



Energy Efficiency Subcommittee
 Meeting Minutes
 May 26, 2020
 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Facilitator:	Susan Cervantes		
Meeting Attendees:	Susan Cervantes, Amy Banfill, Jonathan Wilson, John Mitchell, Monica Light, James Geisen, Maddie Strom, Tom Oosterbaan, Tim Novak, Wende Randall, Emily Madsen, Brianne Czyzio Robach		
Time Convened:	1:01	Time Adjourned:	2:34

Introductions

Emily Madsen recently joined the ENTF team as a data analyst! She will be working primarily with the Food and Nutrition Coalition and Economic and Workforce Development also will be looking at data across subcommittees.

Review of Minutes **From April 28, 2020**

Discussion	None
Amendments	None
Conclusion	Motion Passed

MEAP Updates

Discussion

North Kent Connect – still doing MEAP, and were also granted utility assistance funds for households impacted by coronavirus

DHHS – increased SER cap through the rest of the fiscal year. Households only need a past due notice (not shutoff) to qualify. Also, the elimination of one-time assist means that households may be eligible for an additional payment

KCCA – most funds have been expended

Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Updates

Discussion

Most of the last meeting focused on advocacy on special funding due to the pandemic. There is concern that utility assistance will be a significant need as shutoff holds are lifted, advocacy is important as utility need is often a precursor to food and housing insecurity. Work is being around best practices for safety and social distancing for Energy Waste Reduction programs. There is potential future legislation looking at system preparedness ahead of the another potential pandemic.

DTE – federal affairs team working with legislators to ensure that funding meets need. 9600 accounts in Kent County are currently behind in payments. Moratorium extended through June 1, so the will likely begin the shutoff process for households mid-June. 416 who are greater than \$700 due.

LIHEAP funds – no updates on how these funds will be distributed. It has been reported that most will go to SER, but legislation specifies that some will go to weatherization.

COVID-19 Updates

Discussion

DHHS – is starting to refer folks to Michigan Works. All staff are on layoff one day a week due to budget shortfall (Monday or Friday)

DTE has a [medical hold policy](#) in place so that those who are vulnerable do not risk shutoff and avoid late fees. Programs and resources available on [their website](#).

KCCA received various grants to respond to needs due to COVID-19. The limit increased to 200% FPL. In addition, they have ESG funds available for those outside of the City of Grand Rapids.



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2-1-1 call volume

From March 1 to May 25 the top 5 phone call topics in Kent County were for: food pantries, VITA program sites, online e-file, electric assistance, rent assistance. This was similar for the rest of counties. 32% of calls in Kent County were COVID-related as were about 40% of calls in other counties. Compared to last year, there was a 28% increase in calls in March and a 35% increase in April.

Agency Updates

Discussion

FROM – Have observed that a decrease in restrictions and an increase in funds at state and federal level has led to less need to spend un-restricted funds. Though they are anticipating a jump when moratoria lift.

North Kent Connect – food pantry will stay outside through the summer. They are starting to get calls for rent and utilities and are also handing out energy efficiency materials from Consumers

DHHS – numbers have dropped back down to pre-COVID levels throughout the state. They are anticipating a potential uptick once federal unemployment expires.

KCCA – are hoping to resume weatherization soon. A plan is in place to address home inspections, but it has to be approved by state office before they can restart.

Crystal Flash – Amy Banfill is the residential sales manager at Crystal Flash. She has recognized that some community members need help with utilities and wanted to help provide insight.

The group discussed options to help households prepare for fall. Suggestion to provide advocacy or educational activities for deliverable customers before the cold season. Crystal Flash typically starts sending messages to customers in August. If a customer’s tank is empty, they typically have to pay emergency fee and the leak check requirement. During the summer months, they typically see less heating need but see use of propane for small appliances.

Strategic Design – ENTF is undergoing a strategic design and planning process. Liz at Liz G Strategy will be sharing information about the process via email with a request for committee members to participate in interviews to provide input into the planning process and potential values of ENTF.