

Electric Assistance Program
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2019

Participants:

Amanda Noonan, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
Rorie Patterson, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
Gary Cronin, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
Eileen Smigowski, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives
Noah Hodgetts, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives
Stephen Tower, New Hampshire Legal Assistance
Don Kreis, New Hampshire Office of Consumer Advocate
Karen Emis-Williams, Concord Human Services
Shannon Nolin, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action
Jeanne Agri, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action
Allen Desbiens, Eversource
Nicole Harris, Liberty Utilities
Sue Corson, Unutil
Lisa Sheehy, New Hampshire Electric Cooperative

Minutes: New Hampshire Electric Cooperative

Agenda Items:

1. Introductions

2. Approval of October 27, 2018 Meeting Minutes

- Draft document with edits reviewed. Additional edits provided. Minutes unanimously approved. Liberty will circulate final version of the October meeting minutes with changes accepted.

3. New Software for Fuel Assistance (OSI)

- OSI-No updates at this time other than moving forward with RFP. New vendor for RFP still being discussed.
- If there are questions related to the process, contact Joe Doiron, ext. 8341

4. Monthly Reconciliation Reports (NHLA, Utilities and Staff)

- NHLA-reports are helpful due to reports show arrearage/aging information and past due balances.
- Utility reports are presented slightly differently
- Unutil-to confirm aging report includes active and inactive accounts
- Eversource-believes the aging report includes active and inactive accounts but will confirm
- NHEC-aging report includes active accounts
- Liberty-aging report includes active and inactive EAP customers

5. Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting (NHLA)

- CAP-reviewed report information

- NHLA-requested additional explanation related to the denial report categories.
 - Total Denied but eligible-Income eligible but the bill was not in the applicant's name or other situation.
 - Previous assist-applicant already receiving benefits.
 - Sub w/heat-subsidized but heat included. FAP does not subsidized with heat
 - Denied other-example: bill not in applicant's name, only 1 meter on the house with 2 multiple units.

6. Utility Outreach re: Fuel Assistance and Electric Assistance Programs (Eversource)

- Eversource could not provide an update at this time. Will table this topic until April meeting.
- Liberty-
- NHEC-provides information on bill inserts and website
- Unutil-

7. Arrearage Forgiveness Program (Liberty)

- NHPUC provided a brief overview of other state programs and Charlie Harak's program document.
- Liberty requested if NH was to institute an arrearage forgiveness program the NH Utilities follow the same plan. In some states each utility has a different plan. Need to define program requirements.
- Suggested Utilities would be responsible for program enrollment.
- Cost recovery options were discussed but there was no decision on how this would be handled.
- Unutil is a proponent for the program but it is a time consuming program to administer. The program is tied to other programs (ex: EAP/FAP or other state programs). Depending on arrearage amount, program may have to be extended beyond a 12 month period.
- Unutil-There is no data available related to what happens after a participant exists the program after successfully or not successfully completing the program? Do the participants have an arrearage pattern moving forward? Difficult to capture this data for various reasons.
- NHLA very interested in reviewing program options and a sub-committee to be formed to develop an outline for a possible NH program. NHLA will take the lead for the sub-committee.

8. Updated Brochures and Posters-add competitive supply benefit info, determine languages needed (CAA, OSI, Utilities)

- NHPUC-Federal income guidelines have been updated and information provided to agencies for 2019. Due to federal government shutdown, information has not been updated in the federal registry.
- Unutil-there are no posters available and brochures need to be updated. NHPUC & CAP will look for an old poster and send to Unutil if found. Updated brochures and posters are not available at this time. New brochures should have updated income guidelines added.

9. Increasing EAP eligibility threshold to that used for FAP (NHLA)

- NHPUC-discussed the possibility of increasing the eligibility threshold
- NH Legal-questioned if the Treasure Funds balance projections has changed due to the provider discounts applied to customers bills.

- CAP-stated there were approximately 452 cases where applicants were denied assistance due to over income requirements
- Group discussed should the 750 kWh cap and eligibility threshold be changed. Last analysis was performed close to 8 years ago. Will continue this discussion at the next advisory board meeting

10. Utility recovery costs for Competitive Supply Benefit

- Unitil and NHEC will not be filing for recovery costs
- Eversource cost lower than original estimate but will still file for recovery costs
- Liberty-still working on final costs
- Eversource and Liberty to coordinate their filings

11. Triennial Process Evaluation (~~OCAOSI~~)

- ~~OCAOSI~~-will be reaching out to Advisory Board members to discuss program.
- ~~OCA-OSI~~ on track for April 1st report and will discuss at April meeting

Next meeting: April 26, 2019 at 9:00am

Agenda topics:

Utility Outreach
kWh CAP & Eligibility level
Arrearage Forgiveness Program
Triennial Process Evaluation report review

Minutes by: NH Legal Assistance