

Low-Income Energy Advisory Board Meeting  
Wednesday, May 1, 2013  
HRA/Human Resources Agency  
180 Clinton Street, New Britain, CT 06053

**Members/Designees:** Patricia Wrice, Joy Hollister, Taren O'Connor, Edith Karsky, Kerri Kemp, Eddie Swift, Caty McDermott, Nora Duncan, Frank Augeri, Michael Coyle, Jim McNally, and Kate Quigley.

**Others:** Chuck Anderson, Tom O'Brien, Gail Lucchina.

**Agenda/Item/Action**

**Welcome:** The meeting was convened at 1:40 by Vice Chair Joy Hollister, who noted a lack of quorum. Shortly thereafter, Chairperson Wrice arrived and the monthly meeting officially began.

**2013 LIHEAP Update:** Tom O'Brien provided a LIHEAP update, including an overview of statistics regularly tracked and reported to LIEAB by DSS (see handouts).

Program statistics continue to demonstrate less-than-forecast participation, particularly with deliverable fuel-heated homes. Discussion ensued regarding potential contributing causes, including demographic shifts, "doubling up" households, etc. Tom will provide a demographics breakout when those report metrics come due to Federal oversight agencies.

Full effects of sequestration on LIHEAP are still unknown, and specific funding amounts to the States remain uncertain. While the program is now in Q3, no Fed payments have yet been forthcoming for Q2. This funding delay likely presents more of a challenge to those State that, unlike Connecticut, also use LIHEAP funds for Weatherization.

Tom also reported a new batch of agency utility payments have recently been approved which brings client accounts up to April 29, 2013.

Discussion followed regarding likely outcomes and funding scenarios including the President's budget, which includes less for LIHEAP (+/- \$500M reduction nationwide). Budget uncertainties continue to present funding/budget conundrums for many States. As noted at the April LIEAB meeting, ongoing budgetary uncertainties are hampering LIEAB planning for the next program year.

**Utility Matching Payment Program Updates:** NU's report was unavailable as this month's LIEAB meeting fell on the first of the month, while NU is still compiling report data. The UIL companies (SCG, CNG and UI) are extending their match to May 5th; NU indicated it is extending its match window as well.

**Operation Fuel:** Pat Wrice reports Operation Fuel recently "reopened," but only +/- \$800k in funding remains. Pat reports that some complaints primarily from the Bridgeport area arose regarding Operation Fuel's attempts to capture the neediest/most vulnerable. Specifically, Operation Fuel requires as a condition of eligibility that applicants received a termination notice, and made good faith payments including at least one payment during moratorium and at least four payments within the last year. Pat reports Operation Fuel is particularly targeting seniors at this time. While Operation Fuel had no formal report to share, it confirmed that it has distributed more than \$2M through March 2013.

**LIHEAP Working Group Update:** LIHEAP working group is still organizing per Vice-Chairperson Joy Hollister, and will have an update at the next meeting.

Tom O'Brien advised the Board that after many years of dedicated State service, he recently submitted his retirement papers and is transitioning some LIEAB duties to DSS's Chuck Anderson.

**MPP Letter Working Group Update:** Still under review following presentation at last month's meeting.

**Low Income Discount Rate draft:** DEEP's Gail Lucchina reported that the Low Income Discount Rate report remains close to final release.

**Legislative Update:** CAFCA's Edith Karsky confirmed that the legislative proposal addressing LIEAB membership was unlikely to progress this session. Edith noted there appears to be legislative preference for a LIEAB which is represented by all deliverable fuels, and that the matter would probably be revisited next session. After some discussion, it was suggested that a working group be constituted to discuss LIEAB's future in the face of a changing landscape and reduced funding for low income programs generally. Operation Fuel volunteered to coordinate and report some progress by September.

**LIHEAP:** DSS's Chuck Anderson noted that the LIEAB plan is due to OPM in July, and that additional information from DSS would be forthcoming. Nora Duncan suggested that suggestions and recommendations be developed and shared among board members in preparation for full board consideration at the LIEAB June meeting.

**Approve Minutes of the April 3, 2013 meeting:** A motion - duly seconded - for acceptance of the April 3rd minutes was put before the Board. The vote thereon was unanimous.

**Weatherization Assistance Program update:** Mike Coyle updated the Board regarding WAP. 2013-2014 funding, typically announced +/-February and released +/-April annually, remains uncertain due to budget issues in Washington. DOE allowed many states, including Connecticut, to extend PY12-13, which typically would have ended March 31, 2013. Connecticut is better situated to withstand the funding delay because of carry forward funds from previous program years. However, several CAAs have significantly drawn down their budgets and are focusing on HES work while awaiting a PY13-14 funding announcement.

Edith Karsky proposed a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Nora Duncan, and approved by voice vote. The meeting officially adjourned at 2:50 p.m. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 5, 2013, at HRA in New Britain.