

UP Energy Task Force Energy Assistance - MEAP

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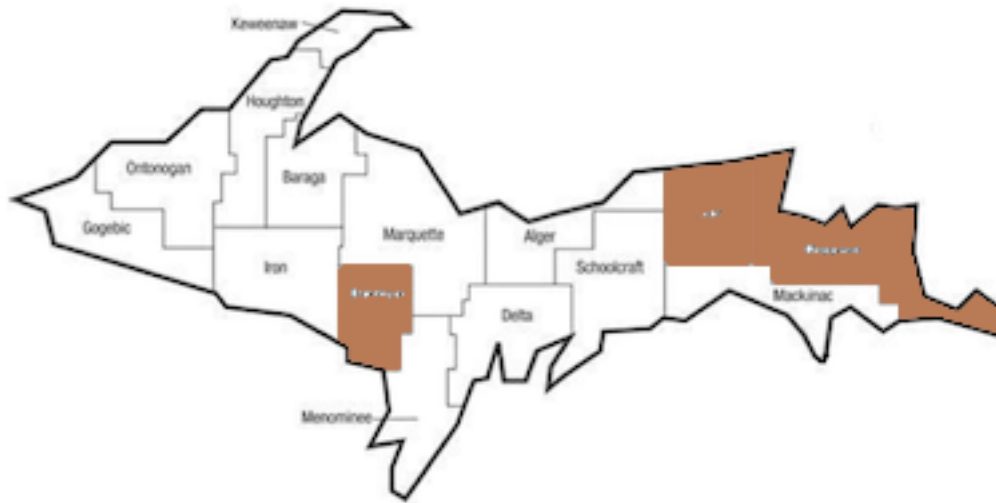
MEAP Foundation


- Public Act 615 of 2012 (March 28, 2013)
 - Created the Michigan Energy Assistance Act that requires the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to establish and administer the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP).
 - The purpose of the MEAP is to establish and administer programs statewide that provide energy assistance and self-sufficiency services to eligible low-income households.
 - Michigan Public Service Commission(MPSC)-MEAP Section performs administrative duties through an Inter-Agency Agreement with the MDHHS.
 - Senate Bill 451(August 20, 2019) extends the Michigan Energy Assistance Act that established the MEAP until Sept. 30, 2023.
 - Passed with immediate effect; awaiting Governor’s signature.

**Low-income is defined as a household at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines which for FY19 was roughly \$25,000 of annual income for a household of four*

- Public Act 95 of 2013 (July 1, 2013)
 - Created the Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF), charging MDHHS with expending money from the fund as provided by the Michigan Energy Assistance Act.
 - The Act allows the MPSC to annually approve a low-income energy assistance funding factor, not to exceed \$50,000,000, to support the LIEAF.
 - On July 18, 2019, in Case No. U-17377, the MPSC adopted a funding factor of 92 cents per meter per month for all Michigan electric utilities that have opted to participate in the funding of the LIEAF, effective for the September 2019 billing month.
 - Electric cooperatives, municipal electric utilities, & investor-owned electric utilities are able to participate in funding LIEAF.
 - Electric utilities that opt-out of collecting the funding factor may not shut off service to any residential customer from November 1 to April 15 for nonpayment of a delinquent account.

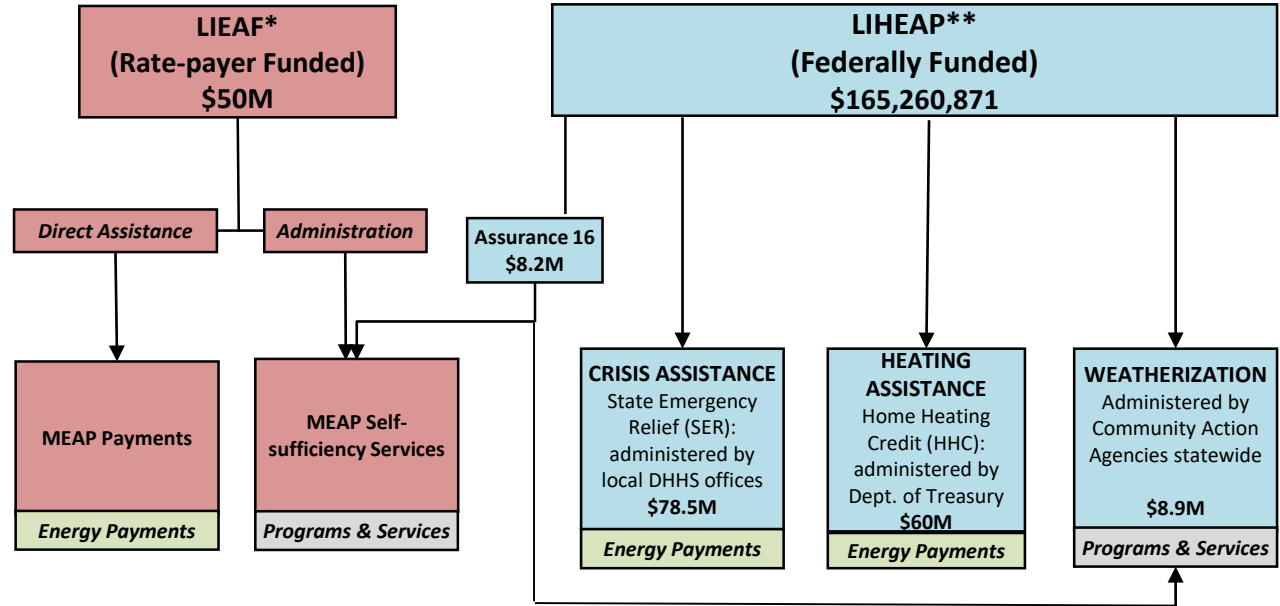
LIEAF Participation



 = County with no providers participating

FY19 Energy Assistance Funding Distribution

- FY19 MEAP Grantees**
- Barry County United Way
 - Michigan Community Action
 - Society of St. Vincent de Paul
 - Superior Watershed Partnership
 - The Heat & Warmth Fund
 - The Salvation Army
 - TrueNorth Community Services
 - United Way of Jackson Co.
 - United Way for SE Michigan



*Low Income Energy Assistance Fund

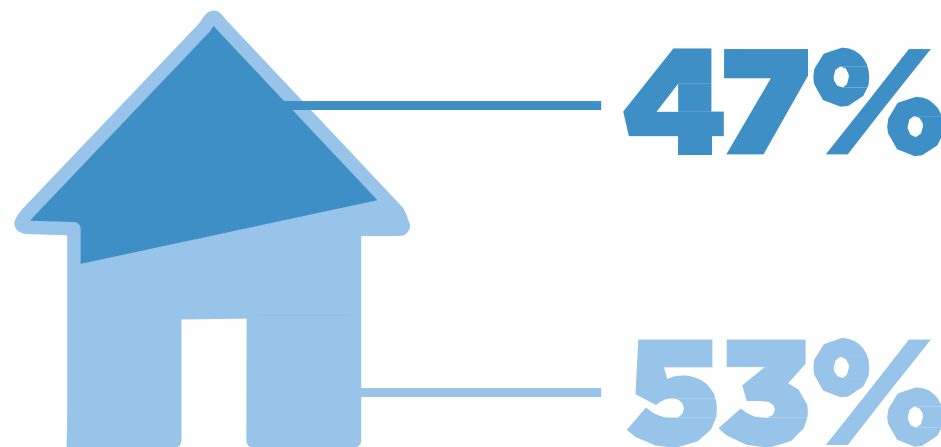
**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

MEAP Grantees in the UP

- MEAP Grantees serving the Upper Peninsula:
 - Local Community Action Agencies
 - St. Vincent de Paul
 - Superior Watershed Partnership
 - The Heat and Warmth Fund
 - The Salvation Army
 - TrueNorth Community Services
 - United Way for Southeastern Michigan
 - United Way of Jackson County
- MEAP Grantees with physical locations in the UP
 - Community Action Agencies
 - St. Vincent de Paul
 - Superior Watershed Partnership
 - The Salvation Army

Michigan Energy Assistance Need FY18

951,809 Michigan households had incomes that make them eligible for energy assistance. In 2018, **fewer than 500,000** households received assistance.



In 2018, the Michigan 2-1-1 system provided over **559,000 phone-based referrals**, with questions related to utility assistance (29%) being the **#1** reason for calls.

Low-Income Energy Assistance FY18



\$164,294,552 in Energy Assistance Payments were disbursed



447,982 households received some type of energy assistance



317,601 households received the Home Heating Credit (HHC)*



79,404 households received crisis related State Emergency Relief (SER) and **2,037** households received deliverable fuel assistance from BCAEO*



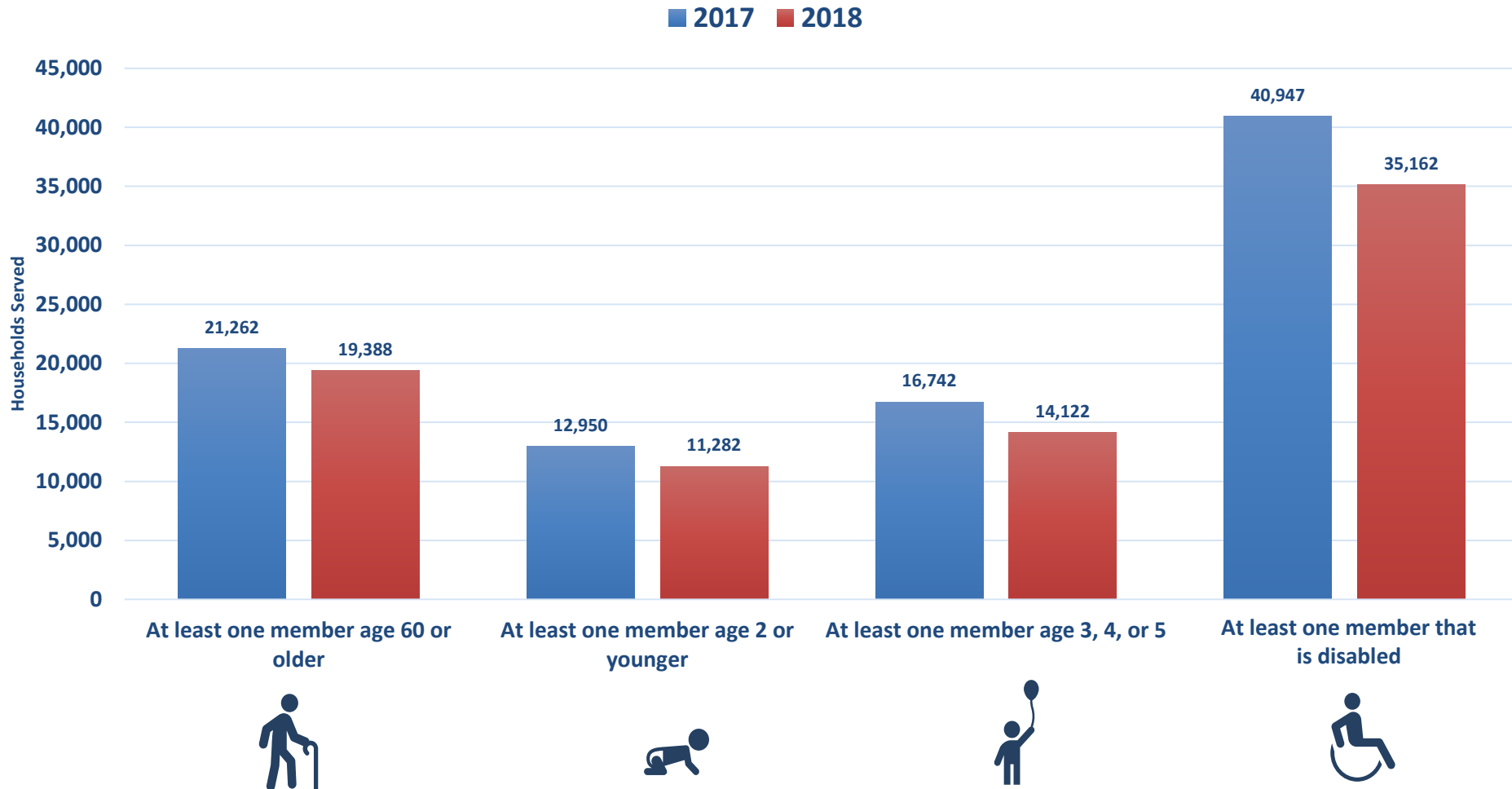
94,446 households were reported as receiving the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)*

**Some households receive more than one type of assistance*

2017-2018 Household Demographics*

Michigan Energy Assistance Program

Source: 2017 and 2018 Legislative Reports



*Some households may appear in multiple categories

MPSC/MEAP Goals

- Help low-income households stay safe and warm while moving toward self-sufficiency
- Provide compassionate service
- Increase accessibility
- Steward tax and rate payer dollars responsibly
- Coordinate energy assistance programs and prioritize to most vulnerable populations
- Develop and test creative methods for serving households with 0 – 20% FPL

MPSC/MEAP Goals

- Coordinate with State Emergency Relief
 - Ensure the organization is listed and data maintained in the Michigan 2-1-1 Profile/Database Listing(s)
 - Become a Navigator/Referral Partner to support households applying energy crisis assistance with SER;
 - Comply with MI Bridges established referral timeframes;
- Distribute funds to eligible households
 - Deliverable fuels will be funded to the extent possible allowed by law – to return funds to the geography of origin: historically around 9%
 - Agencies can lock in propane prices early in the season
- Provide additional assistance and services
 - Develop a self-sufficiency plan for each MEAP household; including resources and services to be provided, may include enrollment in an APP
 - Utilize the MEAP Self-Sufficiency Plan for each qualifying household

Coordination with SER

- For MEAP assistance, household must first receive State Emergency Relief (SER)
 - Initial energy crisis eligibility determination at DHHS for each commodity, using LIHEAP crisis funds
 - DHHS moved to streamlined model
 - Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) model – with the focus moving from a Program Focus to Person (Customer) Focus
 - The new application (MI Bridges) is redesigned with a new look, and only asks questions related to the program for which the client is applying
- MEAP Grantees are trained as MI Bridges Community Partners (Navigator, Access, and/or Referral) to assist households in applying for SER and other MDHHS benefits
 - Some households are more comfortable applying for assistance through a trusted community partner rather than directly with MDHHS
- Referral to MEAP providers for self-sufficiency services and additional direct payment assistance

MEAP – Grantee-Provided Services

- MEAP Grantees work with SER recipients to provide additional assistance and wrap-around self-sufficiency services
 - LIEAF
 - One-time payment assistance (SER co-payment, etc)
 - Ongoing assistance through an Affordable Payment Plan (APP)
 - LIHEAP – Assurance 16
 - Self-sufficiency activities

Affordable Payment Plans

- Implementing a single model for Affordable Payment Plans
 - UPPCo is planning to implement APP for FY20, following the current model of SEMCO
 - Great Lakes Energy has expressed interest in implementing an APP and will be piloting a plan with TrueNorth Community Services (non-MEAP funding)
 - Other natural gas and participating electric companies can choose to offer an APP
 - Consistent customer communications
- Pilot APP for propane or other deliverable fuels

Assurance 16 Activities

- LIHEAP Assurance 16 funding covers expenses directly related to the delivery of energy assistance self-sufficiency activities
- Allowable activities for helping client attain energy self-sufficiency include:
 - Needs assessment and referral
 - Vendor advocacy
 - Energy education
 - Financial counseling
 - Short or long-term case management

Measuring Success

- Measure success of the program:
 - Establish an energy-security metric
 - Use a common base for customer satisfaction survey tool to provide quality assurance
 - Analyze program graduation rates, drop-off rates
 - Emphasize shut-off reduction
- Implement a long-term cost-benefit analysis of all low-income energy assistance programs:
 - State Emergency Relief (SER), Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), Home Heating Credit (HHC), Low- or Residential Income Assistance (LIA/RIA), Winter or Shut-off Protection Plans (WPP/SPP)
- Increase number of electric utilities participating in collecting LIEAF for MEAP

2019 MEAP Workgroup

- Initially called to oversee the major changes in the energy assistance process and to provide feedback to ensure the programming worked as designed
- After first six months, moved some focus to planning for upcoming year(s)
- After one year, shifting to focus on the development of success metrics and fine-tuning processes

Questions?

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Michigan Public Service Commission

1-800-292-9555

www.michigan.gov/mpsc

Appendix A:

Applying for SER (LIHEAP)

- Those wanting to apply for State Emergency Relief can do so in three ways:
 - Apply online through MIBridges, https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/s/isd-landing-page?language=en_US
 - Complete the DHS-1514, Application for State Emergency Relief, [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/Application for State Emergency Relief DHS 1514 419862 7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/Application_for_State_Emergency_Relief_DHS_1514_419862_7.pdf)
 - Complete the MDHHS-1171 and SER Supplement, [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/MDHHS-1171 Assistance Application and Program Supplements 616030 7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/MDHHS-1171_Assistance_Application_and_Program_Supplements_616030_7.pdf)
- To access MI Bridges from the MPSC website, click on the ACCESS MIBRIDGES button on the new [MPSC 2019 MEAP](#) page.
- For additional information, please review this 4-minute video about using MIBridges along with program descriptions for the programs and services offered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547---,00.html>