

EAP Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Quarterly Meeting

July 28, 2023

Present: Don Kreis - OCA, Sue McMahon - Liberty, Jeanne Agri - Belknap-Merrimack CAP, Robyn Sarette - NHEC, Lea Francoeur - NHDOE, John Braswell - Eversource, Amanda Noonan - NHDOE, Gary Cronin - NHDOE, Steve Tower - NHLA

1. April meeting minutes - Unanimous vote to accept as presented.

2. Fiscal update

a. Balance in EAP fund

b. Balance in \$7M appropriate to the Department of Energy for EAP

After the reconciliation of the May SBC collected and benefits paid, the balance in the EAP Fund was \$133,512.90. Following receipt of the reconciliation reports for June, the NH Department of Energy transferred \$550,000 from the \$7 million appropriated to the Department by the Legislature for EAP. The balance in the EAP Fund after the deposits to and payments from the EAP Fund were made to reconcile June SBC revenues for EAP and EAP benefits to customer account, and including the transfer of \$550,000, was \$334,465.90. This was the first transfer from the \$7M appropriation to the EAP Fund. EAP benefits applied to customer accounts in July will continue to be impacted by the higher default service rates. Benefits applied to customer accounts in August will be a blend of the February 1 through July 31 rate and the lower August 1 through January 31 rate. Benefits applied to EAP customer accounts in September will fully reflect the lower default service rates. Reconciliation reports are filed by the utilities by the 15th of the following month. Once the reports for September are received – mid-October – projections will be run for the next EAP year and beyond.

Enrollment has increased over the past year, and it's possible that a program may need to implement a wait list.

3. 2023-2024 Budget

a. Deadline to file is 8/1/2023.

b. Date for Advisory Board process to review and make recommendation.

CAA specific line item budgets are still in process. The total overall CAA budget has been provided to the utilities based on the allocation percentages received from the Department. Overall, the total CAA budget represents an approximate 2% increase over the prior year. The increase is driven primarily by increased salary and benefit costs. There was a brief discussion regarding the need for CAAs to pay “competitive” wages to recruit and retain staff.

After some discussion, it was agreed that the Department will file a recommendation regarding the budgets on behalf of the Advisory Board as has been done in the past. The Advisory Board will meet on August 4 at 9 am to develop a preliminary position on the budgets in anticipation of the August 8 hearing at the NHPUC.

The Advisory Board set a schedule for further review of the budgets: informal discovery circulated by August 10; responses circulated by August 16; meeting on August 18 at 9 am to finalize the Board's recommendations. All meetings will be held via Teams. If there are not discovery questions circulated, a determination regarding the Board's recommendation regarding the budgets may be conducted via email in advance of August 18.

4. [Procedural order](#) issued in DE 22-043
 - a. Hearing on August 8
Group made aware of hearing scheduled for August 8th.
5. Software update
 - a. FAP/EAP/WAP project

The Department (NHDOE) is working on business requirement document. Current system developed back in 2002. It is old and at the end of its useful life. Input on wants and needs for new software has been received from the CAAs. The Department will issue an RFP once the business requirements document is completed, and it is likely that a commercial off the shelf product will be used. There are products that support FAP and WAP, and the EAP specific areas would be customization. The goal is to have the new software in place before the start of the 2025 FAP program year, which begins July 1, 2024. Liberty asked whether there would be integration with the utilities to eliminate all the paper, and the Department agreed that soliciting input from the vendors was a great idea. Discussion ensued about the need for an online application, including the ability to upload all documentation.

6. New Business

Eversource is working on resuming the consumer advisory group meetings, which provide an opportunity for agencies and utilities to interact for the benefit of their clients/customers.

New EAP brochures have been drafted. Liberty and/or Eversource will be asking the utilities and others for the quantities needed. The Department reminded the Board that the FPG levels change in January of each year, and the brochures will need to be updated then. Liberty suggested refreshing the brochure format and design next year.