

Affordability, Alignment and Assistance Subcommittee

Tanya Paslawski (5 Lakes Energy) tanya@5lakesenergy.com

Amy Bandyk (CUB Michigan) amy.bandyk@cubofmichigan.org

Jamie Curtis (MPSC—MEAP administrator) CurtisJ14@michigan.gov

Elaina Braunschweig (MPSC—Rates and Tariff) Braunschweig@michigan.gov



Michigan Public Service Commission

Meeting Overview

- Meeting structure/roadmap
- Utility presentations
- Q&A and Recommendations
- Next Steps

*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

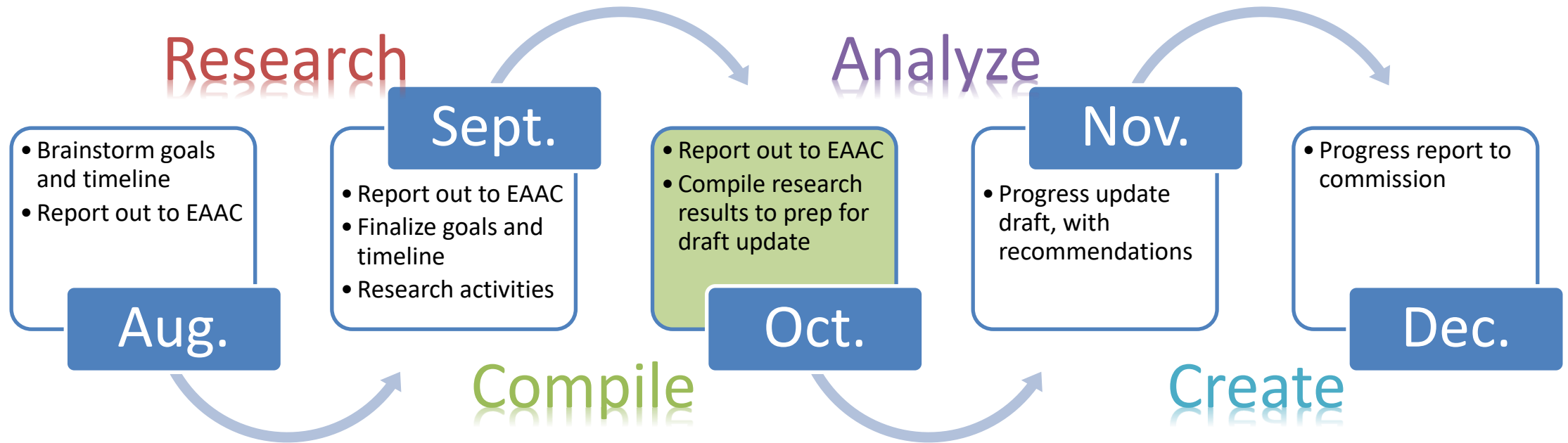
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- Identify solutions
- Bring to EAAC for greater review—October 20 meeting

4

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

Projected 2021 Timeline

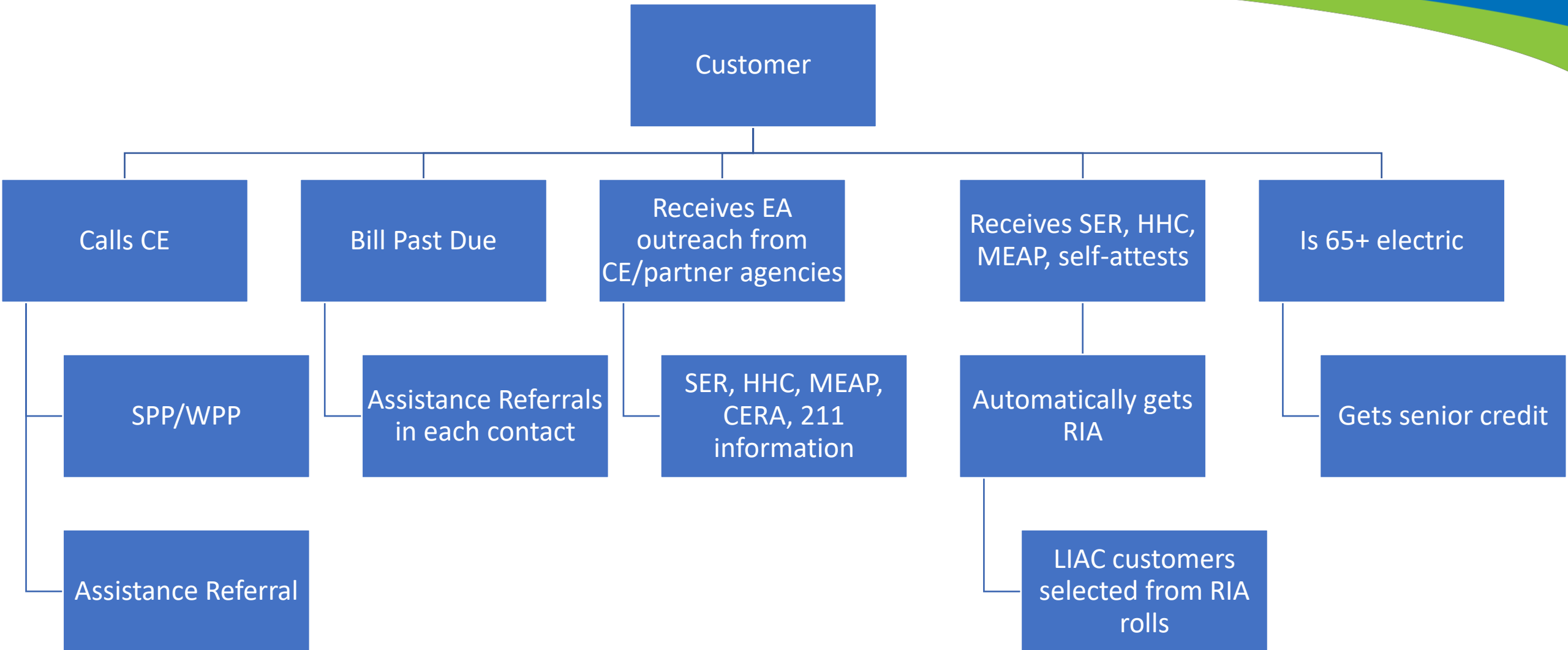


Beyond 2021

December 2022: Submit updated report with recommendations

2023: Continue collaborative as necessary and finalize work

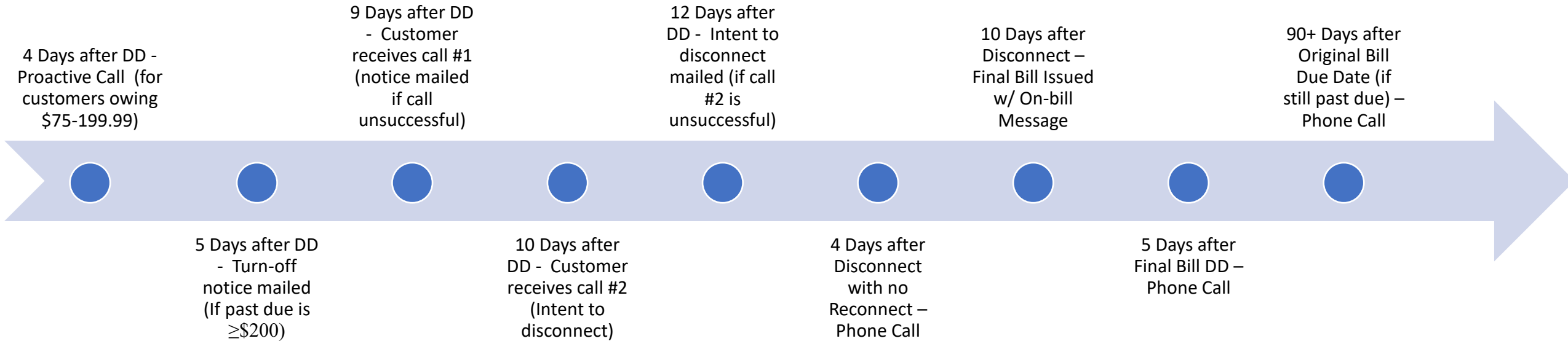
Consumers Energy Customer Journeys – Pathways to Assistance



Past Due Customer Communications - Assistance

Updated 9/14/21

Communication Timeline



*Appendix 1: Verbiage

Other Energy Assistance Communications

Regular Activities:

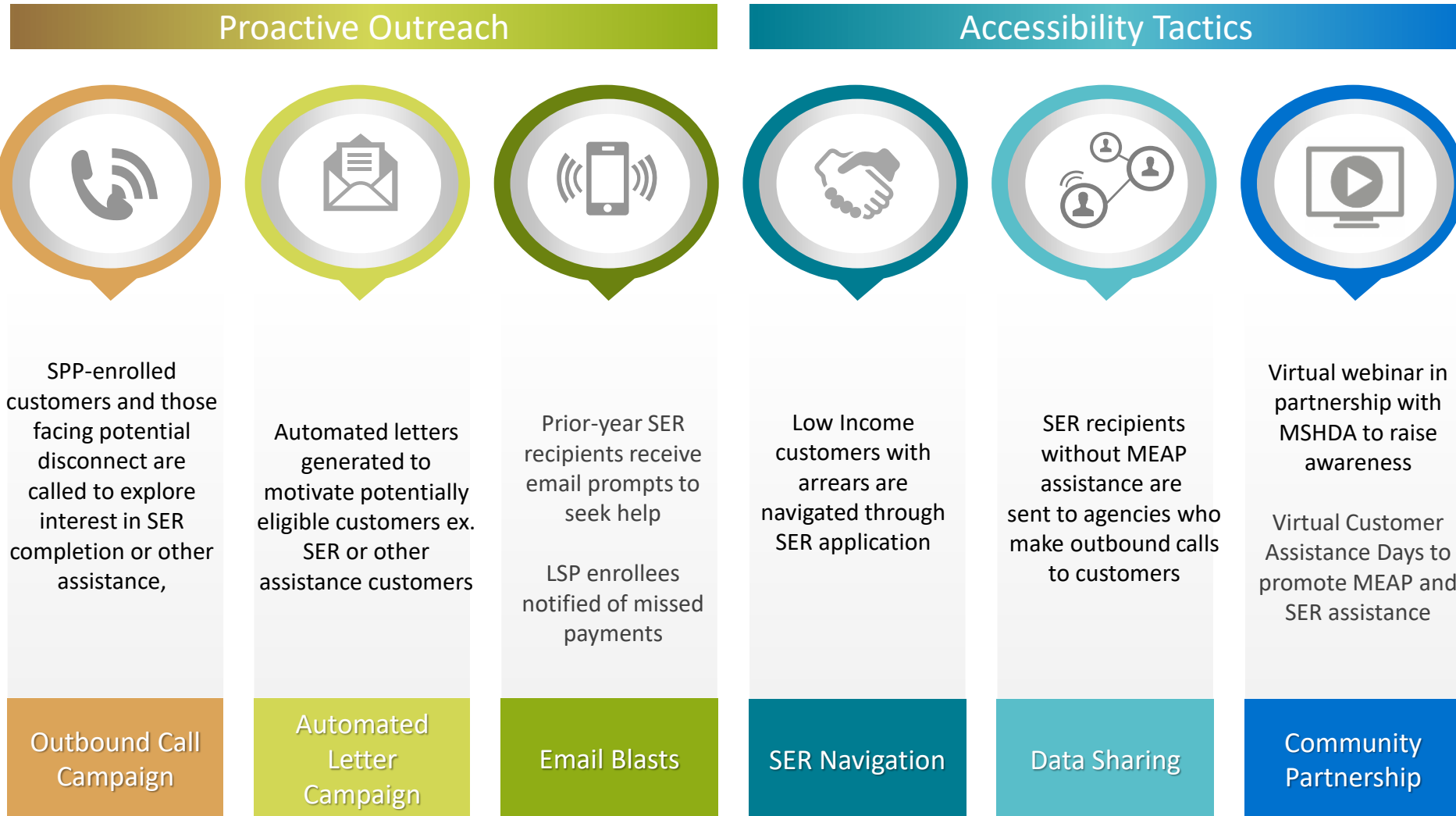
- Home Heating Credit outreach
- State Emergency Relief outreach
- MEAP/CARE outreach
 - MEAP agencies
 - CE
- CARE customer outreach for EWR services
- Community events
- Customer communications – DPOs, call center, field team, community affairs team
- Customers automatically connected to Helping Neighbors for EWR and EE services

2021 Activities:

- 2-1-1 statewide campaign
- CERA statewide campaign
- MIHAF outreach campaign*

*Outreach is performed by reaching out to customers who received assistance last year to see if they need it again in the current year.

To continue driving arrears reduction and accessibility to energy assistance, we leverage our existing processes and our targeted proactive outreach to income-challenged customers

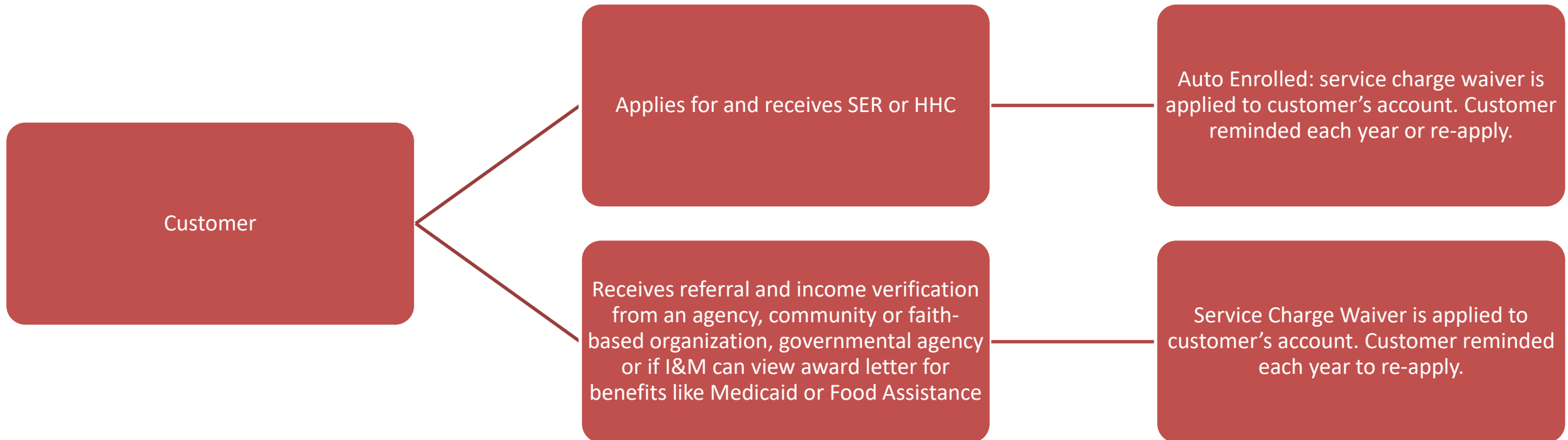


EWR and EE Offerings

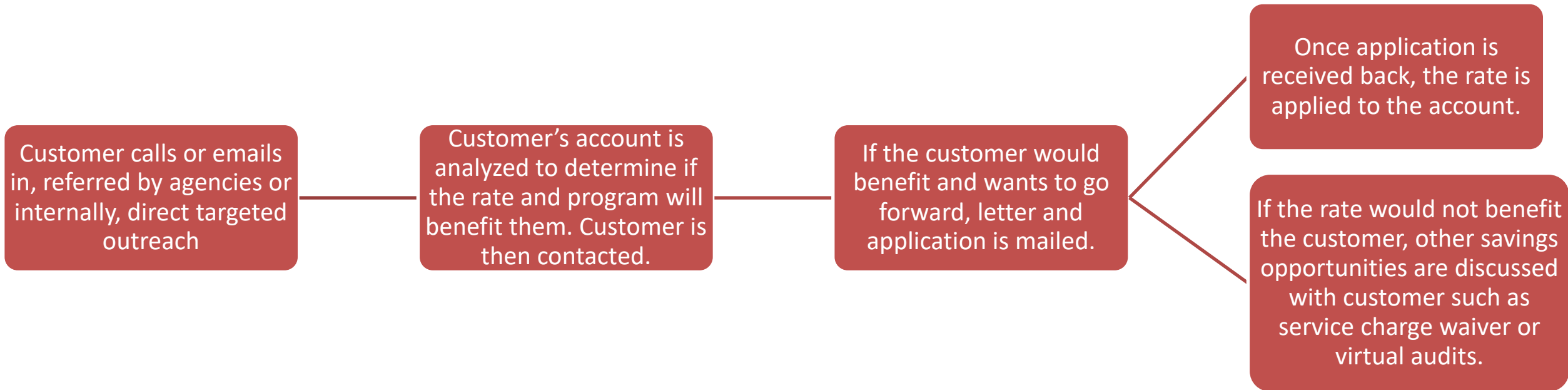
Revenue management protection team hands a list off to EWR team at DTE monthly with customers who are:

1. On shutoff protection
2. Almost eligible for LSP (APP program) but aren't because of consumption level
3. On LSP with increasing usage that could lead to disqualification

Customer Journey – Low Income Customer Service Charge Waiver



Customer Journey – Senior Citizen Discount Rate

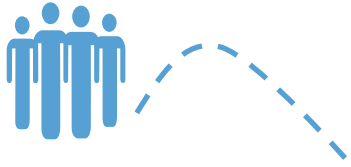


IQ Programs - Outreach

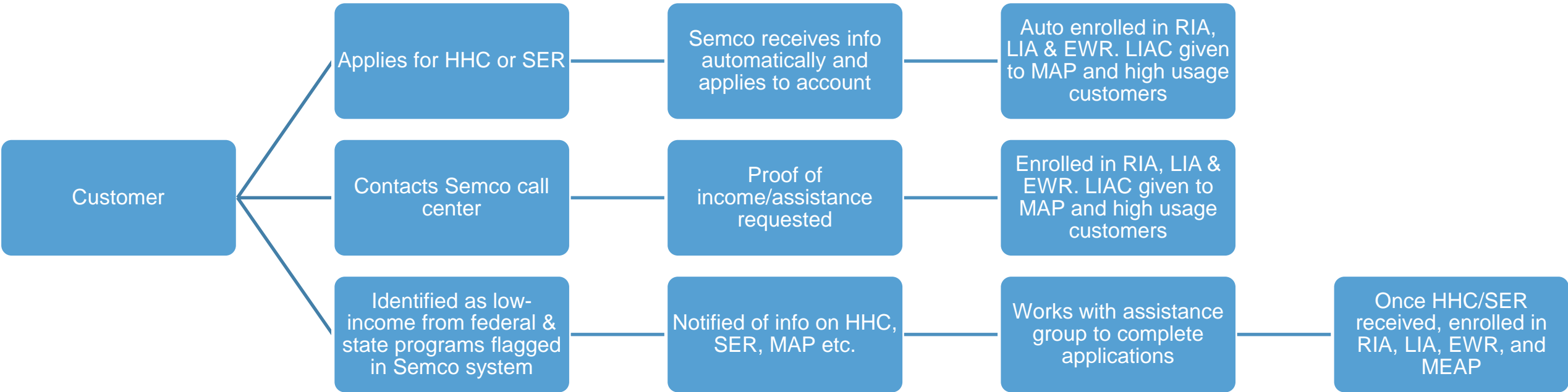
<https://electricideas.com/at-home/at-home-michigan/>

Multiple outreach efforts to market these programs:

- Targeted email campaigns focusing on various IQ EE, EE, and Customer Assistance Programs
- Targeted direct mail for all IQ EE, EE, and Customer Assistance Programs
- Outreach to income-qualified, multi-family housing complexes, senior centers, non-profits, community action agencies, faith-based groups, governmental agencies, etc.
- EE newsletters
- Bill inserts
- eHERs (Home Energy Reports)
- Boosted Social Media (1x per week each)
- Facebooks Ads
- ElectricIdeas.com cross-promotion in email campaigns
- Events and sponsorships
- Worked with agencies and other community groups to distribute program flyers to eligible clients through food commodity days, back to school back packs distribution, through case management for other programs, etc.



Utility Low-income Programs



Low-Income Outreach

- Targeted mail and outbound call campaigns
 - Regular outreach to customers identified as low-income
 - Mass communication to all residential customers to share info on available programs
- Flagging accounts in the system for outreach
 - SER and/or HHC recipients
 - Other assistance funds received (MEAP, CERA, etc.)
 - Interest in receiving assistance
- RIA recipients also enrolled in reduced rate for EWR
- Third party conducts outreach for additional EWR services

UPPCO Outreach and Programs

- Info on website
- Referrals to other agency assistance
- Bills, bill inserts, on notices
- EASE APP
- Marketing and campaign development through new low-income position aimed to liaise low-income and EWR

Leadership Questions

- What areas would you like to see improvement?
 - Not collecting income data from customers makes it difficult to reach out to customers. Need mechanism to identify customers from DHHS or Treasury
 - UPPCO looks at accounts from low-income housing areas-- outreach opportunity

Q&A and Recommendations

What recommendations do you have for the utilities for improvement?

- It seemingly should be mandatory that every household at risk of shutoff should receive a physical energy efficiency needs assessment
- Need a way to receive info from DHHS about income level, Medicaid recipients etc.
- Customers should not have to reapply for assistance each year
 - The requirement is in the statute
- Other states have website that people can connect to--presented at NEUAC--where agencies and utilities can connect to for data sharing
- Commission should investigate HMIS developed by HAND (homeless action network Detroit) and CERA database--can see where service clients are connecting

Did we address our Guiding Principles?

- *This ideal system/program design should achieve this while also:*
 - **Ensuring equitable distribution** in the access to, use of, and outcomes from energy affordability and assistance policies/programs
 - **Centering impacted community priorities** and participation in policy/program development, accountability, and assessment
 - **Treating customers with dignity**, enabling them to live comfortably, and not penalizing customers for an inability to pay their bills
 - **Coordinating and communicating clearly** with relevant state agencies to integrate state policy goals, including those related to healthy homes and climate change



Next Steps

- Report out to EAAC next week and receive their input

- Begin drafting the December report
 - Look for email to begin input process

- Start finding a new stakeholder lead, since Tanya is leaving for NARUC
 - Email Amy, Anne, Elaina and Jamie to express interest in the position

November: Identify solutions
Finalize input on Dec. report draft

Appendix 1

Consumers Energy Past Due Communications:

Associated Assistance Verbiage

Communication 1, 3, 4, 8 – Phone Call

“We understand these are challenging times, and there may be resources available to help. To learn more about payment assistance options, visit Consumers-Energy-dot-com-slash-assistance. For residential customers, help may be available through agencies in your area by hanging up and dialing 2-1-1.”

Communication 2,5 - Mailed Notices

“Need help Paying your bill?”

- Assistance may be available through non-profit agencies in your area. Call 2-1-1 or visit mi211.org immediately for details and inform Consumers Energy of any efforts being made to obtain assistance.
- Assistance may be available through the Department of Health and Human Services. Please contact your local office or visit Michigan.gov/mibridges to apply online.

Communication 6 – Phone Call

“If you need assistance getting your services reconnected, we have a variety of payment arrangement options available to you. To learn more about these options, please visit Consumers-Energy-dot-com-slash-assistance or call 1-800-477-5050. For residential customers, assistance may be available through non-profit agencies in your area. Call 2-1-1 or visit mi211.org immediately for details and inform Consumers Energy of any efforts being made to obtain assistance. Assistance may also be available through the Department of Health and Human Services. Please contact your local office or visit Michigan.gov/mibridges to apply online. To learn more about available payment plans and assistance options, please visit ConsumersEnergy.com/assistance.”

Communication 7 - Final Bill Message

“For residential customers, assistance may be available through non-profit agencies in your area. Call 2-1-1 or visit mi211.org immediately for details and inform Consumers Energy of any efforts being made to obtain assistance. Assistance may also be available through the Department of Health and Human Services. Please contact your local office or visit Michigan.gov/mibridges to apply online. To learn more about available payment plans and assistance options, please visit ConsumersEnergy.com/assistance.”

Communication 9 – Phone Call

“COVID-19 relief dollars are now available for both residential and business customers through new government programs. Visit [treasury dot gov slash cares](http://treasury-dot-gov-slash-cares) for more information. That is t-r-e-a-s-u-r-y dot gov slash c-a-r-e-s. For residential customers, help may be also available through agencies in your area. To connect with local resources, hang up and dial 2-1-1, or apply directly for State Emergency Relief assistance with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, by visiting [Michigan dot gov slash m-i-bridges](http://Michigan-dot-gov-slash-m-i-bridges). In addition, Michigan businesses can learn more about grants and resources at [Michigan Business dot org slash COVID-19](http://Michigan-Business-dot-org-slash-COVID-19). That is Michigan Business dot org slash c-o-v-i-d-1-9.”

Appendix 2: Definitions

- RIA: Residential Income Assistance (customer charge credit)
- LIA: Low Income Assistance (\$30/month credit)
- SER: State Emergency Relief
- HHC: Home Heating Credit
- SPP: Shutoff Protection Plan
- WPP: Winter Protection Plan
- CERA: Covid Emergency Rental Assistance
- MEAP: Michigan Energy Assistance Program

Appendix 3

FY20 ENERGY ASSISTANCE FUNDING & LOW INCOME CREDITS

