

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

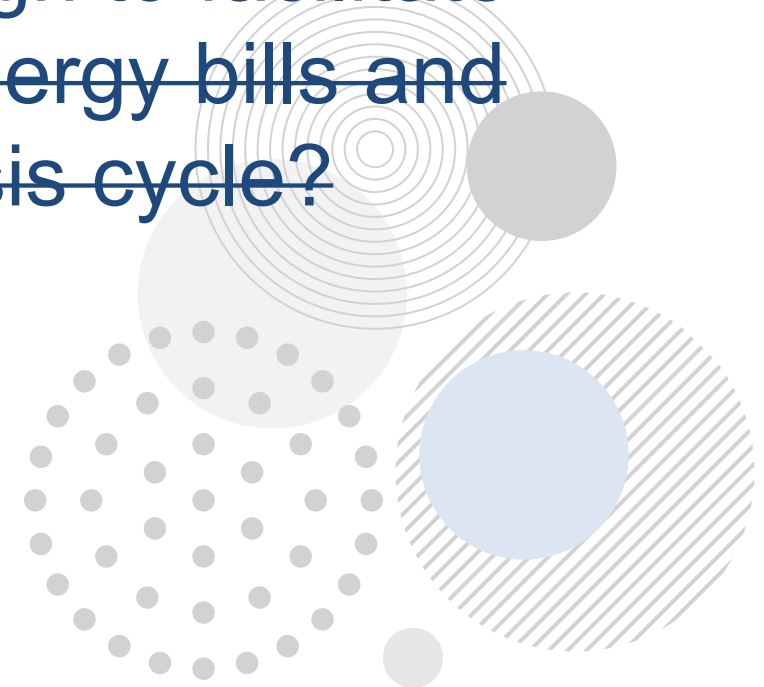
- Guiding question and subcommittee charge
- Meeting structure/roadmap
- Survey results
- Addressing concerns
- Finalize goals
- Assign tasks/research topics

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



Guiding Question

~~What is the best system/program design to facilitate customers' sustainably paying their energy bills and avoiding the crisis-assistance-crisis cycle?~~



Guiding Statement

End the crisis-assistance-crisis cycle by centering energy *affordability* and facilitating customers sustainably affording their energy bills by providing all households with uninterrupted *access to affordable, sufficient* energy in an *efficient, healthy,* and *sustainable* manner.



New 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



Logistics: Meeting 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

4

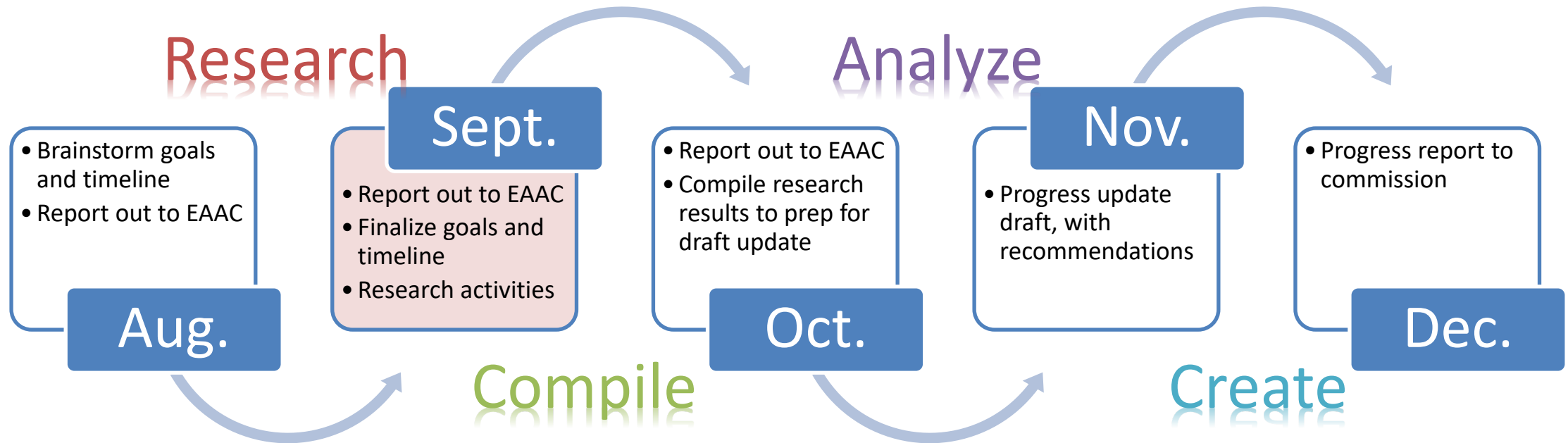
- If appropriate, collaborate with the responsible organization
- Propose to the Commission

Logistics

- File-sharing medium
 - Website https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/0,9535,7-395-93307_93312_93320-566302--,00.html
- Delegating/Communication
 - Research/project groups organized by leadership
- Frequency and date/time of meetings
 - After each meeting we will send out a follow-up email with current projects



Projected 2021 Timeline



Beyond 2021

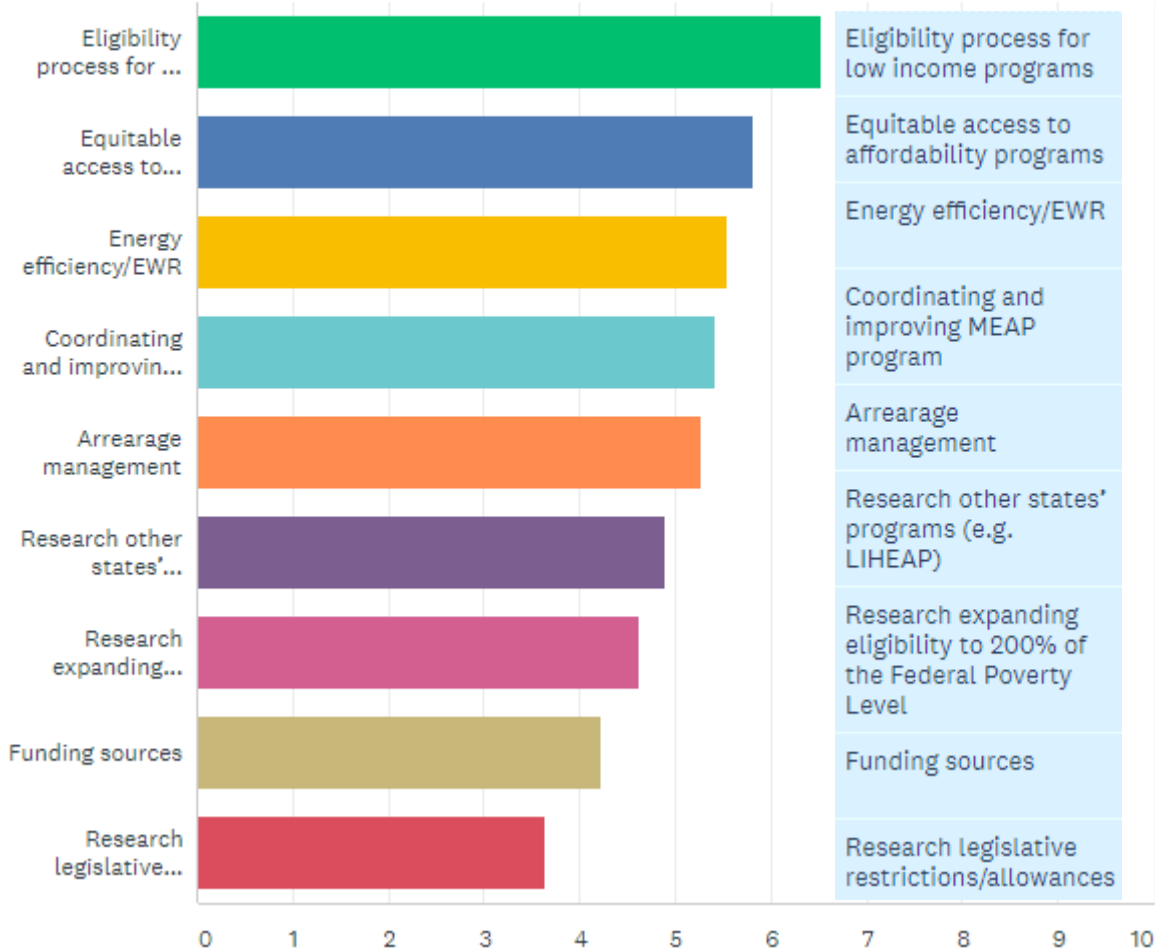
December 2022: Submit updated report with recommendations

2023: Continue collaborative as necessary and finalize work

Survey Results: Priority List

Rank the following areas of focus for prioritization in the December report:

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



Survey Results: Priority List

What specifically do you want to see changed?

- Eligibility process for low-income programs
 - Delve into ideas from last meeting. E.g.:
 - Automation of the process
 - Look at Cohere pilot
 - Automatic enrollment by the utility company (utility collect data and enroll those who are eligible)
 - Proactively identify customers who are falling behind before it gets to the point of emergency
 - Standardize eligibility so that programs interact with each other
 - Standardize a screening tool and application process
 - Align state and federal program requirements
 - More flexible and understandable
 - Shared databases for identification of LI households
 - Create a secure portal for customers to upload documentation
 - Look at ongoing assistance that doesn't require yearly eligibility verification
 - Increased coordination when a customer qualifies for one program, including energy waste reduction upgrades
 - Review customer journey maps
 - Provide flexibility in eligibility
 - Take into account certain expenses (other bills, debt), medical issues/equipment



Goals from last meeting → Project List

Accessibility

(Mostly addressed through outreach group and guiding principles i.e. equity)

- Customer journey

Eligibility

- How verification and collection (works with accessibility)
- Not having to be in crisis to get assistance
 - Avoid policies and program designs that include punitive measures that penalize customers for their inability to pay
- Simplify/expedite process
- Streamline design
- Make more flexible and understandable
- Should be as AUTOMATIC as possible
- Implications of expanding eligibility to 200% FPL
- Critical care---**came out in survey. Please contact leadership or extrapolate in the Google doc about your concerns**

Affordability

- Arrearage management (payment plans, late fees, debt forgiveness)
- Work with MEAP workgroup
 - Update APP pilots
- Financing options for PIPPs and credits
- Can EWR programs be tied to property values?
- Renewable generation and efficient resource opportunities

Next Steps

- Members--Researching desired eligibility changes

- Leadership--Schedule speakers from relevant organizations

- October: education on low-income program eligibility

November: potentially identify solutions

Assign Research

Task	Name	Timeframe
Research other states' programs (NEUAC)	Tom Page, Anne Armstrong	
Customer journey mapping (utility)	Maria Christian	
Customer journey mapping (human services org)	Wende Randall, Niki Fanjoy, Heather Kapustka	
Customer journey mapping (2-1-1)		