

EAP Advisory Board

January 24, 2020 meeting minutes

Participants: Jessica Allen Arnold, (Liberty), Shannon Nolin (BMCAP), Lisa Sheehy (NHEC), Janice Johnson (Eversource), Gary Cronin (NHPUC), Pradip Chattopadhyay, (OCA), Rorie Patterson (NHPUC), Sandra Morin, (Eversource), Amanda Noonan, (NHPUC), Mary Swarzer, (NHPUC), Sue Corson, (Unitil)

Discussion:

- 1. Review of minutes: August 9, 2019 and October 25, 2019 - Minutes approved for both meeting dates.**
- 2. EAP Redesign Subcommittee Report**

Gary Cronin reported that it was the subcommittee's recommendation to EAP Advisory Board that the Board pursue hiring a consultant to review the program design. It has been quite a few years since a review has been completed and the subcommittee agreed that it is time to look at it again. Discussion ensued regarding the need to look at tiers, income brackets and whether the design is meeting the goals of the program. The subcommittee has agreed to provide a draft recommendation to the EAP Advisory Board. This will be accomplished within two to three weeks.

The process of how this can be accomplished was discussed. It was explained that a recommendation would go to the Public Utility Commission and they would approve or disapprove the recommendation. If approved, the Commission would work with staff to develop a RFP to secure a firm/consultant to perform the work.

It was mentioned that there may be a benchmark of cost that will determine if a RFP would be needed. Amanda Noonan is going to check on the amount.

- 3. EAP Eligibility Change – State Median Income**

Shannon Nolin reported that with the PUC approval of the increase in income guidelines to 60% of the State Median Income is now entered into the EAP operating software. This increase in income limits now matches the guidelines used by the NH Fuel Assistance Program. This will result in less confusion for households applying for both programs. It will also provide a much needed benefit for the newly eligible households.

4. Regression of previously denied EAP applications

It was explained that the Community Action Agencies are able to look at previously denied applications and enroll them without the applicant having to come back in to apply. The CAAs are sending a notice with their letter of enrollment explaining why they are now eligible and that they don't need to re-apply at this time.

5. EAP Survey

A draft survey was circulated to the Board in November for input. There were no suggested changes to the survey tool. The survey will be available through an online survey tool for those EAP participants with an email address. Hard copies of the survey will also be available to households coming into a center. The survey will be distributed in late February.

6. Fiscal Procedures Manual

The Fiscal Procedures Manual was reviewed by Board members and suggestions for edits were provided. These edits will be incorporated into the Manual and circulated among the Board for final approval.

The next manual to be reviewed will be the CAA Manual.

There was a request made to the utilities to identify if a monthly report contained multiple months of expenses. Utilities were asked to identify the separate months and amounts when submitting the reports.

7. New Business

Town Square Media – The Program Administrator circulated a PSA that was developed with the help of the Eversource media staff. Board members approved of the language with the exception that the link should be the NH PUC website. All members agreed and it has been changed to reflect the NH PUC. The Program Administrator will be meeting with the media company to explore additional avenues of opportunities. These will be shared with the full Board for review and discussion.

Medical Waivers – There was discussion regarding the continuation of medical waivers for the EAP given the increase in the income limits. The Board agreed to continue with the practice of providing medical waivers for those applicants that are over income and have medical burdens.

8. New Business

Shannon Nolin provided a copy of the PSA that will be aired for the EAP with Town Square Media. She explained that she had visited their site and that they have a media plan worked out for the program which she will share with the Advisory Board for input and approval. Ryan Sheehy from Town Square would be happy to come to a meeting and present their ideas and plan. A draft of the power point will be shared to all Advisory Board Members.