

Low Income Workgroup Meeting Notes
Portland, Oregon
11/5/2015

Summary: The meeting began with a discussion with Charlie Grist of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council about where low income appears in the Draft Seventh Power Plan and a request for workgroup members to submit comments on that section. Sarah Moore, BPA, provided an overview of recent benchmarking working to better estimate how much low income efficiency is occurring in public power territory. Jeremy Stewart, Tacoma Power, presented on their successful ductless heatpump program which includes covering the costs for a DHP in a low income household. The meeting concluded with a prioritization exercise and several priority items from the July meeting were determined to be topics that the group should bring in a speaker for at a future meeting. The next meeting of the workgroup is set for the morning of February 24 in Portland.

Attendees:

On the phone

Hans Berg, State of Washington
Ian Bledsoe, Clatskanie
Pat Didion, Milton Freewater
Norm Goodblau
Bryan, NWPCC Montana
Eric Miller, Benton
Anita Clever, Klickitat PUD
Dawn Senger, City of Richland
Boyd Wilson, BPA
Todd Williams and Lindsey Hobbs, Inland Power
Dan Kinnaman, Grays Harbor
Donna Kinnaman, CAPECO
Elizabeth Osborne, WA NWPCC
Mark Mitten, City of Burley
Kathy Moore, Umatilla and Hermiston Electric
Tim Lammers, Columbia River PUD
Dan Cunningham, City of Ashland
Ed Monson, Benton PUD

In person

Summer Goodwin, BPA (facilitator)
Josh Warner, BPA
Chris Shoopman, Oregon Housing and Community Services
Sean Collins, Energy Project
Steve Joel, HACSA
Greg Kester, Mason PUD 1
Todd Blackman, Franklin PUD
Debbie DePetris, Clark Public Utilities
Courtney Dale, BPA
Margaret Ryan, PNGC
Sarah Moore, BPA
Kathy Grey, EWEB

Cyrus Collins, Columbia River PUD
Coleen NEil, Cowlitz PUD
Jeremy Stewart, Tacoma Pwer
Eugene Rosolie, NEEA
Rogelio Cortes, MWVCAA

Section 1: Charlie Grist – How Low Income Fits into the 7th Power Plan

There's a low income action item in the action plan. Model Conservation Standard 1: hard to reach markets. In order to capture all cost-effective conservation, programs must reach all sectors of the economy and all classes of customers. Efficiency doesn't come from classes in the economy evenly, so MCS 1 determines which classes are underserved from a study of measure activity. This includes low income, moderate income, rural, multifamily, small businesses (and others). First, region must study these classes (report due 2017). Programs will then determine strategies for reaching. Council calls for collaboration with this group.

Eugene Rosolie – NEEA hosts a research group, RTF has a research committee. There's some overlap between low income populations and manufactured homes/rural areas. The action plan could highlight that fact.

Charlie – ETO research shows 30% of territory is Spanish speaking, used census data overlays with program info and targeted their programs accordingly.

Sean Collins – Energy Project has worked with CAPs and Avista. CAPs run periodic needs assessments that could contribute data for the council.

Boyd Wilson - Future work for the group should include comments to council on plan, maybe should think about data collection

Eugene - Comments from this workgroup would be valuable and would carry a lot of weight. Maybe the steering committee could draft something?

Section2: Recap of July Meeting

- Reports from utilities about success stories resulting from low income meetings.
- Prioritizing future workgroup topics.

Other Sharing:

Debbie DePetris: Clark is starting low-income DHPs and is handing out kits for people who come in with low income.

Todd: Franklin has a kit that goes with their winter weatherization workshop. Would be happy to provide list of contents. Heating season comes fast in Tri-cities, so the utility runs workshop ads out right

after that first big bill. Has a prop house and Todd installs the entire kit. Funds come from public information budget (claims measures from BPA when he can).

Lindsey Hobbs (Inland): Working on LI DHP measure. 2 successful installs. Contractors are getting a discount from dealers.

Courtney Dale: How does utility use the LI DHP measure?

Clark: Entirely through CAP.

Tacoma: Entirely separate from CAP.

Inland: Income verification by CAP.

Kathy Grey (EWEB): measure goes both directions, directly to the contractor and through CAP.

Cyrus Collins (CRPUD): Cap agency doesn't hit the "higher income low income" homes. CRPUD ran their own program with different restrictions (owner occupied, etc.). CAP does income verification. Customer might have to pay some if bid is over \$3,800.

Rogelio: His CAP works with a utility that has only offered \$1250 for DHPs. Sarah offered to show him the measures and IM language so he can effectively communicate BPA's offerings to the utility.

Section 3: Efficiency Exchange

A few low income sessions were proposed. Might do outreach to recruit presenters if the session are approved.

Section 4: Low-Income Benchmarking

In section 4 of Council's Action Plan, the research falls entirely on Bonneville and should probably fall to the entire region. Research calls for "the kitchen sink," the region will have to be more strategic in research dollars.

BPA is hoping to apply census data to determine areas where manufactured homes can be considered low income without verification.

Jeremy: Can we apply the same logic to multifamily? Sarah thinks that makes sense.

Steve: There's a trickle down effect of utility funding low income, but that can stretch CAP dollars to 3 more homes.

Sarah: BPA offers similar or better payments to ETO's moderate income program. If utilities want to address moderate income, the answer is probably a program strategy and not asking for more money.

Margaret Ryan: Low-income rural/manufactured home housing stock is not actually dynamic. Sarah: Those are areas where we hope to waive income verification.

Eugene: Demographic research should go to county level, if there are resources to perform that research.

Steve: HUD rehab programs should be aware of standard income measures that are available. Those programs address moderate income homes.

Debbie: WSU SEEP funds offer moderate income program. However, neighborhoods are qualified as moderate income, not households. Too hard to qualify income.

Todd: Your contractors probably have good intel on income levels of their customers.

Eugene: any thought on bringing a low income HPWH? Sarah: Yes, but they're very expensive. It would cost for programs, and that's a policy decision.

Section 4: Side-by-side comparison

HACSA uses ~3 funding sources per home. Paying for staff time is a challenge, since only a few funding sources can be used for that purpose.

Sean: This juggling of dollars shows how working through a CAP adds value to a utility program in the health and safety benefits to the home. Funds can leverage other money to do safety improvements.

Sarah: It's important to make sure that work is done in the correct loading order. If utilities do low income work, it can affect the SIR for CAP agencies when they get to that house by taking away the cheaper savings.

Steve: BPA funds are great because they leverage other sources really well.

How can we express that utility funds leverage to external parties? PR is something we could do much better.

Sean: Low income work a matter of ratepayer equity across the region regardless of who counts the savings.

Hans: Leverage reports exist at the state level, is there a need for BPA to have something similar?

Sarah: BPA is hard pressed to ask for more utility reporting.

Section 5: DHPs for Low Income – Lessons Learned

Price control – Homeowners pay \$3000 regardless of utility incentive, and contractors vary their bids based on this fact. Tacoma pushed for cost control. Cost control of regular income installations is important for low income, it pulls all costs down. Contractors are required to itemize costs of upgrades in capacity and indoor heads to create a price signal.

Hans: are you seeing the same HSPF, sizes and brands as other utilities? Jeremy: yes, though smaller than Snohomish. This is partly because of smaller houses, but because of programs requirements. Oversizing is a problem; the additional cost has a declining value in energy savings.

Tacoma uses a free marketplace system, no contract with installers. Customer deals with contractor directly, no 3 bids required. Itemized bid requirements are important.

Contractors aren't super happy with the program. Started with ASHP contractors, and a few started offering DHPs. Some new contractors jumped into the market specifically. Tacoma created a need and people filled it.

Tacoma inspects the first 12 installs and then fewer as the contractor becomes more comfortable with the product. Increase oversight if contractor fails a few inspections.

Homeowner education is key for savings. Todd: have you experimented with different thermostats? Wall thermostats seem to be more user-friendly. Jeremy: No, and there's been a lot of variability in their studies even when users have received significant training in using the remotes.

Section 6: Strategic Priorities for Workgroup

Proposed next meeting date: February 24th?

Alternative Funding Ideas

Eugene: Zero interest loans or on-bill financing. Tacoma's revolving fund is interesting. No workgroup is necessary, but maybe a presentation?

Steve: More thoughts on programs working to control costs. HPWH might be a good option. Steve bulk orders windows.

Eugene: Bring in a speaker to discuss? Maybe a brainstorming session? NEEA does have connections in industry.

Sarah to look for a speaker on cost control of windows.

Cash Flow Issues

Donna Kinnamen: utility's internal processes delays payment for 3 months.

Margaret: It could be helpful to talk about how it hurts a CAP. We don't know the effect of slow payments from utility to CAPs.

Summer: This could be great as part of our boot camp session at the Efficiency Exchange conference.

Moderate Income

Courtney: Maybe bring in someone from ETOs savings within reach.

Steve: Maybe bring someone from a utility that targets moderate income households. There are HUD programs that target these people.

Eugene: Let's hang on to this topic until after the 7th power plan is final.

Low Income EE measures are Expensive

Group: True.

Sarah: at what point do you stop dumping money into a home that is terminally ill? NEEA works on manufactured homes decommissioning. Maybe Eugene can bring someone from NEEA to discuss?

Neighbor Works of Umpqua is doing a decommissioning. Could we hear about their work?

Hans: Three points: How much money to dump into a home; cost control; decommissioning and replacement.

Margaret: PSU professor who is knowledgeable on the topic. Also someone up a WSU. There's a workgroup that does lots of work on this subject. Let's bring in someone from that group. Margaret will take this on.

Meeting was adjourned after February 24 was set as next meeting date.