

**Discount Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, March 24, 2014**  
**Meeting Notes**

Attendees:

Pat Macy	St Austin Catholic Church
Michelle Akers	HACA
Linda Perez	Meals on Wheels and More
Kathleen Hopkins	Any Baby Can
Tonda Owens	Travis County
Gloria Cuevas	Caritas
Ronnie Mendoza	AE
Sandra Castillo	AE
Lori Kirchgatter	AE
Jessica Twining	AE
Melissa Davis	AE
Irene Nemitsas	AE

**I. Welcome**

**II. Minutes Review**

Reviewed minutes from 3-5-14 meeting

- Focus of last meeting was designing arrearage program (matrix) and decision points
- Clarification was given regarding referral for regular residential customers – regular residential customers will be referred to arrearage program via an agency they are working with, not referred to an agency (by AE) in order to get a referral to arrearage program
- Ronnie explained that he has to send a monthly DSC report to Council
- Minutes approved

**III. DSC Decision Points**

Handout outlines everything the DSC has decided on over the last two years

- A suggestion was made to add “why” statements to the decision points and their relation to which AE program
  - For example: How the DSC came up with \$8,700 balance maximum for weatherization program participants – and then reduced the maximum to \$5,700

**IV. Weatherization Program Structure Narrative**

Outlines CAP Weatherization process from start to finish

- Can we specify a timeframe for each piece of the process?
  - Ronnie suggested adding the CAP Weatherization Program timeline (already created) to accompany the narrative

## V. Weatherization Follow-Up

- Updated numbers for customers participating in CAP + Education program (excludes CAP control group numbers)
- For future updates on numbers, AE will provide DSC members with info on why and at what point customers are falling out of the program
  - Customer didn't complete education class within allotted timeframe; landlord didn't sign agreement form, etc.
- CAP team met with CES - Customer Energy Solutions (formerly Energy Efficiency Services) and contractors two weeks ago
  - CAP homes need to be #1 priority
  - Budgeting error by CES caused delay in CAP work orders going out for bidding process – increased spending authority needed – hoping to be remedied next week
    - Impact to CAP Weatherization customers reflected in updated numbers handout: “Audit Completed & Not Out for Bid”
- Lori discussed incentives for CAP Weatherization customers to encourage response to follow-up surveys (18-month period) – asked for DSC feedback
  - CAP team suggested items such as CFL's, air filters, and possibly \$25 pledge, want incentive items to tie back to conservation
  - DSC members agreed a pledge would be best incentive
  - Self-addressed envelope is a MUST when sending out surveys
  - Surveys will reinforce material from education classes
  - Follow-up materials need to be visually engaging
  - DSC members suggested raffling AE/COA swag items, etc.
- Goal is for CAP + Education group to save more/be more successful in program due to education and case-management component
  - Ronnie states a concern would be if CAP Control group saves more money after weatherization compared to CAP + Education group – customers may get comfortable after weatherization and may not conserve
  - CAP team working with Business Intelligence dept to develop program evaluations and content surveys
- Ronnie asked DSC members if there were any types of reports or information that members would like to have that CAP team hasn't provided to them yet. More detailed information?
  - Members state they want numbers on enrollment and education and percent of program completion
- Question regarding premise with two dwellings on the same electric meter that total over 2,000 sq ft – how do we proceed? Weatherize both dwellings or only main dwelling? Out-of-scope?
  - Suggestion that multiple dwellings on one meter should be considered as one premise
  - There is a current regulation/code in place that each property/dwelling must have own meter – only applies to new construction – the properties we are running into are older homes that have been grandfathered in
  - DSC decision:

- If there is an active lease agreement (landlord situation) – the home is ineligible for weatherization
- If no active lease agreement (family member resides in secondary property) – the home is eligible for weatherization as long as both sets of family members complete the education class
- Max of two properties/dwellings per meter on the premise, anything over is ineligible

## VI. Arrearage Program

- Reviewed matrix – does everyone agree to terms decided on at last meeting?
  - Change ‘CAP’ Participants to ‘Discount’ Participants
  - AE business/operations process will be determined in collaboration with DSC
  - Why did members decide on delayed incentive for regular residential category?
    - Gets regular residential customers to buy into arrearage program since they are not already involved with AE via other programs
  - Clarified that regular residential customers will be referred by Partner Agencies, such as churches, since they likely won’t be working with other assistance agencies if below 60% MFI
    - Need to identify eligible partner agencies
    - Regular residential customers will be tapping into AE resources and Discount Participants and 60% MFI customers will be tapping into AE and agency resources
    - AE doesn’t have structure in place to do open-referral for regular residential customers – need agency referral
  - Ronnie showed DSC members a calculator spreadsheet for graduated payments
    - Reflects winter and summer bills/rates and household size
    - Shows max AE contribution and max customer contribution
    - Graduated payment: 20/80, 30/70, then 40/60
    - The higher the balance the longer the payment arrangement (12, 24, or 36 months)
    - Ronnie will e-mail the calculator to DSC members to play around with numbers
    - Member suggested that customers should be encouraged to get agency pledges to lower balance prior to enrolling in arrearage program
  - Some DSC members concerned that some members in Low-Income Advocates group won’t be satisfied with agency referral option due to comments from the last big group meeting that agency resources are limited/program space is always maxed out
    - This provides a window of opportunity for churches: some are not zip code restricted, open referral, more lenient qualifiers
  - Why is regular residential group 50/50?
    - These customers are likely employed/bringing in an income and we would be providing additional support by contributing 50% of their payment arrangement installment

- Regular residential customers' balances are likely not as high as customers on a fixed income or in the discount program
  - Do we keep 3-month delayed incentive, 50/50, or both? Add a down payment?
  - DSC decision: keep 50/50 payment percentage for regular residential - no down payment and no delayed incentive
- Reviewed program removal strikes:
  - No contact within 30 days
  - Missed/short payments, NSF, etc.
  - 2 strikes and then customer is removed from program
- Program administration:
  - For 60% MFI category – change to “partnering agencies with support service structure”
  - For regular residential category – change to “partnering agencies without support service structure”
- Ronnie reminded DSC members that their design/decision points are just suggestions and will all come down to what is decided by the big group

## **VII. Next Steps**

- Ronnie asked for a volunteer to present the arrearage program information to the Low Income Advocates group at the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - It was decided that Ronnie will present the material and then redirect all questions/discussion to DSC members – pending approval from Robena (facilitator) and JJ Gutierrez (AE)
- Next DSC meeting scheduled for Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> from 2:00pm – 3:15pm