



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 * Multipurpose Room A

February 27, 2018

ENTF Energy Efficiency Subcommittee Members Present:

James Geisen (DHHS), John Mitchell (United Way), Ken Ford (Flat River Outreach Ministries), Kendrick Heinlein (AAAWM), Marissa Boerman (True North Empower), Sherrie Gillespie (Community Action), Susan Cervantes (Community Action), Tara Robinson (The Salvation Army), Tom Oosterbaan (Senior Neighbors), Wende Randall (ENTF), Amy Wright (DHHS), Donata Kidd (MDHHS)

Susan Cervantes, presided.

I. Welcome/Introductions

Introductions around the room, state your name and organization.

II. Review notes from last meeting

Amendments: Take out the word 'guests'. Change James Green to James Geisen.

Minutes provided from last ENTF EE Subcommittee Meeting, held on January 23, 2017

Motion: John

Second: Tom

Motion Approved

III. Updates

a. Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm

The meeting in February was a telephone conference, the call covered the All Parties letter. We want to make sure that legislators are aware of heating funds and the risk of cuts or elimination of funds and what that would mean for the community. This is part of a national effort. Everyone is encouraged to look over the information and speak to their organizations about it. The release of funding didn't occur until January so that was discussed, as was Action Days in DC. It was also discussed how the next budget may include LIHEAP or not and how to deal with that.

b. Agency Updates

DHHS: Talked about universal case load and new MI bridges. March 15th is the roll out date. In the pilot counties, the first four days show that the average time of application to be filled out is 14-15 minutes which is a huge improvement from previous times. Arabic and Spanish versions will be available March 24th. A lot of the agencies represented at today's meeting have already enrolled in training as community partners. Regarding community feedback, early on the feedback was positive. A lot of information was passed through word of mouth in pilot counties until the press release. The main part of the portal being tested is the 'view my benefits' feature, and it has gotten positive feedback, clients really like it.

KCCA: Received deliverable fuels funds and needs to get it spent so referrals are much appreciated. Susan has a flyer she can send out or post, please let her know if you need one. These funds are LIHEAP Crisis Assistance, it aligns with rules of the MEAP funds. LIHEAP funds are also eligible for weatherization. The MEAP pot from Michigan Community Action is for direct assistance, right now the list is closed but is open for LCA and Grand Rapids water. List was closed about a week ago with 90 names on it and it will open again in maybe another week. KCCA has posted for the position of Community Services Assistant and they will be able to help with the demand.

c. Goal Action Steps

The 2017 annual report is being compiled and will be sent out soon for review by members in draft form. Once feedback is compiled it will be finalized.

Last meeting, we discussed what indicator to choose to elevate to dashboard level. There was great feedback from the basic indicators meeting to this group in March so that we can start working on action steps. Overlay DTE information with EE information and put into map so that we can see where shut offs are and gain important knowledge. It is that time of year where we hopefully get 6-month data from Consumers Energy. Right now, we don't have a goal for the change we want to see, but once there is 18 months of data we can make a goal statement.

IV. Advocacy

a. Walk for Warmth

Held walk for warmth on Saturday, Feb 24; there was a very nice turnout and the final numbers aren't in but hoping for about 11 thousand of raised money. It is also hoped that Consumers Energy match that amount. There is an elementary school that raised around two thousand dollars for the cause. The County Administrator, County Commissioner, and Mayor Bliss were there. There was also a great turnout of kids. This year the structure was changed; there were no large sponsorships and all involved had the opportunity to contribute 'donations'. The funding earned from The Walk for Warmth is important because it can help those that fall into gaps of need. The money raised needs to go towards families that wouldn't qualify for other funds normally. Walk used to be at MI Works on Straight Ave, this year it was Health and Human Services and it worked out well. There was also a successful Battle of the Bowls and a lot of delicious soups and support were given. KCCA wants to hold some kind of competition to raise money within the county. There will be no KCCA T-shirts with sponsor logos at future walks.

The Michigan Community Action has a lobbyist at the state level who is working on support for ongoing funding for heating assistance. Sign on letter is only action piece identified as of now.

b. Reminder: LIHEAP Days – March 12 & 13

No current information. It's made up of different agencies who want to participate. DTE or Consumers Energy will sponsor agencies who want to go. They meet with different offices and represent the interests of LIHEAP funding recipients. NEUAC organizes this. Mary Wilkins from the Salvation Army will go. This event happens in Washington DC.

V. Adjournment

Next Meeting

Date/Time: Tuesday, March 27, 2018

Location: Kent County Community Action
121 Franklin St SE Suite 110

Meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of every month, at 1:00 PM.

Meeting Location:

Kent County Community Action,
121 Franklin SE Suite 110

2018 Meeting Date Schedule:

March 27th
April 24th
May 22nd
June 26th
July 24th
August 28th
September 25th
October 23rd
November 27th