



Energy Efficiency Subcommittee
 Meeting Minutes
 April 22, 2021
 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Facilitator:	Wende Randall		
Meeting Attendees:	Aaron Estrada, Allison Kleinsasser, Amanda R, Carissa VanDonselaar, Emily Madsen, Izzy Redfield, James Geisen, John Mitchell, Jonathan Wilson, Kacey Ramones, Maddie Strom, Monica Light, Niki Perkins, Sherri Vainavicz, Sherrie Gillespie, Susan Cervantes, Tom Oosterbaan, Wende Randall, Yvonne Lewis <i>(List may not be complete- please contact Brianne if you were on the call but are not listed here.)</i>		
Time Convened:	1:03	Time Adjourned:	2:35
Introductions			
Review of Minutes		From March 25, 2021	
Discussion	None.		
Amendments	None.		
Subcommittee Leadership			
Discussion			
<p>The group would like to add a co-chair to the subcommittee to help support Susan and staff in guiding the work of the subcommittee. Co-chair responsibilities include helping plan for and facilitate the monthly meetings, also to help represent the committee on the ENTF Leadership (other ENTF subcommittee chairs/co-chairs/leadership).</p> <p>Monica is willing to serve as co-chair. All in favor of electing Monica as co-chair.</p>			
Review of Process Flow			
Discussion			
<p>This flowchart was drafted to show how someone in need of utility assistance would move through the system.</p> <p>Conversation around including CERA funds on the chart. If the situation is based on COVID hardship, CERA will pay utilities and has higher income guidelines. Also, CERA benefits include rental assistance. Brianne and Wende will discuss how to include CERA on the flow for the next year.</p> <p>Once finalized, this document can be shared with community agencies and accessed by navigators and case workers in the community.</p>			
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update process flow to include CERA funds		Brianne /Wende	
Theory of Change Subcommittee Action Items: Effort/Impact Matrix			
Discussion			
<p>The theory of change (TOC) looks at the activities of agencies within the energy efficiency system, the conditions needed to ensure these are successful, and activities of Energy Efficiency subcommittee to ensure the conditions are met for success. The subcommittee will work on together on collective responsibilities. ENTF staff pulled out the subcommittee responsibilities and hope to plot them on an effort/impact matrix to begin to prioritize next steps.</p> <p>The group discussed action areas and plotted them on an effort/impact matrix (see meeting slides for each matrix).</p>			



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Conversation notes:

- Advocate for expanded and/or shared and sustainable funding – this includes reaching out to advocacy groups on a state and federal level.
- Advocate for equitable distribution – are funds distributed equitably throughout the county?; advocate for real-time funding so it is equitable across poverty rates (formulas are based on 2000 data not more recent America Community Survey data)
- Data seems to be the key factor for advocating for additional programs and funding
- Advocate for non-cost prohibitive codes – this should include a focus on safety issues

There are a lot activities that were categorized as high effort and high impact. A handful of activities are high impact and low effort which is where the subcommittee can begin to prioritize. Staff will develop chart of activities based on categorization to bring back to the group for discussion on how to prioritize these actions.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Develop chart of activities based on effort and impact matrix	Brianne/Wende/Emily	

Weatherization Process Update

Discussion

A small group has been working to develop a process and partnership for weatherization funds to ensure a smooth flow of referrals. Kent County’s Legal Department is working to develop a release of information to allow information sharing between agencies. They are also looking at a Memorandum of Understanding between the County and referring agencies.

2020 Utility Assistance Data Collection Update

Discussion

Draft data is available of the total amounts and number of payments made by utility type. Deliverable fuels amounts are extremely low, but the DHHS data groups gas and deliverable fuel funds together.

Initial data shows a large increase in the number of funds and payments made from 2018 (the last year data was available). A report will be developed for next month’s meeting and will include discussion on policy changes that led to more funding being available – increase in SER caps, COVID funds that were available for water, more. The report will also compare 2020 non-covid numbers to 2018 numbers to show increased assistance available due to COVID assistance funding.

Community Partner Updates

Discussion

Susan shared the manual for the CERA funds in relation to utilities. Regulations were set by the federal government and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA).

Compared to SER/MEAP, these funds have is greater income eligibility for households of 1-4 members and similar eligibility for households with 4-8 members. Funds will be paid to utility providers, unless the provider won’t accept funds in which case they can be paid to the tenant. Households do not have to be in arrearages to receive this assistance, but the funds do not cover initial service costs. If someone meets maximum payment limits for utility assistance, they can go to another assistance resource for the remainder.

KCCA may be receiving funds for county-wide water and sewer soon. In addition, the SER cap for water funds is increasing and will go by energy income limit. They are also eliminating the 6-month look back.



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Calls regarding these funds go to The Salvation Army (877-ERA-KENT), staff will walk folks through uploading their application to the website or completing application over the phone. Local partners include KCCA, Salvation Army, the SOURCE, and the Hispanic Center. Each of these agencies has paper applications available for walk-in clients and can provide assistance. Case workers will be able to coordinate with utilities to stop shutoffs that may be in progress. Landlords will also be aware that a tenant is the process of applying for funds. Legal Aid of Western Michigan is also involved and can consult if needed.

The program has started to ramp up and partners will need to expend a high level of funds each month to assist as quickly as possible and to spend the funds down.

Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Updates

Discussion

- The NEAUC National Conference is this week.
- There has been some indication that LIHEAP and MEAP applications are down, and SER spending is up. This ties into conversations around which funding source is used first.
- CTKMW is hoping to partner with MPSC to do outreach around available funding.
- MPSC started convening an Energy Affordability and Accessibility Collaborative. They are meeting on May 19. The next Energy Waste Reduction Low Income meeting is May 6. Connect with Wende for meeting information.

MEAP Updates

Discussion

- DHHS is still processing SER applications.
- KCCA received a lower amount of funding, still has MEAP funds available to serve clients.

Community Partner Updates

Discussion

Meeting slides: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/17zasJYru9H3L7hJyjrlwHmy-hNDSoy7SBX3i_TZch2M/edit?usp=sharing