



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

Bruce Rauner, Governor

**Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP) Steering Committee
Minutes of Phone Meeting Held on August 31, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

Attendance via Conference Telephone

Members: *Deborah Bursey, Ameren; Aimee English, Citizens Utility Board; Joan Howard, Illinois Commerce Commission; Emily Monk, Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO); Jennifer Montague, Commonwealth Edison; Chris Wheat, City of Chicago*

Guests: *Melanie Brown, Ameren; Dave Baron, Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas; Mindy Browning, ERBA; Kimberly Burdine, ComEd; Allen Cherry, Attorney General's Office; Jen Fenske, Nicor Gas; Kerri Halsall, DuPage County; Nancy Kane-Richards, Community Contacts; Karen Lufton, Attorney General's Office; Michelle Machay, Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas; Jim Monk, Illinois Energy Association; Shelby Montgomery, CEDA; Deborah Moss, Nicor Gas; Lauren Pashayan, Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance; Ashley Piwowarczyk, DuPage County; Barbara Richardson, Legal Assistance Foundation of Metro. Chicago; Jen Schmidt, CEDA; Martha Strawser, Rockford; Kathy Walk, CEFS*

Staff: *Maria Gallardo, DCEO; Kevin Harrison, DCEO; Janet Hawes-Davis, DCEO; Patty Hughes, DCEO; Leslie Ann Lesko, DCEO; Marie McLean, DCEO; Ben Moore, DCEO; Amy Park, DCEO*

Call to Order

Emily Monk called the meeting to order.

PIPP

Emily Monk explained that there are two topics for the call. One is the immediate future of the Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP) and the other is about not dropping clients from services.

Maria Gallardo spoke about the immediate future of PIPP. If State funds have not been restored as of the end of the week, there will be no way to offer PIPP during the new program year. There wouldn't be sufficient time to hire and train LAA staff on the changes to the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for PY16 and the PIPP program if it came back at a later date. It is also an issue on DCEO's accounting end. Office of Energy Assistance (OEA) is moving grants as far along in the process as possible with federal funds only. Before PIPP could be offered again, OEA would have to hire back the contractors that supported the STARS system.

Emily Monk explained that if we don't get the State funds reinstated to offer the PIPP program in the new program year, but did get authorization to spend it at a later date, it could be used to supplement the LIHEAP program this year and start both LIHEAP and PIPP next fall.

A question was raised, if PIPP goes away would the utilities still offer those clients the Arrearage Reduction Program? ComEd said they would, but out of the 35,000 customers (that participate in the program) only 8,000 have arrearages. The rest will have the struggle of paying the portion that the State used to pay. Ameren plans to offer it to the clients that are currently on it. Nicor Gas will continue to do the same until they hear not to. Peoples agree to go a four-month period and then they would review.

The question was asked of the utilities, when the 60-day hold ends September 1, will those clients be disconnected? Ameren & Peoples will remove the hold to keep clients from being disconnected on September 1. ComEd is considering holding them out a little longer, but they haven't given their position yet. Nicor is talking about leaving them on the hold for another 30 days but nothing is finalized because it is with their lawyers.

New Business

Jen Schmidt voiced her hope that even if PIPP isn't active this year, that this group continue to work to improve the program and resolve issues that have never been addressed during the four years the program has been in existence.

Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the PIPP Steering Committee will be communicated by email.