



Energy Efficiency Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
 January 22, 2019
 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Facilitator:	Susan Cervantes		
Meeting Attendees:	Monica Light, James Geisen, Kendrick Heinlein, Susan Cervantes, Rachel Kunnath, Donata Kidd, Niki Perkins, John Mitchell, Tom Oosterbaan, Natalie VarnHagen, Heather Milks, Wende Randall, Brianne Czyzio		
Time Convened:	1:05	Time Adjourned:	2:30

Introductions

Review of Minutes **From November 27, 2018**

Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good cause, like from client car repairs, needs to be verified. - Take out first sentence in third paragraph. - DHHS staff look at heat and electric in the past 6 months and use what is more beneficial for the client. - If someone is denied through SER, that would have to be approved for SER to tap into their fund source.
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Conclusion	Motion Passed
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Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Updates **Brianne Czyzio**

Discussion
 Brianne called in to the January meeting. She will pass along notes during the coalition phone call. For continued updates, check the coalition’s website.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

MEAP 2019 Updates **James Geisen, Donata Kidd**

Discussion
 From November 2017 to January 2018, in Kent County, there were 3100 requests. DHHS approved about 1400 of those. So far this season, they took 4300 requests and approved 2037. Essentially, they took in 1200 more and approved 600 more. They are taking in more now than they were in the past. This year, common reasons for denials include: clients have already had an assist, they do not have verification, or they have already signed up for a payment plan. KCCA has been having issues with people who have already been kicked off because they applied for something in October/November but cannot reapply. Clients can get enrolled in payment plan to release co-pay, then DHHS can issue SER. Once someone defaults on a payment plan, they cannot get any more assistance for the season. The message to clients is: Please stay on your affordable payment plan. The details are done when they sign up for the plan and cannot be changed on the back end. There is a formula that sets the amount for the affordable payment plan. Perhaps this group could get in touch with utility companies to advocate for certain clients. The formulas may be published, Susan will look to see if she can find them. Kent County is huge on affordable payment plans, but if there is a nonparticipating company (like propane), can work things out individually. Susan will see if there is any language that can be shared. Last week, KCCA opened their list, 20% of referrals needed a co-pay. LIHEAP is already funded, as is MEAP, so there will not be a lapse due to the government shutdown. With general questions about SER, contact Susan Lapham: laphams@michigan.gov.

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Thinking Forward		Wende Randall	
Discussion			
<p>Though things changed October 1, the group still needs to report data from 2018. Everyone will be getting a spreadsheet to fill out the services their agency provided, and what can be done from an advocacy standpoint. Also, include parameters in the report. Data could help back up conversations. It would be helpful to include some notes/anecdotes in your agency's report that can be used for storytelling.</p> <p>Spreadsheet, with instructions will be sent out in the next few days. The hope is to have the spreadsheets back by February 10. That way the report can be ready to review by the February meeting. Every year the parameters of assistance are changing. This makes it hard to compare data year to year. For example, KCCA has only half of the dollars this year, as compared to last, so their numbers will look different. The report will look at trends and display the impact agencies were able to have for the year.</p>			
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Agency Updates			
Discussion			
<p><u>Flat River Outreach Ministries</u>: Right now, the utility assistance through TSA caseworker comes once a week, they are hoping she is able to come in an extra day a week.</p> <p><u>Area Agency on Aging</u>: They are looking forward to starting the 2019 fiscal year.</p> <p><u>Senior Neighbors</u> started out with about \$2500 dollars, so \$350 dollars is the maximum that can be offered. Recipients must be Kent County residents and over 60.</p> <p><u>Access of West Michigan</u>: They have seen a large increase of utility need. The number of people who need their copay met has at least doubled from last year.</p> <p><u>KCCA</u>: They started receiving 70 referrals a day. They are trying to work out how to do first-come, first-serve, but this has not been easy. They have an extension on ESFP money (used to be FEMA). They also have some homeless prevention funds. Their water funding is on hold, the contract goes to utility advisory board at the city on January 24. They got more in November, but they have gone through this. Deliverable fuels are now through MEAP, there is no separate pot. Clients are better off going to DHHS as soon as possible. Deliverables need to be under 25% full for assistance so this gives navigators time to get clients set up if necessary.</p> <p><u>211</u>: Call specialist now have a handle on utility assistance. Now, they are getting inundated with calls for tax center appointments.</p> <p><u>Green Homes Institute</u>: DTE and Consumers are releasing extensive rebates for low-income households in Kent County. Their main target is 100% AMI or lower and/or they have been assisting in</p>			



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supporting housing as well (homeless, veteran and etc). In 2018 GHI helped bring in over \$100,000 to 3 different organizations. The rebates work best if a program is already in place and are not the best if they are used as the sole funding source outside other assistance. They can boost programs and add to them. On top of that on the multifamily side all existing buildings approved for Low Income Housing Tax Credits can get paid for energy audits by consumers energy and DTE & Consumers are working on special multifamily low-income rebates too (not ours yet). GHI is offering free DOE Home Energy Scores and inspections for low-income residences under certain programs to help determine which of these rebates make sense. GHI is offering to partner with nonprofits and affordable housing developers in Grand Rapids to figure out how to apply for and take advantage of these programs. Also, KCCA's energy audits are available to anyone who is 200% of poverty. They are working with the new communications director at the county to get materials about this program.

Walk for Warmth is February 23. They are hoping for \$20,000. They are looking at doing a special for federal employees who are not being paid right now since they are not likely eligible for SER/MEAP. Since it is harder to donate utility assistance, as compared to food. KCCA served 900 clients at the previous food distribution. KCCA's distributions through February will still be held.

Access will they will be gathering information about kids who cannot afford free/reduced lunch. They will be compiling this information to see how churches can support food pantries and donations.

Wende met with Sam Giffel from the city, to see if there was interest in being involved with this group. She will pull data for the group, and they will reconnect. In addition, there is someone from DTE interested in being part of this conversation. He suggested it may be helpful to connect with private companies with deliverables to open the door to conversations.

This group meets on a regular basis and has the capacity to partner with companies if they interested in seeing how the system works. If you have relationships/contact in the utility companies, reach out to Wende.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline