

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DE 14-205

STATEWIDE LOW-INCOME ELECTRIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

2014-2015 Program Administrative Budgets

Summary of Order *Nisi* No. 25,707 Approving EAP Budgets

August 26, 2014

The purpose of this docket is to review the budgets for administering the statewide low-income electric assistance program (EAP). The EAP is funded by the systems benefit charge and is operated by the community action agencies (CAAs) and the state's four electric distribution utilities.

The EAP serves approximately 33,000 customers, which is approximately 500 more customers than were served at this time in 2013. The program is currently designed to provide benefits to approximately 33,500 customers. The utilities, the CAAs, and the Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) submitted their budgets for the program year October 1, 2014, through September 30, 2015.

Commission Staff (Staff) and the OEP monitor, evaluate, and audit the EAP. OEP's proposed budget of \$7,000 is the same as 2013-2014. Staff costs associated with the program are not charged to the EAP fund.

The utilities bill and collect the system benefits charge, apply the EAP discounts to the bills of eligible customers, and add and remove customers as the CAAs direct. The utilities' combined budget of \$12,137 is 13.58% lower than the prior year.

The CAAs' proposed budget is \$1,839,005, which is 2.0% higher than 2014-2015. The CAAs' budget includes the activities of the EAP program administrator and the six CAAs. The program administrator contracts with, monitors, and performs annual compliance reviews of the other CAAs. The program administrator also compiles the CAAs budgets, invoices the utilities, allocates the

administrative revenues to the respective CAAs, and prepares weekly enrollment reports for Staff, the Advisory Board members, and each CAA. The individual CAAs provide customer education, intake services, certification and re-certification of eligibility, discount tier determination, and removal of ineligible customers.

The proposed 2014-2015 budgets were provided to the EAP Advisory Board, which reviewed the budgets and conducted an informal discovery process. The Advisory Board concluded that the expenses budgeted for the upcoming program year are reasonable. Staff also recommended approval of the proposed budgets. Staff noted that the 2014-2015 budget is 1.87% higher than the prior year and that the increase is due primarily to higher wages and benefits in the CAAs' budget.

The Commission approved the budgets as filed.

To ensure that all interested parties receive notice of this docket and have an opportunity to request a hearing, the Commission delayed the effectiveness of its approval until September 25, 2014. All persons interested in responding to the Commission's approval may submit their comments or file a written request for a hearing which states the reason and basis for a hearing no later than September 12, 2014. Any party interested in responding to such comments and request for hearing shall do so no later than September 19, 2014. Following consideration of any comments and request for hearing received, the Commission may further extend the effective date of its approval. The Commission's approval shall become final and effective on September 25, 2014, unless the Commission orders otherwise.