



Energy Efficiency Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2020
1:00pm – 2:30pm

Facilitator:	Susan Cervantes		
Meeting Attendees:	Monica Light, Susan Cervantes, Laura St. Louis, Sherrie Gillespie, Tom Oosterbaan, James Geisen, Jonathan Wilson, Keshia Hills, Maddie Strom, John Mitchell, Niki Perkins, Tim Novak, Wende Randall, Brianne Czyzio Robach		
Time Convened:	1:01	Time Adjourned:	2:34

Introductions

Review of Minutes **From February 25, 2020**

Discussion	None
Amendments	None
Conclusion	Motion Passed

MEAP Updates

Discussion

- **KCCA:** they have \$50,000 MEAP funds for the year. With moratorium on shutoffs, have gotten inquiries regarding the shutoff process. Are scheduling appointments via telephone
- **Salvation Army:** staff have a phone that participants can call they need an appointment or phone screen. Funds are available through UW for those who may not qualify at DHHS.
- **DHHS:** SER Policy changes:
 - A telephone interview is no longer required for SER.
 - SER Energy services are no longer limited to one payment for the remainder of the fiscal year.
 - Non-cash asset limit increase to \$15,000 for all SER services.
 - DHHS will not be making a shortfall determination for any month for energy or utility services until further notice.
 - Effective 4/1/20, SER Energy Services FY caps are increasing to address household energy needs due to COVID-19 pandemic-related economic conditions. These increases will remain in effect through 9/30/20: Deliverable fuel - increasing from \$1200 to \$1500; Nat. Gas/Electric – increasing from \$850 to \$1150. Participants can reapply if they previously met older cap.
- **North Kent Connect:** still doing MEAP as normal via phone.

Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Updates

Discussion

The last call was April 10th. There was discussion around including LIHEAP in the CARES Act. CTKWM has been looking at identifying trends and changes in need. Major utilities have suspended shutoffs, and Energy Waste Reduction inspections for low-income households are not currently taking place. CTKMW working to ensure funds are available and coordinated once shutoffs are lifted. Some agencies are working on storytelling.

COVID-19

Discussion

Changes to utility assistance:
SER policy did not change for eligibility, participants must have a past due notice to qualify for utility funds. The minimum requirement for threat of homelessness is a court summons.

DTE has extended the moratorium for shutoffs through May. Also, are doing wellness checks on customers who were shutoff prior to the pandemic. Their philanthropy side is working with United Ways and Community Action Agencies to ensure needs are met.



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CARES Act Funding

KCCA designated funds to utility assistance to mitigate any consequences of COVID-19. They also put funds towards homelessness prevention. Once monies are allocated and appropriated, they hope to get them out quickly. CARES Act increased FPL limits to 200% for utility and homeless prevention, which reaches the ALICE threshold. MEAP is still at 150% FPL. KCCA will allocate funds through their office. As moratoriums are lifted, they are anticipating a large uptick in those requesting assistance. They have been highlighting the fact that moratoriums do not mean that rent and utility payments are waived. Concerns include new application processes in place. Everything will be done via phone, waivers in place to accept electronic signatures. Limited technology is a concern for especially older adults. As a community, collaboration will be important to decide upon best practices for next steps.

Through this time, have seen the importance of expanding infrastructure to accommodate increased virtual needs. A lot of work has been done through philanthropy around school-aged children, but this has not expanded to adults. Wende will be talking with community stakeholders around technology as a basic need and how to have a system level conversation around technology.

John can look in the 2-1-1 database to see if technology is a common request. GVMC has done some mapping in the past, but this shows coverage not which households have open accounts.

Agency Updates

Discussion

- **DHHS** – application volume has started to trend back down. They are not closing any Medicaid cases, cash assistance interview requirement waived. For food assistance, predetermination has been pushed back 6 months. Approval rates have increased due to loosening of restrictions
- **Green Homes Institute** – applied for DOE grant with Wayne Metro Action Agency to incorporate health and home energy score into audits to add more value to assessments. Many affordable housing requirements have continued as essential. They are planning and will begin going out once it is deemed safe to do so.
- **Access of West Michigan** – Access has a pot of funds for rental or utility assistance though local churches. Churches in database should email (caseworker@accessofwestmichigan.org) with date of birth, last 4 of SSN, address, utility or landlords name, number of people in the household, first and last name. Assistance is available for those without an SSN as well.
- **North Kent Connect** – funds are available for rental assistance for those impacted by COVID-19 who live in the North Kent service area.
- **Flat River Outreach Ministries** – They are seeing increased numbers of non-local folks seeking food assistance. They are also seeing a decrease in calls of those accessing utility assistance.
- **211** – many calls have been around food access. Calls seem to be more complicated and last longer as many areas of life are impacted by COVID.
- **KCCA** – Their TEFAP food distribution is Thursday at the DeltaPlex, it begins at 9:00am for drive-up/trunk loading service. Police will be available to help direct traffic.
- **Walk for Warmth** – funds raised are smaller than previous years.