

## PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

### Recommend a universal application with automatic referral process

Recommendation: The City departments that provide services to low and low-moderate income customers based on income eligibility should use a universal application form that is not only processed by the receiving department but is also immediately referred to the other respective departments.

Targeted Group: Low and low-moderate income AE customers

Time Schedule: Implement in FY 2016

Need for Program: Various City of Austin ("COA") departments rely upon an income-determinative process for providing services to low and low-moderate income AE customers. The processes do not readily translate to qualifying criteria for AE low and low-moderate income energy efficiency programs and other city programs. Nor does that application necessarily get referred to AE or any other city departments providing services to low and low-moderate income households. AE does not independently verify income for purposes of qualifying AE customers for low and low-moderate income energy efficiency programs. Consequently, non-CAP low income AE customers have barriers to accessing the utility's low and low-moderate income programs. Concern has been expressed by the Council and by groups testifying before the Task Force that there is not enough coordination among the various departments.

Program Description: The following steps are recommended:

- A universal application should be created, consistent with confidentiality and privacy concerns, and used by all COA departments that rely upon an income determination process for program eligibility; (AE reports that there is progress on this recommendation);

- Any completed application involving programs for low and low-moderate income households should be forwarded immediately to all of the COA departments providing services to low and low-moderate income people;
- AE customers that qualify for one of the COA's programs providing services based on low and moderate income eligibility should be deemed <sup>income</sup> eligible for AE's low and low-moderate income energy efficiency programs;
- The COA's Health and Human Services department should provide income and identity qualifying services for eligibility in AE's low and low-moderate income energy efficiency services. The department should also include weatherization and other low and low-moderate income energy efficiency referrals among the list of services it provides on its neighborhood center webpage and in its brochures.<sup>1</sup>
- The COA should direct the City Manager to carry out these recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> The COA's Health and Human Services neighborhood center webpage lists form/application assistance as one of its services. It also requires households to provide identity and income proof to establish eligibility. Lastly, the department is already set up to do referrals to non-departmental entities. Consequently, this department is the logical COA department to have residual responsibility for determining income and identification eligibility for AE's low and moderate income energy efficiency programs.