

Amend Section III (C)(3) at pp 33 and 34 by making the following changes:

### **1. 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 and the Health and Human Services Department should be the residual department to screen low income energy efficiency program applicants for income eligibility.

Targeted Group: Low and low-moderate income Austin Energy customers. Variations in income eligibility requirements will be considered.

Time Schedule: Implement in FY 2016

Community Need: Various City of Austin (“COA”) departments rely upon an income-determinative process for providing services to low and low-moderate income Austin Energy customers. The processes do not readily translate to qualifying criteria for Austin Energy low and low-moderate income energy efficiency programs and other city programs. Nor does that application necessarily get referred to Austin Energy or any other city departments providing services to low and low-moderate income households. Austin Energy does not independently verify income for purposes of qualifying Austin Energy customers for low and low-moderate income energy efficiency programs. Customer Assistance Program (CAP) income verification is carried out by a third party vendor who identifies AE customers that participate in governmental programs whose eligibility in household-income based. ~~the administrators of the programs (such as Health and Human Services Commission for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program — SNAP) which automatically qualify a customer for the CAP rate discount.~~ Consequently, non-CAP low income customers will also have access to the weatherization and other low-income programs through the universal application process.

The lack of an interdepartmental referral process leaves AE customers have with barriers to accessing the utility’s low and low-moderate income programs. Because AE relies on referrals for its low income energy efficiency program, AE customers do not have the ability to directly apply for the program. 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. Variations in income eligibility requirements will be considered. **The cost saving benefit of the program individually can be \$1,000 per home.**

Program Description: The following steps are recommended:

- A universal application should be created, consistent with confidentiality and privacy concerns, and used by all City of Austin departments that rely upon an income determination process for program eligibility; (Austin Energy 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 City of Austin departments providing services to low and low-moderate income people;
- Austin Energy customers that qualify for one of the City of Austin's programs providing services based on low and moderate income eligibility should be deemed income eligible for Austin Energy's low and low-moderate income energy efficiency programs;
- The City of Austin's Health and Human Services department should provide income verification and identity qualifying services for eligibility in Austin Energy's low and low-moderate income energy efficiency services programs. 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 City of Austin 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.