

2018 MEAP Request for Proposals: Inquiries and Responses

Contents

Part I: General Grant Information.....	2
Part II: General Provisions.....	3
Part III: Work Statement	4
Part IV: Project Control and Reports.....	8
Part V: Information Required from Applicant.....	9
Part VI: Evaluation and Selection Criteria	11
Attachments.....	12
Affordable Payment Plans.....	14

Part I: General Grant Information

1. If \$50M is distributed from the LIEAF only, is it bound by LIHEAP rules and requirements?

Yes, all MEAP funds are bound by State and Federal rules and requirements. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.4*

2. When writing our response to the RFP do we base our requested grant award on 50M or 90M assuming LIHEAP will come through?

Agencies are encouraged to respond to the Request for Proposals based on the assumption that LIHEAP dollars will become available and be distributed through the MEAP to give MAE and DHHS an idea of capacity and capability should additional funds become available. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.4.1*

3. When is the soonest DHHS anticipates receiving confirmation of the first FY18 LIHEAP allocation and notifying potential/awarded grantees of the additional funds?

There is no estimated timeline at the moment. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.4.1*

4. If grant funds are awarded to a grantee but not available until mid to late October, can the grantee start the Affordable Payment Plan re-enrollment process at the start of the grant year on 10/1/17?

While not expected or required to begin October 1 without receiving funding, agencies may begin accepting and processing applications, including enrollment and re-enrollment, no earlier than October 1. Funding is expected to be released mid to late October. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

5. Can crisis intervention also mean that a grantee can make a payment for a qualifying household that does not show past due charges on the bill?

No. Households receiving MEAP assistance, which includes crisis intervention funds, must demonstrate need through the definition of crisis. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.3.1*

6. Is the expectation that grantees will provide both energy crisis intervention services and energy crisis prevention services? Will preference be given to those organizations who do both versus those who focus on the type of service they have the most expertise in (while making appropriate referrals when necessary so there is no wrong door)?

Energy assistance programs must include services that intervene to resolve the household's crisis (Crisis Intervention). Strong proposals will also include programs focused on crisis prevention. If crisis intervention assistance services are not provided directly by the grantee, the grantee must ensure the following: 1) Strong partnership agreement with an agency that provides crisis intervention assistance, 2) Seamless referral to partner agency with no re-application, 3) Customer awareness that household is being referred to another agency, 4) Crisis intervention timelines are met: 48 hours or 18 hours in a life-threatening crisis, 5) Consistent criteria used to determine when a referral for crisis intervention will be made. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

Part II: General Provisions

1. Will an organization with an existing contractor be required to seek pre-approval for a sole source selection?

Yes. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.3*

2. At what time should we request the approval for sole source selection of a contractual service—prior to submitting the proposal, after being selected as a grantee but before signing the contract, or at some other time?

Approval should be sought with the submission of the grant application. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.3*

3. Is the “fee for service” model still acceptable?

Yes. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.5*

Part III: Work Statement

Caps

1. Does SER count against the crisis intervention cap or only against the general household cap? In other words is this statement true: SER + MEAP crisis intervention must be less than or equal to \$1,700 for a natural gas/electric household or \$2,050 for a propane/electric household?

SER assistance counts against both the crisis intervention cap as well as the crisis prevention/general household cap. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4*

2. Does the commodity exception cap refer to crisis intervention funds, crisis prevention funds, or both?

Exceptions to commodity caps may be considered on a very limited basis by MAE Grant Administrator for crisis intervention funds. Exceptions to commodity caps can be processed without prior approval for crisis prevention fund use, as long as the household is still within the \$3,000 cap and the exception is documented in the client's file. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4.1*

3. Can you provide more clarification on the \$1,500 heating fuel/\$1,500 non-heat electric caps and what would constitute an exception to these general household caps?

An agency could assist a household using crisis prevention funds for up to \$3,000 without prior approval from the MAE Grant Administrator. The \$1,500 per commodity cap can be exceeded without MAE approval as long as the household does not exceed the \$3,000 cap. For example, if a household presents with a non-heat electric bill of \$2,000 and a propane fill will be \$850, the agency could assist with the electric bill of \$2,000 even though it exceeds the non-heat electric cap since in total the household is only receiving \$2,850. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4.1*

4. If a client has both electric and natural gas with one utility and they are being enrolled in an affordable payment plan with that utility, is it the expectation that the agency will track the usage for natural gas and electric separately to ensure they do not exceed the cap of \$1500 each? If they did exceed the cap for one would they need to be removed from affordable payment plan?

An agency could assist a household using crisis prevention funds for up to \$3,000 without prior approval from the MAE Grant Administrator. The \$1,500 per commodity cap can be exceeded without MAE approval as long as the household does not exceed the \$3,000 cap. For example, if a household receives \$2,000 in electric gap and arrears payments and only \$850 in natural gas arrears and gap payments, the cap exception should be noted. Prior to the household exceeding the \$3,000 household cap, an exception could be sought from the MAE Grant Administrator. It is the grantee's responsibility to monitor payments to ensure the \$3,000 cap is not exceeded. All parties should remain compliant with program requirements (grantee, home energy supplier, and customer). *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4.1*

5. I believe we need a better clarification for the MEAP CAP language. It is very unclear. For example, in the first paragraph on page 36 of the policy, it states \$850 for natural gas/wood/other, \$850 for electric, and \$1200 for deliverable fuels. The next paragraph states \$1,500 for non-heat electric and \$1,500 for primary heat source.

There are two types of available assistance: crisis intervention, which will resolve the household's crisis for 30 calendar days, and crisis prevention which can provide additional self-sufficiency services including enrollment in a home energy supplier affordable payment plan. Crisis intervention assistance caps align with DHHS/SER caps, while crisis prevention assistance allows for additional assistance to households to help move them toward self-sufficiency. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4*

6. For crisis intervention assistance, is it okay to make a "full" fill for a deliverable even if that fill is projected to last the household for more than 30 days?

Yes. Payment may be made for deliverable fuels up to the household's available cap (\$1,200 for deliverable fuels) for the fiscal year. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4*

7. The RFP clearly defines two types of MEAP assistance. Please explain the terms of crisis intervention payment – is it limited to the 30-day resolution amount or can it be greater, so long as it does not exceed the defined \$1700 annual cap? Specifically, please clarify the following language (bottom pg. 22, a, i, 2) - “The crisis intervention payment amount should not exceed the amount needed to resolve the emergency for at least 30 calendar days.”

The crisis intervention payment for metered fuels is limited to the 30-day resolution amount. As the agency deems necessary, crisis prevention funds could be used to resolve more than the 30 day amount, with crisis prevention assistance including other services that will enable participants to become or move toward becoming self-sufficient. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4, 1.3.2*

8. "...deliverable fuels which is limited to the following: LP gas, propane, fuel oil, and coal." Are pellets or wood deliveries not allowable? If not, where do we refer customers needing these fuel types?

For cap purposes, deliverable fuels are limited to: LP gas, propane, fuel oil and coal. Wood and other non-traditional fuel types would align with the cap for natural gas. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4*

9. How will a grantee know the right amount needed to pay on the utility bill to resolve the crisis for thirty days? Will the utilities be reflecting that amount on the bill? It would be quite an administrative burden to call the utility to obtain said amount for each client. The expectation is that the amount needed for 30 days be verified by the provider. MAE will work with DTE and Consumers Energy to provide additional guidance or training on locating this amount in their systems. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4*

Co-payment

10. Are co-pays allowable?

As required by LIHEAP statute, MEAP co-pay requirements will be aligned with SER policy. There will be additional training provided regarding the calculation of client co-payments and any amount exceeding the cap amount becomes the customer's copayment and must be paid prior to the agency releasing payment. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4.3*

11. Are grantees permitted to request a co-pay from a customer as a requirement for MEAP crisis intervention assistance? If no, are Grantees permitted to request a co-pay provided it is not a condition of assistance?

As required by LIHEAP statute, MEAP co-pay requirements will be aligned with SER policy. There will be additional training provided regarding the calculation of client co-payments and any amount exceeding the cap amount becomes the customer's copayment and must be paid prior to the agency releasing payment. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4.3*

SER

12. If a household receives MEAP crisis intervention and needs future assistance are they permitted to apply for SER?

Households that have received MEAP assistance will not be eligible for energy SER assistance. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.5*

13. Can there be a clarification as to why a client cannot receive SER assistance if they have received MEAP assistance from a nonprofit first, if it is still within the CAP?

However, they can receive assistance with MEAP after receiving SER?

SER does not offer the self-sufficiency component that MEAP does and the ultimate goal is to help households to become more energy efficient, which cannot be accomplished through the issuance of an SER payment. We also do not want a client to “shop around” for energy assistance; the goal of MEAP has always been for a household to work with a single provider. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.5*

Participating/Non-Participating Providers

14. Given the exclusion of assistance from customers of opt-out electric providers, has/is the MPSC considered re-opening the LIEAF surcharge docket to add new opt-in providers?

No, there is no consideration for re-opening the surcharge docket. Providers were made aware of this prior to the filing deadline. Customers of non-participating electric utilities can receive assistance during the heating season with their primary heating source but not their electric service through a provider who has opted out of collecting the MEAP surcharge. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.3*

15. What if a customer that has a utility that has "opted out" and seeks assistance for a utility bill after April 1, 2018 has a shut off balance that is above the crisis intervention cap but is not a customer of DTE Energy, Consumers Energy or SEMCO Energy?

Any amount needed to resolve the emergency for the next 30 days, which exceeds the cap, would become the households copay. However, the grantee has the option to provide other crisis prevention assistance could be provided to households of opt-out providers who have a balance that exceeds the crisis intervention cap. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.3, 1.3.2*

16. In one sense, it appears that because non-participating utilities cannot do shutoffs from 11-1-17 to 4-15-18, those customers would not be in crisis during that timeframe and could not be helped. However, because Section 1.3 of the MEAP Policy Manual says that a shutoff is not necessary for a crisis, can MEAP dollars be used to assist customers of non-participating utilities?

In effort to ensure that funding is available to households who are truly facing a crisis and to prevent an emergency that could result from the loss of heat or electricity, MEAP grantees will no longer be able to issue payments to electric providers whose customers are protected under the shut off moratorium outlined in PA 95 of 2013. This will also align crisis assistance policies between MEAP and the State Emergency Relief program as DHHS has not allowed energy benefits to be authorized to the "opt-out" providers until April 1st of each year. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.3, 1.3.3*

17. Can customers of non-regulated utilities receive assistance with utility bills using MEAP dollars? If yes, then when and how?

Customers of non-regulated utilities can receive assistance with utility bills using MEAP dollars at any time during the program year with the exception of customers' accounts with electric companies who have opted out of collecting the LIEAF surcharge and are subsequently protected from shut-off during the heating season as described in PA 95 of 2013. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.3, 1.3.2*

Other

18. Is there a pre-approval process required to use our customer satisfaction survey template that we complete for other funders?

At this time, there is no pre-approval process for customer satisfaction surveys. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 2.7*

19. What account stats need to be on the approval letter? Arrearage amount forgiveness or how much is frozen? Payment Plan Amounts?

Applicants who are approved for MEAP benefits must receive a written notice of approval. The notice should include any contributions the household must make to resolve the crisis. If the applicant is approved for a home energy supplier affordable payment plan, the terms of the program must be provided along with the approval notice. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 5.1*

20. A section indicates that late fees cannot be paid for regulated heating bills. Does that mean that late fees can be paid for regulated electric bills?

Late fees cannot be paid with LIHEAP or MEAP funds for regulated home energy suppliers. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.3*

Part IV: Project Control and Reports

1. On the reporting metrics it appears that grantees are only responsible for tracking denied clients by poverty level? There were 18 metrics in the previous grant year that were tracked on each interim report. Is the expectation that these are no longer tracked?

As indicated in section IV-B (2), the grantee will be responsible for providing a monthly validation tool/household assist file that will reflect every household served during the reporting period and should include corresponding household demographic information. The information that was previously tracked through the Interim Reports will be tracked through the monthly household assist file and will not need to be reiterated through the Interim Reports. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.0*

2. Since the grant indicates that we need to report income percentages that are broken down further than the chart in the grant, is MAE going to provide the broken down FPL ranges for uniformity?

No, the precise income percentage should be reported for each household. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.0*

3. Without a real-time database, how are grantees expected to report the number of dual-assisted customers – those receiving assistance from another MEAP grantee and/or SER?

Grantees are not expected to report the number of dual-assisted customers. Grantees should report all households assisted by their agency. Dual-assistance reporting will be tracked by MAE and DHHS. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.0*

4. How soon will grantees know all of the required reporting data elements that needs to be collected? They mention the monthly data elements that will be entered into the Salesforce system but I did not see comprehensive details regarding the interim and final reports. The appendix for those items just says that they will be inserted here.

All required reporting data elements will be supplied prior to the program start date. The monthly data elements that will be collected using the household assist file will contain much of the data needed for the Interim and Final Reports. We expect to update some of the pick lists in the household assist file including Assistance Type and Service Type. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.0*

Part V: Information Required from Applicant

1. The language is removed referring to the expectation of working with one agency throughout the grant year. What is MAE's expectation? Are clients allowed to work with multiple agencies in the coming year?

The goal of the program is that one agency assists a client throughout the program year. However, the expectation is that there would be no wrong door for assisting households. For example, if an agency does not offer crisis intervention assistance and only offers enrollment in an affordable payment plan (or vice versa), they would need to refer to a partnering agency for that assistance. During the program year, we expect to be able to provide viewing access for front line workers in Salesforce. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 2.6*

2. Does the Standard of Promptness remain as 10 business days?

For crisis intervention assistance, in compliance with federal requirements, the household's crisis needs to be addressed within 48 hours or when there is a life-threatening situation, 18 hours. This may mean placing a hold on the account or triaging the application approval to ensure the household's services are reconnected if services are off. The processing of applications is still expected to occur within the 10 day standard of promptness and grantees will be reporting application to payment timeframes monthly to ensure that households are being assisted in a timely manner. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.4*

3. "Include a step by step workflow that follows an application from intake to payment release for energy crisis intervention and energy crisis prevention." Do you prefer this in narrative form or a diagram?

Either narrative or diagram form is acceptable. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

4.. May we attach other documents such as Consumer Satisfaction Survey, Logic Model and/or Schematic of Work Flow?

Other documents may be attached, but must be counted in the page count (with the exception of partnership agreements). *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

5. Please clarify allowable expenditures for self-sufficiency programs. Both the policy manual and the RFP refer to "needs assessment counseling." Does this include home energy evaluations (home visits by a consultant)?

Home energy evaluations would be included in needs assessment counseling. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.2.1*

6. Per the RFP, equipment purchases require prior approval. In the current grant year, for example, we included the purchase of a laptop (with prior approval) for self-sufficiency training in our proposal, but were only allowed to be reimbursed for 1/3 of the cost, since it is durable equipment. Will the same hold true in this grant cycle? Can we be reimbursed for another 1/3 of the 2017 laptop (or other equipment) purchase in the next grant cycle?

Generally, an organization cannot be reimbursed for equipment purchased in prior grant years. However, if prior approval was sought and an agreement was reached regarding the reimbursement of

the equipment (used exclusively for MEAP) over multiple years, this may be acceptable. The burden of proof of such agreement would fall to the grantee. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.2*

7. Grantee personnel charges cannot include vacation/holiday/sick time, nor can these benefits be included in the fringe calculation. How is a grantee to fund these benefits for employees working 100% of their time on the MEAP? Can the cost of these benefits be included in the indirect calculation?

Grantees cannot charge time to the grant when an employee is not working on tasks associated with the grant. Indirect costs are costs that are not directly accountable to a specific project so the cost of these benefits may not be included in the indirect calculation. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.1.1*

8. Is it appropriate to put costs associated with the A-133 single audit under Administrative Contractual services in the budget?

Yes, for the charges proportionally allocated to the program. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.3*

9. If Administrative Personnel have both administrative and energy assistance program duties, is it appropriate to budget their salary accordingly in both categories?

Yes, if staff work in both Administrative and Energy Assistance program areas they can have a portion of their salary budgeted to each area. The amount budgeted to each area should be proportionate to what they will actually work. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.0*

10. Does the MEAP guidance allow Assurance 16 types of activities to reduce home energy needs and the need for energy assistance? If so, does the grantee have to fund these activities with Administrative dollars or can they be paid for as a program cost.

Federal LIHEAP Assurance 16 dollars will not be available in the MEAP program this fiscal year. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

11. What is the definition of a "Grantee service location"? Is this only the locations that receive applications and do eligibility determination or does it also include locations that perform intake but not eligibility determination?

A service location would include any location where an applicant could complete a MEAP application for assistance. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

12. Do partners have to be identified; if yes, can we use a Letter of Support or preliminary vendor agreement?

Yes, partners have to be identified. A draft partnership agreement should be included with the proposal but does not count in the page limits. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

13. Do we need to attach Household Eligibility Guidelines (Have they changed since September 2015?)

Eligibility should be determined using the 2018 MEAP Policy Manual requirements. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 3.0*

14. Are Letters of Support required?

No, they are not. If included, letters must be counted in the page count. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

Part VI: Evaluation and Selection Criteria

1. How will the RFP be reviewed—will reviewers read parts of the RFP or the entire document?

Reviewers will read the entire document. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

Attachments

1. Under additional Information needed the question(s) are confusing: Is anyone in the household pregnant? 18 years old and in high school?

These questions satisfy the TANF eligibility components of having an eligible household member that could qualify the household for TANF. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

2. Have you or do you currently receive benefits from the Department of Health and Human Services asks for a yes or no answer. For reporting reasons, do we need to also indicate whether the client receives FIP, Food and or SER?

No. However, if the applicant answered "yes," a follow-up question should be posed inquiring about the receipt of SER for energy services. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

3. Should we ask what is your primary heat source rather than how do you heat your home since will only be reporting on the primary heat source?

No. If the request is for a fuel type other than the type the applicant reported as being used to heat their home, ensure that clarification is provided to the household that payment for a non-primary heat source is dis-allowed. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

4. Can the gender of each household member be added to the MEAP application?

Gender will not be added to the standard MEAP application, but could be added to an agency's version of the application that must be pre-approved prior to use. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

5. Please consider one application that can be used to apply for multiple programs. For example, if customer is DTE and Consumers they can complete one application to apply for LSP and CARE.

A single application does exist and can be used for this purpose. Any approved application can be used by grantees. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

6. Are Interruptible Heating/Cooling and Interruptible Water Heating services considered covered or non-covered services?

Interruptible Water Heating services and Interruptible Heating/Cooling services are considered non-covered services. We have sought advisement from Federal LIHEAP Program Staff and are awaiting a response. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.3*

7. According to the draft MEAP Policy Manual the benefit targeting index and the energy burden reduction index the grantees will be responsible for reporting on the annual cost of the main heating fuel, annual electricity cost, annual consumption of main heating fuel and annual consumption of electricity. Assuming the grantee works with the energy provider to gather this information, how would the information be stored/shared?

The annual applicant usage will be collected by the Department of Health and Human Services annually. Account numbers for the household's primary heat source as well as for non-heat electricity must be documented by the grantee. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.5.1*

8. When will DHHS define “benefit and energy burden targeting indexes” so grantees can build into reporting systems?

There is no requirement for grantees to report on benefit and energy burden. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.5.1*

9. Can we use the HHC application information for eligibility?

No. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 3.1*

10. Can the agency use the most recent paystub, and multiply that by 4 to get to the 30 days of income?

No. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 3.4.1.1*

11. Are Attachments A and B required, or just informative?

Attachments A and B are for your reference. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

12. Are Budget and Budget Narrative included in page limits, or can they be attachments?

The budget and narrative are included in the page limits. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

13. Is there a budget template?

There is not a budget template, but a previous template could be used if it contains the necessary information. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposal; 2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.0*

14. Do the audit statements count as an attachment in the 60 page limit?

Audit statements should be provided by selected applicants and are not required to be submitted with the application. If included as an attachment, audit statements would not count toward the page limit. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

Affordable Payment Plans

1. If a customer falls off of an Affordable Payment Plan and needs additional assistance, what cap is used to determine if a payment can be made (Crisis intervention or crisis prevention funds)? And will all exceptions need to be sent to the Grant Administrator?

The cap that would be used to determine the level of remaining assistance would be the crisis prevention funds cap (\$1,500 for each heat and non-heat electric commodity). Customers who receive assistance after falling off of a program do not require an exception approved by the MAE Grant Administrator, as long as they are still within the cap limits, but will need to be tracked via type of assistance as a pick list option on the Household Assist File. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4*

2. If a customer is terminated from an Affordable Payment Plan during the grant season are they permitted to apply for MEAP crisis intervention? If yes, and if the customer has received APP credits does an exception have to be granted by the MAE Grant Administrator before assisting with MEAP funds?

Once a household has received Crisis Prevention assistance, they can receive crisis intervention assistance as long as it is reported as such and such assistance does not exceed the allowable cap amount (\$850 for natural gas, non-heat electric, wood, and other heating fuel sources or \$1,200 for deliverable fuels—propane, fuel oil or coal). *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.4*

3. If a customer had income at time of enrollment in an APP, but at a later date their financial situation changes can s/he receive crisis MEAP assistance? (i.e. customer becomes unemployed or ill)

A household who has received Crisis Prevention assistance, may receive crisis intervention assistance as long as it is reported as such and the amount of assistance does not exceed the allowable cap amount (\$850 for natural gas, non-heat electric, wood, and other heating fuel sources or \$1,200 for deliverable fuels—propane, fuel oil or coal), and all other eligibility requirements have been met. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 4.2*

4. Should households with zero income be allowed to enroll in an Affordable Payment Plan?

Households reporting no income may not be enrolled in a home energy supplier affordable payment plan. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.3.2*

5. Is there a specified timeline for enrollment for Affordable Payment Plans under crisis prevention funds?

There is no specified timeline for enrollment for Affordable Payment Plans under crisis prevention funds. This determination can be agreed upon through partner agreements with home energy suppliers. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 1.3.2*

6. Once APP proposals are submitted from agencies for review, will one APP plan/model be selected for all agencies to adhere?

At this time, agencies should work with home energy suppliers to enroll in existing plans. Stakeholders will be brought together in the coming weeks/months to begin development of a single program that

could be implemented in partnership with any home energy supplier for FY19. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

7. "Expectations for invoicing and reporting on customer activity..." Is the only method for payment to energy companies for crisis prevention funds (APPs) an invoice from the energy company and then payment on that invoice from the grantee? The energy companies had suggested lump sum installments made to energy companies for them to draw down customer payments for APP funds and then reconcile with grantees afterward - will this be allowable?

To maintain a streamlined process for APP customers and use the current utility process flow in place, grantees will be permitted to deposit MEAP funds into a dedicated grant holding account of the Grantee's choice. Utility partners will be able to apply customer benefits directly upon confirmation that the customer has paid their portion of the bill. MEAP grantees will be expected to place sub-recipient type requirements on the utility partner to ensure funds in a dedicated grant holding account are used only for the authorized purposes and performance goals are achieved. If utility reporting requirements cannot be met, non-compliance can be remedied by the following methods: Temporary cash or deposits withheld, Disallowing all or part of the cost of the activity, Suspending or terminating the vendor agreement.

Consistent practices and standardized reports should include all data that would allow the Grantee to comply with MAE reporting requirements. Grantees and utility partners should establish a tracking system to ensure timely reporting of payments. Grantees cannot include APP payments that have not been reconciled on their Financial Status Reports. Once APP payments are reconciled this amount should also reconcile with the applicable client list. Utilities should provide regular reports and receipts to agencies for gap and arrearage payments. Broken down by customer by energy type, arrearage, gap, payment date, etc., and should not include unregulated charges. (Note: All payment reconciliations must be completed and reconciled to ensure that the Grantee's Final FSR can be submitted by October 15th.) Utility partners should report to grantees when a customer has fallen off the plan at agreed upon time intervals, so that agencies may intervene with the household and provide additional services and for accurate reporting.

Additional guidance will be provided for reporting requirements and penalties for non-compliance. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

8. Will MAE accept one bulk payment from the agency to the utility accompanied by a detail list of customer payments or does MAE need to see each individual payment made to the utility?

See APP: #7

9. For agencies choosing to participate in Affordable Payment Plans, what verification is needed to tie gap and arrearage calculations provided in vendor invoices to the amount paid on the customer's account?

See APP #7

10. The applicant seeks to structure its relationship to a utility to include an escrow account(s) that the utility could draw down upon programmatic trigger(s). Would that be allowed? What safeguards would be required?

See APP #7

11. Two utilities have specified they will “true up” the spend at the end of the program year and any unspent funds will be returned to the agency. What impact will there be to an agency who returns unspent funds back to MAE?

Agencies and home energy suppliers must be regularly reconciling payments made to customers' accounts. More guidance around reporting requirements will be provided. See APP #7

12. What responsibility or liability will the agency have for the administration of an APP program that the agency does not control or administer?

Selected applicant remains responsible for the completion of the grant activities, compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement, and the acts and omissions of the subcontractor/sub-recipient. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

13. MAE'S success factors/outcomes measures (enrollment/retention, customer satisfaction ratio, data analysis) for APP.

At this time, the reporting elements collected from the household assist files, interim and final reports will be used. Once a single APP program is developed, additional outcome measures can be analyzed. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 6.0*

14. Should applicants receive some information regarding their enrollment in an affordable payment plan or sign something that confirms their knowledge of enrollment including the terms of said enrollment?

In compliance with Section 2605(b)(7)(4) of the LIHEAP statute: All applicants who apply for MEAP benefits must receive a written notice of approval or denial. Applicants who are approved for MEAP benefits must receive a written notice of approval. The notice should include any contributions the household must make to resolve the crisis. If the applicant is approved for a home energy supplier affordable payment plan, the terms of the program must be provided along with the approval notice. Every notice must provide reference and procedures for requesting a Request for Review/fair hearing. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 5.0*

15. In the proposal, should applicants specify how many APP approvals are projected, or just a dollar amount we want to spend on APP programs?

As specified in Part V: Information Required by Applicant, the applicant should: estimate the number of eligible low-income households that will be served. Include the total number to be served as well as the number estimated to be served through energy crisis intervention and, if applicable, through energy crisis prevention. Provide an estimated average payment per household served with energy crisis intervention as well as, if applicable, with energy crisis prevention. List any partnerships you may have established or will establish to assist and encourage clients to enroll and participate in home energy supplier affordable payment plans. Include the number of estimated enrollments and estimated dollars allocated per home energy supplier. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

16. Can applicants request one lump sum for APP programs or do we have to specify a dollar amount by utility company for the exact spend?

In the Work Plan, applicants are instructed to list any partnerships you may have established or will establish to assist and encourage clients to enroll and participate in home energy supplier affordable payment plans. Include the number of estimated enrollments and estimated dollars allocated per home energy supplier.

For guidance on the Budget, please refer to the Sample Budget and Sample Budget Narrative included with the 2018 MEAP RFP.

17. If the applicant has to specify by utility company, what happens if we do not meet the spend schedule? Can the funds be allocated to crisis prevention? Can the funds be moved to another utility provider?

Applicants can specify amounts estimated to be spent on direct energy payments in the direct assistance category. Moving funds within a category does not require a formal budget amendment, but does require approval by the MAE Grant Administrator prior to the adjustment occurring. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.8*

18. If the applicant can move funds, do we have to submit a grant amendment since it will likely be over the \$5000 limit as long as it's used for APP programs?

Cumulative budget changes equal to, or greater than, 5% require formal Budget Amendments. This would be for moving funds between categories. See 2018 MEAP Policy Manual section 7.8.3 for more details. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.8*

19. For agencies choosing to participate in Affordable Payment Plans, will a copy of the partnership agreement with vendors need to be included as an attachment in the proposal?

A draft copy of any partnership agreements should be made available as attachments to the proposal and would not be counted as part of the 60 page limit. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

20. Please give us some clarification around enrollment of households that contain non-US citizens in an Affordable Payment Plan.

Undocumented aliens are not eligible, but their presence does not disqualify the group. Prorate the benefit for the U.S. citizens and legal aliens only. Households containing non-US citizens should not be enrolled in an affordable payment plan unless the gap and arrearage payments will be appropriately tracked and the amounts prorated monthly. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 3.3.3*

21. Will the client list suffice as proof of payment?

No, proof of payment is satisfied by a cancelled check or an EFT. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 7.6*

22. Is there a minimum threshold/target for APP enrollments (per utility, per agency or total)?

There is no minimum specified threshold/target for APP enrollments from MAE. Agencies can work with home energy suppliers to determine capacity and capability to process enrollments and the ongoing fiscal responsibility that accompanies those enrollments. *2018 MEAP Request for Proposals*

23. Will the agency or utility be responsible for sending a notification to the customer when they are removed from the plan either by choice or by default?

Ultimately, the grantee takes the responsibility to ensure appropriate notifications are being sent to the customer, either by the utility or agency. As indicated in your partnership agreement with a utility, this information should be shared by the utility at regularly scheduled intervals. *2018 MEAP Policy Manual 5.0*