



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) Steering Committee Minutes of Meeting Held on April 11, 2019

Attendance in Springfield:

Angela Baldwin, DCEO; Deirdre Coughlin, DCEO; Leslie Ann Lesko, DCEO; Ben Moore, DCEO; Marie Mueller, DCEO; David Wortman, DCEO

Attendance in Chicago:

Maria Gallardo, DCEO; Abigail Miner, Attorney General; Shelby Montgomery, CEDA; Tyrone Pickens, CEDA; Kimberly Roberts, CEDA

Attendance via Telephone:

Christine Brinkman, Com-Ed; Melanie Brown, Ameren; Mindy Browning, ERBA; Melissa Creamer, Kendall-Grundy; Aimee English, Citizens Utility Board; Jennifer Fenske, NICOR Gas; Abby Helms, Madison Co.; Joan Howard, IL Commerce Commission; Michelle Machay, Peoples Gas; Norma Maisonet, Kendall-Grundy; Barbara Richardson, Legal Assistance Foundation; Lucy Sanchez, Lake Co.; Aarian Smith, ComEd; Eric Schrader, Peoples Gas

Call to Order

David Wortman called the meeting to order with introductions.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections from the January 17, 2019 minutes. Mindy Browning motioned for approval of the minutes and Leslie Ann Lesko seconded the motion. All voted, and the minutes were approved.

Program Update

Leslie Ann Lesko provided an update of the program and said a total of \$24,972,349 is annually obligated on behalf of 23,167 customers enrolled in PIPP. The average PIPP benefit is \$1,077.93 compared to \$970.84 (Last year, we were obligating annually a total of \$24,837,189 on behalf of 25,583 enrolled customers). The total number of customers enrolled in PIPP represents a 9% reduction compared to previous year at the same period (4/5/2018). A total of 1,733 customers have dropped from the program but 455 of these drops were later re-enrolled. This compares with 2,878 drops during last year's program. A total of 876 applications have missed payments. Last year, we had 962 customers with missed payments.

David Wortman asked why the dollar amount spent this year is the same as last year. Maria Gallardo explained the reason being because of customers having higher True-ups which made their bills higher with the cold winter weather.

Next Recertification Process

Maria Gallardo gave the Recertification Process report. A Procedure Letter will be sent to the LAAs sometime in May to announce the start of the recertification and provide guidance to them. The majority of our PIPP customers will recertify in the months of July and August.

We should expect to receive the first Advanced True Up messages in STARS from the utilities sometime in May. STARS will send automatic letters to customers to remind them to contact their local agency for recertification. A total of 2 letters will be sent to the customers to inform them about their recertification requirement. Customers visit the LAA when they are in “Ready for Customer” status. The True Up Adjustment benefit is available in October to customers who drop during the recertification appointment, want the higher DVP benefit amount, and are in good standing with their utility payments.

PIPP Recertification choices are: remain on PIPP, Drop-Over income, drop due to Missed payment with one vendor, Voluntary Drop, Drop-Ineligible, and Drop- No True Up Adjustment—available in October. We will also manage the 6/30 special drops with Kestner Consulting.

A PIPP Recertification Refresher webinar will be scheduled on May 31st. This will also include Kestner Consulting with STARS-PIPP.

Maria asked the utility companies if they had data to share because of the colder winter months. Jennifer Fenske said she did not but will look in to it and get back to her. Maria asked if ComEd or Peoples Gas had any comments. Aarian Smith said she did not but can pull the report as well as Ameren and Peoples Gas.

Leslie Ann asked Kimberly Roberts if she was keeping the same spreadsheet as Jen Schmidt with the temperatures and she said yes. Leslie Ann asked how it was looking. Kim said for the month of January-March, it has been up about 2 to 3 degrees higher than normal. She also said they are expecting the True-Ups to be higher as well.

PIPP Enrollment Period End Date

Maria Gallardo provided information on the New PIPP enrollment applications which will start in October 2019. She stated that 2020 PIPP allocation will be approx. \$40M again. New customers to be added, per funding availability. The Office of Community Assistance (OCA) will work with the LAAs to determine if PIPP will be expanded in the LAA service territory to add new customers. She said some LAAs reached their capacity and ran out of funds.

Leslie Ann reiterated what Maria said and indicated that since STARS, is an automated system, the LAAs should be able to do more with new customers being added. She also stated that if they have questions, they can contact her or Maria.

Working Group and Policy Updates

Leslie Ann announced that there will be few Working Group meetings with a small group of LAAs to discuss recommendations for policy changes or clarification needed in the manual. There are about 17

representatives. The first meeting will be focusing on PIPP and LIHEAP which is Monday, April 15, 2019. She said there will be a special meeting to discussing furnace assistance which PIPP customers can apply for. Leslie Ann mentioned they are working on the state plan.

Aimee English asked when will the invitations of the meeting items go out to the work group. Leslie Ann said a couple of weeks ago, but they are for the LAA and State representatives. Deirdre said that if there were any ideas, they can email them to Maria and/or Leslie Ann.

Other Business

David Wortman asked if there were any other business at this time. David stated that on Monday, March 8, he and Addrena Kim, Acting Assistant Deputy Director of OCA, met in Chicago with Christine Brinkman and Melissa Washington from ComEd to discuss their new program for Supplemental Arrearage Reduction Program (SARP). He said they are going to set up a meeting with some of DCEO staff for further discussion with other items from LIHEAP and PIPP.

Christine said they have announced an initiative called “Powering People” where they are looking to better educate customers on fraud and scams. They are looking to make bill change on the price to compare and the Supplemental Arrearage Reduction Program. She also said they have announced that it is coming but haven’t put it into play yet because they need to finish designing it and do some socialization before it gets out and hoping to launch it in the coming month.

Leslie Ann explained the two bill documents that were attached showing the price to compare. Christine stated that Ameren and many of the stakeholders have been involved in the ICC workshops regarding price to compare.

Maria asked if the customers were currently seeing this and Christine said yes. Christine said they put something in the bill message last year. She explained that in the ICC workshops, it was asked how to get the payment from the back to the front of the bill. The ICC will write a report in June and the utilities will follow-up with some type of filing to show the bill change that they recommend.

Abigail Miner asked if DCEO was doing an investigation into the LIHEAP customers and Alternative Energy Suppliers. Maria said data is being collected in LIHEAP.net. Abigail asked if the data were being collected on all LIHEAP customers and Maria said yes. Leslie Ann said the data has been collected since October 1, 2018. She said if it is not in the drop-down, the IT team will add it. She also emphasized that the customers can change their supplier at any time. It is based on the supplier they had at the time of the LIHEAP application. OCA will have a full year report available later on.

Meeting Schedule

July 11, 2019

October 10, 2019

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.