



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

Facilitator:	Susan Cervantes		
Meeting Attendees:	Susan Cervantes, John Mitchell, Nick Grinwis, Tasha Merlington (for James Geisen and Donata Kidd), Keshia Hills, Nicole Rodriguez, Sherrie Gillespie, Laura St. Louis, Monica Light, Tom Oosterbaan, Wende Randall, Brianne Czyzio		
Time Convened:	1:05	Time Adjourned:	2:10

Introductions

Review of Minutes **From February 26, 2019**

Discussion	None
Amendments	None

Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Updates

Discussion

Wende attended the meeting by phone. Key things discussed include:

- The position of the coalition in requesting that the legislative LIHEAP appropriation be extended. There was also talk about what the state plan and summer filing will look like.
- DTE is looking at potentially supporting standalone legislation around RA and LA rates to offset distribution charges.
- The state wants to prioritize using MEAP for long term prevention and SER for crisis. The goal is to streamline enrollment for those who have already qualified for SER to automatically roll into DTE plans (LSP, etc.)
- There is a policy committee meeting coming up to look at things like the expansion of shutoff exclusions. They plan to use stories of families and young children as part of advocacy for continuation and are partnering with the healthcare system to talk about things that families need. Think about how we can better partner with healthcare partners in our community to ensure that residents are being connected with the correct resources.
- MLPP did a debrief of the governor’s budget. Notes are available on their website: <https://mlpp.org/budget-issues/a-first-look-at-gov-whitmiers-2020-state-budget/>

MEAP 2019 Updates

Discussion

Long-term prevention that MEAP is going towards is affordable payment plans. DHHS can help if a client is in a shutoff protection plan but cannot help with clients in affordable payment plan. With affordable payment plans, funds are redirected on a percentage basis. Once a client signs up for it, it is a 2-year program. Direct them to DHHS first to get approved for SER, before they get put onto affordable payment plan. For a shut-off protection plan, clients need qualifying criteria: elderly, medical condition, etc. Plans usually go through April 30 of each year. Salvation Army has a pot of money for subsidy assistance, one-time payment up to \$200. KCCA has Walk for Warmth funds available as well.

LIHEAP Advocacy

Discussion

In Trump’s budget, LIHEAP has been zeroed out. The state-level funding comes from the federal level. The federal budget will change, and hopefully the line item will be reinstated. This is an advocacy



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points that can be highlighted. New United Way ALICE report is out. This has statewide and county level data. Perhaps ALICE and CTKMW data can be used to put together a fact sheet that can be used to raise awareness in Kent County. Anyone from a nonprofit can advocate for these funding streams. Do any agencies have agency level data that may be relevant? Agencies will look into this and share with Wende and Brianne.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Data Reporting Update

Discussion

This currently shows aggregate numbers and will be formatted to show month by month trends. Stories show the impact on those living in Kent County. What else have they been able to afford, what other crises has this prevented? Send any stories to Wende and Brianne.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Agency Updates

Discussion

Senior Neighbors has been using their money fairly consistently throughout the year, and are on track with their spending

Flat River Outreach Ministries has slowed down due to tax returns coming in, but is picking up again
Salvation Army has remained steady. They still have funding and spots available for the affordable payment plans for LSP, CARE. They will be sending correspondence to vendors – utility vendors that did not participate with MEAP and promised not to do shutoffs, so large bills will come in April. Clients will need to go through DHHS first before Salvation Army because they still need SER approval.

211: all KCTCC slots are full. Energy calls are steady.

Kent County Community Action: is partaking in a community needs assessment. They are in the finalization stage of a customer and provider survey. They ask that all providers complete the survey and encourage customer participation. They will be doing \$50 incentives each week for utilities with 6 weeks of winners. They are working with Public Sector Consultants. It should give them great community data that will be shared once it is completed. They will have their marathon tax days on Friday, Saturday, and Monday (15). KCCA will try to supply promotional materials that can be shared. They do over 200 returns a day. They are walk-in spots. There are other places in the community that do walk-ins as well.

ENTF: In the Workforce Development subcommittee, there has been talk around how to message the system-level efforts. They are creating 3 different messaging avenues – employers, other service providers, and potential consumers. This group could develop messaging within the energy efficiency area. Does it make sense to have a common, collective messaging available? For utility assistance, last year this subcommittee created the service flow for what it looks like when people apply for assistance. This provided potential clients with links to directions, flow chart view, etc. In addition, there has been a lot of mapping done with the Consumers data, what could be done with this data? Target those neighborhoods with education about consumption, weatherization, etc. through flyers and/or canvassing. Perhaps provide this information to agencies who provide services. For a new person coming into the energy efficiency space, it would be helpful to have the steps to go through with each agency. With the MEAP changes this past fall, the messaging was not clear. A clear message



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from ENTF that says that things have changed, and in hindsight this is what services are being provided. When developing messaging, it needs to be flexible as there may be more changes. This messaging will also be great for connecting with potential nongovernmental funders to talk through and raise awareness that there is additional need on top of the governmental assistance that is available. The messaging could include places where people are getting assistance outside of the governmental system, like Access of West Michigan. The messaging has to be accessible by cell phone. What is a good central location for all this information? 211, or the City of Grand Rapids. GR is working to set up a central location in the city for all services. Some ideas to include with the messaging: the process may be lengthy and difficult; and it is going to be a process to go through the system; you need to be really poor to get assistance; the process takes time, nothing happens overnight