

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**DE 22-043**

**STATEWIDE LOW-INCOME ELECTRIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**Prehearing Order**

A prehearing conference in this matter was held on August 8, 2023. This prehearing conference was held pursuant to a supplemental order of notice issued in this proceeding on July 17, 2023. The New Hampshire Department of Energy (DOE), LISTEN Community Services (LISTEN), represented by New Hampshire Legal Assistance, the Office of the Consumer Advocate, the NH Electric Utilities<sup>1</sup>, and the Community Action Agencies (CAAs), represented by the Community Action Program of Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc., appeared. One of the matters raised at the prehearing conference related to the Commission's assessment of certain Electric Assistance Program (EAP) program modifications presented by the EAP Advisory Board to the Commission in connection with a September 2022 report entitled "New Hampshire [EAP]: Review of Performance/Future Directions," prepared by consultant Roger Colton of Fisher, Sheehan & Colton (Colton Report). Following the prehearing conference, in an order *nisi* issued on August 9, 2023 (Order No. 26,870), the Commission approved certain of the Colton Report/EAP Advisory Board recommendations, and deferred consideration of others to a later phase of this proceeding, with a goal of programmatic integration in the October 2024-September 2025 EAP program year and beyond. See Order No. 26,870 at 5-6.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource), Liberty Utilities (Granite State Electric) Corp. d/b/a Liberty (Liberty), Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. (UES), the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NHEC) are referred to collectively as the "NH Electric Utilities" for purposes of this order.

The remaining matters raised at the prehearing conference by the parties centered on the Commission's intended scope for the remainder of this EAP program review proceeding, and the development of a procedural schedule to effectuate the same.

To that end, the Commission incorporates the statutory authorities and Commission Orders cited in the supplemental order of notice of July 17, 2023, and in Order No. 26,870, by reference, in delineating the Commission's review of the EAP program going forward. To aid the parties in their development of discovery, testimonial evidence, and recommendations to the Commission, the Commission offers the following areas of scoping focus:


1. Whether the Commission should approve implementation of the Colton Report/EAP Advisory Board Recommendations 5, 6, and 7 for the 2024-2025 EAP program year, and beyond;
2. Whether further efficiencies can be gained by adjusting the number of tiers and/or modifying tiers, and/or by adjusting the kilowatt hour (kWh) limit for the number of people in the household, to allow greater lower-income assistance, beyond what was contemplated in the Colton Report;
3. Whether economies of scale through cross-regional, or Statewide, processing of EAP benefit applications by the CAAs can be leveraged;
4. Whether more streamlined re-enrollment of EAP recipients, especially older citizens and the disabled, subject to conditions, would be feasible or beneficial;
5. Any other useful efficiencies and modifications that can be developed to maximize benefit to EAP recipients in greatest need and minimize overhead;
6. What safeguards can be implemented to ensure that EAP beneficiaries (customers on both default service offered by the NH Electric Utilities and competitive

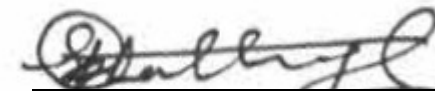
suppliers, including Community Aggregators) do not receive more monthly credit than the actual monthly expenditure on energy supply; and

7. The current status of the EAP Triennial Process Evaluations (under the auspices of the DOE, available here, under the tab “EAP Advisory Board Reports, Statutes, and Orders”: <https://www.energy.nh.gov/consumers/help-energy-and-utility-bills/electric-assistance-program>), and any improvements that could be made to these Evaluations.

The Commission sets a deadline of September 8, 2023 for the parties to submit a proposed procedural schedule for this proceeding, with a goal of a final Commission hearing regarding EAP program modifications to be implemented in the 2024-2025 EAP program year to be held in the second quarter of 2024. The Commission also welcomes responsive filings from the parties, or any other interested persons, regarding the scoping matters discussed above not later than September 15, 2023.

So ordered, this twenty-second day of August, 2023.

  
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Daniel C. Goldner  
Chairman

  
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Pradip K. Chattopadhyay  
Commissioner

# Service List - Docket Related

Docket#: 22-043

Printed: 8/22/2023

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