

## EAP Advisory Board Meeting Minutes\*

July 23, 2021

Present: Amanda Noonan (DOE, formerly PUC), Rorie Patterson (DOE), Gary Cronin (DOE), Chris Vought (CAA EAP Program Manager), Pradip Chattopadhyay (OCA), Karen Emis-Williams (NHWAA), John Braswell (Eversource), Sue Corson (UES), Robyn Sarette (NHEC), Steve Tower (NHLA)

### 1) Introductions

### 2) Review of April 23, 2021 Draft Minutes

- No changes to draft. Unanimously approved as final minutes.
- DOE reminded attendees that minutes do not need to be a verbatim recitation of the meeting; include description of discussion and action items.

#### Action Item –

- DOE will post final version of minutes on its website.

### 3) NH Emergency Rental Assistance Program – Updated Data

- Discussion about how much NHERAP assistance the utilities have received and difficulties quantifying that.
- UES has not been tracking but has created a new promise-to-pay code to track. NHEC and Eversource did not have data to share.
- NHLA receiving weekly reports from Strafford County CAA, which is using Empower to track.
- DOE, NHLA and NHWAA reported large dollar amounts paid for past-due rents and utility balances.
- Some data can be found at [NHERAP Dashboard](#) .
- Discussed significant delays in CAA appointments due to high number of open positions.
- The utilities and agencies are working flexibly with customers because of the delays.
- Discussed the deadline for spending of funds.
- BMCA stated that the CAAs were working on developing a report to identify dollars received.

#### Action Items –

- UES, Eversource and NHEC will provide information about NHERAP funds received to the Board.
- CAA EAP Program Manager will look into whether all CAAs are using Empower to track assistance payments.

- CAA EAP Program Manager will provide information about delays in appointments and will ask about the deadline for spending NHERAP funds.

#### **4) Role of NHLA on the Board**

- Discussion about NHLA's continued participation as a member of the Board following the ending of its representation of The Way Home.
- NHLA is looking for a new client but agreed to continue to participate, similar to its involvement with the EESE Board.

##### Action Item –

- Include a request to recognize NHLA as a Board member in the Board's budget recommendation to be filed soon with the PUC.

#### **5) EAP Brochure Revisions**

- Discussion about necessary revisions to EAP Brochure, to reflect the new State Median Income (SMI) level, the restructuring of the PUC, creating the DOE, and Liberty rebranding.
- DOE now manages Fuel Assistance and setting the SMI.
- Utility bills and disconnect notices still reference PUC and will need to be updated, too.

##### Action Items –

- UES will work with internal IT group to create a draft, revised brochure, and will send it to the Board for review.
- Board members will provide feedback to UES on revisions.

#### **6) Advisory Board Recommendation – RFP for Consultant to review Program Design**

- Discussed that restructuring of the PUC may require withdrawal of recommendation from PUC and refiling with DOE.
- Statutory responsibility for EAP was transferred to DOE by HB2.

##### Action Item –

- DOE working on getting guidance on this and get back to the Board about next steps.

#### **7) Enrollment Levels and Financial Projections**

- Discussion about decreases enrollment.

- May be related to reconciliation between CAA and utilities of EAP participants who did not re-enroll, to extension of certification periods due to COVID, and/or to delays in CAA appointments.
- Applications for NHERAP provide opportunity to qualify customers for EAP and other programs.
- Utilities have done and will continue to do customer education and outreach about NHERAP.

## **8) EAP PY 2021-2022 Budgets – Timing and Process**

- Budgets due August 1, 2021.
- Clarification needed about how filing will be done post PUC restructuring, but discussed probability that utilities file budgets, and Board files recommendation, with PUC.
- After filing question resolved and filing of budgets is done, Board members may ask questions until August 11, with answers by August 15.
- Board will meet via Teams on August 19 at 2 pm, to develop recommendation, which will be filed in a to-be-determined manner.

### Action Items –

- DOE to schedule August 19 Teams meeting.
- Board to proceed with recommendation process as described above.

## **9) Town Square Media Campaign**

- CAA, EAP Program Manager reported that all CAA budgets include funding for this.
- CAA and LIHEAP sharing of costs needs further exploration and finalization before proceeding.

### Action Item –

- CAA, EAP Program Manager will consult with LIHEAP program manager, now at DOE, about how proceed and will report to the Board.

## **10) New business**

- CAA, EAP Program Manager asked Board members to let him know if he needs to respond to inquiries or requests which were sent during the week of his predecessor's departure.

\*DOE took minutes in place of NHEC