

EAP Advisory Board
October 25, 2019 meeting minutes

Participants: Jessica Allen (Liberty), Shannon Nolin (BMCAP), Eileen Smiglowksi (OSI), Lisa Sheehy (NHEC), Janice Johnson (Eversource), Steve Tower (NHLA), Dianne Pitts (TWH), Gary Cronin (NHPUC), Amanda Noonan (NHPUC), Christa Shute (OCA), Pradip Chattopadhyay (OCA), Jeanne Agri (BMCAP). By Phone: Sue Corson, (Unitil)

Discussion:

EAP Customer Survey

1. The customer survey for the triennial process was discussed. Process was discussed for sending questions for feedback via survey monkey through emails, while allowing access to paper versions made available at the CAP offices. It was noted though there was probably no staffing for phone surveys. OCA noted that it is important to not limit the reach out to only email surveys because it could bias the sample by reaching a skewed demographic. Shannon proposed that she will look up data to determine what percentage of the EAP customer base has email addresses.* Eversource suggested that they will check whether they have more email addresses than CAP. Eversource will share that information with CAP based on its data sharing protocol.
2. The survey would be sent during February/March to allow a greater coverage of respondents. Target is 1000 responses. Will be focused on EAP participants. There was some discussion about whether the targeting should include denied applicants.
3. The goal of the survey was discussed and the Board identified that feedback from EAP customers would be useful on the following aspects:
 - Ease of the application process
 - How EAP customers heard about the program?
 - What did they do for fuel heating after benefits depleted?
 - Perhaps a question about whether aware of the 750kwh cap – make sure they know what a kwh is
 - Is the discount beneficial to them?
4. Amanda indicated that she would send an email with the 2006-2007 survey questions to the Board participants. Using those questions would provide a benchmark. Roughly 900 EAP customers responded to the aforementioned survey questionnaire.*Questions were related to (see email for further details)
 - how many years on EAP
 - has receiving EAP discount made anything more feasible
 - disconnections;
 - participation affordability,
 - age range;
 - main heating source

- A comment was made that the surveys should not be so long that that respondents get disinterested in providing feedback.
5. A few other objectives were discussed:
- Did the EAP benefit them? (a little , a lot)
 - Are EAP customers interested in more information about energy efficiency?; provide the contact information to the relevant utility.
 - Allowing an open ended question, perhaps with categories to help trigger thoughts/ responses, so that some feedback is received on how to improve the program.

Shannon/Tracy/ Eileen – going to incorporate additional questions into the survey and send them back out to the group.

Revised draft out to the Board by December 2nd. Board will comment and provide feedback by December 20th. Finalize at the January 31st meeting and disseminate in February.

Discussion on the Recommendations in the Triennial Process Evaluation

1. Each procedural manual be reviewed in entirety before the next process
 - i. Decision to do one procedural manual for each meeting.
 - ii. Start with fiscal procedures manual for January meeting because least likely to change. Amanda to send. Members to review for January's meeting.
 - iii. Other three manuals are CAP procedures, monitoring and evaluation procedures, utility procedures. The consultant under consideration could affect the monitoring and evaluation manual and the CAP manual.
2. Reporting – can get wrapped into the monitoring and evaluation manual review.
3. Completing audit work before April 1. *Amanda to talk to the Audit Division and let them know about the recommendation to be done with audit before April 1.
4. Survey – see discussion above.
5. Outreach:
 - a. OSI charged with presenting summary of outreach plans – no record of that having occurred – review what should be done going forward.
 - b. CAP hosted an outreach / barriers meeting in summer of 2019 in effort to increase coordination. Recommend partnering with local tv and radio stations. PSA's over radio and TV (vs papers).
 - * Janice at ES will connect reach out to Paulette and connect to Shannon
 - *Ryan at Town Square willing to do PSA on website and links are free
 - c. Look for avenues to increase circulation of EAP brochures
 - * Eversource about to do outreach worried about overwhelming the CAPs – Shannon and Jeanne said not a problem

*Sue to add standing agenda item to meetings in the fall for people to come with concerns re barriers to program application

*Also add to social agency meetings that Eversource has

*Janice to put it on the customer advisory board quarterly meeting agendas

6. Software – no update but a hot topic – no responses to RFI – need a consultant to write the RFP *Eileen will have further discussions with DoIT to see if they will help write RFP.

Status of Advisory Board Recommendation to increase income eligibility threshold

- OSI gets notice of change to guidelines but doesn't update until published in federal register
- Website with the information is: <https://www.nh.gov/osi/energy/programs/fuel-assistance/eligibility.htm>
- Right now the income eligibility threshold is 200% of FPL but would like to make consistent with FAP which is 60% of state median income

Program Design

- Time to have a consultant do an evaluation of the program. Aspects that need to be examined are:
 - Review the intent of the program,
 - Review benefit levels
 - Is there a need to widen certain brackets?
 - Do current economic realities require redesign of the EAP program?
 - How do social security changes, FPG guidelines, etc. potentially impact the EAP programing?
- There was some discussion about how and when the EAP program was initially designed. Amanda noted that the objective of the discount tiers was to bring average bill of average customer to 4% of their income. Maybe 4% isn't the right answer anymore maybe it needs to change.
- Sub group should meet to define what a consultant should do.
 - Shannon, Steve, Janice, Gary, Jessica will meet between now and then
 - *Share a January 6th status report with the Board
- The Board decided that it would circulate a recommendation for change in income eligibility to 60% of State instead of 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines to the board by November 8th and then to the commission sometime after that.