

**HEAP Block Grant Advisory Council Meeting  
Thursday, August 4, 2016  
Empire State Plaza  
Suite 146 South Concourse  
Albany, NY 12223**

A meeting of the Block Grant Advisory Council was held on Thursday, August 4, 2016, at the Empire State Plaza, Suite 146 South Concourse, Albany, NY; meeting began at 1:10 pm.

**Attendees:**

Sue Montgomery-Corey, Community Power Network of New York  
Vivvy Williams, BGAC secretary  
Ken Gossel, proxy for Anna Marie Cellino, National Fuel Gas Corp  
Andy Stone, New York State Weatherization Directors Association  
Andrew Bryk, New York State OTDA, HEAP Bureau Chief  
Suzannah Dormond, OTDA Temporary Assistance Secretary  
Kira Pospesel, Commissioner, Department of Social Services in Greene County  
Telephone Attendees:  
Shirani Banya, proxy for Sandra Sanchez, New York City HEAP

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**Discussion**

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Good afternoon. I'm Sue Montgomery-Corey and I'm the acting Chair of the HEAP Block Grant Council and I want to welcome you to the HEAP Block Grant Advisory Council meeting for today. And first we will introduce the people in the room. Commissioner would you like to begin?  
(Introductions)

Sue Montgomery-Corey: And we are joined on the phone I believe by?

Shirani Banya: My name is Shirani Banya, the New York City HEAP calling for Sandra Sanchez.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Okay well welcome Shirani. Our first item this afternoon is a review of the 2015/2016 HEAP season. So Andrew, take it away.

Andrew Bryk: Okay, thank you Sue. In review, starting with the regular component, as you all know we opened that on November 16, 2015. It was scheduled to close on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March and we were able to extend it to April 8, 2016. As of a report July 22<sup>nd</sup>, we've served just a little over 1.4 million households with a regular benefit this year. The average statewide benefit was \$446, for a regular benefit. On the emergency component, we did open that on January 4<sup>th</sup> and it was scheduled to close on March 15<sup>th</sup> and as we did with the regular component, we were able to extend that until April 8<sup>th</sup>. With the emergency component we served a little over 100,000 households this year. That's about 55,000 households less than we did the previous year. We attribute that to the warmer weather and the reduced fuel prices. Conversely though, what I left out, on the regular benefit we actually went up this year a little bit, about 15,000 benefits we went up on the regular side, as opposed to last year, which was kind of weird

because it was such a warm winter, but we went up on the regular, went down on the emergency. Heating Equipment Repair Replacement we actually went up, that was directly related to extending the program from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January to the 29<sup>th</sup> of January. We actually expended about \$900,000 more than we had originally planned on in that component. There was a large need and we were able to keep that open.

Kira Pospesel: Andy can I ask you a question about the increase in the regular benefit for the 15,000, was it in one geographic area, or is that throughout the state?

Andrew Bryk: Throughout the state.

Kira Pospesel: So it wasn't just one.

Andrew Bryk: No, and I apologize, I don't have the county breakout with me.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Could we have the county breakout sent to the Advisory Council? That would be great.

Andrew Bryk: Yes, that would not be a problem. With the cooling, we had a cooling component during 2015/16. With the cooling component we allocated \$3 million to the cooling component. It opened on May 1, 2016 and I'm pleased to say we closed it down on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July where we got the equipment installed. I challenged all the districts to get the work done prior to it being hot and not only that to expend the funds and reach out and shake the bushes, as I would like to say, and I'm pleased to say we were able to do that. We're just a little bit over the \$3 million at this point and we served approximately 4,400 households that had a medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat. So we were able to establish a cooling area in those homes either by providing an air condition or a fan.

The other piece of the Heating Equipment Repair Replacement Component which is really important right now, that the big key takeaway from 15/16 is we just opened on August 1<sup>st</sup>, the Clean and Tune Program. We've allocated \$2 million to operate a statewide Clean and Tune Program for households who are income eligible homeowners whose equipment has not been cleaned within the last 12 months. At the state level we're doing an outreach campaign to recipients of the heating equipment repair, replacement fund, either through OTDA, NYSERDA's Empower Program, or Weatherization during the 2014/15 program year, and that letter is getting mailed out as we speak. So we will do an outreach to everybody who received it and will be able to reinvest in the equipment that we have installed and in the effort to increase energy efficiency, obviously cleaning these systems getting them to operate up to manufacturer's specifications, to the maximum efficiency of that model, but also we want to install carbon monoxide detectors for the health and safety of the home, and programmable thermostats to be able to set it back to increase energy efficiency. And on that, the timing of the program, we plan on operating it from August 1<sup>st</sup> until November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 or until the available funding is exhausted. But I don't want to stomp on the next section of the updates for today but that will, it should marry itself very well with the opening of the heating equipment repair, replacement component for the 2016/17 program as we've slated it in our draft state plan at this point.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: So essentially HEAP is going to become or is now a year round program on some level.

Andrew Bryk: It worked out that way this year yes. And the way we're planning for next year it would appear so, as long as the funding, everything stays static, we're on course to be able to do that for next year also.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: That's a wonderful thing, that's a really good thing to do.

Ken Gossel: Andrew you secure the contractors, the local districts are securing the contractors for the clean and tune program correct? Based on...

Andrew Bryk: OTDA administers the vendor agreements with all of our contractors. We execute those agreements with our vendors and the local districts authorize the payments based off of the selection by the applicant.

Ken Gossel: Is there an open period or is it still open now? So how would say a weatherization program that's interested in getting involved

Andrew Bryk: They can either contact us at 1-866-270-HEAP which is 4327 on your touch pad as long as you're not on your blackberry, or they can call 1-518-473-0332. Our vendor management unit will get them an agreement, or they could go to [www.otda.ny.gov](http://www.otda.ny.gov), go into the HEAP section, on the left hand side there's program areas, select HEAP on the menu, and within the HEAP web page, all of our vendor agreements are listed and downloaded, and there's instructions on how to submit that. But yes, definitely, we definitely have I think right now off the cuff, we're about 268 participating vendors statewide. It's only about 100 less than what we have in our Heating Equipment Repair Replacement pool. And that was where we identified the vendors. We operated a clean and tune program back in 2008/2009, so we still had all of our vendors who had an agreement back from those years. What we did was we solicited their interest and continued participation as we opened it up to this year. So we sent out a confirmation to everybody who we had on file that offered clean and tune services.

Ken Gossel: So walk me through the process if somebody is requesting a clean and tune. How does it, does the local district give that to a vendor or is it done through the State? How is it done?

Andrew Bryk: The applicants would come in and apply. If they received a 2015/16 HEAP benefit there is a short or abbreviated application for clean and tune. Everyone can apply for clean and tune. So if they haven't received a 15/16 they will be screened and they'll fill out a 3421 regular HEAP application and a request for a clean and tune benefit. They would complete that information. Once they're determined eligible by the local district, so the intake eligibility is done at the local district level, the clients are provided with a list of participating vendors and allowed to select one. If they already have an established vendor relationship that would be the preferred vendor, as long as that vendor is a participating vendor that offers clean and tune services. Otherwise, they will be able to select a vendor and that will be the vendor that is guarantees the benefit. The client will then receive a call from the vendor to schedule a time that is agreeable between the 2 parties to get the clean and tune service done.

Ken Gossel: Okay. Thank you.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Any other questions? Comments? Okay. Let's move on then to update on funding for 2016/2017.

Andrew Bryk: I think that is a good question. Where our ultimate funding will end up is like throwing a ball into a roulette wheel. So we don't know where we will end up, as we did last year, we didn't know where we'd end up and I think on April 1<sup>st</sup> as I walked into my director Jeff Gaskell's office, I said, "Jeff we received another \$36 million in April" and he looked back and said, "You're kidding me it's April fool's isn't it?" I said, "No." So that being said, you don't know because there's no federal budget. So we're working under a continuing resolution but what's been proposed at the federal level, I can say it's going to be 3.2, 3.4. Bottom line is we've crafted our plan for 16/17 around a figure of \$325.8 million is our starting point based off of the projected funding for this year. So from that, and we did work off of the present proposed budget, from that we plan on retaining 8% for local district administrative dollars, 80% of those funds will go out to the local districts, 20% will be retained for DHCR and OTDA administrative funds. We will fund SOFA from that and we plan on allocating 10% of the program fund for weatherization activities.

Kira Pospel: Can I just ask, is that starting point pretty much the same as it was last year?

Andrew Bryk: Yes. So that's where we're starting from and that's all we have at this point. I know the letters have gone. I saw something from NEATA.

Ken Gossel: Is the Clean and Tune program the new~ year funds or it is?

Andrew Bryk: The Clean and Tune program is actually 15/16 program funds.

Ken Gossel: I was going to say, you're on the, I know the federal budget and your fiscal year don't necessarily jive so.

Andrew Bryk: Right the state and federal fiscal year definitely, April and September.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Good. Well that brings us to update on HHS LIHEAP Performance Measures.

Andrew Bryk: Performance Measures. As you know all, grantees nationwide have to collect and report out on consumer consumption data and some trends regarding their energy usage. New York State will report for 2016 and in January of 2017 will be the first report that New York State submits to HHS regarding performance measures. We have executed vendor addendums with all of the effective vendors. It ended up being the five largest utilities, ten largest oil, kerosene and propane, ended up being our ten largest commodities delivered. So we have executed vendor agreements with all of the affected vendors, they are all in. We have a project that we've been working on for at least a year, almost two years now. A year, that I've been actively leading it, to create a database so that we can exchange data with our vendors. Some states went and collected the consumption data and the usage data on the frontend from the clients. New York State has elected to go directly with our vendors, and our vendor partners have been very accommodating to us in exchanging this data. So we're going to do it through a secure file transfer protocol. We will identify our caseloads for these affected individuals. We'll reach out to their main fuel type and their electricity provider to be able to come up with an energy burn ratio. What this is being used for is to report out to Congress, to make sure that, 1) we can possibly get additional funding to support the program, and 2) to look at our State's directing their LIHEAP dollars to households with the lowest income that spends the highest proportion of their income towards their energy usage. So there's some real good metrics there that I think will help us to be able to direct and guide our program going forward. We are on track to be able to accomplish that, and in October we will push out our first file out to our vendor partners. Mid

November we will get a file back from our vendor partners with the client's information on that, and we will crunch the numbers and come up with a report. In an effort to do so, we included additional consent language on our HEAP application, the 342, to support this effort and we are, as everyone knows, taking an incremental approach in New York State to performance measures to make sure that we're protecting personally identifiable information, to make sure that we have consent from our clients to use their information, and to gather their information from the utilities. So we did it on two sides; we did it, 1) to be able to gather the information from the fuel providers, and, 2) to be able to get their consent to use their social security number as an identifying factor. That being said, we're not sending out social security numbers. On the fuel side, we will not be using social security numbers at all. On the utility side we're using the last 4 digits of social security numbers to assist in identifying. On the main fuel type that's really simple for us, we have all that information. We're just trying to make sure we have the best information going out to our partners so they can triangulate it. We do not have an account number to be able to identify back to that individual. But we've had a lot of cooperation and thank you for all of your people in your space that worked on this. You guys have been amazing to work with and thank you for accommodating all of our requests.

Ken Gossel: Well, thank you as well. We have a brand new billing system that we just put in in early May, so we're in a stabilization period. Andrew was kind to allow us one bit of data we weren't able to carry over to not have to report the share units and very helpful, so thank you.

Kira Pospesel: Can I just ask you a general question?

Andrew Bryk: Yes, Commissioner.

Kira Pospesel: Well what would be your vision of what you're actually going to do with those performance measures once you have that data?

Andrew Bryk: The sky is the limit. I am a data geek. I like data and I think it will really assist us to identify, are we really targeting our highest benefit to the neediest population we serve? And that's just one piece of it and that's where I can sink my teeth into that. If we can do that and better identify them, if we can cater our benefit a little better to meet the household need, I think that would be a nice step forward to where we could possibly go with this. I think it may also help some of our other sister agencies in doing what they do. Because there's a lot of people in the energy space and if we can get all of them, I'm a big person, there is no wrong door, I think if somebody's coming in to apply, they should be able to apply and access all of the programs from any of the agencies that we are working within the space to meet the needs. So if it opens up different conversations or different possibilities, as I said, I think the sky is the limit.

Ken Gossel: It already has. I'll give you an example. State Public Service Commission has issued an order, it is revamping all of the utility low income programs across the state trying to make them a little more standardized and its already picked up on these performance measures and is directed the Interagency Taskforce be assembled, so I was going to quickly ask about that, such that there can be better sharing of data. It's tough for utilities to get a lot of that data. Ideally we would like to see down the road some ability to get household composition, the number of people in the household and the household income so that we could put it into basically a various discount levels to assist those customers most in need. And we currently run a program like that, the Commission is making us stop running that program because it has a different proposal but, it has recommended future enhancements that may be available through part of these discussions and already is working into this year's plan, slight change to some dollar amounts for the add-on benefits. So, he's proposing a \$5 increase, I think, a \$30

add-on for the 130% poverty level group and retain the \$25 for the vulnerable member of the household group. So what that will allow utilities to do, we're hoping to use that information for us to create another tier of discount, to assist those more needy households if you would. But, hopefully down the road, we'll be able to exchange that other information. We gather that now, the applications and via a different process that has some small expense to it, but that would go away if there was a better exchange of information. So it can be a very good opportunity for all of us to continue to work better to provide the most assistance where needed.

Kira Pospesel: Its always intriguing to me, the benefit is set at a certain level and is for everyone in the state and we all know that it's not the same from Manhattan to North Country. North Country is much worse for the month of February for arguments sake, so it's kind of interesting to me and I think that data will quickly come out of performance reports like that.

Andrew Bryk: I look forward to seeing it. We are taking an incremental approach so we will have a portion of our population that we'll be able to examine and look at and also sharing that information so there may be individuals that we're sharing information because it's part of those top ten other fuels, maybe they were never enrolled in one of the utility low income programs and, you'll have to forgive me, you guys heard me yesterday. I'm into this, this is real money and this is an additional benefit to assist low income households. So I'm into it for lack of a better term.

Ken Gossel: Andrew Performance Measures, this is a national effort correct?

Andrew Bryk: Yes.

Ken Gossel: Okay how are or where do we stand in that effort? Are we ahead of the curve, behind, I mean do you know? Do you have any idea?

Andrew Bryk: Some states started reporting in 2015, states were not mandated to report until 2016 and we are right on course to meet that January deadline. I'm pleased to say that. I have amazing IT folks who have been amazing in creating it. I know there's files already being exchanged, test files between us, utilities and the vendors so that all the system requests are in place for both sides and to bring that in a secure manner setting up that secure file transfer protocol double encrypted on both sides its more tech gobbledygook that I never thought I'd know but I know much better now. But it's a lot of work and I'm just, I have to say thank you. Thank you to our IT, thank you to the different IT outfits for all the different vendors. It's been refreshing. I really envisioned it to be a much tougher endeavor so I'm pleased.

Ken Gossel: Well considering that one of the primary goals is tracking energy burden I assume that's going to be used for a better targeting, as Kira said, better targeting for those folks who need it the most and I think that's a tremendous effort. I think it's a very smart thing for the FED and New York State to do to track energy burden so we can target those folks who need it the most. So congratulations, that's great.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Good. So I guess that brings us to the discussion of the State Plan.

Andrew Bryk: Yes. The plan is on course. We're going through the process. In March we held our needs assessment, we had two needs assessments. We had a needs assessment period for two weeks where we did receive some input on the development of the plan. We drafted our State Plan and we received our income guidelines from HHS and the plan is out for public comment. Actually the public comment period ended on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July so we did have a two

week public comment period and we did hold two hearings; one in New York City and one in Albany. The Albany hearing was on July 14<sup>th</sup> and the New York City hearing was on July 12<sup>th</sup>. As I stated earlier, we are going with the maximum of the highest of 60% of the state median income or 150% of the federal poverty guideline. It's 60% of the state median income until you get to household size 11 or greater and that's where the shift to 150% of the federal poverty guidelines where the 150 is higher than the 60%. The income guidelines for this year did go up about 1 to 2% across the board, depending on the two tier levels. So that's a positive thing and we can bring a few more applicants into receive a benefit. Our benefit levels, we're going to maintain our benefit levels that we had last year based off of the funding and the timeframe of operating from either November on the regular, January on the emergency through March 15<sup>th</sup> and we have reserved the right to extend the program based on available funding so we will know a little better as we get further in whether or not we're able to, what variables come up.

On the benefit levels though we did increase our add-on for tier 1 from \$25 to \$26 okay and our vulnerable level will stay at the \$25 add-on. This is in an effort to assist with the low income proceeding and to assist households and the utilities better enroll them in the appropriate discount level that they offer. So it's a complement to what we are doing with HEAP. Our wood benefit...

Kira Pospesel: That's my favorite.

Andrew Bryk: You'll probably appreciate this one. As you know we've had issues over the last couple of years making sure that we got seasoned wood that wasn't punky that was burnable and 50 miles however the crow flies, and it's really the pulp market and all the variables that come into wood, everybody thinks its wood and its very simple, but it's much more complicated than that. So, in an effort to make sure that we're able to secure delivery, we did increase the benefit by \$25 for wood on the base benefit. They can still get the two add-ons on the regular side but we did increase that from \$500 to \$525 in an effort on wood, coal, pellets, dung, and corn on those fuel types. So I think that's a good thing. We heard a lot last year and I'm hoping that that takes care of a lot of those issues that we've had.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Andrew on the wood issue have you found any real difference regionally as far as where it's easier to get the supply you need or harder?

Andrew Bryk: Yes. If I could bring some of that North Country wood down into the Capital District or closer to New York City, I'm not saying anybody should get into business but boy; you could have a real markup. I know the closer you get down towards, into the Hudson Valley; those prices are going up and up and up. It's the Louisville Slugger Baseball factory out towards you \_\_\_\_\_ and the Emerald Ash Border are within two miles of the factory now and 75% of the bats that are coming out, they're all made out of ash. So it's making its way across and it's really affecting product availability. So, yes there is definitely a variable depending on where you are in the state.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Good. Not surprising, know we're paying attention to it.

Kira Pospesel: But I think I will have to say that with your assistance we were able to find a couple of other providers so we were able to get through so, and those were providers we weren't aware of so that did ultimately work out.

Andrew Bryk: Anything we can do, we're always there. So the regular component for this year we're proposing opening on November 14<sup>th</sup>, the emergency we were going to open on January

3<sup>rd</sup>, thank you Commissioner Fitzgerald from Madison County. I originally put in the plan, I'm saying it's the low hanging fruit that we put out there that we said it was going to be January 2<sup>nd</sup> and it was quickly brought to our attention that that is the observed holiday for New Years. So we will revise that before the plan gets submitted to HHS. We plan on keeping that component open until March. We will see where we can go with it depending on how the weather is. I'm not even looking at the almanacs, as I stated earlier, because they were both wrong last year and I don't know what they're going to be this year. I just hope we can only hope that we get a mild winter like we did last year but I'm not taking any stock in it.

Kira Pospesel: Could I just ask you a question again based on the local districts. Obviously the cold weather period starts for us by the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, so if there is an emergency from the 1<sup>st</sup> to when we open up on the 14<sup>th</sup> and it can be substantial. Is there any other further discussion about opening earlier to pick up those first 2 weeks?

Andrew Bryk: We've looked at it. It just came down to dollars and cents based off of the President's proposed budget but, I would never say never. If you feel strongly that we should reconsider that, I'm open to it.

Kira Pospesel: I think that would be very helpful because then it seems to quell a lot of the issues. It seems like if the cold weather period starts at that point and then the HEAP season starts everything kind of comes together and already you have a majority of those applications have already been looked at in the early period which is waiting for the checks to be sent out, I think that that may make people a little bit less apprehensive. Because right now what happens is the first 2 weeks we have emergencies so they're sitting in the lobby, treated as an emergency because HEAP season hasn't opened and we're in the midst of everything else and it's just so much cleaner and quickly and nicer it seems like an experience if the HEAP season is open. I guess I'd be curious to see what the clients felt about that.

Andrew Bryk: You would like to move the regular and emergency back?

Kira Pospesel: Well I'm still with the regular. I was still with the regular.

Andrew Bryk: The regular back to the 1<sup>st</sup> of November?

Kira Pospesel: Because your timing would be good that by the time they're through their first regular, and then the emergency would open if logic would follow, sometimes it doesn't. But your emergency date may be fine.

Andrew Bryk: It's close. We do and I don't try to hide anything, we try to open to correlate the opening of the regular with the moratorium period, it's not so thin leave out so I don't mind saying, we try to get, because we do buy 30 days of prospective service and 80% of our businesses utilities and that was part of the effort to make that. But I'm hearing you.

Kira Pospesel: It just may, I think that that may make more sense and I think then when folks first identify whether they may need weatherization or something there would be enough time in there and we'd get rid of some of the crises.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: I would agree with that. I think some parts of the state and the North Country being one of them are particularly sensitivity to early cold weather. So I would agree with that.

Andrew Bryk: I will definitely bring that back with me. Thank you. Okay. So Heating Equipment Repair, Replacement right up to hopefully the closing of the Clean and Tune program from 15/16 and on November 7<sup>th</sup> we're able to open that repair and replacement component to eligible homeowners. On the Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement we did increase what we're allocating to that component. This year we increased to \$5.2 million dollars so we will have up to \$5 million for heating equipment repair, replacement. There will be an increase from last year. We have planned to operate starting on May 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of August. We will operate a cooling component as we did this year. We've allocated \$3 million again to that to assist income eligible households with a medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat to assist them in getting a fan or an air conditioner. We planned to operate another Clean and Tune program for 2016/2017 which will open again in August and operate through November 3<sup>rd</sup> of that year to provide inspections and cleanings of primary heating equipment to eligible homeowners and on woodstoves, we will provide a chimney cleaning and unit cleaning. So they are also included in that mix of all fuel types.

Kira Pospesel: Could I just ask you a question about that? If all of a sudden it ends up being a very severe winter, is there a possibility you'd take the money out of that Clean and Tune for 17 and move it back into a regular component so there wouldn't be a clean and tune?

Andrew Bryk: We have reserved the right depending on funding to be able to shift the funds around if we need to.

Ken Gossel: So Andrew when is that filed with HHS and when you do technically get approval of it?

Andrew Bryk: The end of August we will be filing and they don't technically approve our plan, they accept our plan as the Block Grant and we normally get acceptance of the plan shortly thereafter. We're anticipating doing our payments the same as we've had in the past, try to get those payments out as early as we can as soon as we do receive the money from HHS. As you know, a few years ago we changed over to the statewide financial system and all the payments are authorized at the local level, batched up and then issued directly to vendors through the Office of the State Comptroller. That process has really enabled us to break 2 to 3 weeks off of the payment cycle between the time we receive it at the state and we use to make allocations out to the local districts. So that we've removed that whole process so it really does assist us to get those payments out a little earlier. I think last year we had the first week of December those payments went out. So we're right on line, normally I'm out doing vendor meetings and saying, by Thanksgiving you will see money. So we're right on line to be able to start to do that again this year.

Kira Pospesel: There's very few cases when we open up the locks now that we have control that really even go out so it is a very, very big difference.

Andrew Bryk: So, as long as everything goes according to plan, we will submit the plan to HHS and we'll put the package together put it into OLDC which is the online data collection through HHS. We will submit that, actually the Governor will submit it and then we will go from there and open up the program.

Andy Stone: Andrew I just want to take a minute to compliment you. This is a nice plan it really is. I mean I had almost nothing to say about it this year other than the fact that we'd love to see more money in Weatherization, but I mean taking the time to do the Clean and Tune program, and the foresight to open each of these programs in advance of when it becomes a major issue

for folks out there is a really good step in the right direction. Opening the Cooling program early, opening the Clean and Tune program early, opening the Furnace Replacement program early, so that we're not waiting for catastrophic issues with folks is really a good step in the right direction. I just want to compliment you on that, I really appreciate it.

Andrew Bryk: Right back at you because I have to go on the record, thank you for working collaboratively. It's nice to have a resource that I can bounce things off of so thank you.

Andy Stone: You're welcome.

Kira Pospesel: Unlike Andrew, I do have several questions with sticky's so if you don't mind. So on 5.11, I don't know if you have a plan to look at, okay it talks about the Weatherization Measures that you provide. There is one column where the major appliance repairs are not marked. So my question was, that's not marked. On the following page it talks about major appliance replacement but replacement of refrigerators only.

Andrew Bryk: That's clarification on the second page and that is we had our partners at BHCR review that section 5. And they did make a couple of changes this year from last year.

Kira Pospesel: Yep, and again I compared the two and I see what the changes were. So I guess my real question is that you don't repair a refrigerator, you actually replace a refrigerator and I guess I don't understand the rationale for that because sometimes it could be a quick fix for a major appliance, so why would there only be replacement?

Andrew Bryk: And I'm going to do this.

Andy Stone: They actually can do minor repairs in a refrigerator. If a gasket goes bad and that can actually be replaced so...

Kira Pospesel: Yeah because the way this appears is that it doesn't appear that way. So that's actually attachment 3.

Andrew Bryk: And that was 5.1?

Kira Pospesel: 5.11. That was just unclear.

Andy Stone: I think you'll also see as time goes by there's less and less need for refrigerator replacements since the energy tag on refrigerators came out in 1980 whatever year it was 85, 86 something like that, we're finding that we're not seeing as many 30 and 35 year old refrigerators as we used to. So the efficiency level of most of the refrigerators that we see now has gone up significantly. We're actually replacing less and less refrigerators and the Empower program is too.

Andrew Bryk: I know on Long Island LIPA they also do refrigerators also.

Kira Pospesel: Could I ask you about the fair hearing section 12? When you talk about how many fair hearings the grantee had in the prior federal year, you have 1334. When I looked up the prior year before that it was 195. So it appeared it went from 195 to 1334 and I was wondering was there one issue like why did the fair hearings grow that much? Because it certainly wasn't what we were seeing.

Andrew Bryk: No, I don't have an answer for that. I apologize. There was not, no one issue was brought to our attention although we did have our counterparts in fair hearings review that.

Kira Pospesel: Because I'm just wondering if there was a lack of education I'm not quite sure for whom because when I looked at 12.2 it says, how many of the fair hearings resulted in the initial decision being reversed? The answer was 29 out of 1334. So it wasn't many. The prior year out of 195 was 22. So there was obviously different behavior and it wasn't turning around the fair hearing but those people were asking to have the fair hearing.

Andrew Bryk: Yeah, it's funny only because the person that actually completed that for us at Fair Hearings is new. There was a change in fair hearings so now that you're bringing this up, I'm kind of looking at it with a different set of eyes and going, was the criteria that was utilized was it the same? It seems like there's a huge discrepancy here for some reason.

Kira Pospesel: Well from 195 to 1334 yeah.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Well it could be a typo. The other question is, if it was the 1300 was that statewide, was it in particular parts of the state and that may help you narrow down kind of what's going on with it.

Kira Pospesel: When I read it from a local district perspective, that's a lot of work with not changes in any results. I mean there's no significant difference in the results. So I was just a little concerned about that.

Andrew Bryk: Thank you. I will re-look at that and ask some questions. Thank you.

Kira Pospesel: On Section 16, now maybe this was mine but it was everyone that we ran off because obviously if the public wants to come in they can look at these plans, but there's black lines through them and I don't think they were intentionally struck out so I don't know why and it wasn't from our printer, IT told me it wasn't our printers.

Andrew Bryk: Section 16, I will review that too and get back to your office. I apologize if there was something that we did.

Kira Pospesel: It could just be south of Albany I don't know.

Andrew Bryk: I always like to say it's the counties in Ohio. So I'm going to look at Section 5, Section 12 and Section 16?

Kira Pospesel: Yes, thank you and opening earlier next year.

Andrew Bryk: Okay.

Ken Gossel: That would be nice too. And a part of that I know when funding comes through and is approved, but maybe communication to look at potentially communication to the recipients. Right now you're sending out probably about the time you're sending payment files to the utilities and other vendors from the pull down that happens and it used to be that a lot of people would go to HEAP unnecessarily jamming the DSS offices looking for that assistance because maybe they got a shut off notice so it does help to move it forward if possible. But communications of those grant authorizations hopefully sooner rather than later so you don't necessarily need to clog up the county offices.

Andrew Bryk: Okay, I'm hearing you. I'm looking at it in the process because our notices are tied to our payments, so when the payment goes to the client, we actually a few years ago we used to send out the notices prior to the payment and it was confused on that side. So I got the notice but I didn't get the payment. My utility and my vendor doesn't have the payment yet but I'm getting a notice and they call their vendor, and like I didn't get notified or I didn't receive the payment. So when we changed to the SFS System it enabled us to tie the notices to the payment so we did tie them back together so to speak so that the notice doesn't go before the payment so the client's, so maybe though how can we do a better job of educating the clients on the frontend? Maybe if we could do something with our client books or ongoing outreach. That being said, for this year, the early outreach is almost 100% set at this point so we may have to look going forward. I don't want to set any unrealistic expectations.

Kira Pospel: But his point is well taken. What happens is all of a sudden we advertise HEAP is open, so the early outreach folks haven't seen what they thought they might have been approved for and we're tying it together which makes sense but that's usually at least a couple weeks later so that's what happens and people start calling.

Andrew Bryk: And there's one thing that is positive and this is like if we can push more people to apply through My Benefits they can look into their case and they can find out prior to, as soon as its processed you can go and do an inquiry on your case. A client can find out what they're eligible for. So I think as we go further and further and use technology we'll get a little better at that. But definitely I'm hearing you here. How can we communicate this to the clients? I will have another opportunity to speak with our vendors when we do our vendor meetings so I can try to frame our message a little differently so that we're getting information out. I know a lot of vendors like to do bill stuffers or stuff so maybe I can work with our partners to get a little bit more education, anything that we can do and at the same time we will have a call with our districts and maybe we can work collaboratively to figure out what's the best way to approach our local constituencies. How can we get that message out?

Kira Pospel: Good to have some year round.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Alright if there are no other comments or suggestions for the HEAP State Plan. One thing I realized is that again, I neglected to ask about the minutes. So we have the minutes from the last meeting. Does anybody have any comments, suggestions, changes that you would like to make?

Ken Gossel: One instance, my company National Fuel was Eshton Fuel, maybe just picked up on a typo or, page 4. Other than that, I thought they looked great.

Andrew Bryk: Sorry we overlooked that. It's not a new subsidiary is it?

Ken Gossel: No. I didn't know all the Louisville Bats were coming out of \_\_\_\_\_ but they're probably shipped to Louisville for processing.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Alright, could I have a motion to accept the minutes then with that change noted.

Ken Gossel: I'll move that Sue.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Okay. Do we have a second?

Andy Stone: I will second.

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Okay great. All those in favor?

[Chorus of ayes]. Okay and now we are at the open discussion part of the meeting. Does anybody have anything they'd like to raise or mention?

Ken Gossel: I'd just like to ask quickly can you talk about publicly at the Interagency Taskforce that I mentioned earlier.

Andrew Bryk: I haven't been party to it first hand, but we do have two of our executives, Jeff Gaskell, actually three of our executives; Jeff Gaskell the HEAP TA Director, Phyllis Morris our Deputy Commissioner and Michael Perrin our Executive Deputy Commissioner have been involved in these taskforce meetings with the Governor's Office, the PSC and those are active and ongoing. They have a very ambitious agenda and I know that they're task will be coming up with a recommendation. That recommendation should be done by October I believe if I remember correctly. And then they will make a recommendation whether or not the taskforce should continue. But they're addressing the low-income issues. How can we do better data sharing? How can we coordinate and collaborate our programs better whether it be the low income programs through Empower Weatherization or HEAP and the utility program. How can we better service the LMI community because we really don't want the LMI community to get lost in this new energy space that's coming up in New York State? I think the discussion about what we need to do is over. We need to move forward. I'm definitely supporting the activities that are going on, what can we do and I just want to make sure that the needs of the low-moderate income New Yorkers, that there's a voice for them at the table and that they're not being left behind. Because as we all know, the people who are affluent can afford to get into that space, middle income people can afford to finance into that space. How do we ensure that low income people are able to participate in New York's clean energy future?

Sue Montgomery-Corey: Any other comments or discussion people would like to offer this afternoon? So I guess we are adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:43 pm