

BPA's Northwest Low-Income Energy Efficiency Workgroup

June 25, 2025 | 1:00pm – 3:00pm (PST) | Hosts: BPA LIEE Team

Agenda Notes

Welcome & Introductions

Opening Remarks: Jamae Hilliard Creecy, Vice President, Energy Efficiency, BPA

- Provided by Jamae Hilliard Creecy, Vice President, Energy Efficiency, BPA
 - Jamae shared programmatic successes and statistics with the group
 - While low income may struggle with cost effectiveness it is extremely valuable to the program
 - Acknowledged that BPA's commitment to the Low-income program is steady and acknowledged the staff's hard work

BPA Updates

- Amy Burke provided resources for information on the workgroup including the website and where to access the previous meeting material archive
- Website language has been updated to adhere to federal language change requirements
- Reviewed the workgroup reference list with the group

General Updates for program

- Workgroup meetings will be ongoing and held as webinars for the time being
 - The online format will mean the meetings are a little shorter
 - The team will be tracking federal changes that could impact work
- Provided an overview of strategic priorities
- Supporting measures
- Developing new opportunities
- Assessing potential incentive increases
- Addressing contractor hesitancies
- Supporting communities

Implementation Manual updates

- IM Webinar hosted on the 26th
- Most items called out in April manual updates
- Key updates for 2026-2028
 - Program name change
 - Removing metal-frame only precondition
 - Disallowing cost coverage for full roof tear offs
 - Update on grant language for new rate period
 - Requiring cost fields be entered into beets
 - Removing "by request" measure distribution channel

- Repair cost clarity
- Repair cost caps
- HPWH incentives going up
- Income qualification Clarification provided to group
 - Q: Clarification on who is it that approves income qualification?
 - **A: The state agency has approved the income qualification**
- Ongoing efforts and discussions
 - Workforce development
 - EEI coverage of CAP admin costs
 - Collaborating with Habitat for Humanity
 - Supporting low-income multifamily housing
 - Measure development
- Low income 101 webinar – July 17th
 - Will provide details and resources for those interested in starting a low-income program
- Additional Grant budget available
 - Attendees asked to reach out to program if they have any projects that might be illegible
- Questions:
 - Q: What were the specifics that made the decision about repair costs?
 - **A: Repair costs had been a grey area. Program wanted to provide more guidance and that necessitated some guidance. Program wanted to provide more consistency around repairs**
 - Q: How do we get invited to the 101 webinar?
 - **A: We can add anyone interested**
 - Q: Do the repair cost caps apply to all measures?
 - **A: The IM gives guidance on what measures allow cap costs**
 - Q: With repair costs capped does that give cap agencies the ability to move forward without pre-approval?
 - **A: That is a question for the state or utility agency you are working with**

State Updates: Program Status and Success Stories

- Washington Department of Commerce: Lauren Savage Wittig
 - Lauren provided a review of success stories from Washington
- Oregon Housing & Community Services: Danielle Safford
 - Danielle provided a review of success stories for Oregon
 - Q: You mentioned an increase in cost to weatherization materials, is it across the board?
 - A: Yes, across the board.
- Idaho Department of Health & Welfare: Lisa Johnson
 - Lisa Johnson provided a review of success stories for Idaho
 - Q: Is Idaho pursuing IRA funding?

- A. A state agency has approved the program but not pursuing funding. More will be discussed as things progress, but funding is key

Impacts to Programs (*Open Sharing*)

- Utilities
 - Benton PUD – Spending is going faster, more customers coming to them but have been around for a few years and have momentum
 - Clark PUD -Looking for ways to spend low-income budget and expanding where they can
 - Chelan County PUD – Low-income program started last year but it is starting to take off.
 - Franklin - Our low-income program is coming along great. Franklin has no problem spending their budget. Much like Benton, Frankling is seeing an uptake in customers for insulation and HVAC. One year wait list currently.
 - Cowlitz - Utilized all their HEAR funding and have a wait list as well. Have been installing cold climate heat pumps and are using B&O funds to install HPWH's and DHPs
 - Coos Curry – Lots of success in territory with a contractor who reached out about smaller projects. 3 sites. Networked with her and were able to help a lot.
 - OTEC - Just working on spending budget. Have had some wonderful successes. Have been waiting on updates so, thank you Amy for the latest updates. This will help us tremendously.
 - Northern Wasco PUD – Past few months have seen a big shift in the actuality of rebates coming through. Almost 4 megawatt hours of savings through a few industrial projects have taken a significant amount of EEI credits. Coincidentally, in that same time frame, internal systems have been changing. Kept all the IQ customers in pipeline and provided them incentives. Shift from free services to asking for financial investment has produced a good response. Looks like getting more IQ heat pump and ductless requests now.
- CAPs
 - Opportunity Council and Building Performance Center – Budgets have continued to improve on the state level and while federal funds are on hold and waiting for information, state levels are solid.
 - SNAPWA - Here in Spokane, for Low Income Wx, budget constraints: faced with 2 contracts not renewing in the light of new government administration. Clients are in high need in the community and sadly don't have the funds to help all. if CAP loses LIHEAP and DOE, it will be short about 30%.
 - Energy Project – Federal funds are uncertain and that would impact some agencies. Will be distributing a survey about a virtual summit.
 - CSC – Still plugging away but have perhaps slowed down a little. Spent a lot of funding so far. Federal funding is 50% of the program budget. Have used weatherization ready funds on two projects.
- Others
 - NW Energy Coalition – Do not often apply for federal funding but it was applied for it had been for particularly focused projects. Are having to shift focus to continue doing work.
- Question:
 - Any word on Saddle bag heat pumps?
 - Still in process but will let everyone know when a measure is developed

- Are CAP agencies slowing down due to lack of funds?
 - In Spokane, NOT slowing down. Hybrid agency and have field crew and contractors. Contractors are going up EXTREMELY high in costs.
 - Opportunity Council and Building Performance Center – not slowing down but not speeding up either

Open Discussion (*As Time Allows*)

1. **What projects or efforts are you planning for the next fiscal year?**
 - a. CEC – Looking at a lot of multifamily new construction IQ stuff
 - i. More stringent higher regulations
 - ii. Seeing that some funding is going away
 - b. Energy Trust of Oregon
 - i. Concerned about DHPs going in from other organizations that aren't inspecting and find poor installs – trying to get insulation – SIRs aren't as good as they would have been when these go in – lack of training to get best practices – big issues with ducts
 - c. Yamhill CAP – heat pump wasn't installed – didn't apply for permit – rodents – ducts disconnected – wasn't leaving it like that
 - d. CAPO - Long-term planning processes going on through the end of the year that we are keeping tabs on, that have the potential to exacerbate the challenges earlier discussed.
2. **Are there places where you feel BPA's programs have slowed you down that might be able to be optimized or made more efficient?**
 - a. Community Services – funds are easy to spend – would love to have more funding – appreciate that it's flexible – good, deemed values – struggle with PUDs that get funds from an outside provider – more operations and isn't involved so much in the
 - b. Yamhill CAP - Rebate amount has led the way in talking with the other partners – leverage our levels when talking to other agencies and some agencies have updated their work
3. **Are there any emerging programs, technologies or organizations that you feel would benefit other groups as well?**
 - a. Community Services – finds that processes are not written down at all – so much paperwork – finding ways to document that and distribute to staff – can use nice looking flow charts using chat GPT
4. **What do you see as the biggest barrier currently to your working relationships with partnership organizations?**
 - a. Getting everyone in the same room – getting everyone in the same room and working with other states and agencies – this is a great forum – a lot of times it starts with an awareness of what each is struggling with
 - b. Still effective – no travel but still helpful

Closing

- Recap
- Next Steps
- Next Meeting: October 2025

Adjourn