

**Electric Assistance Program  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
April 26, 2019**

**Participants:**

Amanda Noonan, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission  
Rorie Patterson, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (late arrival)  
Gary Cronin, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission  
Tanya Wayland, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission  
Karen Cramton, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission  
Pradip Chattopadhyay, New Hampshire Office of Consumer Advocate  
Brian Buckley, New Hampshire Office of Consumer Advocate  
Brian Rice, Eversource  
Tanika Richardson, Eversource  
Sandra Morin, Eversource  
Janice Johnson, Eversource  
Nicole Harris, Liberty  
Jessica Allen, Liberty  
Karen Emis-Williams, Concord Human Services  
Shannon Nolin, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action and EAP Administrator  
Jeanne Agri, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action  
Susan Corson, Unitil  
Lisa Sheehy, New Hampshire Electric Cooperative  
Tracy Desmarais, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives  
Noah Hodgetts, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives  
Eileen Smiglowski, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives  
Steve Tower, New Hampshire Legal Assistance (late arrival)

**Minutes:** Commission Staff

1. Eversource Low/Moderate-Income Solar Proposal

Eversource provided the Advisory Board with an overview of a draft low/moderate income solar proposal. Handouts summarizing the draft proposal are attached.

2. Triennial Process Evaluation

The Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) presented a summary of its findings and recommendations of the TPE (attached). OSI filed the report, and circulated it to the Advisory Board, on April 1, 2019, in accordance with Order No. 24,820 (January 22, 2008). Generally, OSI concluded that the EAP is functioning efficiently and effectively and noted its recommendations focused on making a great program even better. As the annual financial audit of the EAP was finalized after the due date for the TPE, OSI asked the Board to consider recommending the Commission move the deadline for the TPE to at least one month after the issuance of the annual financial audit. OSI has received some written comments on the TPE and asked that board members provide further comments no later than May 31, 2019. Following receipt of any further comments, OSI will finalize and file the final version of the TPE with the Commission.

### 3. Outreach

NHEC provided a handout prepared by Townsquare Media Group, outlining a proposal for radio public service announcements. Those PSAs would be at no cost to the EAP. The EAP Administrator and OSI will work with communication staff at the utilities to develop a script for one or more PSAs and will work directly with Ryan Sheehy at Townsquare. The EAP Administrator and OSI will report to the Advisory Board on the status of the PSAs at the July meeting.

### 4. Arrearage Management Program Subcommittee Report

The Arrearage Management Program (AMP) subcommittee concluded, based on preliminary data analysis, that the EAP fund may not be sufficient to support a long-term AMP. Eversource, which has AMPs in its other jurisdictions (MA and CT), stated that an AMP for all its customers will be part of its upcoming rate case filing. Eversource estimates that the cost to program its IT system to operate an AMP is \$1.7 million. Liberty does not plan to propose an AMP as part of its upcoming rate filing. NHLA stated it would consider asking the Commission to open a generic docket to develop guidelines for utilities to use if designing individual AMPs.

### 5. Eligibility Cap and Other Possible Programmatic Changes

The Board discussed increasing the existing eligibility threshold of 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) to 60% of State Median Income (SMI). The federally funded Fuel Assistance Program used 60% of SMI as the eligibility threshold during the 2018-2019 program. According to the Community Action Agency, approximately 3,000 households qualified for the Fuel Assistance Program during the 2018-2019 program year, but did not qualify for the EAP, which has an income eligibility threshold of at or below 200% of FPG. Staff stated it had developed projections of the impact to the EAP Fund if the income eligibility threshold was 60% of SMI. Given the length of the meeting, the Board agreed to discuss the possible increase in the income eligibility threshold via a conference call. A conference call was scheduled for May 8, 2019 at 9:00 am, and Staff agreed to circulate information about the projected impact on the EAP fund in advance of the call.

Other ideas mentioned for changing the program included increasing the discount levels and aligning the age and enrollment schedule for senior citizens used by the EAP (65, annual certification) with the age and enrollment schedule used by the FAP (60, certification every two years).

### 6. 2019 Brochure

The Board decided to print brochures for 2019 even though there is ongoing discussion about making changes to the program. Any changes to the program require Commission approval, and that process could take some time. Unitil has prepared an updated brochure and stated it would circulate the print-ready version to the Board. Unitil, NHEC, and Liberty will communicate to Eversource how many brochures they want printed, and Eversource will order for all utilities. The utilities will consider the possibility of programmatic changes later in the year in deciding how many brochures to order.

### 7. January 25, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The Board unanimously approved the minutes as drafted.

With regard to item 6, Liberty clarified that its outreach about EAP includes the use of social media, bill inserts, newsletters, and a welcome packet. Eversource indicated that it sent an email to the Board, describing the company's outreach, which include using bill inserts and outgoing phone calls.

With regard to item 4, Eversource clarified that its aging report includes only active customers.

**Action Items:**

1. Consider recommending the Commission move the deadline for the TPE to at least one month after the issuance of the annual financial audit.
2. The EAP Administrator and OSI will work with communication staff at the utilities to develop a script for one or more PSAs and report on the status at the July meeting.
3. May 8, 2019, 9:00 am conference call to discuss projected impact on EAP fund of increasing the income eligibility threshold to 60% SMI. Staff to circulate information about the projected impact on the EAP fund in advance of the call.
4. Unitil to circulate the print-ready version of the EAP brochure to the Board.
5. Board members provide Eversource with print quantities for brochures, and Eversource to arrange for printing.

**Next meeting: May 9, 2019 at 9:00am (teleconference)**

**Next regular meeting: July 29, 2019 at 9:00 am**

**July Meeting Minutes – New Hampshire Welfare Directors**

**An updated schedule for meeting minutes is attached.**