



Kent County Essential Needs Task Force \* Energy Efficiency Subcommittee Meeting  
Kent County Health and Human Services Building \* 121 Franklin SE \* Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
Suite 110 \* Conference Rooms C/D

August 22, 2017 Minutes

**ENTF Energy Efficiency Subcommittee Members and Guests Present:**

Susan Cervantes (Kent County Community Action), Darcy Cunningham (Salvation Army Social Services), Cherie Elahl (North Kent Community Services), Ken Ford (Flat River Outreach Ministries), John Mitchell (United Way 211), Tom Oosterbaan (Senior Neighbors), Niki Perkins (ACCESS of West Michigan), Wende Randall (Kent County Essential Needs Task Force), and Sherri Vainavicz (United Way 211).

Guests: Alison Rudi (Calvin College for Social Research)

Susan Cervantes (ACSET Community Action Agency), presided.

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

Ms. Cervantes announced the official new name for the agency will be Kent County Community Action. Introductions around the room.

**2. Review notes from last meeting**

Minutes provided from last ENTFF EE Subcommittee Meeting, held on July 25, 2017

Motion: Darcy Cunningham

Second: Tom Oosterbaan

Motion Approved

**3. Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Update**

Darcy Cunningham (Salvation Army Social Services)

Ms. Cunningham reported that Kent County residents who received a Home Heating Credit this year will automatically receive a second Home Heating Credit. The amount is to be determined and will vary depending on the heating obligation. Payments are expected to be made at the end of September.

Ms. Cunningham reported that the Heat and Eat program will pay 87,000 households a \$20.01 LIHEAP payment that will show up on their MI Bridges card. Eligible households will apply the credit to energy bills.

### 3. Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Update (cont.) Darcy Cunningham (Salvation Army Social Services)

Ms. Cunningham reported that August is LIHEAP Action Month. The Coalition has drafted postcards as part of an Advocacy Tool Kit that is available in this location:

<http://www.coalitiontokeepmichiganwarm.org/>

#### TOOLKIT

All of the Resources you need at your fingertips.



#### CLIENT POSTCARD

[Postcard Download](#)

Borrowed from our friends in Missouri, download this printable postcard on cardstock. Clients can complete onsite for easy sendout.

#### CONGRESSIONAL DATA SHEETS

[Data Sheet](#)

This downloadable PDF contains a state wide and congressional district factsheets. This informative document allows you to present localized information for education purposes. PLEASE NOTE: The data includes LIHEAP as well as MEAP (state dollar) funding data.

#### LIHEAP MATTERS TO MICHIGAN INFOGRAPHIC

[Infographic Download](#)

This downloadable PDF infographic highlights key data about LIHEAP in Michigan. Easy to read the format is a great conversation starter.

#### MICHIGAN LIHEAP TALKING POINTS

[Talking Points](#)

These talking points help answer all of your questions on LIHEAP, specific to Michigan. Educate and Share.

#### LIHEAP & WAP INFO SHEET

[LIHEAP & WAP](#)

This downloadable PDF provides great information on why LIHEAP and WAP make a difference.

#### LIHEAP STATE SHEET

[State Sheet](#)

Used at LIHEAPAction Day, this sheet gives historical LIHEAP funding data as well as a few other key data points.

#### SEND A NOTE TO CONGRESS

Use [NEUAC's](#) or [THAW's](#) ready forms to send a note to Congress. Use any of the data above to make it

### **3. Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Update (cont.)**

Darcy Cunningham (Salvation Army Social Services)

Ms. Cunningham reported that the Coalition had Congressional visitations as Ms. Cunningham met with U.S. Representative Justin Amash (his policy person) on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Other members of the Coalition will be conducting meetings throughout the State in August.

### **4. LIHEAP Update**

Darcy Cunningham (Salvation Army Social Services)

Ms. Cunningham reported that an RFP went to the Michigan Agency for Energy (MAE) on Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. Due to the current continuing resolution in Congress the status of funding is unknown going into the new heating season beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>. On Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup> there will be a “Q & A” in Lansing. Ms. Cervantes added that she recently attended a session at the MCAA Conference with the National Lobbyist and he reported that he feels the continuing resolution will last into 2018.

At this time there were updates presented that were not on the agenda.

Mr. Mitchell will request a chart from Dr. Carlson to include the Open/Closed dates for 211 so this data can be added to the Metric Study.

Ms. Rudi reported that conversations with DTE Energy regarding the Metric Study have come to a halt. Ms. Rudi asked guests if anyone had a good contact that she may use as an alternate. Ms. Cunningham noted that due to DTE’s new system transition it is more than likely a timing issue as DTE has been excited about the study. Ms. Cunningham offered to reach out the Ms. Rudi’s contact as well.

Ms. Cervantes reported that Kent County Community Action has less than \$5000 in MEAP funding. For special cases there is Walk for Warmth and CSBG funding available. Ms. Cervantes noted that CSBG funding is at 125% Federal Poverty Income. Weatherization Assistance Program is currently assisting clients in a timely manner due to a small waitlist, referrals are always welcome. As of June 30<sup>th</sup> Ms. Cervantes reported that the DOE funding has been received, but that LIHEAP is not available yet for the next plan year. Deliverable fuels funding is abundant and referrals are welcome.

Ms. Elhal reported that there is one month left of MEAP funding for North Kent Community Services. They are welcome to referrals, but the clients must be new to avoid duplication in services. NKCS offers a case managed long term program and also a new one-time payment for gas and electric.

Mr. Ford reported that Flat River Outreach Ministries is very low on MEAP funding and it will most likely not be available through the season.

## 5. Strategy Planning (action steps)

Wende Randall (Kent County Essential Needs Task Force)

Ms. Randall opened by explaining the goal of the discussion is to create action steps for the ENTF EE Measure and Indicators. Ms. Randall passed out the current language of the Success Measures and Indicators as a handout (see attached).

### 1.1

Ms. Randall discussed Indicator 1.1 – The percent of state government business days in which utility assistance is available. Currently, the Trello Board displays data from 2015 to the first 6 months of 2016. Ms. Randall questioned attendees if this data could be controlled and mapped out, as she suggested the information be divided geographically with possible zones Flat River Outreach Ministries, North Kent Community Services, and Senior Neighbors would like their data to be included in this indicator. Mr. Geisen (not present) will be asked to also include MDHHS data in this indicator. Ms. Cervantes noted that heating season (November 1<sup>st</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup>) is a factor in this indicator. Ms. Cunningham noted that The Salvation Army bases their data on the information that is supplied to 211 when programs are open for scheduling.

Ms. Randall shifted the 1.1 discussion to outcomes and listed many factors contributing such as; capacity, budgeting, and heating season. Ms. Cervantes noted that Kent County Community Action has a balance between capacity and need, which coincides with the heating season. Ms. Elhal noted that North Kent Community Services has a staffing deficit with a larger need. Ms. Cervantes offered a solution to occasionally sending a staff member to assist.

Ms. Randall asked if there is a way to influence policy at the state level. Ms. Cunningham replied that currently the DHHS writes the State Plan and there was a comment session in mid-August. Ms. Oosterbaan would like to know who the decision makers are and why there has not been a lot of movement. Ms. Cunningham answered that currently Michigan spends 70% of the funding on electrical and heating assistance and there has not been conversations on the heating season in a long time. Ms. Cervantes noted that at one time there was a discussion for DHHS workers to have some time off for processing and a conversation with Mr. Geisen might reveal how this impacts agencies and provide opportunities.

Ms. Randall summarized the action steps of 1.1 as finding contacts and advocating.

### 1.2

Ms. Randall discussed Indicator 1.2 – The percentage of eligible residents (income 150% of poverty or less) receiving any subsidy in the course of the year. Ms. Randall would like to identify residents receiving subsidies and asked attendees for ideas. Ms. Vainavicz answered that State-wide MEAP data can be utilized to isolate the subsidies. Ms. Cervantes noted that Kent County Community Action is offered limited slots for certain subsidies, so tracking will have to include these variables. Ms. Cunningham added that Kent County has 50 million residents are under the 150% and there currently is not enough funding for the need, which greatly affects some households which go without utility services. Ms. Perkins offered that at a point when residents are going without services it would be beneficial to refer to ACCESS of West Michigan. ACCESS reaches out to 100-120 different congregations in Kent County and does not utilize traditional funding. Ms. Perkins noted that there are some caveats to non-traditional funding such as churches having to set boundaries and also there is not case management due to the lack of social workers.

## 5. Strategy Planning (action steps) (cont.)

Wende Randall (Kent County Essential Needs Task Force)

### 1.2 (cont.)

Ms. Cervantes added that subsidies do have a negative impact on households when payments are missed, as a result the entire arrearage must be paid in full. Ms. Randall proposed education along with subsidy enrollment to offset late payment penalties. Mr. Ford noted that Flat River Outreach Ministries is heavily case-managed and Ms. Elhal added that North Kent Community Services has customized their programs to include education.

Ms. Randall asked attendees if there is success data available for DTE's LSP subsidy. Ms. Cunningham reported that The Salvation Army does have some success data, but that ultimately DTE should be contacted to obtain this information.

Ms. Randall summarized the action steps of 1.2 to create a list of subsidies and find out how their slots are determined. In addition, compose a template with historical data and request Kent County data to find out which residents are under 150% so a target area can be defined.

### 1.3

Ms. Randall discussed Indicator 1.3 – The percentage of Kent County households spending more than 2% of their local geography's median income on electric utility service. Ms. Cervantes suggested that this indicator needs to be based on the Federal Poverty Income to keep the language the same as the other indicators. Ms. Cunningham added that this indicator should be about affordability of the area.

Ms. Elahl and Mr. Ford made a list of poverty triggers contributing to this indicator as the following: housing, transportation, livable wage, mental health, isolation, availability of employment, and education.

Ms. Cervantes added that weatherization would also be a factor. A suggestion was made to contact local Landlords' Associations about the Weatherization Assistance Program and to contact Steepletown. Ms. Cervantes noted that there is not a cap on how much can be spent on a weatherization unit but there is an average. Ms. Randall reported that she has contacted Joel from Home Repair Services and has invited him to sit on the ENTF EE Sub-Committee. Home Repair Services has moved their focus from weatherization to Health & Safety assistance. Ms. Cervantes added that after the transition Kent County Community Action will have access to CDBG funding for home rehabilitation.

Ms. Randall did not summarize the action steps of 1.2 at this time. Once the indicator is revised another discussion can disclose an action step.

### 2.1

Ms. Randall discussed Indicator 2.1 – The percent of Kent County residents who participated in energy efficiency education program in the past 12 months. Ms. Randall asked attendees for suggestions of any education taking place besides the Weatherization Energy Audits. Ms. Cervantes noted that Kent County Community Action has a Client Plan of action that is discussed with each household that applies for weatherization. The Plan of Action is an educational tool that summarizes what actions a client can take to reduce energy consumption. Ms. Vainavicz added that Consumers and DTE have their own audit programs, but they are limited. Healthy Homes Coalition of West

## 5. Strategy Planning (action steps) (cont.)

Wende Randall (Kent County Essential Needs Task Force)

2.1 (cont.)

Michigan will be partnering with Kent County Community Action to ensure Kent County homes are eliminated of harmful housing conditions. In addition, there are programs with the City of Grand Rapids for lead abatement which includes education.

Ms. Cervantes noted that the units for Energy Audits on the handout is incorrect and the Annual Report would be a good source for accurate reporting.

Ms. Randall did not summarize the action steps of 2.1 at this time.

## 6. Adjournment 11:52 am

### Next Meeting

Date/Time: September 26, 2017 10:30 AM

Location: ACSET Community Action Agency  
121 Franklin St SE Suite 110  
Conference Rooms C/D

**Meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of every month, at 10:30 AM.**

### Meeting Location:

ACSET Community Action Agency,  
121 Franklin SE Suite 110, Conference Room C/D

### 2017 Meeting Date Schedule:

September 26, 2017

October 24, 2017

November 28, 2017

December 26, 2017

Success Measure

**Percent of Kent County residents who had uninterrupted electric utility service in the previous 12-month period**

Indicator 1.1

The percent of state government business days in which utility assistance was available.

2016  
2017

Indicator 1.2

The percentage of eligible residents (income 150% of poverty or less) receiving any subsidy in the course of the year

2016  
2017

Indicator 1.3

The percent of Kent County households spending more than 2% of their local geography's median household income on electric utility service

Success Measure

**Percent of Kent County households consuming per-capita energy (kWh) at least 5% below baseline 5-year Michigan state average per-capita consumption**

Indicator 2.1

The percent of Kent County residents who participated in energy efficiency education program in the past 12 months

	Energy Audit	Individual Education	Classes
2015			
2016		32	
2017			

Indicator 2.2

The percent of electric utility service addresses weatherized in the past 12 months

	Weatherization	Furnace Replacement	Energy Conservation Project (inc Energy Audit	Total
2015				354
2016	69	74	33	208
2017				