

# Energy Affordability & Accessibility Collaborative

February 16, 2022



# AGENDA

9:30am 15 min	Welcome/Housekeeping Matters	Anne Armstrong - MPSC
9:45 am 15 min	Guiding Values	Briana Parker – Elevate Briana DuBose - EcoWorks
10:00 am 10 min	Community Concerns and Solutions	All
10:10 am 20 min	U-20757: EAAC Commission Directives	Anne Armstrong - MPSC
10:30am 40 min	Presentations from Subcommittees	Ad-hoc Definitions Affordability, Alignment & Assistance Outreach and Education Data Analysis & Regulatory Review
11:10am 10 min	Structure of EWR-LI and EAAC Collaboration	Brad Banks - MPSC
11:20am 10 min	Next Steps	Anne Armstrong - MPSC
11:30am	Adjourn	

## Commission Staff Priorities

- Ongoing COVID-19 response
- Coordination with the DEI subcommittee and MPG Customer Education & Outreach Workgroup, MEAP Workgroup and state team, Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm, Ad-Hoc Low-Income Energy Group and others
- Continuation of monthly reports on shutoffs and arrearages
- Development of a public website to allow the shutoff and arrearage data to be available in a protected, more easily analyzable form

# EAAC CHARGE: 2021

## Commission Priorities:

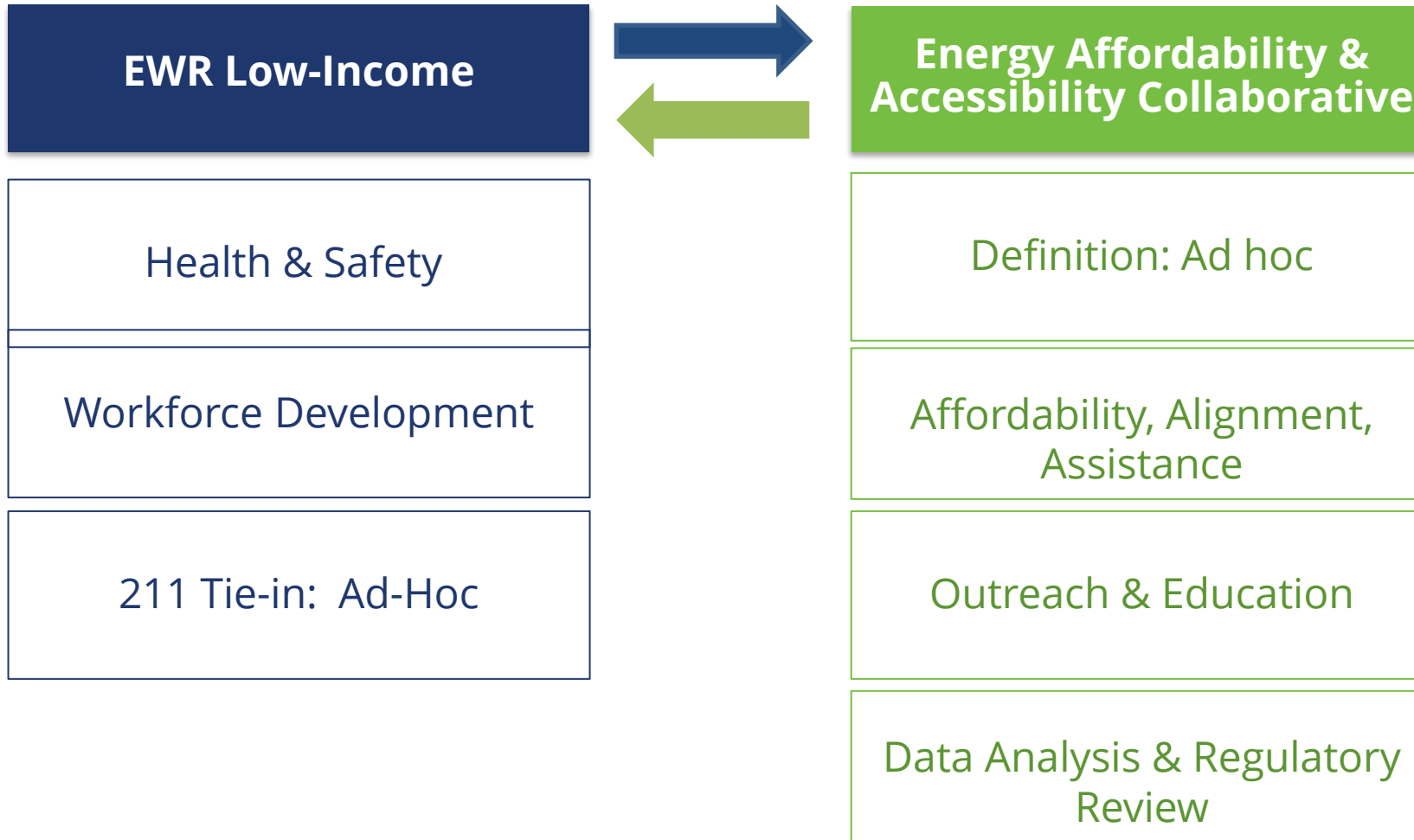
- Ongoing COVID-19 response
- Recommend approaches for simplifying the energy assistance and customer protection systems, working with the EWR low-income workgroup
- Explore a common definition of energy affordability with the goal of reducing the number of households with unsustainable energy burdens
- Emphasize the importance of data collection, transparency & analysis to inform policy by developing a long-term data collection strategy
- Review rule-based protections
- Expand communication and engagement, especially to marginalized communities

# Two Concurrent Priorities: One Goal

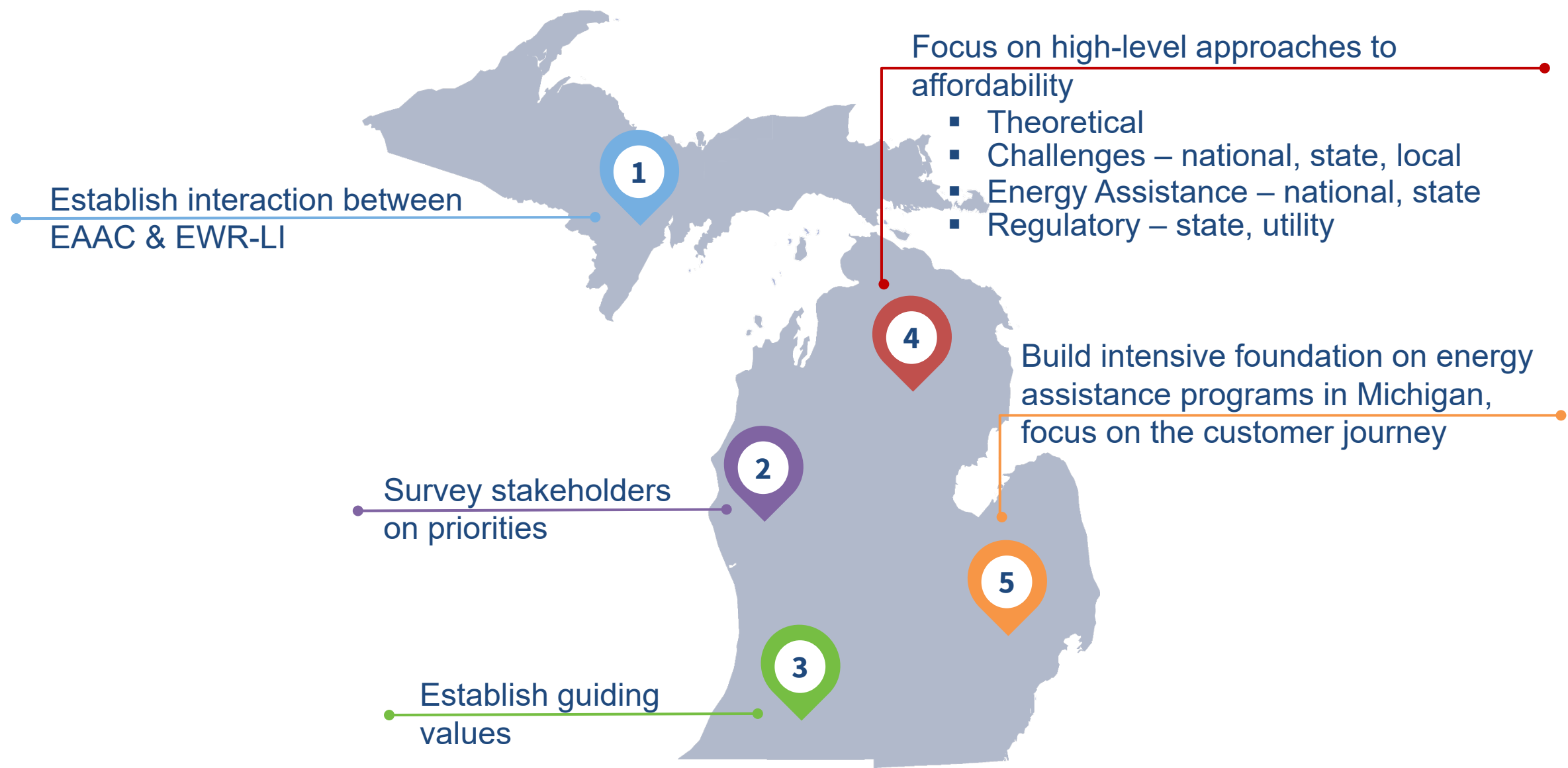
## Reduce the number of households with unsustainable energy burdens

- **COVID-19 Response**
  - ✓ Outreach and education
  - ✓ Program and policy revision to meet immediate needs and reduce immediate barriers
- **System Analysis and Recommendations for Long Term Reform**
  - ✓ Sustainable affordability
  - ✓ Establish process for high energy burden/low-income communities to influence policy development
  - ✓ Expand and increase ease of access to services
  - ✓ Collection of data for protection, safety and equity

# EWR Low Income/EAAC STRUCTURE



# WHERE WE'VE BEEN



# TODAY'S MEETING:

## Update Energize

01

Guiding Values and  
Community Concerns



03

Subcommittee Update &  
Call for Volunteers



02

Overview of  
Commission's Charge  
in U-20757, 2/10/22



04

EWR – LI  
EAAC Collaboration





# Guiding Values

Briana Parker – Elevate  
Briana DuBose – EcoWorks

# EAAC GUIDING VALUES

1. Advance racial and economic justice
2. Enhance environmental justice
3. Active listening and communication
4. Operate with integrity
5. Ensure inclusion
6. Practice accountability
7. Encourage collaboration
8. Follow leadership from impacted individuals and communities
9. Education and awareness
10. Promote transparency

# Community Concerns and Solutions

ALL

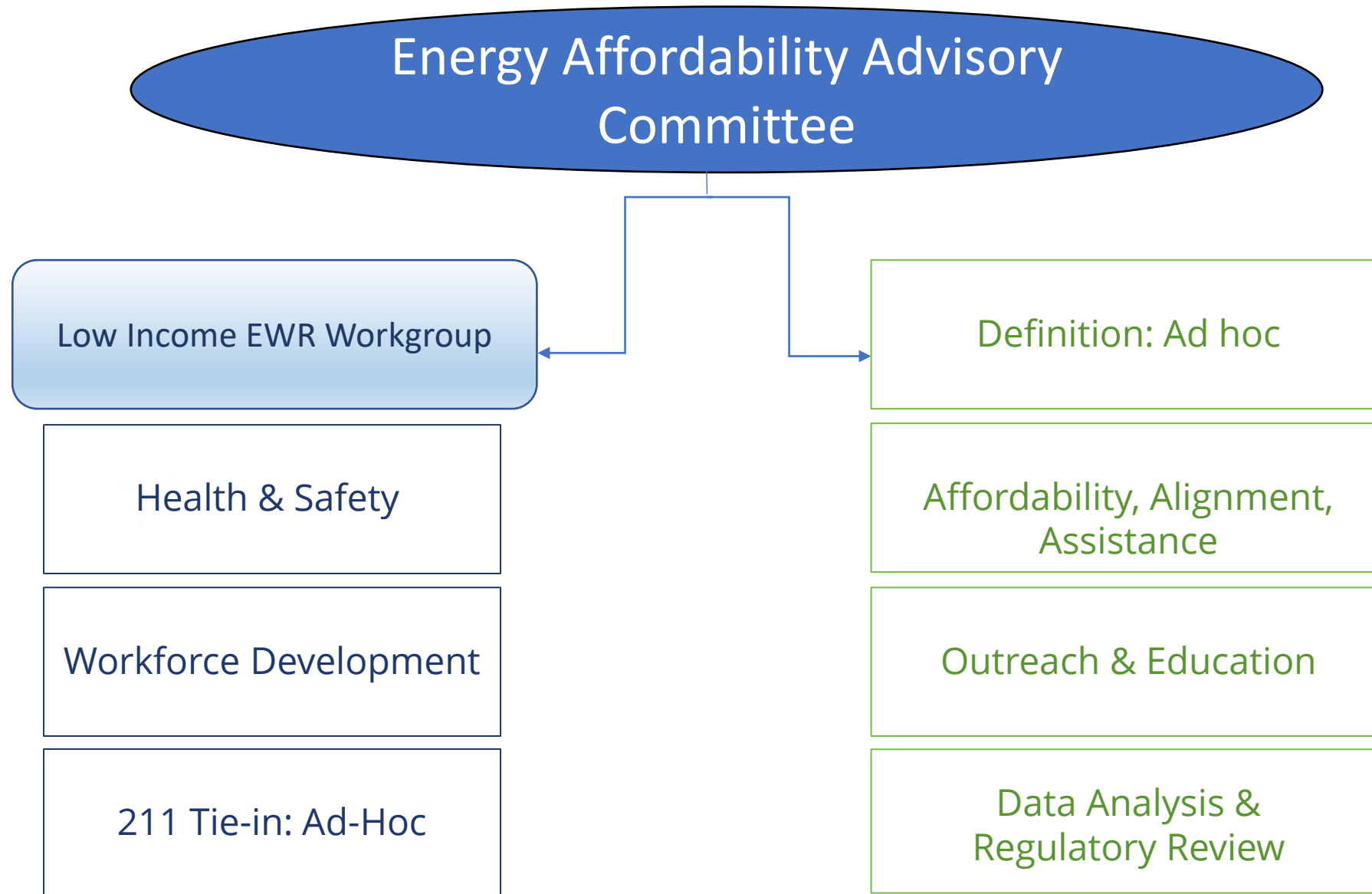
# U-20757: Commission EAAC Directives

Anne Armstrong – MPSC

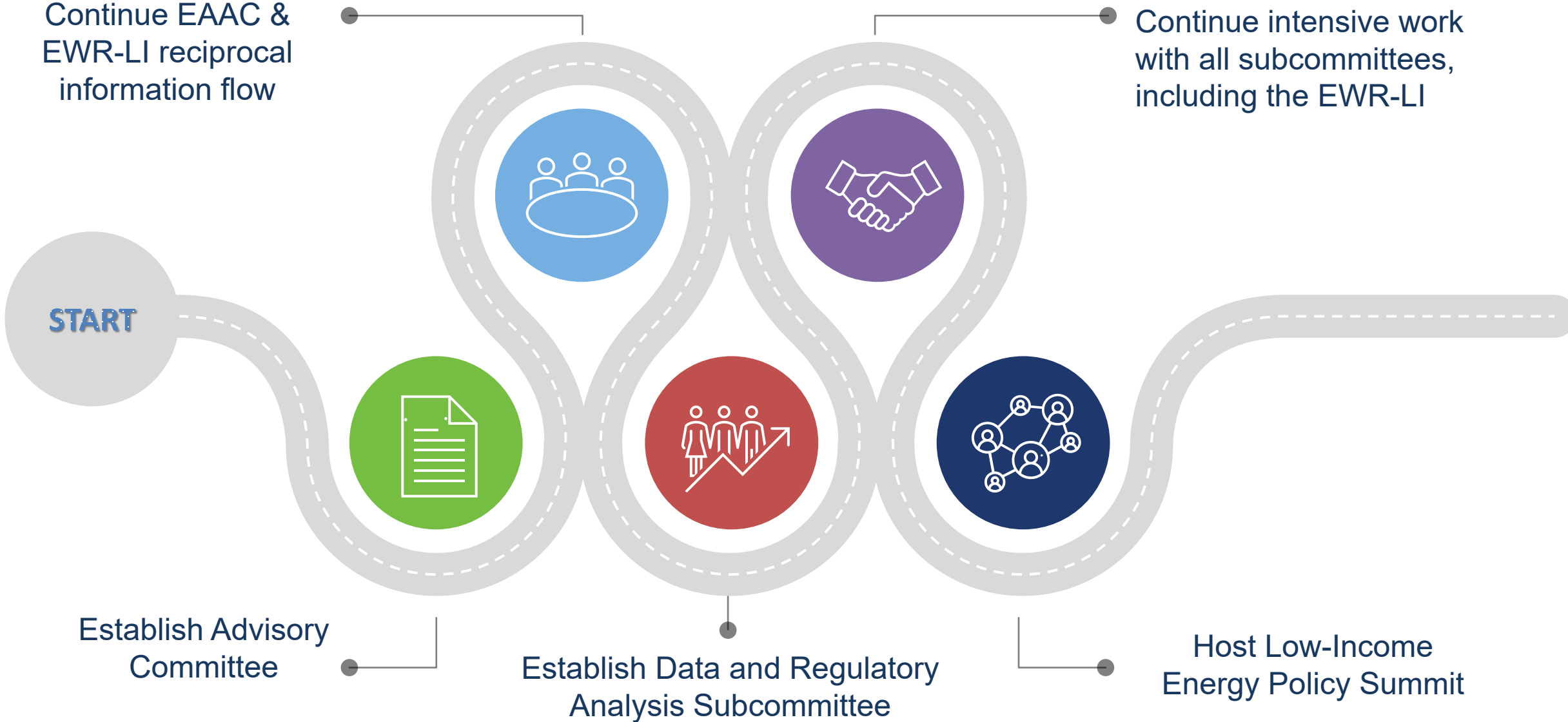
# U-20757 February 10 Order: Recommendations/Charge

- Continue the Collaborative for at least two additional years with assessment in the future as to the Collaborative's lifespan.
- Adopt the proposed structure of the Collaborative, including an Advisory Committee comprised of EAAC and EWR – LI leadership.
- Increase participation of historically marginalized communities in policy development and leadership, working with the MPSC DEI Committee.
- Collaborate with the Governor's Poverty Task Force, the Governor's Council on Climate Solutions, and the Council on Future Mobility and Electrification to contribute toward cohesive policy across state agencies.
- Direct investor-owned utilities to continue to file monthly reports in this docket detailing the data on shutoffs and arrearages.
- File a progress report to be filed no later than December 16, 2022.

# Energy Affordability Collaborative



# WHERE WE'RE GOING



# Subcommittee Updates and Discussion



# Ad-hoc Subcommittee on Definitions

Mary Wilkins – MPSC

Wende Randall – Heart of West MI United Way,  
Kent County Essential Needs Task Force



# Reminder of our charge

- Establish **common definition of energy security/self-sufficiency** – begin with proposed definition by MEAP Workgroup Subcommittee 2.
- Develop proposal for an **energy affordability standard** and how the standard can be integrated into the regulatory environment.
- Draft suggested requirements for consistent **energy affordability-related information** for utilities to submit to appropriate dockets: rate cases, IRPs, EWR cases.

# Progress made

- Determined to pursue a definition of energy affordability
- Discussed concepts inherent in self-sufficiency and energy security
- Ruled out some concepts/language
  - Fuel types
  - Non-energy utilities
- Narrowed down definition options
- Now working to obtain stakeholder input into the meaning of included concepts:
  - Having a cost that is not too high
  - Able to be afforded
  - Home energy efficiency
  - Health and wellness
  - Sustainability

# Goals and timeline for 2022 and 2023

- Establish a definition of Energy Affordability. (May/June 2022)
- Transition into discussions about an energy affordability standard. (June/July 2022)
- Develop a proposal for an energy affordability standard. (July – November 2022)
- Discuss how the standard can be integrated into the regulatory environment. (January – June 2023)
- Draft suggested requirements for consistent energy affordability-related information for utilities to submit to appropriate dockets: rate cases, IRPs, EWR cases. (July – November 2023)

# Meeting Cadence

- Third Wednesday of the month
- 1:45 – 2:30 p.m.

# Leadership Contact

Wende Randall | Director  
Kent County Essential Needs Task Force  
118 Commerce Ave SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
[wrandall@hwmuw.org](mailto:wrandall@hwmuw.org)  
Cell: 616-295-2485

Mary Wilkins | Departmental Specialist  
Michigan Public Service Commission, Customer Assistance Division  
7109 W. Saginaw HWY  
Lansing, MI 48917  
[wilkinsm3@michigan.gov](mailto:wilkinsm3@michigan.gov)  
Direct: (517) 284-8193

# Affordability, Alignment and Assistance Subcommittee

Kristen Bolds - St. Vincent de Paul

Elaina Braunschweig – MPSC, Rates and Tariff

Jamie Curtis - MPSC, MEAP Administrator



# Subcommittee Charge

- *Streamlining and making more accessible* existing energy assistance programs
  - Improving upon existing energy assistance plans
- *Researching* next generation affordable payment plans
- *Analyzing* collections processes and disconnections
- *Integrating* with EWR, weatherization, and rate design





# *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.



# 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



# 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

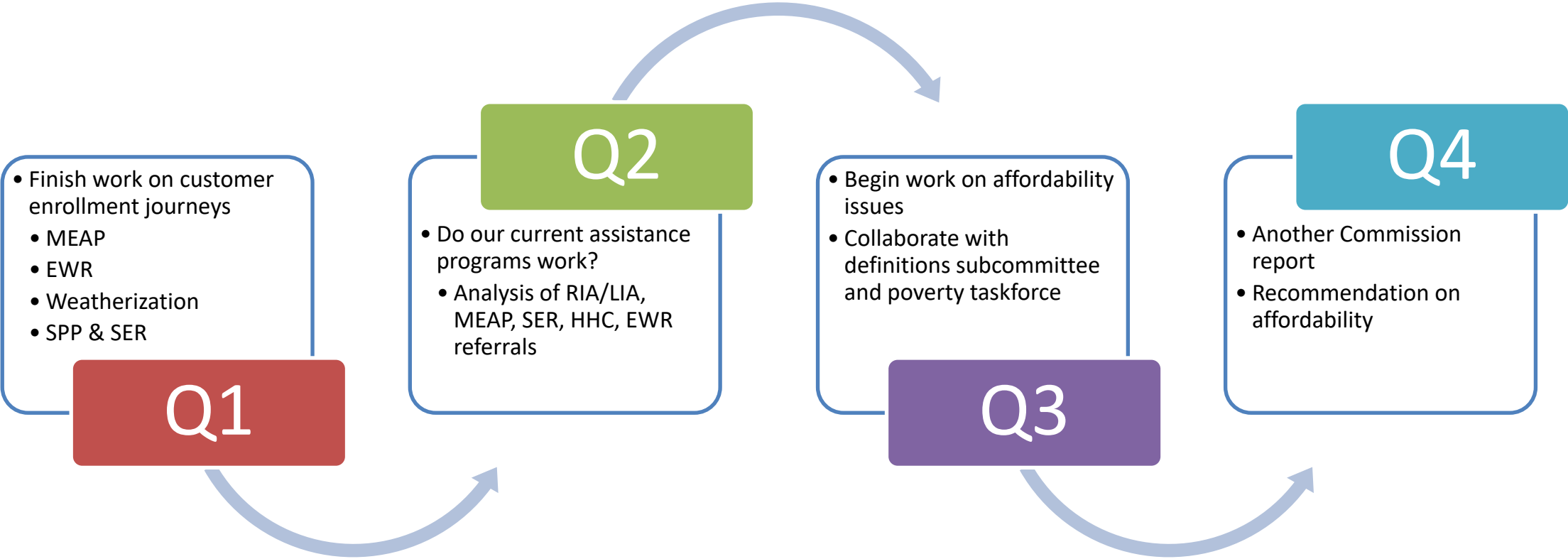
4

- Collaborate with the responsible organization, if appropriate
- Propose to the Commission

# Current Goal

- Examine the customer journeys for utility credits, DHHS/MI Bridges (SER), MEAP, weatherization, and EWR referrals.
- Make recommendations on improvements where appropriate.
- Still working on education. Will be discussing improvements in these programs soon.

# Potential Timeline for 2022



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

# Meeting Cadence

- Meetings every second Thursday of the month
- 1:00-2:00 p.m.
- Ad-hoc EWR group meets to analyze and make recommendations on the existing hurdles in EWR referrals from utilities and community agencies/MEAP grantees.
- New members always welcome!

# Leadership Contact

- Kristen Bolds - St. Vincent de Paul  
[kbolds@svdpdetroit.org](mailto:kbolds@svdpdetroit.org)
- Elaina Braunschweig – MPSC, Rates and Tariff  
[Braunschweig@michigan.gov](mailto:Braunschweig@michigan.gov)
- Jamie Curtis - MPSC, MEAP Administrator  
[CurtisJ14@michigan.gov](mailto:CurtisJ14@michigan.gov)

# Outreach and Education Subcommittee

Briana Parker – Elevate  
Briana DuBose – EcoWorks  
Anne Armstrong – MPSC  
Reka Holley-Voelker - MPSC



# Agenda



- Refresh of Charge
- Goals & Timeline Status
- Meeting Information & Contact Us!

The Outreach and Education Subcommittee charge is to:

- Expand outreach and participation to historically marginalized communities, and
- Develop outreach strategies to inform communities of available energy assistance and other resources, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2022 Goal: Community Listening Sessions across the state**

- Work across subcommittees to ensure information sharing and coordination for listening sessions**
- Create a community survey**
- Compile Statewide Comprehensive Energy Assistance & Energy Waste Reduction Resource List**

**Timeline Status:** Need to discuss with Subcommittee

# Meeting Cadence & Leadership Contact!



- Meetings are held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
- We adhere to group agreements
- **Contact:**
  - Briana DuBose, EcoWorks ([bdubose@ecoworksdetroit.org](mailto:bdubose@ecoworksdetroit.org))
  - Briana Parker, Elevate ([Briana.parker@elevatenp.org](mailto:Briana.parker@elevatenp.org))
  - Anne Armstrong, MPSC ([armstronga3@michigan.gov](mailto:armstronga3@michigan.gov))
  - Reka Holley-Voelker, MPSC ([holleyr@michigan.gov](mailto:holleyr@michigan.gov))

# Data Analysis and Regulatory Review Subcommittee

Chris Forist – MPSC

Jake Thelen - MPSC

Kasey McNeally - Superior Watershed

Rick Bunch - 5 Lakes Energy

# Charge and Goals

1. Intertwine Commission's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative
2. Data Collection
  - Compare U-20757 and R 460.151 data points
    - a) What is different?
    - b) Research, analyze and review
  - Examination of a long-term data collection strategy
  - Ensure consistency with Commission directions on Data Collection and Privacy through the MI Power Grid Customer Education and Participation Workgroup from U-20959
3. Review Part 7 of the Commission's Billing Rules
  - a) Focus on R 460.130 - R 460.133
  - b) Review medical form (for medical emergency/critical care)
  - Educate understand/intention of each rule
    - a) Review if still current/modify/re-evaluate
  - Utility data request

# Meeting Cadence and Leadership Contact

## Volunteer

1. To volunteer, please email Chris Forist at [foristc@michigan.gov](mailto:foristc@michigan.gov)

## Meeting Cadence and Timeline

1. Meeting cadence and timeline to be determined by the group at the first meeting in March

## Co-leads:

1. Chris Forist, MPSC ([Foristc@michigan.gov](mailto:Foristc@michigan.gov))
2. Jake Thelen, MPSC ([Thelenj7@michigan.gov](mailto:Thelenj7@michigan.gov))
3. Kasey McNeally, Superior Watershed Partnership ([kaseym@superiorwatersheds.org](mailto:kaseym@superiorwatersheds.org))
4. Rick Bunch, 5 Lakes Energy ([rick@mi-maui.org](mailto:rick@mi-maui.org))

# EWR-LI / EAAC Collaboration

Brad Banks– MPSC





# Next Steps

Anne Armstrong – MPSC

# NEXT STEPS

- Ongoing Committee Work
- Establish Advisory Committee:
  - Communication
  - Cross-pollination
  - Decision making
- Low-Income Energy Policy Summit
- Update website to increase accessibility, transparency, and inclusion
- [Documents and Resources Page](#)

# Thank You for Participating

Anne Armstrong – [armstronga3@michigan.gov](mailto:armstronga3@michigan.gov)

