

**QUESTIONS TO AUSTIN ENERGY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE
LOW-INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE**

(Information effective as of December 1, 2014)

1. How many low income weatherization programs are offered by Austin Energy? Please provide the program names and the annual budget for each for the past 3 years and the planned budget for next year.

- A. Customer Assistance Program (CAP) FY13 \$1M; FY14 \$1M; FY15 \$1.5M
- B. Austin Energy Weatherization (AEWX) FY12 \$0.8M; FY13 \$0.8M; FY14 \$1.3M; FY15 \$1.3M
- C. Low-income Weatherization Rehabilitation Assistance Program (LWRAP) \$250,000 set aside included in AEWX budget

2. How many units were weatherized under each of the programs during the last fiscal year?

- A. AEWX FY14=62
- B. LWRAP FY14=26
- C. CAP FY14 = 202

3. How is each of the low income weatherization programs different from each other?

- A. All measures performed are the same for all programs
- B. The intake process for each program is slightly different.
 - a. CAP customers are selected via an extensive case management approach based on criteria established by the Customer Assistance Program Discount Steering Committee.
 - b. AEWX customers are now selected from these approaches:
 - i. CAP referral list as noted above in item 3Ba.
 - ii. Housing Rehabilitation Coalition (HRC) or non-profit organizations who participate with AE in the CAP or Plus One program

4. What are the steps AE takes in implementing each of the programs? As part of your answer, please provide a flow chart for each of the programs, including the qualifying for any program and any inter-departmental activities.

This item requires further clarification. It is unclear if you are asking about the steps to obtain homes or the process to install efficiency measures.

5. What is the organizational structure for each of these programs? If you have answered this question in No. 3 above, please disregard.

We do not have an org chart specific to the weatherization program as there are shared resources across the CES organization. Below are the positions responsible for the function for the program.

VP, Customer Energy Solutions
Director, Energy Efficiency Services
Manager, Residential Energy Services
Environmental Program Coordinator, Weatherization
VP, Customer Care
Manager, Customer Care
Customer Services Manager, Customer Care
Community Services Coordinator, Customer Care

6. What are the barriers AE has identified to more efficient low income energy efficiency programs?

Some of these barriers are being addressed via process improvements, automation, communication, contract modification and the solicitation of a Request for Proposal for additional contractors and funding allocations.

- a. Aligning and optimizing city and community resources (However, currently working with Low Income Consumer Advisory Task Force to find partners in the community.)
 - i. Housing Repair Coalition (HRC)
 - ii. Austin Water Utility (AWU)
 - iii. Texas Gas Service (TGS)
 - iv. Travis County
 - v. Foundation Communities
 - vi. Pecan Street
- b. Optimizing Contract for Installing Measures (Items a-e in process of being addressed in next couple of months with Request for Council Approval and Request for Proposal.)
 - i. Bundling of jobs
 - ii. Aligning budget with funding approvals for contracts
 - iii. Limited contractor pool. Only nine were awarded in 2013 as some were limited on the type of measures they could install.
 - iv. Conflicts between current work and universal price list timing, resulting in contractor payments lower than prevailing wages (RS Means reimbursement). Multiple, complicated measures (Process improvement underway to simplify focus on direct install measures.)
 - v. Some measures outside of contractors and AE expertise
 - vi. Multiple contracts: Tier I; Tier II; Test-Out (RFP will simplify to two contracts.)
 - vii. Competing with Contractor's peak season of May-September.

- c. Inability to Weatherize Homes
 - i. Not all homes available to be weatherized (Process improvement will shift CAP non-EDU homes into the EES pipeline.)
 - ii. Condition of the homes. Approximately 25% need Rehab due to structural issues.
 - iii. Housing Repair Coalition fund shortage
 - iv. Customers not being accessible
 - v. Tenants and landlords not communicating and signing proper approvals (Process improvement will require signature prior to assessment.)
 - vi. Lack of home pre-screening (Addressed by process improvement.)
 - vii. Language barriers (Process improvement will include a fluent Spanish speaking staff member accompany AE assessment team.)
- d. Significant number of days to complete process
 - i. Manual spreadsheets (Process improvement will transition from spreadsheets to automated database.)
 - ii. Multiple contractor, subcontractor, testing, education and verification customer touch points in addition to education sessions (Process improvement will schedule multiple efforts at the same time.)
 - iii. Multiple invoices from appliance vendors, contractors and inspectors (Process improvement will reduce the number of measures.)
 - iv. No alignment between AE, Customer and Contractor on measures to be installed (Process improvement will require approval letter listing measures to be signed by all prior to installation.)
- e. Cost of delivery
 - i. Process improvements and automation
 - ii. Utilize staff to install CFL lights from current supplies
 - iii. Numerous change orders (Process improvement will include more communication, sign-offs, joint assessments and simplified measure list.)
- f. Improvements related to decreasing energy consumption not maintained by customer (Process improvement promotes CAP education and residential App to increase customer awareness and knowledge.)
- g. Multiple oversight Council Committees and Task Force efforts
 - i. Numerous directions and expectations some in conflict
 - ii. Multiple meetings per month can be significant drain on resources

7. Is our current delivery system of low income weatherization dispersed geographically or is there a systematic geographic approach such as a neighborhood by neighborhood approach?

- A. ZIP codes provide our geographic delineation of service.
- B. Priority has been given to the ZIP codes with the highest poverty population density.

8. How has Austin Energy engaged the community in implementing the weatherization programs in neighborhoods?

AE has coordinated with the HRC, TGS and AWU to increase the scope and level of service to the clients. AE works with Travis County in an effort to prevent replication of service. AE has reached out to non-profit and to investor-owned low income multifamily complexes to offer CFLs.

9. What suggestions have contractors provided to make the process more efficient?

Several that have been recommended are listed in the answer to Question 6. This is an ongoing effort.

10. Has AE used the city's purchasing process to decrease low income weatherization program costs through bulk buying or directly contracting with the manufacturer for materials and /or equipment?

Yes. Examples include CFLs and refrigerators (2013 and 2014).

11. What does AE know about what other communities in Texas or in other states have done in making their low income weatherization programs more efficient?

Staff continues to benchmark and investigate best practices. EES had a team that reviews new programs and enhancements bi-weekly for all EES programs. Programs are making process improvements. AE has participated in various studies and purchased research reports. Currently, GDS is updating a previous report to include best practices and benchmarking. AE commits a greater percentage of its budget than required by the PUC of investor owned utilities in Texas.

12. How has AE leveraged low income weatherization dollars with other program dollars in other city departments or with nonprofits or other public entities to decrease operating costs?

Yes. Examples include:

- A. AWU installs water conservation measures in each home requiring the measures.
- B. TGS conducts gas leak and CO testing in each home and reports homes that need associated services. They then address the homes via their program.
- C. HRC addresses homes needing structural repairs.
- D. Non-profits have installed CFLs and have Memorandum of Understanding associated with the CAP program.

13. Once eligibility is established, do the programs have a different standard for delivering the energy efficiency measures to the eligible customer? In other words, does AE apply the same energy efficiency criterion for both CAP-funded and non-CAP-funded low income weatherization programs?

All of the EES Weatherization programs provide the same measures, with the same criteria.

14. Many Texas utilities provide Energy Efficiency dollars to the federal weatherization providers to deliver low income weatherization services consistent with the Department of Energy WAP program.

Is AE aware of these programs?

Yes.

If AE is aware of any partnerships between federal weatherization providers and Texas utilities please provide the following information:

- a) **How do the utilities hold the community action agencies accountable for quality of work and financial integrity?**

This is a very broad question asking for specific detail. The detail would be dependent on the program and the authority implementing. Processes to hold agencies accountable vary per program. Best practices are clear contractual agreements, automated shared data, ongoing communication and process improvements.

- b) **To what extent were the federal weatherization providers able to meet the utilities' weatherization program production goals?**

It depends on the programs; some are performed by utility, state, city or non-profit entities. Because of this dependency, we cannot list the specifics without further clarification.

- c) **What program operating efficiencies, if any, were achieved?**

It depends on the programs. Because of this dependency, we cannot list the specifics without further clarification.

- d) **What energy savings were reported?**

It depends on the programs. Because of this dependency, we cannot list the specifics without further clarification.

- e) **What demand savings were reported?**

It depends on the programs. Because of this dependency, we cannot list the specifics without further clarification.

15. **It is my understanding that to be eligible for CAP-funded low income weatherization programs, a CAP customer must have less than a certain level of past due bills.**

This is no longer a criterion for weatherization.

If this is true, in whole or in part, please provide the following information

- a. **The public policy goal for this eligibility criterion;**

NA

- b. **The legal basis for this eligibility criterion;**

NA

- c. **Whether non-CAP customers participating in the free weatherization program funded with energy efficiency dollars also are subject to the eligibility criterion involving the applicant's level of past due balances?**

NA

- d. **Can a CAP customer apply for the free weatherization program funded with energy efficiency dollars, and if so, does AE apply the same eligibility criterion to that applicant as for an applicant for CAP-funded weatherization services or for a non-CAP customer applicant for the free weatherization program funded with energy efficiency dollars?**

NA

16. It is my understanding that to be eligible for CAP-funded low income weatherization programs, a CAP customer must first take an educational course.

This is no longer a criterion for weatherization.

If this is true, in whole or in part, please provide the following:

- a. The public policy supporting this eligibility criterion;**
NA
- b. The legal basis for this eligibility criterion;**
NA
- c. A description of the program including the amount of time involved, the location of the classes, and the number of AE employees involved, the estimated cost of providing the educational course, and if other City of Austin employees are involved, the number of non AE COA employees and the estimated cost involved for these non AE COA employees?**
NA
- d. Whether non-CAP customers participating in the free weatherization program funded with energy efficiency dollars also are subject to the eligibility criterion involving the applicant's level of past due balances?**
NA
Can a CAP customer apply for the free weatherization program funded with energy efficiency dollars, and if so, does AE apply the same eligibility criteria to that applicant as for an applicant for CAP-funded weatherization services or for a non-CAP customer applicant for the free weatherization program funded with energy efficiency dollars?
NA
- e. Whether any other of AE's energy efficiency programs requires as a criterion for eligibility that the applicant first complete an educational program?**
NA