

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PIPELINE

LOW-INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY
TASK FORCE

May 28, 2105

- Staff input in bold italics.
- Current concern is that some of the recommendations have not been discussed in detail to be listed as a “recommendation” and need more vetting to provide a clearer direction.

TASK FORCE ORIGIN

- City Council Resolution No. 20140828-158
- Explore program options for low income and low-moderate income households such as income-sensitive sliding scale incentives, neighborhood-based energy efficiency programs, low-cost loans, combining community and city resources to effectively deliver programs, program cost-saving measures, and any other alternatives that will improve the effectiveness and cost efficiency of program delivery.

SCOPE OF MISSION

- Funding Levels for Weatherization
- Participation in Renewable Generation
- Encourage energy efficiency in apartments complexes, small rental units and duplexes
- Establish a demand reduction goal for low and low moderate income households

PROGRAM EQUITY

- Limited demographic data provided from Austin Energy surveys supports the conclusion that low and low-moderate income consumers are not getting a fair share of energy efficiency program benefits
- ***The demographic data does not support the above conclusion. The data is representative of the programs we have surveyed. We do not have the same depth of surveys for the low income weatherization as we do for other programs. The surveys do not indicate the “fair share” of the programs. They indicate the participants of the programs who completed the surveys.***

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- Carol Biedrzycki, Chair Texas ROSE (Ratepayers' Organization to Save Energy)
- Tim Arndt, Vice Chair, Energy Efficiency Consultant
- Dan Pruett, Meals on Wheels and More
- Cyrus Reed, Sierra Club
- Kelly Weiss, Habitat for Humanity
- Lanetta Cooper, Texas Legal Services Center
- Richard Halpin, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin Green Sanctuary Ministry
- Chris Strand, Stan's Heating and Air Conditioning
- Karen Hadden, SEED Coalition

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- First meeting November 5, 2014
- Formed 3 committees
- To date have held 14 meetings
- Next meeting is May 29th
- On June 1st meeting is scheduled to hear from citizens
- Coordinating with the Community Power Forum

TARGETED GROUPS

- Low-Income (under 200% FPG) 28%
family of four \$47,700
- Low-Moderate income (201 to 400% FPG) 38%
family of four \$47,701 to \$95,400
- Renters 54.9% of all households in 2013
- Owners 22.2% < \$25,000; 46.8% < \$50,000
- Renters 32.8% < \$25,000; 63.9% < \$50,000

POSSIBLE LOW-INCOME PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- To treat all funds budgeted for energy efficiency services weatherization the same as Customer Assistance Program (CAP) weatherization
- One Stop Weatherization (Coordination with housing repair programs)
- ***This needs more vetting by the Housing Repair Coalition and Neighborhood Housing, along with AE.***
- Include affordable housing income eligibility requirements in the the weatherization program
- ***This has not been discussed in detail to be consideration a recommendation.***

POSSIBLE LOW-INCOME PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Program for reduced price, high-efficiency, professionally installed, Window Air Conditioners
- Set standards for repair and replacement of central unit air conditioners in Weatherization Program
- Broaden cost effectiveness standard to include societal benefits (community values)
- ***The current cost/benefit tests used are the Total Resource Cost, Utility, and Participant tests. The TRC is typically the best practice. Societal benefits do not necessarily benefit the sole end user.***

POSSIBLE LOW-MODERATE INCOME PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Low interest loan backed by loan loss reserve
- Include affordable housing income eligibility requirements in the weatherization program for customers receiving housing repairs or receiving housing benefits.
- ***This was not discussed in detail as a possible recommendation.***

POSSIBLE AFFORDABLE RENTAL PROPERTY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Target a portion of program funds to properties serving low and low moderate income households
- Improve community outreach for ECAD (Energy Conservation Audit Disclosure)
- ***This was not discussed in detail to be a current recommendation.***
- ECAD coordination with Code Compliance
- ***This was not discussed in detail to be a current recommendation.***
- Create a loan loss reserve (Better Building Funds)
- Virtual billing for affordable housing development with solar.

POSSIBLE CROSS CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve collection of demographic survey data and provide an annual report by council district.
- ***This was not discussed. Staff would need more information on what “improve” means.***
- Reduce demand by 900 Megawatts by 2025.

NEXT STEPS

- Special called meeting on May 29th.
- Meeting for public comment on June 1.
- Budget recommendations final by June 12.
- Final Report date TBD