

**MINUTES**  
POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
June 7, 2023

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

The Policy Advisory Council (PAC) meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Dr. Mae Worthey-Thomas, via Microsoft Teams video and audio conferencing. Dr. Worthey-Thomas called roll and announced a quorum of four out of seven members present.

\*Two members signed in after roll call for a quorum with six out of seven members present.

**Council Members Present**

Vice Chair - Dr. Mae Worthey-Thomas, NHD Representative  
Bob Cooper, At-Large Representative  
Chris Mohr, At-Large Representative  
Jessica Mahon, Subgrantee Representative  
Makana Bennings-Tookes, Utility Representative  
Jeanne Stoneman, At-Large Representative

**Council Members Absent**

Angelia Haskett, DWSS Representative

**Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) Staff Members Present**

Maria Wortman-Meshberger, Chief of Employment and Support Services  
Betsy Ransdell, Social Services Specialist

**Nevada Housing Division (NHD) Staff Members Present**

Steven Aichroth, NHD Administrator  
Tamera Saida, Weatherization Grants and Projects

**Others Present**

Angela Hernandez, Community Services Agency  
Ashley Gonzalez, HELP of Southern Nevada  
Stacy Thornton, Nevada Rural Housing Authority  
Carlos Gonzalez, Nevada Rural Housing Authority

**Public Comment**

No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an Agenda as an item upon which action will be taken. (Because of time considerations, the period for public comment by each speaker is

limited to three (3) minutes and speakers are urged to avoid repetition of comments made by previous speakers).

Dr. Worthey-Thomas opened the meeting for public comment. There were no public comments.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Worthey-Thomas asked if there were any comments or changes to the meeting minutes from the last meeting, which was held on February 16, 2023. There were no requests for changes to the meeting minutes. Bob Cooper made a motion to approve the minutes with no changes. Chris Mohr seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The motion was passed with a vote of 6 – 0.

### **PAC Membership Update**

Dr. Worthey Thomas announced that Jeanne Stoneman has been appointed to the Policy Advisory Council. Jeanne Stoneman accepted the appointment.

### **PAC Election of Officers**

Dr. Worthey Thomas asked for nominations for the open officer position of chairperson. Bob Cooper nominated Dr. Mae Worthey-Thomas. Jeanne Stoneman stated interest, as well. Dr. Worthey Thomas declined the nomination, and then asked for a motion to elect Jeanne Stoneman as the new chairperson. Jessica Mahon then asked Jeanne to share some information about herself. Jeanne stated that she has worked closely with Robin Yochum, our previous chairperson, at the Governor's Office of Energy. Jeanne stated that she works in Energy Efficiency, with one of the chief programs being the Weatherization Assistance Program. Jeanne stated that she has a passion for energy efficiency as well as helping Nevadans. She has also worked with the northern Nevada Rebuilding Together. Dr. Worthey Thomas again asked for a motion to approve Jeanne Stoneman as chairperson. Bob Cooper made the motion, with Chris Moore giving the second. The motion was passed, and Jeanne Stoneman was elected chairperson of the Policy Advisory Council with a vote of 6 - 0.

### **Energy Assistance Program Management Monitoring Summary**

Maria Wortman-Meshberger shared her expenditure spreadsheet via screenshare. Maria stated that in the month of April, the Energy Assistance program received 2,813 applications, which was 32% more than the amount received at this time last year. In April, the number of applications that were processed was 2,884 applications and 1,289 of those were determined to be eligible, which is an approval rate of 45%. The average time to process a case approved in the month of April was 108 days. The time frame to process a case has decreased over the last few months. The average energy burden for April was 2.74%, while the current energy burden is 2.29%. The total amount expended for this program in the month of April for regular benefits was \$1,145,638, with a year-to-date average benefit of \$1,093. In the month of April, \$113,455 was expended on arrears, which was an average benefit of \$582, coming in close to the average of \$581. Overall, in the month of April, the Energy Assistance Program expended \$1,259,103 for benefits, which includes both regular benefits and arrearage benefits, with the year to

date average benefit of \$1,230 per household. This includes supplemental benefits. Maria announced that the LIHEAP state plan and the UEC state plan public hearing will be held on June 29th at 10:30am.

Makana Bennings-Tookes asked Maria Wortman-Meshberger If there was an average date between the North and South of the state in application processing times. Maria stated that they are processing February cases from the Las Vegas area by the end of this week. The Carson City area cases from February will be processed by the end of June, with the target date being June 23rd. Makana asked If the applications are approved after July 1st, if they will be receiving benefits in the new fiscal year. Maria Wortman-Meshberger stated that, yes, this is the case, and that since nothing will be changing, the clients will receive the same benefits in the new fiscal year. Makana Bennings-Tookes asked Maria if there would be any consideration to have alternative ways for assisting to expedite the application process. Maria stated that the staff at the Energy Assistance Program is undergoing training in order to increase the ability to process applications. She also stated that some staff has been brought over from the food stamp, TANF, and Medicaid departments to assist with the application process.

#### **Weatherization Assistance Program Production and Expenditure Summary**

Tamera Saida gave expenditure reports for the FEAC fund and the DOE fund for the Weatherization program ending in the third quarter of the state fiscal year, which is March of 2023. The FEAC fund has expended \$1,993,761, with \$1,22,356 going toward program operations. This shows that the program has expended 63% of the total funding for the fiscal year with one more quarter to go. For the DOE program, \$660,430 in total has been expended through the end of the third quarter, with \$607,338 being spent on program operations. This shows a 48% expenditure rate with one more quarter to go. Tamera stated that it is estimated that the DOE program will be on track to spend 90% of its fund and has estimated that 10% of the fund will be a carryover for the new fiscal year, which will be allowed, and has been included in the DOE state plan for program year 2023. Tamera stated that there is not enough information for the quarter for the LIHEAP funds, as they only just received their first draws in the months of April and May since the funds were approved so late in the year.

#### **Department of Energy State Plan**

Tamera Saida reported that for the Department of Energy state plan for program year 2023 the Weatherization Program is starting out with an allocation of \$1,665,130, which is about \$200,000 more than it started at last year The program will have about 10% of that as a carryover and taking it into the next year. The readiness fund is back this year at \$281,670, but the \$800 cap will be changed to a \$13,000 ACPU. This will enable the program to serve a lot more clients. With the carryover and this years' allocation, the total will be just under 1.9 million to start out program year 2023.

Tamera asked if anyone had any questions about the state plan?

Bob Cooper stated that his contact information is not current on the state plan, and Tamera asked him to email his current information, so that she can change it in the DOE database.

Dr. Mae Worthey-Thomas mentioned that this state plan does not include the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, and that those funds have already been approved previously.

Jessica Mahon asked if the eligibility guidelines were the same on this year's state plan or if they were introduced this year, referring to the HUD categories for eligibility, which includes automatic eligibility for section 8 recipients. Tamera stated that that was also in last year's plan.

Dr. Mae Worthey-Thomas stated that one of the requirements of having the GOE state plan approved is to conduct a public hearing, which will be this afternoon from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Dr. Worthey-Thomas invited everyone to attend but stated that it is not mandatory.

**How Often Should the Council Meet? (Bylaws require 2 per year minimum)**

Dr. Mae Worthey-Thomas stated that the bylaws of the Policy Advisory Council require that the council meet twice annually and was wondering if anyone would like to discuss reducing the meeting frequency from four times per year to two. Dr. Worthey-Thomas opened this for discussion. Jeanne Stoneman stated that she does not object to meeting quarterly. Chris Mohr also stated that he likes to meet quarterly. Dr. Worthey-Thomas asked for a motion to continue to meet quarterly. Jeanne Stoneman made the motion, with Jessica Mahon seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a 6 - 0 vote. Dr. Worthey-Thomas stated that she will draw up a schedule for these meetings to be pre-planned.

**Public Comment**

Dr. Worthey-Thomas asked for any public comment, and there was none.

**Adjournment**

The Policy Advisory Council meeting was adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Tamera Saida  
Grants and Projects Analyst