



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

Bruce Rauner, Governor

**Percentage of Income Payment Program (PIPP) Steering Committee
Minutes of Phone Meeting Held on June 11, 2015**

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Attendance via Conference Telephone

Members: *Aimee English, Citizens Utility Board; Emily Monk, Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO); Doc Mueller, Illinois Municipal Electric Agency; Ellen Rendos, Nicor Gas*

Guests: *Melanie Brown, Ameren; Mindy Browning, ERBA; Kimberly Burdine, ComEd; Latoya Butler, CEDA; Allen Cherry, Attorney General's Office; Latoya Crowe, ComEd; Jen Fenske, Nicor Gas; Laura Goldberg, Citizens Utility Board; Michelle Machay, Peoples Gas/North Shore Gas; Dan Manfredi, IACCA; John Pady, CEDA; Barbara Richardson, Legal Assistance Foundation of Metro. Chicago; Najmah Shamsid-Deen, CEDA; Julie Vahling, AARP*

Staff: *Maria Gallardo, DCEO; Dennis Gorss, DCEO; Patty Hughes, DCEO; Ben Moore, DCEO; Amy Park, DCEO*

Call to Order

Emily Monk called the meeting to order.

PIPP

Emily Monk explained that this call was originally scheduled to discuss the Arrearage Reduction Program (ARP) possibilities for PIPP clients that were to be dropped on June 30, 2015. However, the Governor's press release of June 2 may make the issue moot.

DCEO has been instructed to prepare for the suspension of State LIHEAP. If the fund is suspended, PIPP is suspended, which would mean shutting the program down until further notice.

The original purpose for this meeting was to discuss the Arrearage Reduction Program (ARP) as a possibility for the group of clients that had to be dropped from PIPP as of June 30, 2015. There was a question regarding the possibility of ARP continuing if the State LIHEAP fund was suspended, because the portion that is collected and administered by the utilities for that purpose never comes to DCEO. Emily explained that there had been a lot of internal discussion regarding this and discussion with a couple of the utilities. When it was going to be a small group of people dropped from PIPP, it might have been possible for the utilities to figure out which clients had been dropped and still help with their arrearages. However, if the entire PIPP program is shutting down, there are no longer plan participants and the utilities' ability to identify previous participants would not be an easy process. Also, within the Energy Assistance Act, it specifically outlines how ARP is to be administered. However, if the utility doesn't have enough funds to help all the clients with arrearages, how does the utility decide who to

help? The PAC will wait to see the fate of PIPP as of July 1 before we revisit the possibilities and problems of providing ARP.

Emily explained that there is a three page letter, in draft form, for mailing to the PIPP clients explaining that their participation in the program would end on June 30, 2015. The second page of the letter would provide information specific to the PIPP participant's utilities and if there are additional resources available. The third page covers legal assistance information. OEA will be providing the second and third pages to the utilities in order to make sure that the information provided is accurate. The letter itself is a policy document from the Administration and is not open for review or comment, but OEA plans to make it available before the clients receive it. The first page of the letter provides the LAA information and indicates the client may be eligible for Federal LIHEAP.

There was a lot of discussion on what should be done about the recertification letters that were going out. Should the LAAs stop sending them, or should they continue? The thought was that they should stop sending them, and if the PIPP program continues that the clients be treated as someone that fell in the gap. There was a discussion on whether the LAAs should cancel existing appointments for recertifications. The LAAs also mentioned that they wouldn't have staff to enter the information in STARS for the PIPP recertification activities. The consensus was that they cancel recertification appointments that have been scheduled.

There was discussion about what would happen if the letters are sent to all PIPP clients that PIPP is not going to be available after July 1, 2015, and then the State LIHEAP funding is restored at a later date. Would OEA have to start the program all over or could it continue without interruption? Emily Monk explained that if the funding was restored any time after July 1, PIPP would have to start as a whole new program with everyone applying again. LAAs asked if DCEO could wait to send the letters until July 1, 2015, once we know for sure if PIPP is going to end. In the meantime, LAAs suggested that there be some verbiage added to the recertification letters, asking the client to call the day before the appointment. Most of the clients will have received the letter explaining that there is no PIPP funding before their appointment comes up.

Emily Monk clarified that if DCEO waited until July 1, 2015, to send the letter, once it was clear that the State money hadn't been reinstated, many clients wouldn't receive the letter until possibly July 10. Everyone indicated that they felt that was better than sending the letter before it is absolutely certain that PIPP would end on June 30, 2015.

The LAAs had questions about whether they should process the applications they are currently taking and will continue to take until there is a definite answer on June 30. Emily said that OEA has no clear answer to give because this is unprecedented. There is nothing written in the business rules about how to end the PIPP program.

Meeting Schedule

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