



**Illinois  
Department of Commerce  
& Economic Opportunity**

JB Pritzker, Governor

**Low Income Energy Assistance Policy Advisory Council (PAC)  
Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday, January 30, 2020  
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**Attendance in Springfield and Chicago:**

*PAC Members:* Joan Howard, Illinois Commerce Commission; David Wortman, DCEO; Kevin Wright, ICEA; Melanie Brown (Proxy)

*Guests:* Jim Agnew, ICC; Mindy Browning, ERBA; Jim Monk, IL Energy Assoc.; Marta Myers, Ameren; Kathy Walk, CEFS; Mionia Booker, CEDA; Abigail Miner, Attorney General's Office; Shahi Nawab, CEDA;

*DCEO Staff:* Deirdre Coughlin; Aaron DeWeese; Maria Gallardo, Wayne Hartel, Angela Lee, Leslie Ann Lesko, Ben Moore, Marie Mueller, Mick Prince

**Attendance via Conference Telephone:**

*PAC Members:* Elizabeth Berendsen, City of Chicago; Aimee English, Citizens Utility Board; Barbara Eskildsen, IL Area Agency on Aging; Ellen Rendos, Nicor Gas; Dalitso Sulamoyo, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission; Lorrie Walls, City of Chicago; Kris White, Will County; Staci Wilson, Illinois Municipal Electric Agency

*Guests:* Larry Dawson, IACAA; Jennifer Marten, Nicor Gas; Shelby Montgomery, CEDA; Lauren Pashayan, Attorney General's Office; Eric Schrader, Peoples Gas; Barbara Richardson, Legal Aid Chicago; Kimberly Roberts, CEDA; Aarian Smith, ComEd; Martha Strawser, Rockford Human Services;

**Call to Order**

David Wortman called the meeting to order.

**Approval of PAC Minutes**

There were no corrections from the October 24, 2019 meeting minutes. A vote to approve the minutes was moved by Kevin Wright and seconded by Joan Howard. The motion carried. The minutes were approved.

**Fiscal**

Ben Moore provided the fiscal report. He referenced the Program Status report that was distributed to the attendees. He said the Weatherization program has about \$40.1 million available in funds out in the

network. The grantees have utilized about \$16.7 million to date. There is about \$23.4 million available. The two carry-over grants from Program Year 2018 State and HHS ended September 2019. Ben said they had carry-over funds available in November from DOE. There were some agencies that requested those funds. DOE is a three-year grant that was slated to end this fiscal year, but DOE extended it for another year.

Ben indicated that LIHEAP has about \$218 million out in the network for this Program Year 2020. He said about \$15.7 million has been expended with about \$102. million still available. The new grants will be available in June which will be discussed further at the February 2021 Grant Application workshop. In addition to letting the LAAs know the initial 2021 funding allocation, we will also go through some changes/clarifications to the 2021 Weatherization & LIHEAP Implementation Plan and cover program updates and questions.

### **Weatherization**

Mick Prince provided the Weatherization report. He stated a total of 1,504 units have been completed. In work order print status, there are 684 units.

OCA is working on an agreement with the University of Illinois regarding the Weatherworks re-build. There will be multiple meetings with the LAAs for feedback to get the best system. Mick and Wayne Hartel are in the process of working on drafting the FY2021 DOE State Plan and program updates. Our office is also trying to hire more Weatherization staff.

### **LIHEAP**

Leslie Ann Lesko provided the LIHEAP report. The heating season is in full swing and a total of \$78.6 million is being spent on behalf of 142,613 household receiving at least one benefit. Since December, the program is available to the general low-income households that were not part of the priority groups. In terms of application entry count, we have taken a total of 173,977. This is 9,528 less applications compared to the same time last year. PY19 was 183,505 apps. This is a 5% reduction. We expect to catch up during these following months.

The Department has been in discussions with the Director's Office to find ways to promote our Energy Assistance Program. OCA drafted two Press Releases (in both English + Spanish) to tell the public funds are still available. We are considering whether to participate in the National Energy Assistance Director's Association (NEADA) Public Service Announcement Campaign. The participation would include: 1) two radio ads in English and Spanish, 2) one TV ad in English and Spanish, 3) one social media ad and 4) potentially run TV ads on in-house hospital networks. This portion of the campaign is contingent on outside funding.

OCA submitted the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 LIHEAP Performance Measures report to HHS. Thanks to the regulated utilities and propane vendors for your continuous partnership in providing data for this important report. This report consists of the following 3 sections: 1) Energy Burden; 2) Prevention of Home Energy Crises and, 3) Restoration of the Home Energy Source.

Maria Gallardo provided a summary of the FY2018 LIHEAP Performance Measures Executive Summary report, which includes only HHS funding. OCA assisted that year a total of 181,742 households utilizing

HHS funds. We collected energy burden data for 56,315 (31% of the population) households with regulated utilities and propane vendors. The report answers two major questions such as: 1) Does LIHEAP furnish higher benefits to higher burden households? Yes and, 2) Does LIHEAP pay a larger share of the home energy bill for high burden households? Yes. A link to the Performance Management website will be sent out via email to PAC members for review of other program data.

### **PIPP**

Maria Gallardo provided the PIPP report. The new enrollment period ended on December 31, 2019. A total of \$27,220,586 is annually obligated on behalf of 29,002 customers receiving PIPP benefits. This represents an increase of 22% compared to the same period last year. After December 31<sup>st</sup>, all applicants are offered the traditional LIHEAP-DVP benefit. The LAAs have until January 20 to process these applications in STARS and have them in final disposition (enrolled, denied or moved to DVP). Two LAAs requested an extension and OCA is working with them.

As we previously discussed, one of the goals this year is to allow the general population (December) to apply for PIPP. This was a challenge in service areas where the LAA was running out of funds in October or November. OCA worked with the LAAs and based on funding availability, some LAAs offered PIPP starting on October, some LAAs offered PIPP each month until available funding by county, by utility and priority group was met and some others offered PIPP starting in November or December. All the LAAs offered PIPP to new customers.

We deployed the new enrollment approval and denial letters in STARS last Friday, January 24.

We had a PIPP Steering Committee meeting on January 16. The meeting was short and the main take away was that OCA will be analyzing data on our LIHEAP and PIPP populations. It is our goal to bring the data to the PIPP Steering during the April meeting to be reviewed and determined if program changes are needed.

### **Other Business**

#### **State Supplemental Fund Borrowing**

David Wortman indicated that the Comptroller's Office will borrow a total of \$30M from the State LIHEAP fund. The borrowing needs to be paid back to the fund within 48 months. David said this means we may need to boost programmatic spending and the Department is interested in marketing the program.

#### **PAC Designee Letters**

The two-year member term expired on December 2019. OCA sent each organization a letter requesting the organization to renew their current designee or designate another member to serve on the Council by no later than February 11, 2020.

### **Meeting Schedule**

The next meeting is scheduled on April 30, 2020.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.