

Statewide Low- to Moderate-Income Portfolio Stakeholder
Webinar
July 14, 2021
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Summary Report

Filed: August 3, 2021
Case 18-M-0084
Case 14-M-0094

Pursuant to New York Public Service Commission Order Adopting
Accelerated Energy Efficiency Targets
and
Order Authorizing Utility Energy Efficiency and Building
Electrification Portfolios Through 2025

1. Introduction

To provide an update on the development and implementation of the Statewide Low- to Moderate-Income (“LMI”) Portfolio (“Portfolio”),¹ NYSERDA and the Utilities² (collectively, “Program Administrators”) hosted a webinar for stakeholders on July 14, 2021.³ The objectives were to provide stakeholders with an update on the continued development of the Statewide LMI Portfolio, including progress since the July 2020 Implementation Plan filing, and to solicit stakeholder feedback. A PowerPoint presentation, filed in conjunction with this report, was given at the stakeholder webinar, followed by time for stakeholders to ask questions and provide comments. At the end of the webinar, stakeholders were encouraged to submit any further comments, questions, or suggestions via the email address LMIforum@nysERDA.ny.gov.

Questions and comments received during this stakeholder webinar have been and will continue to be reviewed and considered by the LMI Joint Management Committee (“JMC”).⁴ Following initial development and implementation of the Statewide LMI Portfolio, the Portfolio will be aligned periodically based on a review of initiative performance and evaluations. Questions and comments raised by stakeholders will be used to inform the calibration of the Portfolio.

2. Presentation Details

Title: Statewide Low- to Moderate-Income Portfolio

Date: July 14, 2021

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Webinar

¹ Case 18-M-0084, In the Matter of a Comprehensive Energy Efficiency Initiative (“NE: NY Proceeding”), Order Authorizing Utility Energy Efficiency and Building Electrification Portfolios Through 2025 (issued January 16, 2020) (“Implementation Order”). Pursuant to the Implementation Order, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (“NYSERDA”) and the New York Utilities (“Utilities”) (collectively, “Program Administrators”) on July 24, 2020, filed a statewide Low- and Moderate-Income (“LMI”) Implementation Plan (“Implementation Plan”).

² The Utilities referred to herein are: Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation; Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (“Con Edison”); KeySpan Gas East Corporation d/b/a National Grid, The Brooklyn Union Gas Company d/b/a National Grid NY, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a National Grid (collectively “National Grid”); National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation, New York State Electric & Gas Corporation; Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc.; and Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation, (collectively, “Utilities”).

³ The Commission required the Utilities and NYSERDA to host at least two stakeholder engagement sessions annually. NE: NY Proceeding, Implementation Order, p. 101.

⁴ *Id.*

Moderator and Presenters:

Moderator:

Lisa Romero – NYSERDA

Presenters:

Brittney Pietro – National Grid

Chris Coll – NYSERDA

Scott Oliver - NYSERDA

Rachel Charow – Con Edison

Andrew Neufeld - NYSERDA

Agenda

- Welcome: Briefly welcomed attendees and explained the process to raise questions.
- Context: Overview of NYS LMI households and creation of LMI Implementation Plan
- Overview of Initiatives and Services: Objectives and Progress to Date
- Stakeholder Engagement: Process of seeking and implementing stakeholder feedback
- Next Steps: Timeline for launching initiatives and services
- Discussion: Attendees were encouraged to ask questions using the WebEx “Chat” and “Q&A” functions. Presenters provide responses.

3. Stakeholder Information

Invitations, that included stakeholder registration information for the webinar, were sent electronically to stakeholders who had previously attended a stakeholder meeting and those listed on the Low-Income Forum on Energy email list. In addition, a meeting notice was posted on the Department of Public Service (“DPS”) Document and Matter Management website (“DMM”) on June 15, 2021. Due to continued COVID-19 concerns with respect to in-person gatherings, this session was held electronically via webinar.

Stakeholders attending the webinar included DPS Staff, human service and community-based organizations, advocates, local governments, contractors, installers, energy service companies (“ESCOs”), developers, consultants, and vendors.

There were 179 registrants. Of those registered, 25% were from downstate (NYC boroughs, Westchester and Long Island), 63% were from upstate New York and the remaining 12% were from out of state. 123 registrants attended the WebEx.

4. Review of Stakeholder Input

The Portfolio development and execution is expected to continue through 2025, and the Program Administrators expect the Portfolio to evolve. As programs are developed and calibrated, it is paramount to continue engaging with stakeholders, including requesting feedback and suggestions during the initial design and redesign of initiatives and services.

During the WebEx, it was explained that multiple topical workstreams, reporting directly to the JMC, have been created to address specific initiatives and services. These include but are not limited to: 1-4 Family Homes; Affordable Multifamily retrofits; NY Energy Advisor and Marketing; Beneficial Electrification; Evaluation, Measurement, and Verification (“EM&V”); and Stakeholder Engagement. Other coordination areas addressed include data sharing, implementation consultants, and streamlined program applications.

The topics, discussion, and comments received from this stakeholder meeting and subsequent stakeholder meetings have been and will continue to be referred to the appropriate workstream or the JMC for review.

Questions and Answers

Panelists posed an initial general question and request to WebEx attendees. We receive referrals for the 1-4 family program from utilities and from other sources. The JMC is thinking about ways to better target and refer low-income households to the 1-4 family program and would like suggestions on outreach strategies. The attendees were encouraged to submit suggestions, via LMIforum@nyseda.ny.gov

There were 17 questions raised and addressed during the WebEx. The first three Q&A below note that attendees were encouraged to submit suggestions on those specific topics. Note: comments on any topic are always welcome.

Q1. What are the expectations for Community Energy Advisors in regards to providing advice for multifamily projects? Are they expected to know these programs well? Is it correct to assume that there will be a separate technical advisor?

A1. The Community Energy Advisors are not expected to be technical consultants to building owners. However, Community Energy Advisors should be sufficiently familiar with the program offerings to know and understand what is available for residential customers or affordable property owners to make referrals or direct customers and affordable property owners to the appropriate program(s).

Built into the multifamily initiative, there will be resources dedicated to providing technical consultation and services to building owners going through the program. In terms of additional support/opportunities, stakeholders were encouraged to submit ideas to LMIforum@nyseda.ny.gov

Q2. Multifamily: Why is only 75% of the audit fee for Technical Assistance being provided? ASHRAE Level II audits cost more. This seems to be discouraging larger buildings to participate in a comprehensive approach.

A2. We are raising the incentive from the current Flex-Tech offering for large buildings. We are also seeking to cover 100% of small building audits in order to increase participation in the program among smaller buildings, which have historically participated less in the comprehensive offering due to capital constraints. We are open to additional

suggestions on how to structure funding of audits. Please submit additional considerations to LMIforum.nyserda.ny.gov

- Q3.** Will there be any workforce development for Participating Contractor networks?
- A3.** NYSERDA has several workforce development programs that currently provide financial support, especially to disadvantaged communities. Attendees were encouraged to submit comments via LMIforum.nyserda.ny.com with workforce development needs in areas that aren't covered.
- Q4.** Multifamily Program: In the multifamily program, what is the difference between prescriptive measures and custom measures?
- A4.** Prescriptive Measures: Prescriptive measures are found in the New York State Technical Resource Manual ("TRM"). The TRM provides guidance on how to calculate savings for those measures.
Custom measures: Custom measures are measures not found in the TRM and for which there needs to be a "custom" calculation of savings, for example, a chiller optimization project in multifamily buildings. Custom calculations may also include use of custom models to calculate savings for a measure, rather than using the formulas in the TRM.
- Q5.** Heat Pumps: Are the costs (shared on the PowerPoint slides # 20-22) before incentives or after?
- A5.** The costs that were presented were costs before incentives, *i.e.*, the total measure cost before rebates. The calculation is: Gross cost minus utility rebate minus the NYSERDA incentives. For EmPower customers, in most cases, after rebates and incentives, there were no costs to the customer. In some cases, for Assisted Home Performance customers there was a customer contribution, in particular, with a Ground Source Heat Pump.
- Q6.** What is DMM?
- A6.** DMM is the DPS Document and Matter Management System designed to manage documents filed with and issued by the department. To search for documents related to this case, search on the DPS DMM website under Case 18-M-0084
- Q7.** Is the new EmPower application video online?
- A7.** The Combined Residential Application will be available beginning July 16, 2021, on the Combined Residential Application landing page at <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/ny/ahp-empower>. The landing page contains links to the geo-eligibility screening tool, the online application, and the paper application. This revised application will replace the current subsidy application and EmPower New York application. Training will be available.
- Q8.** When can we expect the updated LMI Implementation Plan to be filed?
- A8.** The JMC plans to file the Updated LMI Implementation Plan within the coming weeks.

Note: since the July 14 Webinar, the JMC has decided to file the Updated LMI Implementation Plan later this year.

- Q9.** Given the heavy reliance on local contractors to complete energy efficiency work, what will be the QA/QC (i.e., Quality Assurance/ Quality Control) and oversight practices that will be in place to ensure trust and accountability of each program?
- A9.** 1-4 Family: NYSEDA has had and will continue to have a robust QA/QC process, inspecting about 20% of completed work. The process works well and NYSEDA has seen a decrease in customer complaints.

Multifamily: There are pre- and post-inspections on construction, as well as QA/QC on construction. QA/QC is also performed on audits. Customers are given the opportunity to bring their own contractors into the program, but may also select a contractor from the Participating Contractor network, who will have met license and insurance requirements for the programs. For the comprehensive offering, customers may also opt to use their Provider to oversee construction, helping provide quality control to the construction.

- Q10.** In addition to the Energy Advisor website, have you considered having a hotline so people can call and/or text to connect with someone directly?
- A10.** In the development of the NY Energy Advisor, consideration was given to having a hotline. In this first iteration of the NY Energy Advisor, there will be links to other web pages with contact information for customers to reach out to someone tied to the offers or programs if they have questions. A call center will be considered for versions 2.0 of the NY Energy Advisor.
- Q11.** Multifamily program: Would an audit require the Energy Service Provider to use TRM calculations for prescriptive measures or may a provider use other industry calculations standards such as ASHRAE, etc.?
- A11.** We have been reviewing how savings will be calculated for this offering, and are trying to be flexible. We are considering allowing the use of custom energy models for comprehensive projects; in those instances, there would be QA/QC performed by a third party to confirm the energy savings calculated through the model and the assumptions used.
- Q12.** Regarding outreach, using the NY Energy Advisor, have you considered ways you could reach LMI customers that are recipients of utility discounts or any other forms of public assistance?
- A12.** Outreach strategies are being considered. We are working through the marketing strategy over the next few months.
- Q13.** Given that smaller (2-10 unit) LMI building stock typically has deferred maintenance and other legacy characteristics that prevent EE work from proceeding, what specific funding/program coordination ideas are being considered that would address these expensive remediation needs?

- A13.** In most instances, EmPower is available to 1-4 family buildings. In the future, it is expected that EmPower will merge with Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR[®] to form EmPower +, leveraging existing 1-4 family framework to reach more customers. There are special projects where NYSERDA is working with the New York State Department of Health and New York State Home and Community Renewal to better coordinate programs and resources.
- Q14.** Within the multifamily program, will there be opportunities for retroactive incentives for projects completed within the program year if the work was completed with using an in-house contractor or non-participating contractor?
- A14.** The Program Administrators do not offer retroactive incentives. We can take that back and discuss as a group.
Regarding contractors, a building owner/manager will be able to use their own contractors in the program, or bring them on as a participating contractor. We also encourage anyone interested in completing a multifamily project this year to apply to existing programs in the market in order to receive incentives. There are currently utility and NYSERDA programs available and operational, while the statewide offering is under development.
- Q15.** Will this presentation be available to watch? Will slides be sent to attendees by email?
- A15.** This presentation is not being recorded. The power point slides and notes will be available within a few weeks on the DPS DMM website.
- Q16.** Are the geo targeting areas the same or have they changed?
- A16.** The geo targeting function will be live on NYSERDA's website on July 16th. The new geo targeting area is for EmPower eligible customers and provides a 100% subsidy so the areas are smaller to start out. We plan on enlarging the areas with assistance from local community groups in the future.
- Q17.** It was indicated that the disadvantaged communities map was a temporary fix until something else was finalized. Does this mean the disadvantaged community map will remain an active resource?
- A17.** There is a main map and a separate map that is being used for now by EmPower. There is a map and set of criteria for what the state is referring to as an interim definition for disadvantaged communities. The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act ("CLCPA") tasked the Climate Justice Working Group to define disadvantaged communities. Those communities are then to be targeted to receive the benefits and investment mandates of the CLCPA. The Climate Justice Working Group is developing the criteria. The plan is to include community involvement. They are close to drafting a set of criteria which will be put out for public comment later this year. Once we have a final set of criteria coming out of that working group, that would supersede the interim criteria.