

# Affordability, Alignment and Assistance Subcommittee

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# Meeting Overview

- Amy—farewell
  - [Leadership survey](#)
- Introduce Anne's new administrative/policy specialist
- Meeting structure/roadmap
- MEAP customer journey
- Q&A
- Next steps and updates

\*Slides and materials will be shared by email after the meeting



# Goals Structure

1

- Choose a goal
- Solicit input on changes members would like to see in said program or goal using the guiding question/subcommittee charge parameters

2

- Research the goal
- Have organization who runs that program (utilities/Staff/DHHS) provide background knowledge/limitations of that program

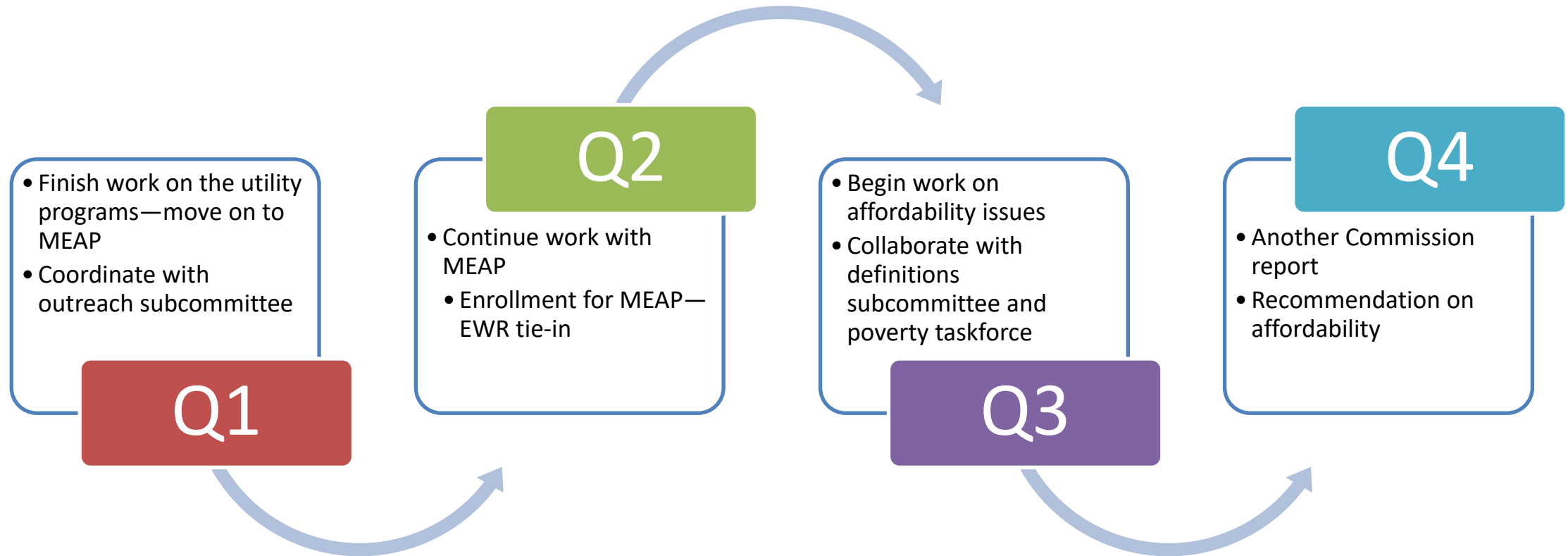
3

- Identify solutions
- Bring to EAAC for greater review—October 20 meeting

4

- If appropriate, collaborate with the responsible organization
- Propose to the Commission

# Potential Timeline for 2022



\*This timeline is tentative and subject to change based on the priorities of the AAA members

\*If anything changes in the utilities' or DHHS' low-income programs, please come to us to present on it

# Member Feedback

- Feedback from last survey
- Making sure we start touching on if these programs are working once we wrap up customer journeys

## Next Topic: MEAP

- Last part of our customer journey exploration
- Discover some EWR tie-in
  - Don't forget—if you'd like to join that ad-hoc group exploring how to improve the EWR—affordability tie-in, let us know

# MEAP

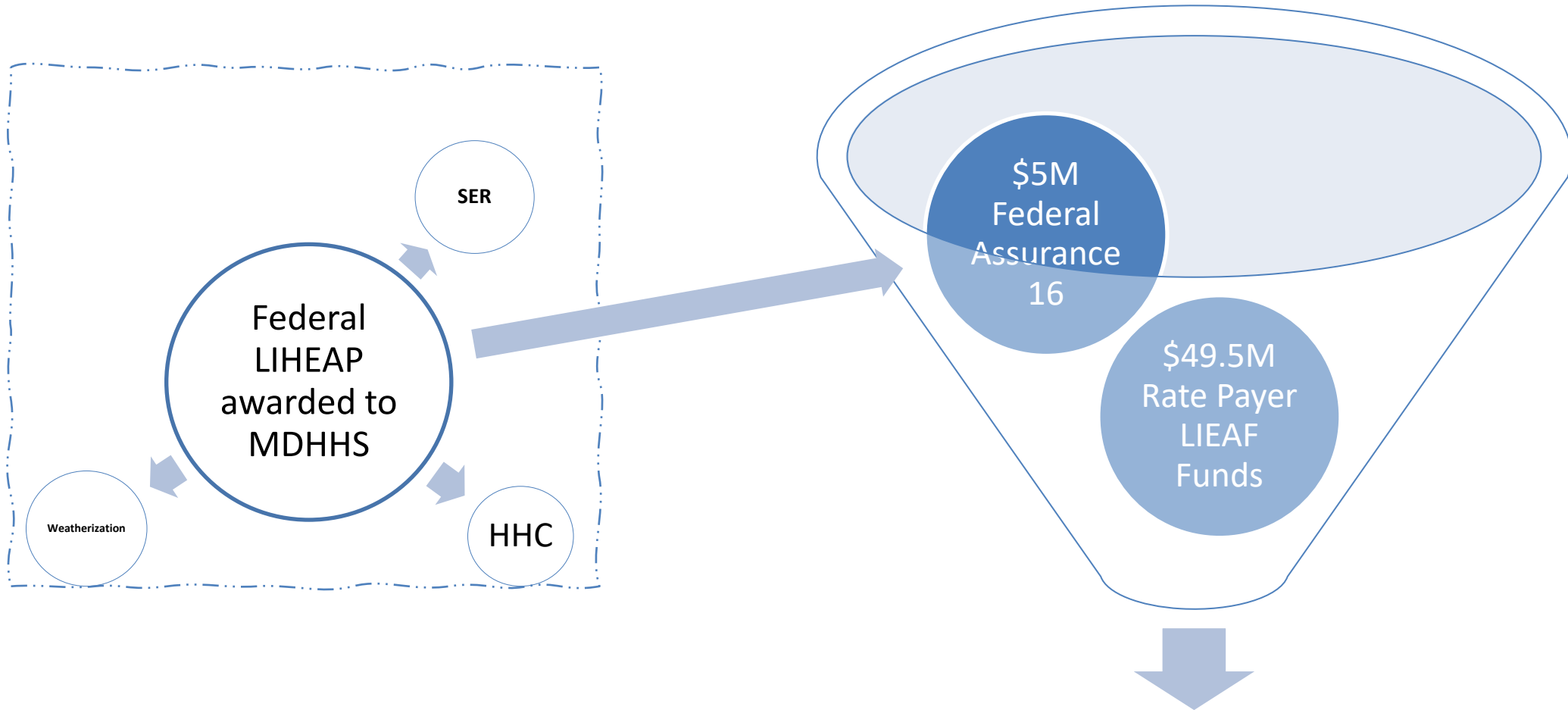
Kristen Bolds—St. Vincent de Paul  
Customer journey maps  
Services provided

# 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.
- Self-sufficiency services include assisting participants with the following:
  - paying their energy bills on time;
  - budgeting for and contributing to their ability to provide for energy expenses, which may include enrollment into an affordable payment plan (APP);
  - and utilizing energy services to optimize on energy efficiency.



# 2022 MEAP Funding

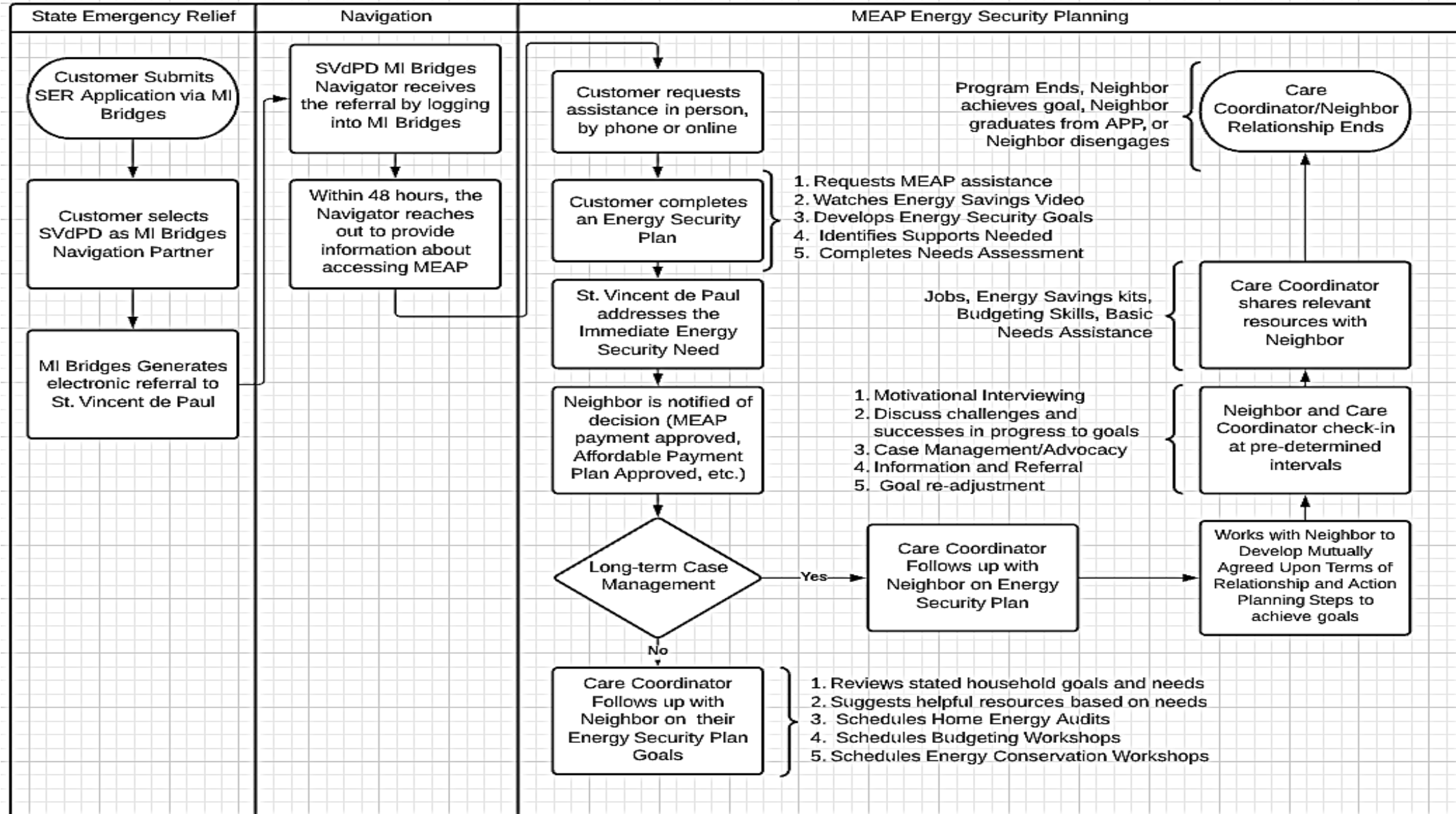


\$54.5M MEAP awarded to 9 Grantees

# MEAP Customer Journey Values

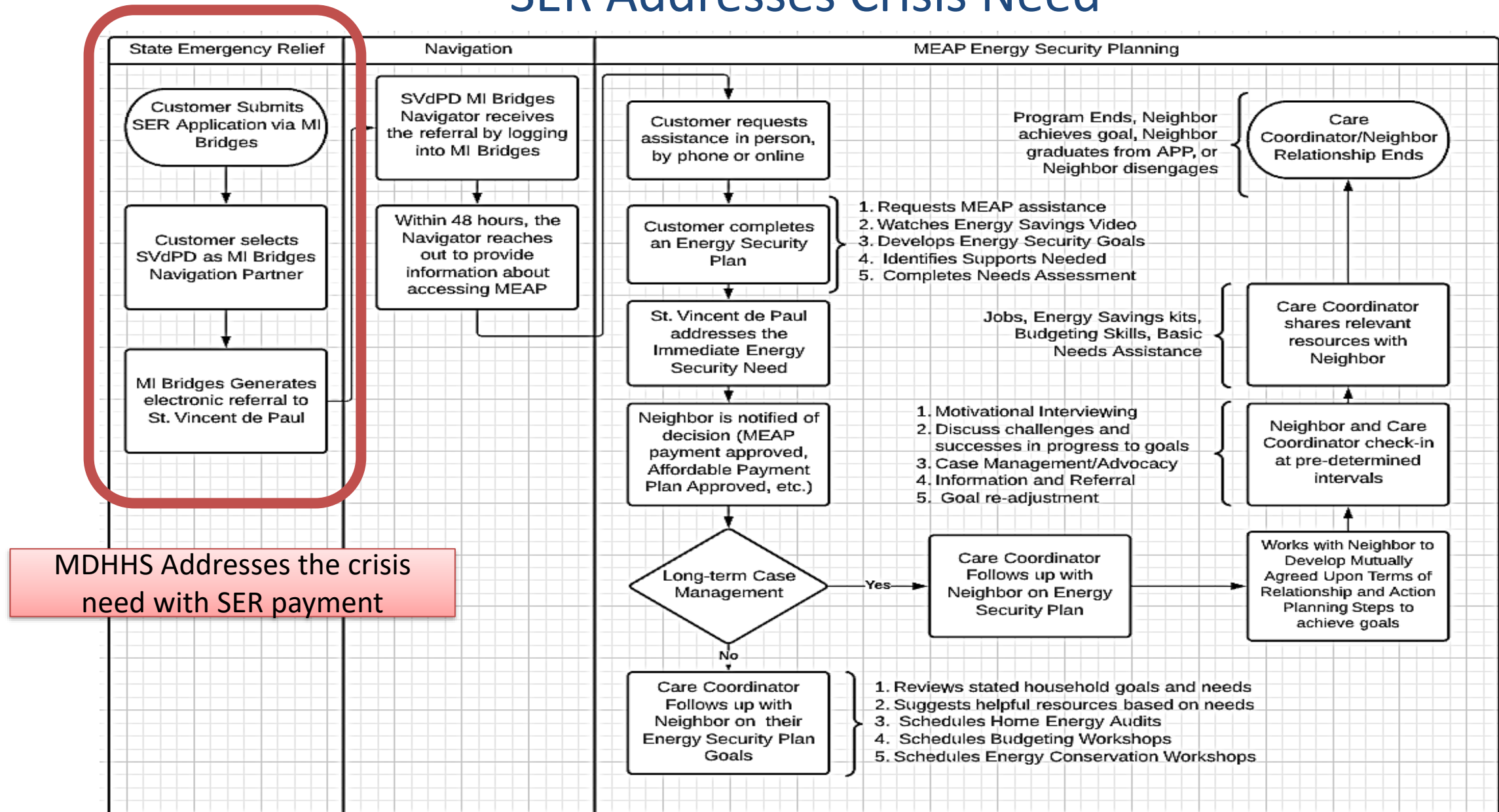
- Promotion of long-term **Energy Security** as a component of self-sufficiency.
- Promotion of customer **Dignity and Self-Determination**.
- Supports **Trauma Informed Care** Principles.
- **Holistic Assessment** of Household.
- **Tiered Approach** based on Household Characteristics.
  - Seniors/Disabled
  - Very Low Income: 0-19% Federal Poverty Level
  - High Energy Consumption
  - Fixed Income
  - Mainline (all others)

# St. Vincent de Paul MEAP Customer Journey: Referrals from MI Bridges

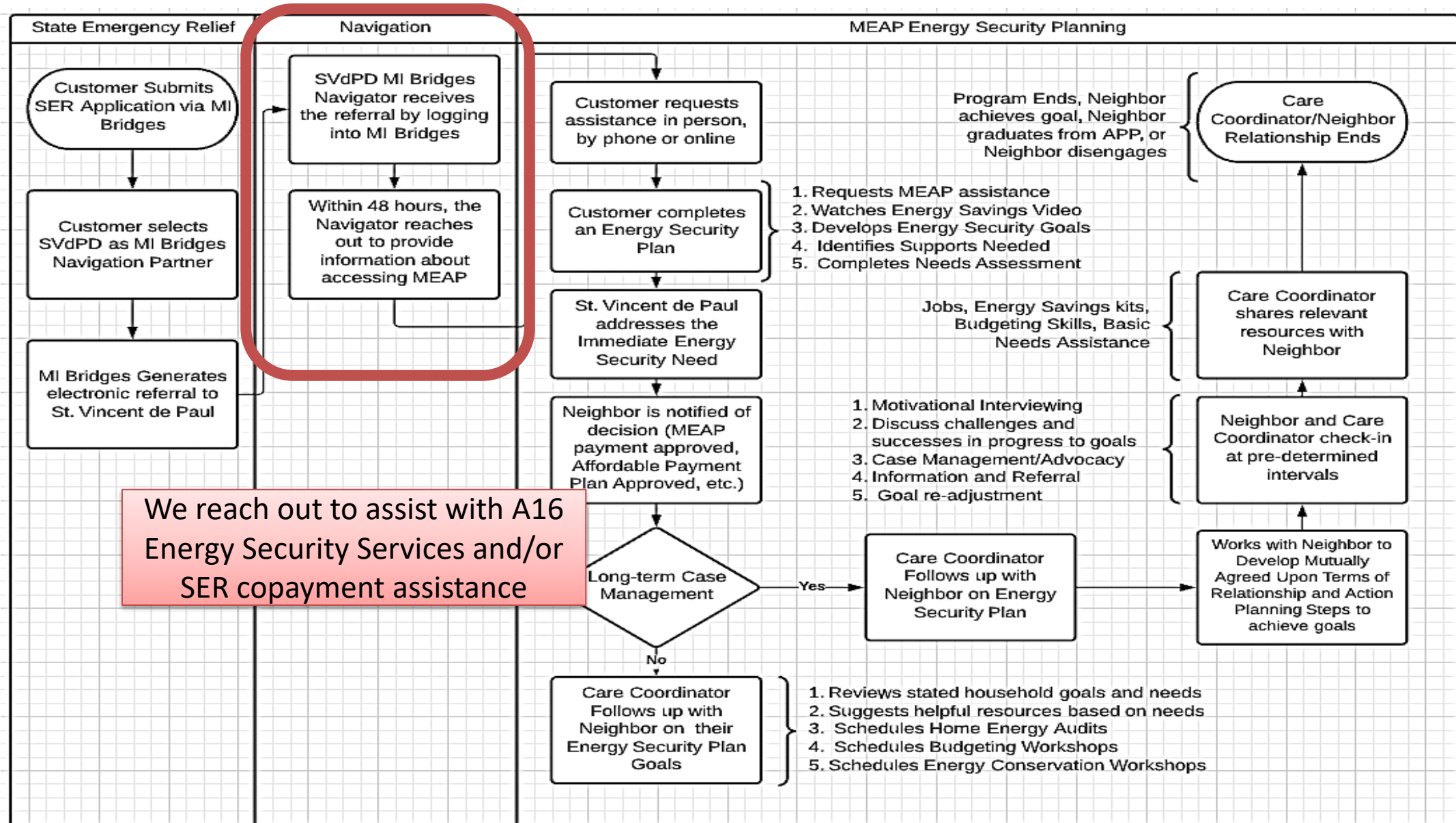


# St. Vincent de Paul MEAP Customer Journey:

## SER Addresses Crisis Need



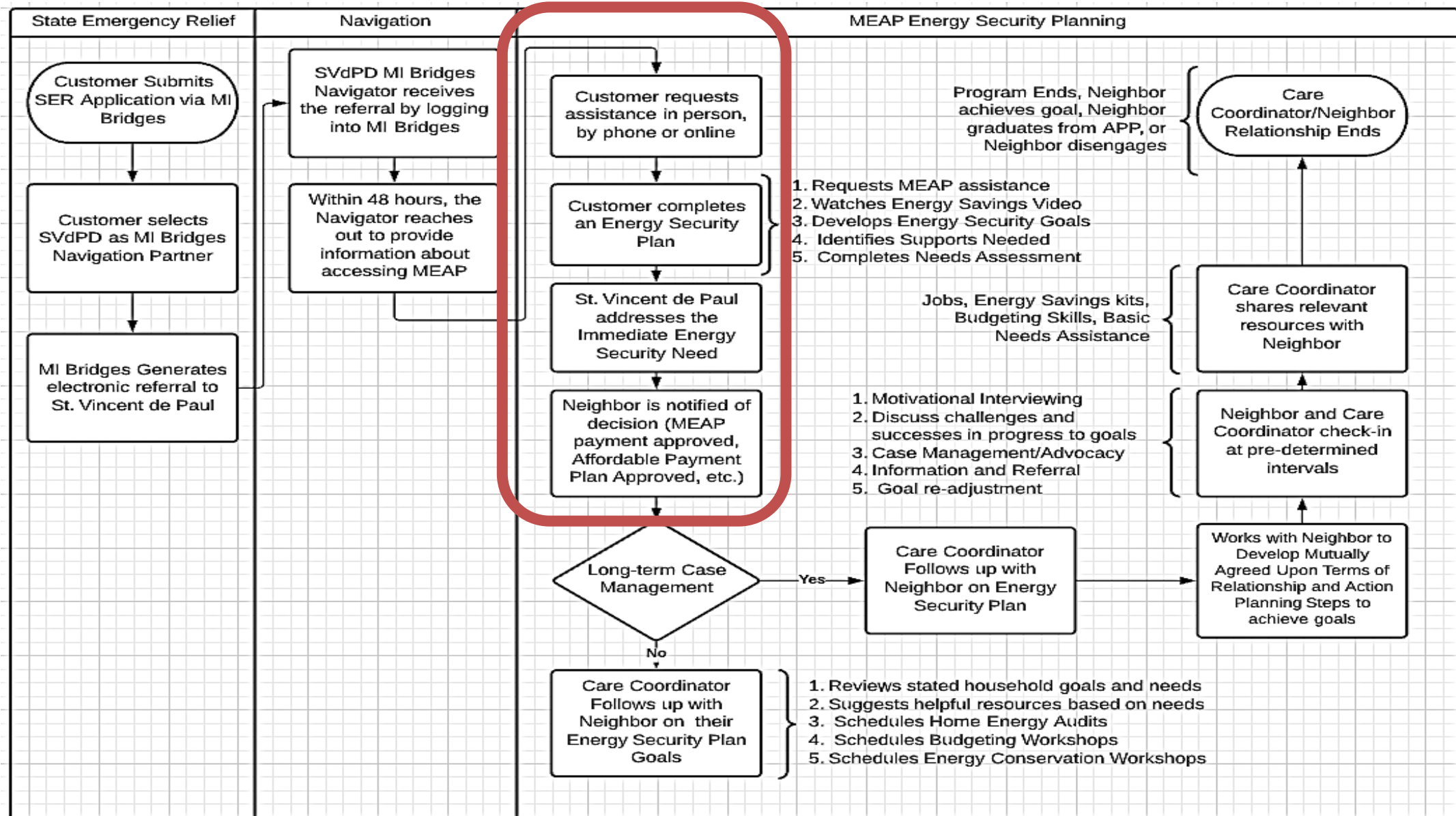
# St. Vincent de Paul MEAP Customer Journey: Outreach to MI Bridges SER MEAP Referrals





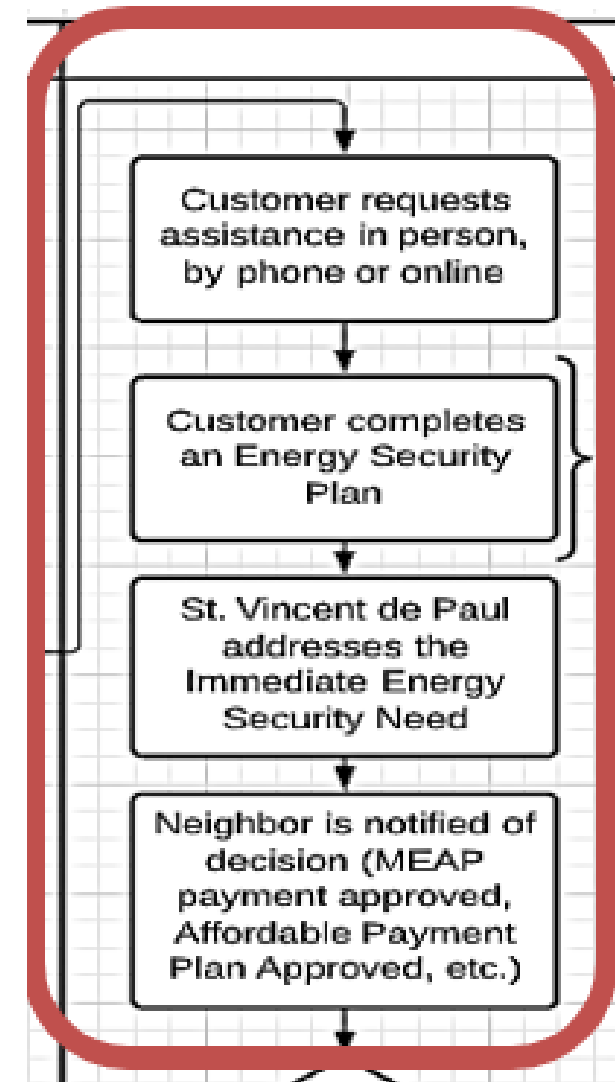
# St. Vincent de Paul MEAP Customer Journey:

## Focus on Customer Priorities



# Addressing Immediate Utility Need/Customer Priorities

- Customers are better prepared to engage once their crisis is resolved.
- They complete an Energy Security Plan
  - They select their households energy security goals
  - They determine the supports they need
  - Receive some basic energy conservation education
  - Completes a needs assessment
  - Opportunity to schedule Home Energy Audit
- We first address the short-term Energy Security need before engaging in longer-term Energy Security Planning



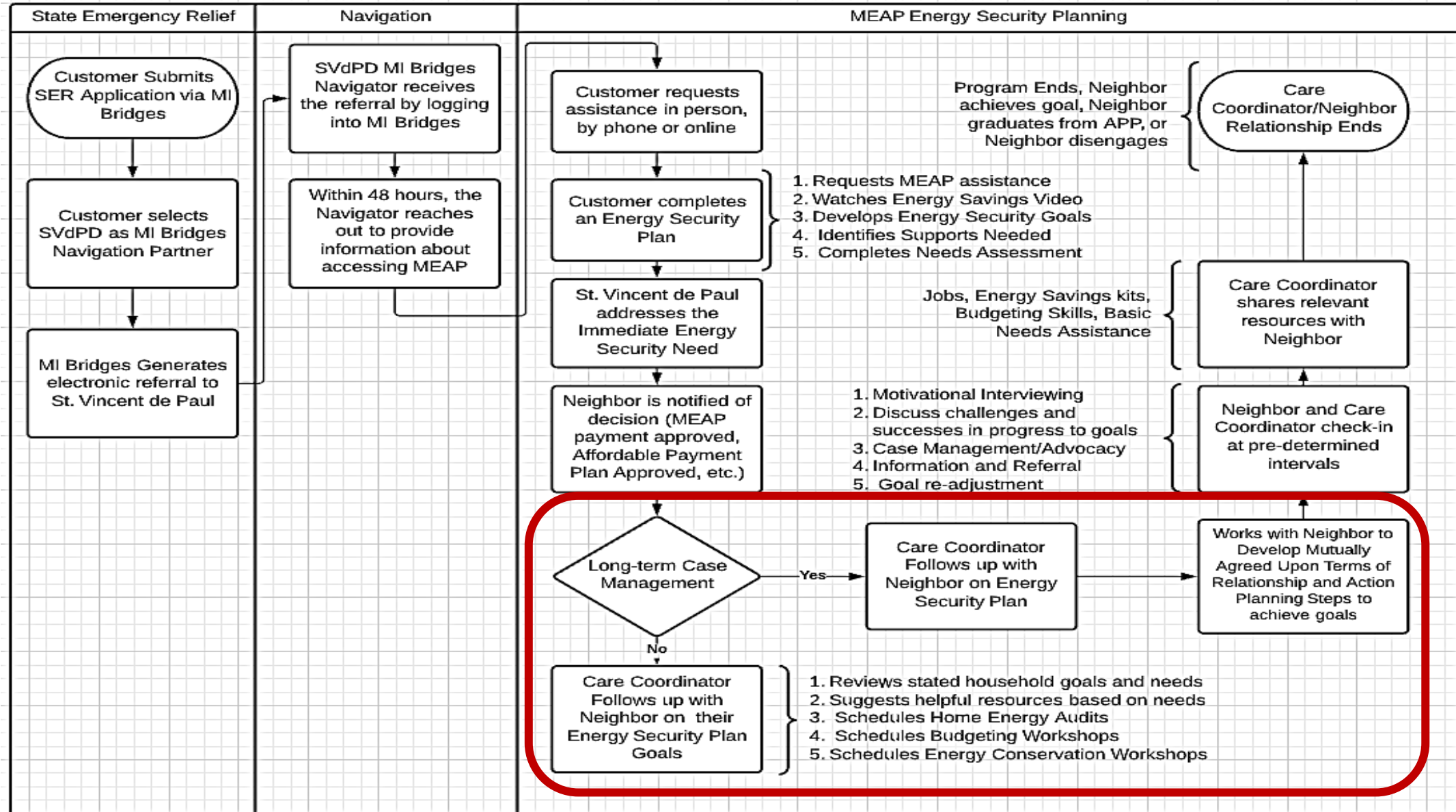
# Addressing Immediate Utility Need

- We can provide the required SER copayment AND/OR
- Enroll in a utility-sponsored Affordable Payment Plan (APP).

Affordable Payment Plans	SER Copayment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a low monthly predictable payment</li><li>• Shut-off protection while on program</li><li>• Customers earn arrearage forgiveness by making on-time payments</li><li>• Supports customer dignity, household budgeting and self-sufficiency</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better suited for households with no source of income, and unable to make timely APP payments.</li><li>• Currently the only option available for those with “high arrears” and “high utility consumption” due to costs.</li></ul>

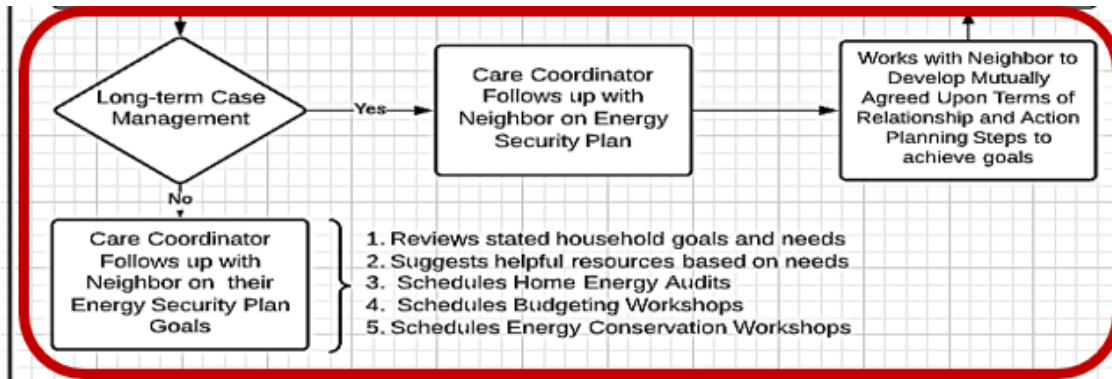


# St. Vincent de Paul MEAP Customer Journey: Tiered Approach

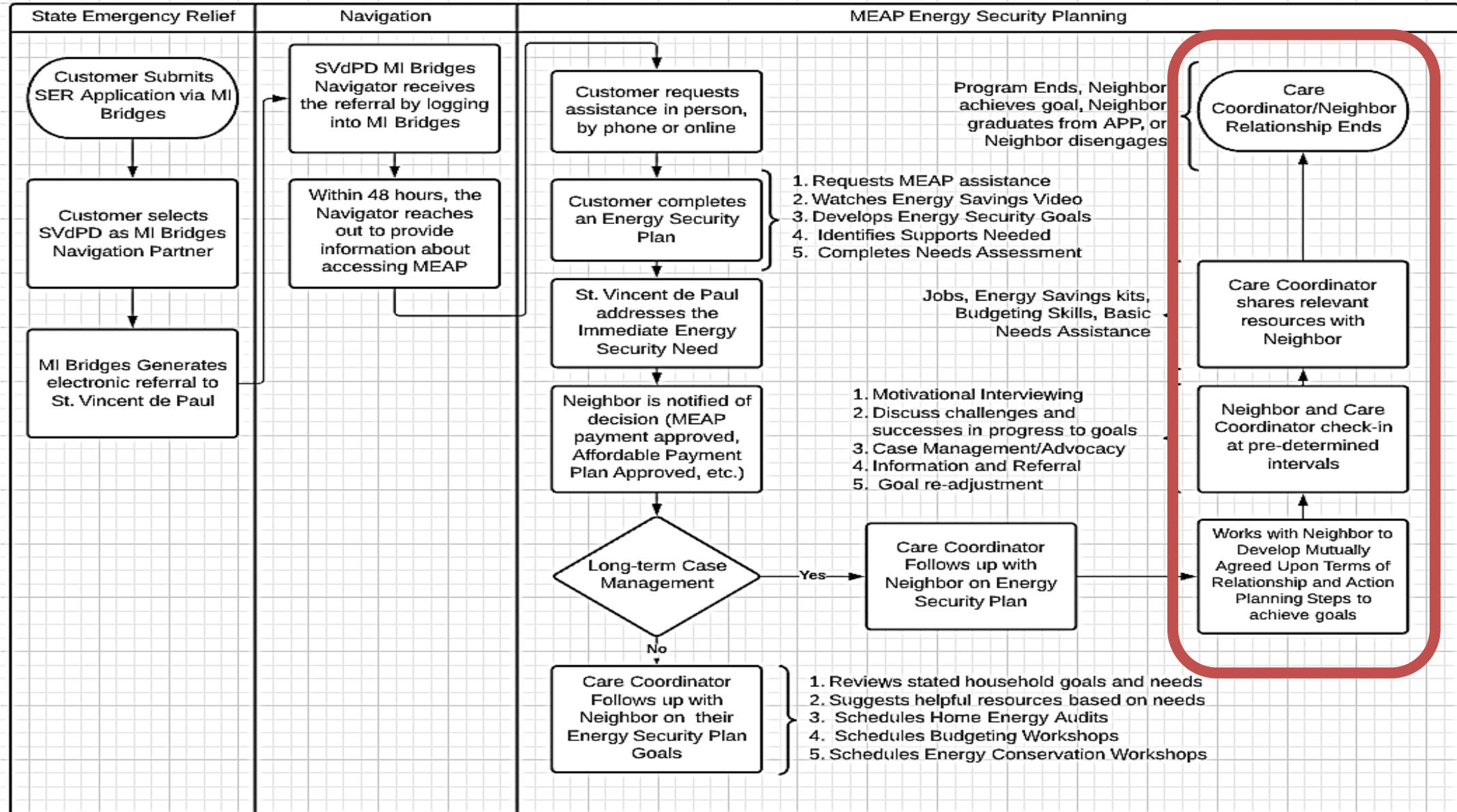


# Tiered Approach

- Households are triaged to specialized Care Coordinators based on common energy security barriers
  - Very low income
  - High consumption
  - Fixed income
- Partners with households to develop a more in-depth Energy Security Plan

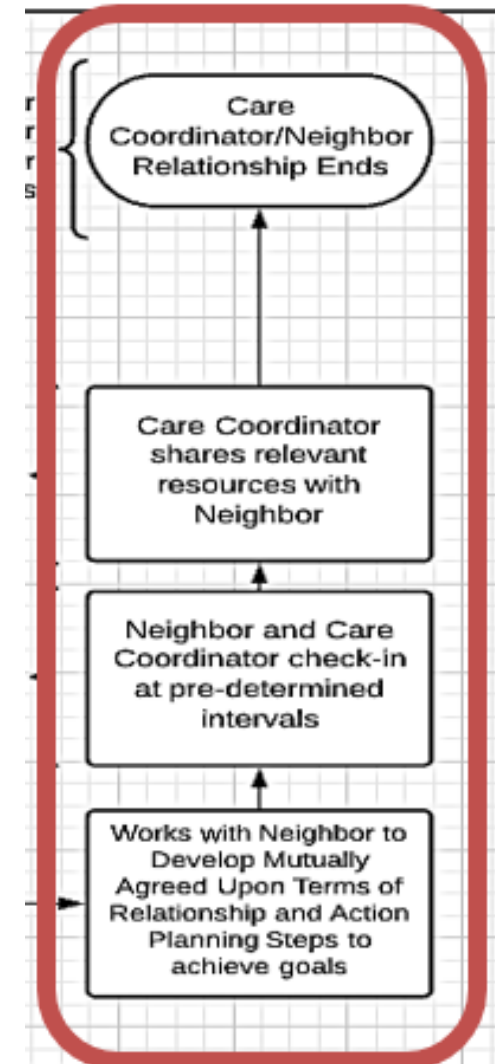


# St. Vincent de Paul MEAP Customer Journey: Ongoing Support



# Ongoing Support

- Frequent check-ins
- Assistance in overcoming barriers to successful plan completion
- Motivational Interviewing
- Resources
  - Employment opportunities/job readiness
  - Home Energy Audit Scheduling
  - Energy Kits
  - Budgeting Workshops
  - Energy Education Workshops
  - Advocacy with other organizations



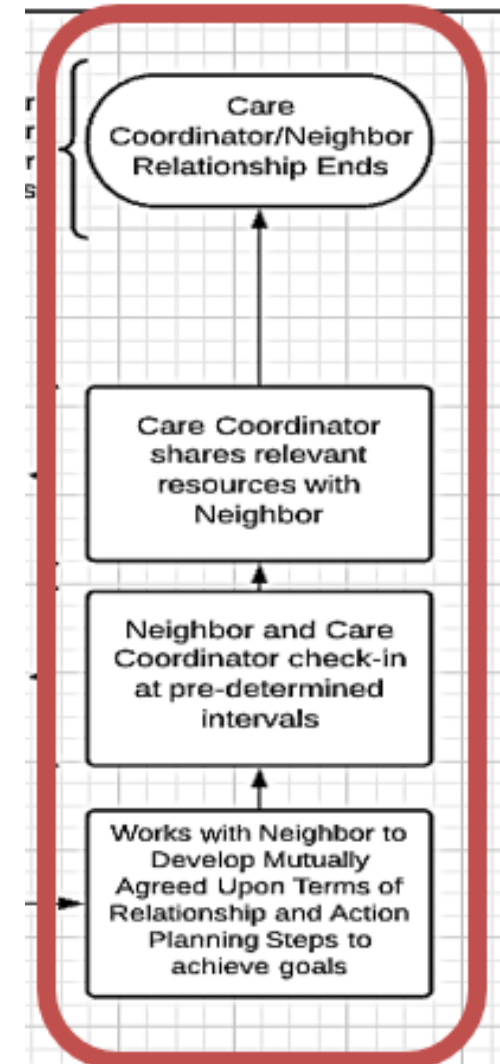
# Relationship Ends and Outcomes Documented

## Successes

- Household achieved energy security goals (increased income, graduated from an APP, reduced consumption and moved into an APP, etc.)
- Household remained free from shut-off
- Household maintained energy payments
- Increased knowledge/change in energy consumption behavior
- Increased knowledge of, and improved budgeting and bill payment behavior

## Challenges

- Households often disengage
- Disengaged households sometimes come back to seek additional assistance year after year
- Program ends and household is still not energy secure.





# Q&A



Michigan Public Service Commission

# Progress and Low-Income Updates

- CE PIPP Order 2/10/22 ([docket U-21021](#))
  - Staff coordinated to advocate for things desired from this workgroup
- Members wanted a list of definitions. If you did not already see it, there is now a [low-income toolkit](#) with many definitions including programmatic design.
- Draft customer journey maps sent out in meeting follow-up

\*If you know of any developments in the low-income field, let us know

# Next Steps

