



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) Steering Committee Minutes of Meeting Held on January 17, 2019

Attendance in Springfield: Deirdre Coughlin, DCEO; Leslie Ann Lesko, DCEO; Ben Moore, DCEO, Marie Mueller, DCEO, Angela Baldwin, DCEO

Attendance in Chicago: Shelby Montgomery, CEDA; Tyrone Pickens, CEDA; Abigail Miner, Attorney General Office; Karen Lusson, Attorney General Office; Aimee English, Citizens Utility Board; Kimberly Roberts, CEDA, Maria Gallardo, DCEO

Attendance via Telephone: Christine Brinkman, ComEd; Melanie Brown, Ameren; Byron Bullock, Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency; Deborah Bursey, Ameren; Jennifer Fenske, Nicor Gas; Abby Helms, Madison County Community Development.; Joan Howard, IL Commerce Commission; Michelle Machay, Peoples Gas; Jim Monk, IL Energy Association; Lauren Pashayan, Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance; Anita Russell, CAPCIL; Lucy Sanchez, Lake Co.; Aarian Smith, ComEd; Martha Strawser, Rockford Human Services; Kathy Walk, CEFS; Anthony White, Ameren; Staci Wilson, IL Municipal Electric Agency.

Call to Order

Deirdre Coughlin called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections from the October 4, 2018 minutes.

Program Update

Maria Gallardo provided an update of the program and indicated that a total of \$25,205,643 is obligated annually on behalf of 23,906 customers currently enrolled in PIPP. She said the program had 26,211 customers enrolled YTD in the previous year, but expenditures are roughly the same as this year- \$25,044,461. This is a 9% reduction in the number of enrolled customers.

In terms of the number of dropped customers, a total of 784 customers have been dropped from PIPP since October 1st. Of these, 428 were dropped on their Primary utility and 356 were dropped on their Secondary utility. Maria also reported that a total of 9,538 customers had missed payments since October 1st. However, this figure includes all statues (In-Progress, Resolved, Needs Follow-Up, Intervention); thus, not all interventions ended in a dropped PIPP.

PIPP Enrollment Period End Date

Leslie Ann Lesko provided information on the new PIPP enrollment applications which ended on December 31, 2018. This applies to LAAs that were taking new PIPP applications since October.

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 applications given they experienced Lack of Funds (LOF) status during the Recertification summer months or were reaching their budget capacity. After December 31st, all applicants are being offered the traditional LIHEAP Direct Vendor Payment (DVP). LAAs have until January 31, 2019 to process these new applications taken into a final status in STARS.

Consumer Education Subcommittee Call (December 5)

Maria said the Office of Community Assistance (OCA) convened this subcommittee via a conference call to discuss the proposed quarterly report (“Upside Down” report), process and customer communication and gather feedback from the group. This is in response to the significant increase in state funding needed as a consequence of higher True-Ups experienced during the recertifications to date.

The meeting discussed the impact also of having a fixed budget bill and that no consumer education nor account verification is done during the program year until the customer recertifies. Therefore, the group felt the need to re-convene the Consumer Education Subcommittee to further discuss ways to educate customers on the impact their usage could have in their next budget bill and to also educate them/refer them to utilities’ energy efficiency programs and weatherization assistance.

Price to Compare in ComEd’s Bill

We have learned that ComEd will begin including the supply price in the customer’s bills and printing this in the message section. During the meeting Aarian Smith from ComEd stated she would confirm and send an example email to the group.

Other Business

PIPP “Upside-Down” Report Customer Intervention Follow-Up Call

The utilities reached out to OCA and indicated they want to discuss a new plan to help PIPP customers that could potentially experience a higher True Up during their next recertification to get educated during the program year and hopefully reduce their usage. This is because not all utilities will be able to provide the same data (as previously discussed in December) because their IT staff is already committed to other projects.

Training Needs

OCA is in the process of assessing the LAA needs for PIPP training topics and we will have more information about possible PIPP Recertification Refresher training and other trainings that may be offered to the Local Administering Agencies (LAAs).

New Business

Deirdre Coughlin asked if there was any new business, there was none. The group was reminded about the dates of future Steering Committee meetings: April 11; July 11 and October 10.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.