

Meeting

Wednesday, September 7, 2011
1:30 p.m.
Community Renewal Team

Members: Anne Foley-Chair, Laura Gonzalez, Shirley Bergert, Deb Polun, Lindsay Parke, James McNally, John Dobos, Eddie Swift, Kristen Formanek, James Gatling, Anna Ficeto, Laura Green, and Patricia Wrice.

Others: Pamela Giannini (DSS), Tom O'Brien (DSS), Joy Hollister (CLASS), Joanne Balaschak (NO, Inc.), Deb Polun (COA), Edith Karsky (CAFCA), David Thomas (AARP), Kate Quigley (United Way 2-1-1), Sharon Eberman (NU), Al Carbone (UI/SCG/CNG), Carlos Vazquez (UI/SCG/CNG); Caty Patton (OPM) and Pamela Trotman (OPM).

Agenda Item	Action
Welcome	The meeting was convened at 1:30 p.m. The chair introduced Anna Ficeto as a new board member representing PURA. Board members introduced themselves.
Approval of August 3, 2011 Minutes	Deb Polun moved approval of the August 3, 2011 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by John Dobos with one abstention by Anna Ficeto.
Utility Matching Payment Program Updates	<p><u>United Illuminating</u> As of August, UI reported 3,000 hardship accounts for electrical heat customers. The A/R balance was \$3 million, of which, \$2.5 million was delinquent. UI received \$2,599,428.52 in energy assistance.</p> <p><u>CL&P- Yankee Gas</u> A combined total of 24,000 CL&P and Yankee Gas customers participated in the MPP. Over 5,000 customers participated in the below budget payment component.</p> <p>Approximately \$32 million was expended on energy assistance services: \$25 million -energy assistance grants \$7 million- MMP-Phase I \$240,000 –CAA support \$4,100 - social service providers</p> <p><u>SCG/CNG</u></p>

	<p>Approximately \$26 million expended on energy assistance services: \$21.3 million energy assistance grants \$3.8 million in MPP-Phase I \$95,000 for intake support \$2,700 below budget</p>
<p>Operation Fuel</p>	<p>To date, 673 applicants were served through the Summer Program. The program expended \$118,000 of its \$200,000 allocation.</p>
<p>FFY2012 LIHEAP Allocation Plan</p>	<p>The chair provided members with an overview of the FFY2012 LIHEAP Allocation Plan. Major points include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan was developed based on the President's proposed budget level of \$1.98 billion. • At the President's level, CT projected allocation will be \$41.8 million- a significant reduction from last year's level of \$98.3 million. • Plan prioritizes eligible households to reach the most vulnerable population first. (Deliverable Fuel Heated Households). • If additional funding is available basic benefits may be provided to utility heated households. • Plan provides Crisis Assistance and Safety Net Assistance Benefits at the level of last year's basic benefit level. • Plan provides basic benefit after Crisis Assistance and Safety Net Assistance Benefits. • Three tier approach recommended by the LIEAB was not approved by the Governor. <p>DSS provided an update on the 2011-2012 LIHEAP Allocation Plans from other states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States are basing plans on the President's proposed funding level. • Massachusetts – will modify eligibility criteria from 60% SMI to 200% FPL. • Rhode Island will use 60% of SMI as eligibility criteria • Pennsylvania will use 150% of FPL as eligibility criteria and will back into

benefit levels

- New York – Program will remain closed until November 16.

Board members strongly disagreed with the proposed LIHEAP Allocation Plan to prioritize services for fuel delivery customers. Members voiced concern that funds should be distributed equitably regardless of the type of heating source. After an in-depth discussion the following motions regarding the LIHEAB Block Grant Allocation Plan 2011-2012 were passed by board members:

I. Motion by Shirley Bergert.

Move to maintain the 2010-2011 LIHEAP program structure, eligibility levels and plan for reduced benefits by creating a three tiered approach to allow the program to modify benefit levels based on federal and potential state-appropriated funds.

Seconded by Patricia Wrice and passed on a voice vote with Pamela Giannini-DSS abstaining and Anne Foley-OPM voting against the motion.

II. Motion by James Gatling.

Move to modify the proposed start date for CEAP fuel authorizations from November 15 to November 1.

Seconded by Shirley Bergert and passed on a voice vote with Pamela Giannini-DSS and Anne Foley-OPM abstaining.

III. Motion by Patricia Wrice.

Move to request state-appropriated funds to supplement federal funds allocated for administrative costs to the Community Action Agencies to administer the program.

Seconded by Shirley Bergert and passed on a voice vote with Pamela Giannini-DSS and Anne Foley-OPM abstaining.

IV. Motion by Shirley Bergert.

Move to ask state legislators to commit state-appropriated funds to supplement federal funds. available for energy assistance

	<p>benefits.</p> <p>Seconded by David Thomas and passed on a voice vote with Pamela Giannini -DSS and Anne Foley-OPM abstaining.</p> <p>OPM and DSS voiced concern that maintaining the FFY11 program structure and eligibility levels funded with the President's proposed amount would likely result in either (1) benefit levels so low that deliverable fuel heated households would not be able to meet the 100-gallon minimum for a delivery; or (2) running out of funds and program closure by December.</p> <p>Some members stressed the importance of informing their customers of the proposed LIHEAP Allocation Plan to allow their voices to be heard.</p>
Next Steps	The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 5, in room 410 at the State Capitol.