



**Illinois**  
**Department of Commerce**  
& Economic Opportunity  
JB Pritzker, Governor

**Low Income Energy Assistance Policy Advisory Council (PAC) Meeting**  
**Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday, February 7, 2019**  
**10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

**Attendance in Springfield and Chicago:**

*PAC Members: Kevin Wright, Illinois Competitive Energy Association (ICEA)*

*Guests: Mindy Browning, ERBA; Christina Crockett, CEDA; Abigail Miner, Attorney General's Office; Tyrone Pickens, CEDA; Shahi Nawab, CEDA; Tyrone Pickens, CEDA; Kimberly Roberts, CEDA; Zenobia Williams, CEDA*

*DCEO Staff: Angela Baldwin; Deirdre Coughlin; Maria Gallardo; Leslie Ann Lesko; Ben Moore; Marie Mueller; Mick Prince*

**Attendance via Conference Telephone:**

*PAC Members: Tracy Barczewski (Proxy), IL Area Agency on Aging; Elizabeth Berendsen, City of Chicago; Deborah Burse, Ameren Illinois; Aimee English, Citizens Utility Board; Wanda Hopkins, South Austin Coalition; Joan Howard, IL Commerce Commission; Ellen Rendos, Nicor Gas; Lorrie Walls, City of Chicago*

*Guests: Melanie Brown, Ameren; Latoya Butler, CEDA; Kimberly Campbell, Dynege; Jennifer Fenske, Nicor Gas; Karen Lusson, Attorney General's Office; Lauren Pashayan, Land of Lincoln Legal Foundation; Aarian Smith, ComEd; Emily Williams, Nicor Gas; Eric Schrader, Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas*

**Call to Order**

Deirdre Coughlin called the meeting to order and indicated the Department has a new Acting Director, Erin Guthrie.

**Approval of PAC Minutes**

Deirdre Coughlin made a motion that the October 18, 2018 minutes be approved. No corrections were presented. Motion to approve was made by Kevin Wright and was seconded by Ellen Rendos. Motion passed.

**Fiscal Report**

Ben Moore provided an overview of the current IHWAP and LIHEAP grant funding available throughout the network. Additionally, he indicated that OCA is currently processing IHWAP grant modifications to provide additional funding for LAAs that have demonstrated additional capacity to weatherize additional homes in their service territory. See the Program Status report for the distribution of HHS and State funds.

### **Weatherization**

Mick Prince gave an update on Weatherization. He reported that 713 units have been weatherized so far in the 2019 program year. He also noted that it is difficult to forecast production due to the infusion of utility funds in the IHWAP program.

Mick mentioned that a wrap-up webinar on the OCA procurement manual was scheduled for Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> (1:00pm -3:00pm). OCA and Wipfli conducted six regional workshops in the previous quarter to train the network on conducting procurement in accordance with 2 CFR 200.

OCA staff has begun drafting the DOE State Weatherization Plan and do not anticipate any major changes to the plan. OCA is planning to submit the plan to DOE before the required submission date.

OCA attended the utility kickoff meetings (at Sangamon County for Ameren and DuPage County for the northern utilities) for the IHWAP programs. We had discussed mobile home training with Ameren in regards to their other energy efficiency program and suggested that they contact Chris Clay, the person that had conducted the training for the IHWAP network. Karen Lusson from the AG's office asked if Ameren was including HVAC work as part of the utility funded weatherization work, and Mick said that HVAC is not currently included but that issue is something we continue to discuss with Ameren.

### **LIHEAP**

Leslie Ann Lesko gave an update on LIHEAP. She said the program is in full swing and a total of \$81,809,199 has been spent on behalf of 151,440 households receiving LIHEAP to date. See breakdown by LAA in the Program Status report. The application intake trend is down by 7% compared to this time last year. OCA did another press release to promote the program and to announce that federal employees impacted by the federal shutdown may be eligible for energy assistance.

We are having an annual LIHEAP/IHWAP Grant Application Workshop with the LAAs on Feb. 27. In addition to letting the LAAs know the initial FY20 funding allocation, we also go through some changes/clarifications to the 2020 LIHEAP Implementation Plan and cover program updates and questions. OCA will be hosting a Prevention of Fraud, Waste and Abuse Workshop with the Inspector General. The workshops will be provided to the LAAs as regional trainings during the months of March and April.

### **Low-income designation report for Program Year (PY) 2018**

Maria gave the report for PY18. We requested a report to know how many households that applied for LIHEAP during PY 2018 were denied for assistance but received the low-income designation on their utility accounts. A total of 8,021 households received the low-income designation during PY18. This total amount includes all the utilities. Requesting PY17 to compare.

### **PIPP**

Maria reported a total of \$25,192,628 is annually obligated on behalf of 23,816 customers that are receiving PIPP benefits. See breakdown by LAA in the Program Status report. New PIPP enrollment applications ended on Dec. 31, 2018. This applied to LAAs that were taking new PIPP applications in PY19 (since October). After this date, all households are offered the traditional LIHEAP-DVP program. As you may remember, a total of 17 LAAs were accepting new PIPP applications since October. LAAs who did not accept new applications were advised by OCA not to take new PIPP applications given they experienced LOF status during the recertification summer months or were reaching their budget capacity.

Training Needs Assessment- OCA is going to follow-up with the LAAs to assess what are currently the PIPP training needs. So far, we have identified a need for: 1) Recertification Refresher, 2) True-Up Adjustments, and 3) Step 2 Recertification to be completed by the LAA.

Follow-up meeting with Utilities/LAAs re: customers with higher usage- OCA met with the utilities and few LAAs (the ones who participate in the PIPP Steering) on Jan. 24 via a conference call to further discuss how best help PIPP customers experiencing a higher usage during the PY. The group agreed to take the following approach:

- Focus I---Increase awareness during the initial enrollment and at recertification and educate customer on how usage could impact the next budget bill.
  - Create a Q&A to utilize during intake and explain usage and changes in income could have an impact in the next budget bill and CPR.
  - Send out a short and sweet letter to new customers (3-4 months after enrollment) and reiterate their usage and income changes could impact their next budget bill and CPR.
  - OCA to edit PIPP brochure to reiterate increase in usage during a PY could have an impact in next year's bb amount + CPR.
  - Develop a video and explain budget bill, usage, etc. [ComEd has developed a video about this that will be posted in YouTube and they will share with the group]. The goal is to show this video when customers are waiting for their application intake and also refer customers to see the video.
- Focus II-- Identify PIPP customers with at least 2 years of participation that are receiving maximum State Benefits and are having a 25% increase or more in usage compared to previous year. The goal is to send a letter to remind them about their usage increase could have an impact in their next budget billing amount and CPR.
  - Currently, all utilities show usage on customer bills and the group also discussed referring these customers to see any increase in usage during the year, should they have additional questions.
  - Alternate Supplier Info in STARS- As part of the customer education concerning alternative suppliers, during our discussion, we learned that Nicor and Peoples Gas customers send us a Future Supplier Change that results in a drop. However, we are not getting a message in STARS when a Supplier Change will occur for ComEd and Ameren customers. This is due to the Purchase of Receivables and that the future change does not end in a drop. As a next step, we are going to create a report that the LAAs can run. It will list out those customers who choose an alternative supplier and that this choice does not end up in a drop. This new report will help the LAAs educate these customers about the supplier.

### **Other Business**

Deirdre asked for any other business the group would like to bring at this time. Deborah Bursey asked if there are any benefits in inviting other utility staff such as their Energy Efficiency group or the Utilities' Weatherization staff attend the PAC meetings. Deirdre and Ben indicated it would be a good idea, especially when they have questions.

### **Meeting Schedule**

The next quarterly meeting dates are: April 25; July 25 and October 24

### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned.