



Energy Efficiency Subcommittee
 Meeting Minutes
 February 26, 2019
 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Facilitator:	Susan Cervantes		
Meeting Attendees:	John Mitchell, James Geisen, Kendrick Heinlein, Tom Oosterbaan, Sherrie Gillespie, Susan Cervantes, Monica Light, Keshia Hills, Nicole Rodriguez, Brett Little (phone), Wende Randall, Brianne Czynio		
Time Convened:	1:00	Time Adjourned:	2:30

Introductions

Review of Minutes **From January 22, 2019**

Discussion	None
Amendments	None
Conclusion	Motion Passed

MEAP 2019 Updates

Discussion

DHHS: SER numbers for this season: October had 1914 registrations, there were 1336 in November, 1116 in December, and 1336 in January of 2019, the number has stayed steady. They are taking 200-300 more a month as compared to last year. The increase is likely because people must initially come to DHHS instead of individual agencies. During the vortex, the building was closed a few days, but they were still handling emergencies. They are not hearing a lot of feedback from clients after they have gone to the MEAP agency.

Kent County Community Action: MEAP has been a learning process. They are struggling to interpret the decision notices, and often need to refer back to the policies. The applications are taking longer to be approved because they need to make sure they are staying within the guidelines. The process is getting easier as time is going on. They are not sure what to do/tell clients who are denied assistance. Most denial reasons are due to the client being over the income limit. Last year, agencies could deduct certain things so they could get the client under the income limit to receive assistance. They have not been using Walk for Warmth funds because those funds are very limited. If someone has been denied because they did not submit something on time or did so incorrectly, KCCA can help them resubmit.

Flat River Outreach Ministries: They have been able to send a few people who have denials to Salvation Army because they are able to provide assistance.

North Kent Connect: They have picked up a lot more of the MI Bridges applications for SER. The MEAP applications are just starting to pick up. They are not able to help with SER copays of asset/income through MEAP.

Deliverable fuels: There was a spike in people who are extremely low/out of propane at the end of the month as people used more than normal due to the extremely cold temperatures.

The Salvation Army: has appointments for CARE and LSP still available.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Thinking Forward **Wende Randall**

Discussion

The group discussed how things played out with the cold weather and how it impacted clients.



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Salvation Army did a lot of rescheduling. They had to start scheduling after 10 if GRPS is closed because that is when their office opens, and they have to come into the office to meet clients. KCCA rescheduled appointments with holds on accounts to the extent possible. For transportation, it was tricky because their busses were out on the road when the building closed. Flat River Outreach was never completely closed. Staff were able to work from home or transfer calls to their cell phones and work through it. They did reschedule their pantry days. Senior Neighbors was closed for 3 days, it took them about a week to catch up. At North Kent Connect, there was at least 1 staff member there for people who needed to pick up emergency food. Most staff at the Area Agency on Aging were working remotely to keep everything up and running. 211 was open and fully staffed every day. Some staff worked from home. There were multiple frustrations – food pantries closed, HAP closed. 211 and DHHS worked together well to help in emergency situations. For power outages, Montcalm and Ionia were keeping them in the loop about what shelters were open/closed, and when. A lot of the tax sites were closed those days, so they had to reschedule those appointments as well. In the future, if there are additional hours that agencies are open, please communicate with 211! They will then be able to share that information with others in the community.

Propane is currently 5 days out for delivery. For deliverable fuels, some companies were able to deliver fuel, but companies cannot deliver to other company's tanks. Perhaps an emergency plan could be developed.

Walk for Warmth went well, it was short and sweet. The funds raised each year are decreasing, so KCCA is working on being diligent about using the money for those who need it the most. The new marketing restrictions made it harder to get information out. And, not being able to solicit sponsors made it harder to get agencies to donate. In the future, ENTFF can work to get the word out and try to garner support.

In the past, the group has talked about hosting/presenting at an event for West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum. This will allow ENTFF to look at connecting with companies around sustainability. Think about what information can be shared with companies that are looking at the triple bottom line.

Data:

Phone meeting with Consumers is coming up to look at the next run of data for their shutoff notices. No updates yet for getting data from DTE. Wende has been discussing leading the conversation with Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm about pushing for statewide releases of data, she will keep everyone posted on how the conversation goes. If anyone has any ideas, let Wende know.

Annual Report: what information is important for your agency to communicate around this report?

- One story is the difference in the criteria. When looking at the expenditures, it should be clear what the allowable expenditures were. One of the important things to include is how many payments per household as well as types of payments.
- DHHS can share a story from the client's perspective. It would be helpful to have a glimpse of what a household receiving assistance looks like.



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- Another issue is that in early 2018 there were deliverable fuels funds through LIHEAP but agencies did not get the summer fuel program or LIHEAP this season. For 2017, agencies were able to spend much more on summer fuel. Perhaps the report could show who was served in the past and who was not served this year.
- Non-MEAP includes LIHEAP. Some LIHEAP is direct LIHEAP, that information can be shared.
- Next year, include that agencies cannot use MEAP funds for non-participating providers.
- One complaint from rural groups is that there are a lot of nonparticipating service providers, so they are not able to provide services.
 - o Some smaller providers decided not to participate, maybe because 98% of the funds go back to DTE and Consumers. Propane providers aren't metered so they have never participated.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
If you haven't provided data yet, please send to Brienne when possible. In addition, in the next week, send 1 or 2 stories about your clients, their situation, how you were able to provide assistance, and what challenges you faced.	All	

Agency Updates

Discussion

Senior Neighbors: has plenty of money left. They are not getting many utility calls. Most money is going towards rent and bed bugs

Area Agency on Aging of West Michigan: They have an emergency pot. They are also giving money towards bed bugs. For bedbugs, SER is available if the client is a homeowner, or they can request exemption if they are renters. In addition, the cost could be deferred to tenant if they feel it is tenant caused. This could also lead to the loss of vouchers. James will follow up and figure out what the process is when applying for SER for bedbugs.

Clients are expressing frustration with the system. DHHS has not been hearing a lot of feedback related to SER. They are collecting complaints, especially from rural areas, and are keeping a list of complaints. Any outreach from staff should prompt potential clients not to wait until the last minute. During the polar vortex, DHHS was doing case management and home visits to make sure everyone who did not have heat was getting into hotels.

Consumers and DTE have boosted low income rebates for single families specifically. This doubles/triples market-based rebates for low income (100% AMI or lower). Last year Green Homes Institute brought in over \$100,000 across agencies to boost funding. Rebates work best when partnering with other agencies, not as a standalone. Green Homes Institute also has specific funding from the Wege Foundation to help any households that may need efficiency assistance.

Conclusions

Discussion

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline