



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

October 24, 2017 Minutes

ENTF Energy Efficiency Subcommittee Members and Guests Present:

Susan Cervantes (Kent County Community Action), Darcy Cunningham (Salvation Army Social Services), Ken Ford (Flat River Outreach Ministries), John Mitchell (211), Tom Oosterbaan (Senior Neighbors), Wende Randall (ENTF)

Guests: Bree Butler (ENTF)

Darcy Cunningham (Salvation Army Social Services), presided.

I. Welcome/Introductions

Introductions around the room, state your name and organization.

II. Review notes from last meeting

Minutes provided from last ENTFF EE Subcommittee Meeting, held on August 22, 2017

Motion: Susan Cervantes

Second: Ken Ford

Motion Approved

III. Funds Updates

a. Background (Darcy)

This year's funding has been unique due to funding delays. Funding for the Michigan Energy Assistance Program comes from two sources: federal LIHEAP funds and state LIEAF funds. The federal LIHEAP funds have been appropriated by congress but have not yet been released to the states. However, state LIEAF funds are available and are in process of being released to the 17/18 MEAP grantees and will be available late October/early November. Typically, Michigan is awarded about 140 million per grant year. DHHS will receive the total amount and then place about 40 million in the Energy Efficiency MEAP pot. LIEAF funds are an electric surcharge that is collected by energy suppliers who have agreed to be monitored

by the state. These surcharge funds are capped at 50 million dollars, the state collects this amount and adds it into the MEAP pot to make a total of 90 million dollars.

b. Known and Unknown (Group)

For this funding year, the federal funds (LIHEAP) were not dispersed on time but the LIEAF Funds were, so there is currently only 50 million dollars available. An email was received that California received their LIHEAP funds and Michigan has received their award notice/letter. It is still unknown at this time if the money will be dispersed the same way it has been in the past. This has created a unique situation; therefore, the state has decided that non-profits can apply for two types of funds. 1) Crisis intervention from LIHEAP 2) Crisis Prevention Assistance LIEAF. In the past, agencies only had to apply once for funding but since the money is split up this year there will be two separate application processes and two separate funding caps. Prevention has a \$3000 family gap. Intervention has an \$850 cap for electric and heat and a \$1200 gap for deliverable gas with SRE funds being deducted from the cap. Energy companies can no longer apply for funding as they have in past years, so it is up to non-profits to run the affordable payment plan between customers and energy companies. LIHEAP funding goes towards weatherization in Michigan.

Community Action is not allowed to administer energy payment plans anymore, but they can assist with any Grand Rapids City water plans. The Salvation Army will be offering Care and LSP (Low Income Sufficiency Program through DTE). They are currently waiting on the contracts signed with Vendors. Kent County Community Action has EFSP funds for homelessness prevention since they were released to provide homelessness prevention. They can cover first month's rent, eviction, and mortgage payments. Individuals have been calling directly Kent County Community Actions and they have also been receiving HAP referrals. DHHS has a 10% carry over from last year and will be starting on Nov. 1st.

c. How are agencies handling the situation? (Group)

Agencies would like to put together a unified message, Darcy provided an outline. With our agencies and others in mind, it needs to be decided what to tell agencies when they call seeking assistance during this funding time with its new challenges. There is a new rule this year: if electric assistance is not available from Nov 1st to April 1st from energy supply companies, they will not be able to shut off the electricity in homes during those dates. Community Action has funds through walk for warmth for anyone in desperate circumstances.

IV. Messaging

DHHS does professional visits through the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm. December 12th is Action Day where they also speak with state legislators. Look at getting something together in the next few weeks to be sent out so that people are aware and can participate.

One idea might be to put together an information sheet or graph. It may be helpful to gather personal stories about what the crisis means to them, these personal stories can aid the data. Community Action says the home heating tax credit is under-utilized and we need to urge community members to apply for that tax credit. When it's closer to the end of the year, it is recommended to do a push for to make people aware of the home heating tax credit. Talking points to agencies will also be ready in the next couple of weeks.

V. Advocacy

- a. Suggested Driver job fair to find drivers for various organizations since everyone is having a shortage. Wende will reach out to MI Works.

VI. Adjournment

Next Meeting

Date/Time: November 28, 2017

Location: ACSET Community Action Agency

121 Franklin St SE Suite 110

Conference Rooms C/D

Will look at meeting being moved from 10:30 to 1:00pm in the afternoon. Susan will check on room availability. **No December meeting**

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:

November 28, 2017