

WEAF Advisory Group

Agenda

May 31, 2023

KEY TOPICS: Maximizing LIHEAP Funds, AMP Design, Rate spread and spreadsheet toggles

GOALS FOR MEETING OUTCOME: Finalize decisions on approaches to maximizing LIHEAP Funds, AMP upfront relief vs. 12-month installments for relief, review rate spread and toggles email

Agreements from 5/31/23 meeting:

- Agreed on the Arrearage Forgiveness Percentages listed below.

Arrearage Management			
<i>Tier</i>	<i>FPL %</i>	<i>AMI %</i>	<i>Discount</i>
T1	20%	4%	100.0%
T2	50%	12%	100.0%
T3	100%	24%	90.0%
T4	150%	36%	70.0%
T5	200%	80%	50.0%

- Agreed on the rate spread listed in the WA LI Program Funding v3 spreadsheet.

1. Agencies handling all Energy Assistance Applications – Yochi/Misty
 - a. Agency Staffing/Funding Model review - Chris

Tillis, Daniel

I'd say the last several weeks we've had great discussions and last week we got close to a couple of really key important decisions, and we are getting close to the last handful of big decisions we need to make before we might be ready to file. We only have about four meetings left before that date is here and so the agenda that I shared on Friday. Yochi and Misty, hopefully you're OK that I put you as part of that first topic. I thought you could help lead the discussion with where TEP and the agencies might be now on all of the energy assistance program applications and BDR, along with LIHEAP already going through the agencies and the company not being an intake for those at all other than referring them to the agencies. We might get some online applications that we would refer to the agencies. Chris on here for 1A which maybe we start with by sharing some staffing funding models you put together for the agencies. Chris and I had a chance to chat about those on Friday and then shared those in the updated spreadsheet and cost allocation model among other things.

Yochi Zakai

I can mention via way of transition, I think we said last week that we would be open to having the

agencies be the primary point of contact. They do like a website application on Cascade's website that folks could fill out that would feed into the agencies. It all depends on making sure that this discussion includes funding and making sure that the agencies feel like they're going to be compensated for the additional work it would entail to be taking all the phone calls about applications considering the higher expected enrollment amounts. So, we're looking forward to that discussion and I appreciate you providing the spreadsheet in advance. I was able to take a look at it, but I haven't had a chance to discuss it with any of the agencies yet and so we might not be able to give you a response on that today. And I wanted to start off by saying we appreciate that we are going to learn more about this proposal and then figure out what additional questions we have and take it back for consideration after this meeting. I just wanted to set that expectation that I don't think I'm going to be able to give an answer on if the funding is going to work or not at the end of the call today.

Mickelson, Christopher

So basically there's this new toggle you can select fee or staffing. There are two types of staffing. I'll get into that in a little bit. Personally, I like the staffing fee and I'll explain why. This information was provided by Misty, thank you by the way. We found out what the average FTE rate is, the benefit rate; we're using the standard 2080 for hours, which gives us the average FTE cost.. Then based off that we figured out how many FTEs would be needed based off the enrollment level and how many anticipated customers would be signed up. In this instance it's at 10% enrollment. We're looking at 5.7 FTEs. If we go to say 30 then the FTE changes. And then obviously the average cost times need indicates what your staffing cost would be, so that's just a straight staffing cost amount. The staffing with P (stands for performance) is taking a piece of the history of WEAFF and what each agency typically signed-up, so as you signed-up more, we figured it made sense to reward those agencies with more funds than those who may not have signed-up customers. And there's a few counties and agencies that historically have maybe only signed up two or three WEAFF recipients throughout the year; that's a very low percentage of the possible low-income customers in those counties. So, they would still get more money than the agency fee compared to historically, but obviously, if they signed up more, they would get more funds in the future; if they signed up less, then obviously, they'd get less funds, but that's kind of what this column ended up doing. Overall, it kind of provides a little more additional funding to recognize that performance piece and then essentially it takes that amount, figures out for each of the agencies, and then how much they would get. Now some agencies, they would be able to hire 1 ½ agents and others a little less. Some agencies historically signed up, say 5 WEAFF recipients on average each year, and so if I took $5 * 75$ that would be \$375. We're still recommending giving them \$1000, so it's still almost three times what they would normally have gotten from the fee base. We're trying to incent them to try to focus a little more on getting people signed-up, but if they still perform lower than expected, then obviously they don't quite get nearly the funds some of these other agencies get. Any questions? I know that was kind of high level and may have been quick.

Charlee Thompson

What is the performance column in column N?

Mickelson, Christopher

That is figuring out a weighted average out of the possible Cascade customers, how many are eligible for this program and then the performance piece is how often did that agency sign up WEAFF

recipients within that county. By the way, on calculating what FTE is needed, it's taking the eligible AMI count within that county, times whatever our enrollment level is, taking 365 days in a year, minus out all the weekends and then determining what an FTE, how many daily applicants they could do. Talking with Misty, she indicated on average they do about five and she expects if someone was solely doing this, they'd be able to do more than five. In doing so, I actually decided to go with a lower number; I did four and part of the reason for going with that was to hopefully help reduce any backlogs because I know the agencies right now get people signed up, but they can't really see them until maybe two or three months down the road, so by doing a lower number you can work through some of that backlog.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

When I said five, that's five appointments that we're seeing today where we actually schedule the client. They have to come in to provide all their documentation to us and in the future, when we're not going to be doing appointments, it's all going to be self-attestation over the phone with the clients. I figure my staff will be able to see a lot more people, but it's just going to determine how we set up our program. It's going to be a phone call and then doing a very small amount on the website when we get them approved.

Mickelson, Christopher

You'll still be doing appointments to get LIHEAP and AMP, is that not correct?

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

Isn't AMP also going to be self-attestation?

Tillis, Daniel

Yes, but the customer will be required to go to the agency first or to attempt to qualify for LIHEAP first, which is not self-attestation, and then the only customers who wouldn't have to go through that would be the customers who don't have the citizenship status required to qualify for LIHEAP. So, if you do AMP first, you could do that via self-attestation.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

My understanding was we were going to do self-attestation to get these people on as quickly as possible, and we then schedule LIHEAP appointments as we were able to fit those appointments in. Am I thinking about this wrong?

Yochi Zakai

I think we're still thinking about it. If we can enroll people in BDR right away and then for those people who we think are going to qualify for LIHEAP, get them an appointment so they immediately start getting a discounted bill, but then once they come in for the LIHEAP appointment, we're going to be able to forgive arrearages and then use the AMP to cover whatever is left if LIHEAP does not fully forgive their past due balances at that time.

Tillis, Daniel

I think that process would work. The BDR could be submitted through the portal. We could apply it and then leave everything else as is at that time until we receive additional pledges on the portal from the agencies.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

I would say we will probably be able to serve a lot more people than just the five a day because we're going to be signing them up for the BDR with self-attestation and just scheduling an appointment for a later date.

Jen Rightsell

Right now if this person has a LIHEAP appointment or an energy appointment, it can be noted onto the account, but it doesn't prevent them from being disconnected if they're up for disconnect. What if a customer comes in for BDR and we approve them for BDR and we schedule them for an upcoming LIHEAP appointment, but they have an arrearage on their account, is the goal to do LIHEAP before the AMP? Would it make sense for Cascade Natural Gas to be able to hold an account to prevent disconnection until the LIHEAP can be reviewed? The LIHEAP appointment can be reviewed, and the AMP applied.

Tillis, Daniel

If a customer tells us they have an appointment with an Energy Assistance Agency, we do not progress to the point of disconnected service for non-pay.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

You might want to check with Shannon because we mark it in the portal that they have an appointment, but we have been told that is not stopping disconnections.

Tillis, Daniel

I can tell you that our process for our credit and collections team is that if we're on the phone with the customer and they tell us they have an appointment with an agency or even that they're trying to get an appointment with an agency, that credit rep, who has to manually create that disconnect order, should not create that disconnect order. They should defer that account for further review in the future. Shannon, I don't know if the portal currently writes anything that the agencies are telling us about the appointment date to the account in CC&B.

Steed, Shannon

It does automatically once they submit it. There's a drop-down list of three different types of notes that they would like to add to an account and once they make their selection and hit submit, it just takes a moment for that to turn into a note on the customer's account.

Tillis, Daniel

Our credit and collections process is that no disconnect for non-pay order goes out without a manual review by a credit and collections rep. That's the final step before the order would actually be sent to our field technicians to disconnect the customer's service. Part of the process for that credit and collections rep is to do a thorough review of the account before they even try to call the customer. If they see a note that states that the customer has an appointment, they might still try to call them to see if there's anything else that can be done, but they should not send out that disconnect order. That's our process even if the note is not on the account and a customer verbally tells us I have an appointment with BMAC on June 1st; the credit and collections rep should not send out that disconnect order. The account should be protected with the note you provide in the portal with whatever process we decide when you qualify customer for any type of assistance.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

So my one thought has turned into two questions. Based on this conversation, I guess this is directed at Jen, are you hearing that customers are still receiving disconnection notices, despite the fact they've scheduled appointments. Is that what's happening?

Tillis, Daniel

Well, that's different. Our credit and collections process does not stop as far as automated calls and disconnect notices and such while the customer is getting an appointment or has an appointment. However, we will not disconnect service That manual process at the end where the credit and collections rep is involved, that's where they say they have an appointment, we're not sending out that disconnect order.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

OK, that's helpful to understand.

Jen Rightsell

We've had a couple of our staff earlier this morning in fact that said that their client they were seeing today had their gas turned off and then called to get it turned back on a couple of times since they made the appointment for energy assistance. It says that they had called the call center to provide the appointment date and then turn it on only to have it turned off again later and then told that they have to have a pledge amount to get it restarted.

Tillis, Daniel

If that happened, then it's a breakdown of the process and somebody is not following the process. If you have those accounts you could share with us, we can definitely review them to see what happened. I can tell you; we had a complaint recently from WA Commission where a customer service rep didn't do their job right and that did result in the customer being disconnected when they should not have been, and we made an exception to our reconnect process. We did make it right, even though it obviously was a bad experience for the customer and getting their service turned off. It was a human error and it's unfortunate, but it does happen.

Jen Rightsell

If someone gets disconnected, is payment or pledge required to get it reconnected or just working through the prior obligation process, and then if a deposit is needed that gets billed later?

Tillis, Daniel

If the customer is disconnected for non-pay, they can choose not to pay the outstanding balance and start a new account, using prior obligation rules, and currently in Washington, deposits are still on moratorium and so they wouldn't even be required to pay a deposit and they could set up new service. If the deposit moratorium were to go away, then they would be required to pay a deposit on the new account.

Jen Rightsell

So it's the moratorium that's preventing needing the deposit to reconnect now - OK.

Tillis, Daniel

Correct. The Commission is currently reviewing disconnect, reconnect, and fee rules. There's actually a workshop scheduled for second half of June on that topic, but until that review is

completed, all of those deposits, reconnect fees, late fees, all of that is on moratorium. I think we got into this discussion because of what the order would be in the qualification process for BDR and AMP.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

That's a good segway into the first question that arose since we got the second one taken care of. So, this is responding to something that Yochi had mentioned about the process that BDR would initially be applied to an account and then customers would be referred for LIHEAP and then AMP would be applied for eligible customers. How does this work for customers that are ineligible for LIHEAP, due to an attested income above LIHEAP eligibility and or a circumstance where they do not meet the immigration status requirements.

Tillis, Daniel

If they had self-attested income above LIHEAP eligibility that means that they could still qualify between 151 and 200% for AMP and BDR, so there are a few options. They could immediately self-attest for BDR and AMP through the agencies, if that's what we choose to do and then they might be in the pool for later income verification processes, which we might have to work back through a little bit depending on what decision we make here on where customers are going to go for qualification for the different programs, but they could still be eligible for BDR. If their self-attested income ends up between 150 and 200, they would be eligible and then that would be submitted to the company via the portal and then the portal would be our source for the random pool selection for self-income verification. If they aren't eligible because of citizenship status it would be somewhat similar, but they could still be eligible at any point within the income spectrum at the different tiers, they just wouldn't be eligible for LIHEAP so they wouldn't have a later LIHEAP appointment, since that's out of the question at that point. But, based on their self-attested income and household size, if they're between 0 and 200, then they would be placed in that tier for both BDR and if they have a past due balance, they will receive the arrearage forgiveness for that tier. And again, I think they would then end up in that pool for random selection for post qualification, income verification. If we decide to continue with that, that would be the only pool because if somebody comes back in for a LIHEAP appointment, they would be income verified then.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

Right. That all makes sense in terms of benefits that those individuals will be qualified for. I'm just thinking about the process flow and maybe I'm misunderstanding what was being discussed and proposed earlier, but it sounded like those who attest to an eligible LIHEAP income and would also be eligible for AMP, would be referred for a LIHEAP appointment automatically.

Tillis, Daniel

What we're trying to work through is that, and I think we were close to an agreement last week is that we would like for all AMP and BDR qualifications go through the agencies if WEAFF is going away and if we could get staffing levels right, agree on the funding for staffing levels. I think the question is, if a customer called an agency can they qualify customer via self-attestation for BDR over the phone and then schedule a LIHEAP appointment for later to then try to qualify them for LIHEAP, and if they qualify for LIHEAP but it doesn't cover all the arrearages or if they don't qualify for LIHEAP then add AMP on if they qualify.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

I think that makes sense. It's pretty hard for me to visualize it without some sort of actual process flow in front of me.

Tillis, Daniel

I was actually thinking earlier, Corey, that it might make sense at some point—we're going to want to come back to see if anybody has any questions on the staffing models—but it sounds like we're probably not going to make a final decision on this today, but in the interim, it might make sense for the agencies and TEP to take a shot at the flow of what you would like to see happen for BDR, AMP and LIHEAP altogether going through the agencies.

Yochi Zakai

What you described Dan makes sense: a customer would call and based on self-attestation on the phone, get enrolled in BDR and then you'd ask some basic questions about eligibility for LIHEAP and get them an appointment for LIHEAP, if that doesn't cover all of their arrearage then give them AMP for further arrearage forgiveness at that time, if Cascade is able to follow its processes and not disconnect folks in that time period. If customers are not eligible either due to income or other type of status then I think on that phone call they could be eligible to get AMP right away getting the arrearage forgiveness and the payment plan. Based on them not being eligible, there's going to be a state funded energy assistance similar to LIHEAP that is going to be available for customers up to 80% AMI. And so, I do think if we're going to have state funding available that we're going to want to make sure we're qualifying customers for that too. So it could be that with the state funded grant, we're going to want most folks to come in for an appointment first. I'm not sure exactly what the eligibility criteria will be for those. I'll acknowledge what you said in the chat Corey about customers being forced to disclose their immigration status. And I guess I defer to the agencies to see how they deal with that today.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

As we're taking down their information for our application, we ask if they have Social Security number. If they state no, we move on from that and we wait until the end, after we get everybody in the household, to determine because as long as there is someone in the household with Social Security numbers, they still may qualify for LIHEAP. It's the way that the program works, the majority of the people we see, even undocumented people, still qualify for LIHEAP because of their other household members that live in the home, so I don't foresee a problem with that. When you were talking about scheduling LIHEAP, we would only schedule a LIHEAP appointment if they qualified for it, and if they didn't qualify for one reason or another, we would then do the self-attest at that time with the client to get them qualified for the AMP.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

OK, those are very helpful pieces of information, which helps me better understand the process.

Tillis, Daniel

I just want to restate to make sure we're all on the same page on what we're hearing. The desired flow from the agencies is that the customer who calls the agency and indicates that the need for assistance; you would like to have the ability to allow them the opportunity to self-attest income and household size immediately to qualify for BDR. The agency would submit that pledge through the portal and indicate that they have an appointment for LIHEAP so they will be protected from

disconnect for non-pay, and then, once you have the LIHEAP appointment, you'll try to process the LIHEAP application 1st and then use AMP as needed based on that LIHEAP application qualification. If in that initial conversation you discover they won't qualify for LIHEAP for some reason, immediately you could qualify them via self-attestation over the phone for both BDR and AMP, and then you submit that in the assist portal, and that would really be the end of the process. Other than later, that would be our pool for potential post qualification, income verification and random selection. Is that an accurate summary of the flow that you all think would be best? Misty said in chat that's how she's envisioning it. Chris, based on that, does that change how you would that change the model option in any way.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

Based on what I'm hearing and understanding, that makes sense. Is it possible for Cascade to develop a visual of that process so we can all see it and make edits to what the company's understanding of the flow would be at this point?

Tillis, Daniel

I can try to put that into a flow.

Mickelson, Christopher

And Dan, as for your question, when you said model, are you talking about an AMP calculator like we have in Oregon or are you talking this particular model reflected on the screen?

Tillis, Daniel

Yeah, I was actually talking about the agency staffing funding models that you put together that are on the screen.

Mickelson, Christopher

At the moment I don't think it really changes the proposal and the staffing piece. The one caveat I haven't mentioned that I will here is, these agency fund dollar amounts you get at the beginning of the program year, that's how we envisioned it versus the fee as you sign people up. So, it's more of an ongoing basis and so that could also help staffing and planning for the agencies. That is something to consider when thinking about these two different agency-type funding methods.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

So what year did we take these number of clients that we've seen for our WEA numbers, what year is that from?

Mickelson, Christopher

Last year.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

OK. By this gadget basically it's less than a full-time person based on last year's numbers, but this year's numbers are way up.

Mickelson, Christopher

Yes, the numbers are way up. Since it's really based off the eligible customers that are 80% AMI out of the county, that the number of Cascade customers served within those counties and that's really what we're trying to target, all of these eligible customers within the county on these programs.

Tillis, Daniel

Chris, as I look at this again, one of the thoughts that I have is I think your model has 500 BDR applicants are qualified customers per month, right? And then when I look at those counts for historical years, that comes out to about somewhere just shy of 200 per month, so it makes me wonder if that's understating what we'd likely see with additional outreach on BDR and AMP together, that might go to the agencies starting October 1 of this year once we have the new program in place and it's via self-attestation. Let's say we'll have a ton more hours because we already do a lot of outreach for WEA, but we'll certainly try more. I don't know if there's a way to build a model that's more about what we expect the BDR total to be, which is the higher number. Working CBO will hopefully drive some of that up, which is new.

Yochi Zakai

Can I ask a question? The total staffing costs are based essentially on the enrollment level toggle, is that correct? And then it's only the apportioning of those costs between the agency that changes when you switch that toggle.

Mickelson, Christopher

Correct.

Yochi Zakai

So if we wanted higher compensation amounts, we would use in this model to support those assumptions and that would be the enrollment level and then the number of daily applicants that the agencies were able to process, if I understand that correctly.

Mickelson, Christopher

Correct. Keep in mind though, enrollment level does impact the AMP and energy discount because that is also determining how many we think we'd actually get and realistically, I would say 10% for this first year would be a very good goal because, like Dan said, historically we've been getting maybe 2 1/2, maybe 3% per week. So, getting two to three times what we get would be a substantial increase, then next year, 25-30% maybe should be our goal.

Yochi Zakai

Thank you. I really appreciate having all the notes explaining all the toggles. That's really helpful.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

So the daily applicants is not considered, I'm concerned about that because our daily applicants, when its self-attestation, is going to be pretty much almost every phone call that we take. We take in anywhere from 150 to 200 phone calls a day.

Mickelson, Christopher

Well, we're only expecting 4.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

I am concerned about that. Our phones ring nonstop, every three to four minutes we're on a different call.

Tillis, Daniel

Are all of those Cascade customers?

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

Not all of them, but we are screening them for all programs. So, when they call in, we're asking them what their heating bill is and some use Cascade for cooking. So, we are screening every single person that comes through our door and responding. I think Jen said she has 900 calls in an hour. Our phone lines have crashed. There are some days that we're pulling in 400 to 500 hundred calls. I've got 10 staff members answering calls and seeing clients at the same time.

Yochi Zakai

This is a model that underpins some assumptions that guide what funding for the agencies should be. I am not envisioning that Cascade is creating a model that will reflect the actual operations of any agency, either in aggregate or on any specific day. I'm open to push back here but the way I was thinking about it was that I would recommend we take back now for TEP and the agencies to look at the overall funding amounts and say, based on a rough estimate of the amount of work that we anticipate this new program would bring in, do we think that this is an appropriate compensation amount regardless of whether the actual calculation is exactly how the staffing will end up being used? Is that a fair task for the next week and does that kind of line up with what everybody else is thinking?

Tillis, Daniel

I was assuming that question might have been more for the agencies or others, but I'll just go back to BDR, and Chris, this is partially for you as well, but we assume BDR is going to be about 500 qualified customers per month, probably a really high qualification rate if it's via self-attestation. We don't see a lot of customers giving us income levels that aren't qualified via self-attestation. It happens but it's a very high qualification rate when they apply. Are we really factoring in that 500 a year when we're based on historical WEAf data because we have a new program that we're expecting more customers to qualify for? I think we have some room and Chris would know better than I, but maybe some room in the model to adjust that a little bit for the funding to account for that. If the agencies want to take a shot at what you think, if you tell me it's 500 and we could give you a spread of what that would look like by customer population and tell us what you think that incremental BDR load would increase your staffing need, I think that's one way to take a shot at it as well.

Mickelson, Christopher

And by the way, the 500 is on a monthly basis that works out to be about 2 customers per day per agency. Going with four daily applicants, part of our goal was to help reduce the backlog. You're talking about 500 customers overall, not 500 customers per month per agency. The overall possibility for this program is around 60,000 of our customers and as you can see this by county. In essence, look at your county and see what the eligible low-income customers that are up to 80% AMI and get a sense of how many in your county that you could possibly see.

Tillis, Daniel

You could see the WEAf numbers on here for a year, so agencies on average the last few years are approving 2,208 Cascade customers for WEAf, so you're looking at going to 6,000 who would qualify for BDR, and then within that maybe the AMP and LIHEAP; it's basically 2 ½ times what you're doing today for WEAf already.

Jen Rightsell

Agencies might focus on LIHEAP first and then bring on these other programs during the appointment as they find that customers are eligible for them. With having customers come in this way, it's like coming in for the utility programs and then determining if LIHEAP is eligible for them so it's kind of a backwards way that we are used to doing things. It'll take some time trying to figure this out.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

And not only that, when we do our advertising, because of the way Jen just described it, we focus on LIHEAP first, we're focusing on the lowest poor in our communities. Our focus has never been really on the 151% or up to 80% AMI. People this year are just finding out because PSE moved up to 80% AMI that we are able to serve at this higher rate and people are coming in. By this time, we dramatically slow down for appointments, and I can tell you I'm booked out until the end of July right now for people who are coming in that will qualify for WEAFF up until the end of July right now, which is not heard of.

Mickelson, Christopher

OK. Thank you. This really should probably be looked at in congruence with LIHEAP utility programs and it sounds like maybe even state funds in the future. So, you may have three different buckets being looked at at the same time, and I think a well-designed calculator or verification model would be able to do all three at the same time just by putting in the income, the household size, and answering the questions that we've all discussed.

Tillis, Daniel

I keep going back to 500 BDR per month and you going through that just now; maybe we're talking about intake calls that the agencies are taking instead of setting up an appointment for later or to qualify them for LIHEAP where they'll be going through the BDR qualification self-attestation process on that upfront phone call. It's going to be more real time, which means more customers are likely to go through it and then later they're going to have that LIHEAP and AMP appointment. Hopefully some of that's funded by the LIHEAP Fund, so it shouldn't all be carried by Cascade, obviously. I just think there's something from a volume standpoint we're missing here.

Mickelson, Christopher

Well, if so, then that's the enrollment level. It sounds like maybe we'll be able to do more than two or three times what we've historically done and maybe it's closer to 20% of the enrollment level.

Tillis, Daniel

I guess we're at a point where we need to probably move to Yochi's suggestion of maybe having TEP and the agencies talk over the next week and build some models of what they believe staffing levels would need to be for the primary intake for a BDR and later AMP with LIHEAP and some AMP up front. Based on their experience and knowledge of their daily call volume and historical WEAFF data, I do think we should consider some sort of gross up for WEAFF volume just because we know that it's been higher this program year in volume and increases in cost and pledge amounts based on that. We could extrapolate what we think 22-23 program year is going to end through May data with just a few months left in the year, and I think ideally the way we want to staff this is to avoid booking appointments over a month out. We would like to get those appointments taken care of earlier rather than later to get customers the relief and not to continue to move the customer through the

collections process for their arrearage balance. Not every customer that qualifies for BDR is going to qualify for AMP because they may not have a past due balance.

Mickelson, Christopher

And to take advantage of federal funds getting those funds sooner, too. Yes Misty, the 7760 is the entire counties eligible low-income population. I can't imagine you would get 100%. That would be great if you got it in one year. Then I guess year two, you would have nothing but LIHEAP.

Misty Velasquez Community Action of Skagit

I'm not saying that we're going to have it. I'm just saying that's the potential and its completely self-attestation. You will be surprised how many people come out to try to get on this program and people that we're going to be turning people away because they're not going to qualify. You have to figure that in too; how much time are we going to be turning people away who are going to call and want to get on this program because they think they can.

Tillis, Daniel

Yeah, I mean that that's where the enrollment rate comes into to play so you have to assume some sort of enrollment rate and then that gives you your monthly volume, and the daily volume, of course. So, we will go with the approach of TEP and the agencies talk about this and come back next week with some recommendations or thoughts. And then internally we can see if there are ways to think more about that BDR volume compared to the historical WEA volume and what other options we might think are viable. Jenna asked what is the current enrollment rate for 2023 so far?

Steed, Shannon

I can check on that.

2. Arrearage Forgiveness Program Design – Tier 3 – 5 Percentages, Forgiveness Cap and Frequency – Chris

Tillis, Daniel

OK, so we'll let Shannon do that and then maybe once she has it maybe she can provide that to Chris separately in the chat and then we'll come back with some enrollment rate data for us. Let's move to the next topic in the meantime and we'll be working with the spreadsheet for that as well and that was the Tier 3 through 5 arrearage forgiveness percentages. And this was another topic where everyone wanted to take a week to think about it and see if we're comfortable with the percentages that are there for Tier 3 through 5, which are 90% for Tier 3, 70% for Tier 4 and 50% for Tier 5, so I'll open it up for input and thoughts on that. Alright, everybody's quiet. So that means you're good with the percentages, right?

Yochi Zakai

I'd love to hear from the agencies specifically looking into three through five. I'm comfortable with 90 percent, you know for Tier 3. Tier 4 looks like our average arrearages are going to be \$811.00 and then Tier 5 it's \$850 and so for folks up to 150% FPL for giving 70% of that upfront and then for folks in that highest income bracket between 150 and 80% AMI, we'd be giving 50% of it with the remainder going on a payment plan.

Tillis, Daniel

We have a couple agencies in the chat who have said they're good with the it Yochi - OppCo and BMAC.

Jen Rightsell

It's just a curiosity question for the discount rate. We're not good with round numbers for the discount rate, so I see 71% or 8%. Why not go with round numbers for those why 71 versus 70 or something like that?

Mickelson, Christopher

That was decided a while back, but it was to get a particular energy burden percentage.

Tillis, Daniel

It keeps them all on that 35 to roughly 3 1/2% range. Misty said that Skagit is good as well and Charlee has said that in NWECC is good. Thank you both. Is anybody not OK with those arrears management arrearage forgiveness percentages?

Yochi Zakai

I think I can be good with it, and I think this is something that we're going to want to look at in a year as well. But I think for the first year I can be good with it.

Tillis, Daniel

Great. Thank you.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

As a quick refresher, I know these are updated numbers, but I can't remember off the top of my head what the originally proposed discount percentages were for tiers 3 through 5.

Mickelson, Christopher

I think it was 80/60/40.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

That's what I was thinking, but I wasn't totally sure. Public Counsel would not oppose these percentages.

Tillis, Daniel

Great. That looks like we have a decision on that, which is excellent. Chris, do you have what you need to answer the question from earlier about the current year WEAF info?

Mickelson, Christopher

We've done about 1% so far of our customers so that's a little less than 2000.

Tillis, Daniel

Which is what we've done historically for full year, right?

Mickelson, Christopher

Exactly. We're still close to our historical average. It looks like it's maybe more front loaded than spread out evenly throughout the year.

Tillis, Daniel

I would expect the volume is not going to be up the same percentage because the dollar amounts are higher because rates are higher, and we increased the max grant to \$625 and established a minimum. We also went back and gave some customers who had already qualified some increased amount of pledge amounts as well, so the volume is not going to be up. It looks like a little bit, but the total dollar amount pledges are up significantly.

Mickelson, Christopher

Alright, do we have time to go to the next item on the agenda? It sounds like everybody's good with the AMP percentages.

3. Rate Spread – *Chris Mickelson*

- a. Review the written description provided by request

Tillis, Daniel

The next item is going to be about the spreadsheet and the functionality of it, the toggles and the rate spread, so we're where we need to be. By the way, if I were to take the average per month for the WEAf pledges, if it stays flat, it won't, but there would be 2,866 pledges for the year--obviously the summer is going to be a little bit lower--but it's still definitely going to be higher than what we've seen historically as far as the volume goes; we've done about 1,658 so far this year so we're only 600 short of our best for the year.

Tillis, Daniel

The next topic was a carryover from the last few week and Chris had sent out a written description of the various toggles and the data that's in the spreadsheet and the rate spread that you see in cells G35 through roughly L35, which is the rate spread. Chris had answered some questions about it so wanted to see if anybody still needs any explanation or anything that's in the spreadsheet or has any questions on it. OK I don't see any hands up.

4. Program Name – Dan

Our second to last topic is program name. We want to market the combination of the bill discount rate and the arrearage forgiveness program. We need an official external name for the programs like we have for WEAf today - Washington Energy Assistance Fund. We do need to have this before we file. In the state of Oregon, externally and internally, we call the bill discount rate the energy discount program or the EDP. At one point we were going to name both programs in both States AMPED for Arrearage Management Program Energy Discount. We didn't get to an AMP in Oregon for a lot of different reasons, so we left just the AMP part out. Internally we call it EDP as well. We'd certainly love to continue to call the Washington bill discount rate the EDP for simplicity's sake, so I'm just trying to think of a good name or acronym for these programs. I just want to get this group really thinking about some ideas for names, we're certainly open to ideas.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

How about Cascade Arrearage Relief Energy Discount - that says CARED.

Tillis, Daniel

I like that a lot. that was fast, Corey.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

In my brain, I tend to think of arrearage or debt relief rather than forgiveness. You know, it's not a sin to have debt.

Yochi Zakai

I like it too, and much better work than I could ever do, Corey - good job.

Tillis, Daniel

We have a leader in the clubhouse if anybody else comes up with any other great ideas, let us know, and you don't have to wait until next week. Feel free to send them via e-mail if you want. You can even post them in this chat anytime you want to. The last topic, that we're going to talk about next week and I think that's going to be pretty easy to start with is revisiting the staffing models for the agencies handling BDR and AMP qualification being the primary intake for that. In addition to that topic, I'll leave the program name on for us to come back to any ideas you might have in between this week and next week, we made a decision on Tier 3 through 5 for forgiveness, so that's good. We don't need to continue to keep that one on there. And no one had any additional questions on the spreadsheet, so we don't need to keep that specific topic as far as asking questions about the spreadsheet. Any other topics for next week?

5. Topics for 6/7 Meeting – All

Yochi Zakai

Can the company think about a timeline for providing a draft tariff and filing to the group for review?

Tillis, Daniel

Chris, do you want to think about that and reply via e-mail before next week or do you want me to put that on the agenda for next week?

Mickelson, Christopher

Put it on the agenda for next week, but I would say once we get the name and I don't think we need much more from that, we could get something sent around the week of June 19th. Obviously, you guys would only probably have that week to look at it and provide input the following week, so we'd be filing--if we're trying to still keep with the July 1st, which I think is a Saturday, so we either need to do it that Friday or push it out to the 3rd which right before a holiday.

Yochi Zakai

The other thing that I've been thinking about with the tariff is if we want the actual discount percentages to go in the tariff or if we just want to put that in the cover letter where we're explaining more of the program design and then maybe put in the tariff that the discount will be set to bring energy burden down to under 3.6%. That way we might have a little bit more flexibility in working with the advisory group to do adjustments in future years without needing to make a tariff change. I think that future year adjustments would still involve full discussions with the advisory group as well as a filing with the Commission, but that filing could be something a little bit more informal perhaps included in an annual report or a separate filing, and maybe not have the exact

discount percentage in the tariff. Or if we do have the discount percentage in the tariff to also include that goal because I guess the point that I'm trying to make is I want the Commission and the and folks reading the tariff to understand that the goal of the discount is to bring energy burden down to a certain percentage and not to provide a discount of a fixed amount.

Mickelson, Christopher

We were planning to explain as part of I believe it was Senate Bill 59, that the goal is to bring energy burden below 6% and that's what the Senate bill stated. I believe we were planning to put the percentages in and I think our draft already reflects the percentages in there so any modifications through this advisory group in the future in a year or two when we review these programs, would most likely have to do a tariff change anyway to accommodate a lot of those modifications we decide to go with.

Charlee Thompson

I was just going to jump in and say that I actually think that's a really good idea Yochi. I like the idea of not necessarily etching the percentages into stone, but as you said, highlighting the goal of reducing the energy burden. But if we're going to have to change the tariff anyway, which I didn't necessarily think about, then I guess that makes sense and look forward to reviewing the draft filing soon.

Mickelson, Christopher

If commission staff is on board with not having percentages in there then we could look at some way to design the tariff that way, but I would definitely want to get their input and buy in on that.

Tillis, Daniel

Cory said in chat that he thinks memorializing it in the filings cover letter is fine.

Gross, Jennifer

I think it's a good idea to have it in the tariff because it gives clarity to the customer and also clarity that we're not discriminating between customers. There's a clear rule of what we will apply.

Yochi Zakai

We can talk about this more next week. I'll think about it a little more, again the goal which I think could probably be accomplished in multiple ways is to clearly identify that we are setting it based on percentage of energy burden and ultimately the group's goal is that the actual percentage amounts will be adjusted to maintain that goal of reducing energy burden it consistent with state law.

Tillis, Daniel

Corey - your question in the chat about the name, I do think CARED, the past tense doesn't market as well as CARES does, but I can't think of a good S. You could go with Cascade Arrearage Relief Energy Savings, and we could still call it EDP internally. It is energy savings if it's a discount, but that's an option and CARES markets better than CARED.

Corey Dahl (PCU-he/him)

I think so too. It probably doesn't send the right message, but we used to care, not so much anymore. We still have some time to think about it, but I think we're on the right track.

Tillis, Daniel

Yeah, I agree and I'm sure you all will stay awake tonight trying to think of a good name and probably will help you fall asleep a little faster than normal. Next week's agenda we will start with agency staffing models being primary intake, maybe some follow up conversation on the draft tariff filing and the timeline on that program name. Anything else we want on next week's agenda? Anything else big we need to make a decision on before filing? I won't send the agenda probably until Friday afternoon so if anybody in the group thinks of anything that we don't have on the agenda yet, let me know. Any final comments, questions, or topics before we wrap up this week? Thanks everyone. Have a great rest of your Wednesday.