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Low Income Collaborative 8/26/2010

Introductions

Michigan Benefits Access Initiative Update, Nancy Lindman
Sherry Miller – Mi director of 211 – PowerPoint posted.

What kind of schedule are they looking at to add these programs? Hopefully over the next few years, but it is a matter of resources.

DHS is a collaborative of MBAI

Looking to add additional counties in next few months. Some areas are more challenging.

Why are these services not accessed by more people? There were surveys done and Nancy can provide these findings. Many people feel they are not eligible.

If participation were to increase significantly would funds run out? I can't answer that.

Coordination of major low-income home repair. How big is this problem? Walk-away homes. EO, WAP moneys have to walk away from a home because a roof repair can't be funded.

DTE – The number of homes that needed significant repairs was about 1/3 in a sweep. Post ARRA, it could be quite troublesome to do a neighborhood without these funds because the homes would have roof problems.

When you come across this problem how do you address this? There are a small percentage of LIHEAP monies that you can use, also requesting that DOE funds be used to fix these roofs.

DTE is ahead of Consumers on these programs.

DTE has had discussions with Habitat for Humanity and Owens Corning to try and coordinate with funding.

Sharon – MCAAA – clearly home repair has always been a problem for the CAA's. Once a CAA has to walk away from the home due to a roof repair they can't do any weatherization. It's always been an ongoing battle for us.

DELEG is an equal opportunity employer/program.
Auxiliary aids, services and other reasonable accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Art – makeover application program. Asked homes to apply and found most applications to be from trailer homes. They had terrible energy consumption, difficult construction, and there was nothing they could do. There's a large population in the rural area with these types of homes. Those folks need that type of help and can't get it. Those that did qualify they are really excited about.

What can be done to a trailer home? Converting from the window airs to a central air system. But, this can be costly.

What about the ones who have a structure outside the structure? Yes, this creates a unique situation.

Has there been any contact with the mobile home manufacturer's to see if there are any updates to help these homes? I am not aware of anything available for these homes.

The newer mobile homes, are these better? Yes, the modular manufactured homes are much better constructed and constructed in a controlled environment. But, these older homes, there's just nothing you can do but try to get the people out.

The under belly is the only type of insulation you can do, but it is not a lot of help.

Sherry, have you had calls about how many times you can't help a caller. Yes, we do have unmet needs statistics. I do not have that information on hand but can be emailed.

A part of this is in the long run the neighborhood approach is a mix of low income and non-low income. There's a dynamic that needs to be thought about. After the BBFM (MRRI) post pilot program could give us better data. We could learn a lot from BBFM (MRRI).

The BBFM (MRRI) could give us an idea how to approach the non-low income area.

MCAAA will help us figure out how to get organizations to open up their purses to help fix windows and roofs.

It's too bad you have to walk away, it seems like doing some would be better than doing none.

You can do CFLs, low flow shower heads, etc., but anything else beyond that would require a blower door test.

What's the proper equation to make utilities more affordable? That's the million dollar question. What can work for a customer?

With the ability to repair roofs would keep the family in the home. Lowering the utility bills the family is more likely to stay in their home. That is why it is important to find these funds.

Each allocation we get from the LIEEF for bill payment there is a portion left over, then we get an allocation for weatherization. We would like to be able to use these funds for these types of

repairs.

Is that person going to keep coming back for bill assistance if they get their roof fixed and their weatherization done? There is a mathematical equation here. Maximizing the use of the funds.

If you do neighborhood by neighborhood you increase the value of those homes.

Then there is the issue of the renters. Would an improvement to a rental increase the rent of the home? Could we make a homeowner agree to not raise the rent?

If someone comes to a CAA and their municipality they would be matched. Block grant programs, etc.

How do we get the word out? Some people are just lost. Just telling your employees. Large organizations should just get the word out. I would refer people to 211, they may refer people to Michigan Energy Options.

Lori – I spoke with Sally Talberg from Michigan Saves this morning and they are offering the financing program for those that would qualify.

A state-wide brochure is another idea being thought about. An all-inclusive generic brochure. Although it would have to be easily understood.

Some of our Consumer Alerts are information heavy. The smaller card stock is more generic, maybe video alerts.

Maybe some different languages.

Social media?

DTE and Consumers both have Facebook.

Does the consumer have internet? Twitter?

What about collaborating with the post office? As long as it doesn't add to our cost.

Web applications - minorities and low-income use the phone more than anything. Make sure it's mobile ready.

Keep a look out for the grants on the MPSC and the BBFM (MRRRI).

Efforts to work with DHS – third party energy payment. It looked like DHS was open to working with us, but then it fell through. We are looking forward to our next round of funding to get this done. Fortunately we do not get many requests for third party bill payments. Salvation Army will pay these types of bills.

There is a report out there and Lori can send the link out. Other states have programs to allow for this type of payment. We are going to take another route.

Other issues?

Next meeting will be Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm date. Sept. 10, 2010 1:30-3.