

**MINUTES of the
POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

September 9, 2014

The **Policy Advisory Council** (PAC) was called to order by Sherry Manning at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 9, 2014, via video conference in the Housing Division's offices in Carson City and Las Vegas.

Committee Members Present

Celine Apo, Utility Company Representative (Arrived at 2:15 p.m. after meeting commenced)
Sherry Manning, Consumer Groups Representative
Michele Montoya, Subgrantee Representative
Debra Parra, At Large Representative
Betsy Ransdell, At Large Representative

Committee Members Absent

None

Staff Members Present

CJ Manthe, Administrator
Michael Holliday, Chief Financial Officer
Sue Martin, Program Manager
Colleen L. Platt, Deputy Attorney General (Arrived at 2:25 p.m. after meeting commenced)
Jim Smallridge, Compliance Audit Investigator
Patrick Conway, Grants and Projects Analyst II

Others Present

Bruce Atkinson, Community Services Agency
Mike Hynick, Nevada Rural Housing Authority
Rita LeFever, Neighborhood Services
Roy Smith, Nevada Rural Housing Authority

Public Comment

Sherry Manning opened the meeting for public comment. There was no public comment.

Introductions of NHD Staff

Sherry Manning asked for introductions of the new Nevada Housing Division staff present at the meeting:

CJ Manthe said she joined the Nevada Housing Division as the Administrator in late May of 2014. She previously worked for Nevada Rural Housing Authority and they are one of the subgrantees of the Weatherization Assistance Program. She stated that she knows firsthand the importance of the work of the Policy Advisory Board and the Program in helping persons with disabilities and elderly save money on utility bills leading to improved quality of life, which furthers the mission of the Nevada Housing Division.

Michael Holliday said that he also is from Nevada Rural Housing Authority and is now the Chief Financial Officer for the Nevada Housing Division. He too is familiar with the Weatherization Assistance Program stating that it is a great Program providing direct support to the people who need it.

Introductions of New PAC Members

Sherry Manning asked for introductions of the new members of the Policy Advisory Committee:

Debra Parra said she has been with the Nevada Housing Division since 1990. Currently she is administering the HOME Program, Housing Trust Fund Program and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Portions of the Housing Trust Funds are used by the Weatherization Assistance Program but the amount has been cut in half over the last few years. Hopefully, it will be restored to the full amount in the near future.

Celine Apo said that she has been with Southwest Gas Corporation for about four and one-half years in the Energy Efficiency Conservation Department. She started out as an intern for six months in 2010 then hired on fulltime primarily working as support for Holly Lloyd on the rebate and energy efficiency programs. As of January 2014, she transitioned into the low-income program in California. On July 1st she was placed over Nevada and Arizona low-income programs as well. *(Her introduction occurred later into the meeting after the discussion regarding the HEROS Weatherization Program.)*

Minutes

Motion: Moved by Michele Montoya and seconded by Betsy Ransdell to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2014 meeting.

Motion carried with Debra Parra abstaining.

FY 2014 End of Year Report

Sue Martin said that 99.9 percent of the funds were expended leaving only a small balance of approximately \$7,000 of Southwest Gas funds unexpended. Rural Nevada Development Corporation (RNDC) has a very small number of Southwest Gas customers in their service area and was having a hard time locating eligible projects. To help remedy this situation, Nevada Rural Housing Authority (NRHA) agreed to take \$30,000 of their Southwest Gas funds in exchange for \$20,000 of Department of Energy (DOE) funds, which RNDC could use more effectively in their service area. After the switch of funds, NRHA only had a quick timeframe to spend the Southwest Gas funds but did an excellent job in getting most all of it expended.

Sue Martin said that the subgrantees still have until September 30th to spend the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds because they are on a different grant cycle. All of the LIHEAP funds are expected to be expended by the deadline.

Sue Martin said that the subgrantees met their goals of spending all of the Funds for Energy Assistance and Conservation (FEAC) and DOE funds. However, several subgrantees' production goals for the number of units produced were down because the subgrantees had to spend more funds on Health and Safety compliance increasing the average cost per unit primarily due to the whole house fan installation requirement of DOE. The Weatherization Assistance Program is looking to increase the Health and Safety funding which is typically ten to fifteen percent.

FY 2015 Year to Date Report

Sue Martin said this report is only for the first month of the new fiscal year. Expenditures and production is only at five percent but if everything was linear it would be at eight percent for July. However, July is a start up month for the subgrantees and they are just turning over projects to contractors. Typically there is not enough time for there to be many completions.

HEROS Weatherization Program

Patrick Conway explained, with the assistance of NRHA, the Weatherization Assistance Program has received a new grant of \$600,000 from the Governor's Office of Energy (GOE) to operate the Home Energy Retrofit Opportunities for Seniors (HEROS) program. The HEROS program will augment existing weatherization funding for persons 60 years and older, at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, and are NV Energy electric customers. The GOE contract and funding has been approved by both the Board of Examiners and the Interim Finance Committee and is now in the process of being committed to the six subgrantees who will implement the statewide program. Non-rental properties can receive up to \$6,000 for eligible weatherization measures but the HEROS funds cannot be used for health and safety measures. However, these funds can be leveraged with other funding sources that can address health and safety items and additional weatherization measures.

Sherry Manning said this is incredible and what is most important is the collaboration of the different agencies allowing the HEROS program to come together so quickly. She asked how could the funds be distributed to the subgrantees without going out to competitive bid?

Sue Martin responded by saying that it is not necessary because the GOE wanted to use our current delivery system under an inter-local agreement. The GOE could have implemented the program any way that they wanted it just had to be for NV Energy customers. However, since the infrastructure of trained and knowledgeable subgrantees already existing within our Weatherization Assistance Program, GOE decided that it made more sense to use the Nevada Housing Division (NHD) instead of creating a new program.

Patrick Conway added that the funds are being distributed to the subgrantees in the same percentages as the existing funding under the Weatherization Assistance Program, which is based on the population of each service areas.

Sue Martin said HEROS should be considered a pilot program with the potential to receive more funding in the future if it is successful. The GOE has also discussed a separate weatherization program that will be for the benefit of State employees and has the potential to provide another pot of money.

Update on FEAC Advisory Committee Meeting

Patrick Conway said that at the last PAC meeting it was raised as a concern that there may be other parties interested in using the FEAC funds for a different purpose than their current use. It was suggested that someone attend the next Low Income Energy Assistance Program Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for May 1, 2014. He said he attended this meeting and there was not any discussion regarding an alternative use of these funds that would impact the Weatherization Assistance Program. However, there has been a proposed recommendation by the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to change the distribution of how the funds are distributed under the Energy Assistance Program (EAP), which is a sister program of weatherization that also receive FEAC funding. The PUC wants EAP to distribute it funds in 1/12 monthly distributions instead of providing a lump sum annual benefit to eligible household that qualify for assistance. Concerns were raised that this would impact households that may need the assistance in a lump sum due to a loss of a job or persons who receive propane as a fuel source because it requires payment at the begin of the heating season when the tanks are filled.

Betsy Ransdell said it is her understanding at this time it is being recommended that the awards remain as an annual benefit because there would be significant cost to establishing a monthly distribution process.

Sherry Manning asked if this is something the Policy Advisory Council (PAC) should become involved in advocating in helping to protect low-income clients?

Sue Martin responded saying that she does know if it would affect us at the PAC level. However, the PUC had their public hearings but never gave EAP a formal recommendation to modify the program.

Michele Montoya said this is exactly why she mentioned this as a concern at the last meeting because items can come up and they may or may not affect us. We need to be on top of items that may potentially go to the legislature to change our program.

Sherry Manning concurred with Michele Montoya stating that we need to continue to keep an eye on these types of matters. If concerning matter arise during the upcoming legislative session email either Patrick or Sue.

Agenda for Next Meeting

Sherry Manning requested agenda items for the next PAC meeting. The suggested agenda items are:

- Election of Officers
- Year to Date Production and Expenditures
- Service Provides from subgrantee for next program year
- DOE State Plan

Colleen Platt stated that the Attorney General's Office will be conducting a Boards and Commission Training at the end of October 2014.

The next meeting of PAC is scheduled:

Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

Public Comment:

Sherry Manning opened the meeting a second time for public comment. There was no public comment.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Conway
Grants & Projects Analyst II