

## Low Income Working Group

Energy Efficiency Advisory Council

April 14, 2021

### Proposed Restructuring of Low-Income Committee

**Restructuring Determination:** The Low-Income Committee (Committee) is necessary as a representative body of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council for the following reasons:

1. 99,056 Homes eligible for LIHEAP | 11,206 Homes received LIHEAP (11.3%)
  - a. LIHEAP recipient target should be 30,000 homes (30%)
  - b. Education and measured impact reduce dependence.
2. Outreach & Awareness is a large barrier to entry and service delivery.
3. Global pandemic has fostered an atmosphere of “despair” and “hopelessness.”
4. It will take collaboration between working groups and committees like this Low-Income Work Group to have meaningful results.

### Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (Council) Mission Statement:

The Energy Efficiency Advisory Council’s (Council) mission is to assist affected energy providers in the development of energy efficiency, energy conservation, peak demand reduction, and emission-reducing fuel switching programs for all customer classes. These programs and financing mechanisms aim to be cost-effective, reliable, and feasible, and include evaluation, measurement, and verification of energy savings. The Council strives to collaborate with the Public Service Commission staff and the Public Advocate to recommend candidate programs for three-year portfolios to be approved by the Public Service Commission or the appropriate governing body. For more information and to follow the work of the Council, visit [www.de.gov/eeac](http://www.de.gov/eeac)

### Need:

Approximately **38%** or **126,000** occupied households in the State of Delaware have income less than 80% of the area median and therefore may be defined as “low income.” Furthermore, many low-income Delaware households experience a high energy burden and struggle to find resources to upgrade their households and appliances to reduce energy demand and costs. The Committee has an obligation to support all Delaware low-income energy efficiency programs and initiatives by providing feedback and guidance on the development and implementation of cost-effective program offerings.

### Low Income Committee (Committee):

1. Description – The Low-Income Committee (Committee) supports all Delaware low-income energy efficiency programs and initiatives by providing feedback and guidance on the development and implementation of cost-effective program offerings.
2. History - The Committee was created in 2016 to support all Delaware low-income energy efficiency programs and initiatives. The Committee provides feedback and guidance on the development and implementation of cost-effective program offerings. The Committee membership includes EEAC members (including utility representatives), state agencies,

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community action agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and community foundations.

3. **Highlights** - In 2019, the Committee successfully supported the following:
  - a. Delmarva Power & Light's efforts to deploy \$4 million in Exelon merger funds designated for the creation of low-income energy efficiency programs. After a competitive RFP process, the Delaware Sustainable Energy Utility was awarded a contract to create a program to administer the funds, which includes a fund for larger programs and one for locally focused energy efficiency programs.
    - i. Moving forward, the Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the deployment of these funds.
  - b. Educating committee members about the low-income energy burden of Delaware
  - c. Learning low-income program best practices from around the country
  - d. Assessing the needs and opportunities for low-income energy efficiency programs in Delaware
  - e. Discussing the skills and training needed to support the energy efficiency workforce of Delaware.
  
4. **Gaps** – The Committee will identify, advise, and recommend methods to fill gaps previously identified by the public and as specified in the Low-Income Working Group document titled *"Introduction to Delaware Low-Income Demographics and Available Housing Services,"* which was presented to the Council on July 13, 2016. Gaps and supporting solutions include but are not limited to the following:

#### Short Term:

- a. Engage effective community organizations that advocate for and can implement change for those in need.
- b. Learn and prioritize those needs advocated by engaged effective community organizations.
- c. Identify and source out those financial and institutional resources that can effectively impact a list of prioritized needs through coordination and facilitation of Committee activities.

#### Long Term:

- a. Identify the root causes of energy inefficiency in Low Income Communities
- b. Recommend ways to maximize energy efficiency resources.
- c. Provide a framework to leverage partnerships.
- d. Stress the importance of focusing on vulnerable populations.
- e. Emphasize broad community outreach.
- f. Recommend effective training resources.
- g. Monitor and advise on the success and failure of low-income initiatives.

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- h. Support the sustainability of those low-income initiatives that work.
- i. Promote STEM based curriculum as an integral part of outreach activities to children and their parents.
- j. Advise and recommend effective methods for engaging and articulating those individuals without a voice who are marginalized and underrepresented in Low Income Communities.
- k. Establish a framework for data monitoring and analysis based on prescribed data sets/points (i.e., Community Vitality, Education, Environment & Infrastructure, Financial Health & Wealth, Housing, Job Creation, Public Safety and Transportation) that are directly relevant to root causes of energy inefficiencies.

5. **Recommendations** – The following are some recommendations of this Working Group:

#### **Council Approval Required:**

- a. Change name from “Low Income Committee” to “Energy Efficiency & Equity Committee”.
- b. Expand the Committee membership to include Healthcare, Workforce & Job Creation, Faith Community and Housing representatives.

#### **Work Group Actions Going Forward:**

- a. Query each Committee member on their intent for active membership forward-going. Inactive members may choose to be kept informed.
- b. Committee meeting agendas to include a focus on gaps and solutions which have been identified above.
- c. Committee actions be documented, with minutes that include necessary follow-up actions, deliverables, due dates, and responsible members.