**Illinois Income Qualified (IQ) Energy Efficiency (EE) Committee Meeting (LIEEAC) IQ-S Q1 Committee Meeting**

Wednesday April 12, 2023

3:00-5:00 PM

**Attendee List:**

AJ Young, Greenlink Energy Solutions

Alan Elliott, Opinion Dynamics

Alex Deeb, Leidos

Annette Beitel, Future Energy Enterprises (IQ Committee Facilitator)

Arlinda Bajrami, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

Becky Tures, Future Energy Enterprises (IQ Committee Facilitator)

Brook Cranford, Ameren Illinois

Carrie Malfeo, Village of Park Forest

Cassidy Kraimer, The Preservation Compact

Celia Johnson, SAG Facilitator

Christopher Vaughn, Southern Company

Dalitso S. Sulamoyo, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)

Dan Huntsha, Faith In Place

David A Kilgore, Ameren Illinois

David Brightwell, ICC Staff

Debra Perry, Ameren Illinois

Dena Jefferson, Franklin Energy

Diana Fuller, Walker-Miller Energy Services

Elizabeth Horne, ICC Staff

Jan Gudell, Elevate Energy

Jarred Nordhus, Peoples Gas

Jennifer Pearson, CEDA

Jill Calkins, Tri-County Opportunities Council

John Carroll, Ameren Illinois

Julia Friedman Opower, Oracle Utilities

Karen Lusson, National Consumer Law Center

Kate Shonk, Citizens Utility Board

Kathy Walk, C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation

Kristol W Simms, Ameren Illinois

Leyah Williams, ICC Staff

Lisa Miranda, Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago

Mallory Audo, Ameren Illinois

Marion Lunn, ComEd

Marissa Strassel, MUSE Community Design

Mary Hemmer, Senior Services Plus

Naomi Davis, Blacks in Green

Nelson May, Future Energy Enterprises (IQ Committee Facilitator)

Nicholas Arquette, Village of Bensenville

Nicholas Lovier, Ameren Illinois

Nicole Popejoy, Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies

Odette Watson, East Central Illinois Community Action Agency

Omayra Garcia, Peoples Gas Delivery

Peter D. Pasholk, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)

Philip Halliburton, ComEd

Robert Rusteberg, Leidos

Roberta Tolson, ComEd

Rochelle Phipps, ICC Staff

Ron Markus, BCMW Community Services

Ronna Abshure, ICC Staff

Scott Eckel, ICC Staff

Steven Pappageorge, Moraine Valley Community College

Tara Cunningham, Rinnai America Corporation

Terry Burnside, House of Hope Peoria

Theresa Collins, Senior Services Plus

Thomas Drea, Ameren Illinois

Tisha Burnside, Resource Innovations

Victoria Nielsen, Applied Energy Group

**Introduction and welcome by Annette Beitel:**

Today’s meeting is dedicated to discussing the tools and resources energy companies are using to educate community-based organizations, community action agencies and customers about their energy bills, energy efficiency and related assistance programs*.*

**Ameren Illinois Tools and Resources for Energy Efficiency and Bill Assistance Resources** *Mallory Audo, Nick Lovier and Deb Perry*

**Presentation by Mallory Audo:**

1. Ameren Illinois is committed to providing customers with information to aid them in making informed decisions on how to participate in energy efficiency upgrades. Additionally, we work together with our community organizations and community action agencies to share energy.
2. To better tailor to our customer’s needs, we conducted a low-income needs assessment (commonly referred to as a Lena study).
   1. A high-level overview of the results showed us that only 61 percent of customers were aware that the light heap even existed.
   2. Using these findings, Ameren used the responses to identify the variance in responses to close gaps on the aspects which were identified. One of the most important takeaways of this study was considering different ways to help customers receive education, information, and resources regarding energy.
   3. Ameren also identified updated innovative applications such as the Propel app to consider what can be implemented into its program to help meet customers where they are at. The Propel app is a similar app to the Wallet app which allows individuals to track their balances such as food stamps. It allows specific organizations to do promotions and marketing on it, which we have utilized to advertise HEIQ on. It pops up like a banner ad would on your phone and it would take you directly to the IQ application to learn more. We’ve had phenomenal luck with it since COVID.
   4. One of the other key elements that came out of the study was to update the Ameren Income Qualified webpage so that information that was identified in the Lena study was accessible to customers. The link for that is: <https://www.amerenillinoissavings.com/qualified/>
   5. The intent of this page is to have a one stop resource page for all our Income Qualified customers to easily identify the resources needed to participate in our programs, offerings, and initiatives. This is where our partners can refer customers when they are conducting one-on-one meetings.
3. Another key aspect to our updated webpage is the additional information on financial assistance.
   1. We currently are working with Warm Neighbors, Cool Friends. Through this partnership, we offer project bonuses to moderate income customers who are eligible participants. On the site, it will directly link browsers to the Warm Neighbors Cool Friends website, which marks the first step in getting them connected to any financial assistance they may need.
   2. We have also included an educational video addressing any questions or concerns anyone may have. Ameren has received ample positive feedback from low-income customers who referred to this video as a starting point regarding learning about HEIQ and how to participate in it. It is very important for us to educate our customers on what to expect in the process of participating from start to finish from filling out the application.

***Question:*** *Can customers can get information about LIHEAP through this website?*

***Answer:*** *Yes, they can.*

* 1. We want to take this time to walk through the different resources that are there to help connect the dots between the program and work that the community action agencies do.
     1. We partner with agencies in a variety of different ways. This webpage drop includes information that is aligned with the program initiatives that can help income qualified customers easily access agency research.
     2. We’ve additionally included a search engine that can help customers find agencies in their area by simply inputting their zip code.
     3. We also have a search finder to help customers find a Community Action Agency serving their areas. This takes them directly to the DCO website that lists their counties and respective resources.

1. This brings us to utility bill assistance, also known as LIHEAP. The Lena study was very useful in helping us include the resources that customers had previously found helpful. Once again, we’ve tailored this segment of the website to help customers get any information that they need with links and FAQ’s.
   1. We have also included a segment on income eligibility, how to apply and where to apply.
   2. There are additional sections which include information on helping customers to save on their utility bill. The first segment is dedicated to helping customers save money, and the second is for resources that help customers manage their bills.
   3. There is a third Ameren Illinois Resource page that is dedicated to energy assistance and opportunities. It includes information about rising power prices and taking care of your home amidst of this. There is further information on payment agreements and billing information.

***Question:*** *Because not everyone has access to the internet, would somebody be able to call Ameren’s line and receive the same information as listed on the website?*

***Answer:*** *Yes, they can. Our representatives that work in the call center are equipped with all the information that they need. This includes county lists, phone numbers for everybody and email addresses. The representatives will talk through any questions or concerns the customers may have.*

1. Due to our current climate, it is important to educate our customers on how to manage their energy usage.
   1. This is not necessarily a resource that is funded and executed through the energy efficiency program, but is a great resource that Ameren Illinois has for all their customers. It is an easy way to help customers read their bills better, and subsequently budget more efficiently.
2. Our partner page is dedicated to the market development initiative and whom it serves. The purpose of this resource page is to equip our CBOs and Community Action Agencies with any resources that they need to efficiently talk to their clientele about energy efficiency.
   1. The target audience for this webpage is our community partners, but also those who are not considered to be MDIs. We will still equip them with any resources or information that they need.
   2. One of the other ways we support our partners is by offering them one-on-one marketing and outreach strategy support. We also provide them with branding guidelines and best practices.
   3. We also give out community kits that our agencies and MDI partners can distribute through different events.
      1. Communities are invited to share good news stories to us. We love to hear about what they’re doing in the community and the impact they are making.
3. Our partner store is an online store that is similar to Amazon, but free for those who are interested in receiving marketing collateral. All they need to do on this webpage is order their collateral. It has been a success, as individuals can simply check out and have it shipped directly to them.
   1. This, once again, represents an opportunity for customers to identify what they are looking for. Promotional items like fliers, tablecloths, pens, and sunglasses are available on the partner site. Once again, they may order these free of charge. They don’t need to pay for shipping, it is all included, and we ship it out through our vendor.