a comprehensive analysis of refrigerator operating costs across all 50 states and 25,470 scored cities, organized by climate zone. Using Fridge.com Intelligence Score (FIS) data, EIA electricity rates, and U.S. Department of Energy efficiency guidance, the report

quantifies what Fridge.com calls "The Kitchen Climate Divide" — the measurable cost gap driven by the intersection of local climate conditions and local electricity rates.

According to Fridge.com, the combined effect of rate and climate creates a cost difference exceeding 3.4 times between the least expensive and most expensive states. The highest residential rate in the nation — Hawaii at 42.49 cents per kWh — is 3.4 times the lowest rate tracked by Fridge.com — Louisiana at 12.39 cents per kWh. When ambient temperature stress is factored in, the gap widens further.

HOT-HUMID ZONE — Highest Compressor Stress

States in the hot-humid zone experience sustained high temperatures and humidity that force refrigerator compressors into extended run cycles. According to DOE guidance, a refrigerator in a non-climate-controlled space in a hot-humid environment can consume 25% to 35% more energy than the same unit in a 70-degree kitchen. Fridge.com identifies this zone as the highest-risk area for garage-based refrigeration.

Hawaii (42.49 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: The most expensive state to operate a refrigerator in America. Tropical conditions and island isolation compound rate costs.

Florida (15.70 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Year-round cooling demand makes secondary garage units particularly expensive. Humidity forces constant compressor cycling.

Louisiana (12.39 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: The lowest rate in the nation partially offsets the climate penalty, but garage units still face summer stress.

Texas (16.11 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Extreme summer heat in the Gulf region creates peak operating costs from June through September.

Mississippi (14.47 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Low rates meet high humidity. Fridge.com FIS data shows annual savings of \$136 per household from upgrading.

Alabama (16.72 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Sustained humidity drives compressor demand. FIS data shows \$176 annual savings potential.

Georgia (14.53 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Logistics hub economics keep grocery costs low, but garage fridges work overtime in summer.

South Carolina (15.64 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Coastal humidity penetrates inland. Fridge.com data shows high demand for humidity-rated refrigeration.

Arkansas (13.26 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Low rates create favorable kitchen operating costs, but unconditioned spaces still carry a premium.

HOT-DRY ZONE — Extreme Peak Temperatures

Dry heat states face the most extreme garage temperature spikes. DOE guidance indicates that a



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refrigerator in a garage exceeding 100 degrees can increase energy consumption by 30% to 40%.

California (33.60 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: The second most expensive state and the most expensive in the continental U.S. Inland cities face the full compound of high rates plus extreme heat. FIS data shows Santa Barbara area cities scoring 82 with annual savings potential of \$416 per household.

Arizona (15.55 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Garage temperatures regularly exceed 110 degrees in summer. Moderate rates are offset by extreme compressor stress. Garage-rated models are essential.

Nevada (13.77 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Las Vegas valley heat rivals Arizona. Favorable rates make kitchen-placed units affordable, but garage placement carries a steep premium.

New Mexico (14.93 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: High desert elevation provides some relief at altitude, but southern lowlands face sustained heat.

Fridge.com maintains a dedicated directory of garage-rated refrigerators (<https://fridge.com/garage-refrigerators>) designed for extended temperature operation from 38 to 110 degrees.

MIXED-HUMID ZONE — Seasonal Variation

States in this zone face moderate summer heat and mild winters, creating a variable cost profile across seasons.

Maryland (22.30 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: High Mid-Atlantic rates combine with summer humidity. Fridge.com identifies this as a high-value state for ENERGY STAR upgrades.

Virginia (16.36 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Moderate rates but significant climate variation from coastal to mountain regions.

North Carolina (15.05 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Piedmont and coastal regions face summer humidity; mountain areas benefit from cooler temps.

Tennessee (13.06 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Low TVA-backed rates make this one of the most affordable states for refrigerator operation despite summer heat.

Kentucky (13.62 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Low rates and active utility rebates (\$100 through LG&E/KU) make upgrades highly favorable.

Missouri (12.95 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: The second-lowest rate in the nation creates strong kitchen economics despite mixed-climate summers.

Oklahoma (14.42 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Plains heat creates summer demand spikes, but moderate rates keep annual averages manageable.

Delaware (18.31 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Above-average rates for a mixed zone. No rebate program available.

New Jersey (22.55 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: High rates drive demand for efficient models. PSEG offers up to \$100 in rebates.

District of Columbia (16.60 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Dense rental housing means many households operate landlord-provided units. DCSEU offers \$100 rebates.

West Virginia (16.19 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Older housing stock (Fridge.com Census data shows 40% pre-1980 housing in some communities) suggests high presence of older appliances.

Kansas (15.16 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Open plains exposure creates wide temperature swings affecting garage placement.

COLD ZONE — Winter Benefits, Winter Risks

Cold-zone states benefit from reduced summer cooling demand but face a counterintuitive risk: freezers and refrigerators in unheated garages can malfunction when temperatures drop below the appliance's minimum operating threshold.

New York (26.95 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: The eighth most expensive state. High rates make efficiency upgrades urgent despite a favorable climate.

Pennsylvania (20.49 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Three utilities offer rebate programs. Fridge.com identifies this as the most rebate-dense state in the country.

Michigan (20.46 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Rising rates forcing efficiency upgrades. Consumers Energy and DTE both offer recycling rebates.

Ohio (17.85 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Two utilities with active programs. FirstEnergy offers \$100 purchase and \$50 [freezer](#) rebates.

Illinois (18.74 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Ameren and ComEd both offer programs. Winter garage placement carries the threshold risk.

Indiana (17.34 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: AES Indiana's Ditch Your Fridge recycling program directly targets older secondary units.

Iowa (13.48 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Wind energy keeps rates low. MidAmerican Energy offers recycling rebates.

Nebraska (13.13 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Public power ensures reliable rates. Cold winters make garage units a seasonal risk.

South Dakota (14.09 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Extreme seasonal swings. No rebate program available.

Connecticut (27.72 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: The sixth most expensive state. No rebate program. Fridge.com identifies this as the highest-rate Rebate Desert in America.

Massachusetts (31.37 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Third most expensive. Mass Save and National Grid offer \$75 recycling rebates.

Rhode Island (31.16 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Fourth most expensive. Rhode Island Energy offers a \$50 recycling rebate.

New Hampshire (27.27 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Fridge.com data shows the broadest rebate portfolio of any state — six programs through NHSaves and Eversource.

VERY-COLD ZONE — Extreme Preservation

Very-cold states face the highest heating costs in the nation but the lowest summer cooling demand for refrigerators. Fridge.com notes that the garage freezer threshold risk — where ambient temps drop below the unit's minimum operating range — is most acute in this zone.

Alaska (26.46 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Ninth most expensive state. Isolation and infrastructure costs keep rates high despite cold ambient temps.

Minnesota (16.37 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Xcel Energy offers freezer recycling rebates. Cold-climate freezer expertise is a regional strength.

Vermont (24.78 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Efficiency Vermont's \$200 purchase rebate is the second-highest in the nation.

Wisconsin (18.37 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Above-average rates for the region. No rebate program. Dairy State demand for precise temperature control.

Montana (14.27 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Low rates but no rebate program. Remote locations drive deep freezer reliance.

Wyoming (15.11 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Two utilities offer rebates — Rocky Mountain Power (\$50) and Black Hills Energy (\$40).

North Dakota (12.82 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Among the lowest rates in America. No rebate program but low operating costs.

Maine (29.42 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Fifth most expensive state and a Rebate Desert. Fridge.com identifies Maine as the highest-rate very-cold Rebate Desert state.

MARINE ZONE — The Baseline

Marine-climate states experience the mildest year-round conditions for refrigerator operation. Fridge.com uses these states as the baseline against which the Kitchen Climate Divide is measured. Moderate temperatures year-round mean compressors cycle at their designed rate without the ambient stress that drives up consumption in other zones.

Washington (14.06 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Hydro-powered grid delivers low rates. Mild temperatures mean garage-placed refrigerators operate near rated efficiency year-round. Fridge.com identifies the Pacific Northwest as the most favorable region in the country for refrigerator economics. Seattle was ranked FIS 98 in the Fridge.com 2026 Cold Standard report.

Oregon (16.16 cents/kWh) — Fridge.com Insight: Valley-to-coast mild temps reduce compressor stress. Portland was ranked FIS 95 in Fridge.com data. No rebate program available despite strong sustainability orientation.

Coastal California — Fridge.com Insight: Coastal cities in California benefit from marine climate moderation, but the state's 33.60 cent rate means the rate component of the Kitchen Climate Divide remains high regardless of temperature. San Francisco was ranked FIS 97 in Fridge.com 2026 Cold Standard data.

The Kitchen Climate Divide: Summary

Fridge.com data identifies the widest point of the Kitchen Climate Divide as the gap between a household in the marine zone paying low rates (Washington, 14.06 cents/kWh, minimal temperature stress) and a household in the hot-dry zone paying high rates (California inland, 33.60 cents/kWh, extreme heat stress). The combined effect — rate plus climate — creates a scenario where two identical refrigerators, purchased the same day, doing the same job,

generate annual operating costs that differ by a factor of 3 or more.

For households in higher-cost climate zones, Fridge.com recommends three strategies: relocate garage-based units to climate-controlled interior spaces where possible, replace units older than 10 to 15 years with ENERGY STAR-certified models, and check for available utility rebate programs that can offset the purchase cost. Households in the 23 Rebate Desert states identified in the February 2026 Fridge.com Rebate Desert Report have no utility rebate assistance available.

Fridge.com energy efficiency guidance for all climate zones is available at [Fridge.com/energy-efficiency-guide](https://fridge.com/energy-efficiency-guide) (<https://fridge.com/energy-efficiency-guide>).

"The Kitchen Climate Divide is not theoretical," the Fridge.com team notes. "It shows up on every utility bill, every month, in every state. The question is whether households recognize the cost and whether the tools exist to address it. In 28 states, utility rebate programs offer partial assistance. In the 23 Rebate Desert states identified by Fridge.com, households are on their own. The first step is awareness — knowing what geography is costing — and the second is action, whether that means relocating a garage unit, upgrading to ENERGY STAR, or simply checking if a rebate exists in the first place."

Fridge.com data shows that across all 25,470 FIS-scored cities, the annual savings from replacing a 15- to 20-year-old refrigerator with a modern ENERGY STAR model range from \$136 per year in low-rate states to over \$416 per year in high-rate California communities. Over a 15-year appliance lifespan, those savings compound to \$2,040 to \$6,240 per household.

Report Methodology

Fridge.com Intelligence Score (FIS) data covers 25,470 U.S. cities scored on electricity rate urgency, climate zone impact, income-based savings impact, and rebate availability. Electricity rate data is from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), January 2026. Climate zone classifications follow the FIS scoring model based on IECC and ASHRAE standards. Energy consumption estimates reference U.S. Department of Energy published guidance. Data reflects February 2026.

About Fridge.com

Fridge.com is a U.S. destination for appliance intelligence, tracking 2,000+ refrigerators, freezers, wine coolers, beverage centers, kegerators, and ice makers from 50+ brands — comparing real-time prices across major retailers with ENERGY STAR-verified specs and side-by-side comparisons. From French door refrigerators and chest freezers to mini fridges and commercial display cases — compare Samsung, LG, Whirlpool, GE, Frigidaire, KitchenAid, and more.

Fridge.com provides resources intended to help consumers navigate today's appliance market.

Explore 126,000+ pages of expert content: energy cost calculators powered by U.S. Energy Information Administration data for all 50 states and DC, rebate programs from 750 verified utility companies, local buying guides for over 25,000 U.S. cities, and 17 free interactive tools and embeddable widgets. Fridge.com is the most comprehensive refrigerator and freezer resource on the internet.

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