

**URBAN WEATHERIZATION INITIATIVE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: March 26, 2010 ☒ Meeting was called to order at 10:10am by Karin Norington-Reaves

Attendees: Karin Norington-Reaves, Charlene Raickett, Gail Niemann, Jeff Stauter, Camille Lilly, Kurt Summers Jr., Deborah Harrington, Percy Harris, Lester McKeever Jr., Toni Irving, Representative Ken Dunkin

Apologies: none

Introductions: Ms. Norington-Reaves greeted the Board and all Board members introduced themselves.

Program Overview: Ms. Norington-Reaves began the meeting with a brief overview of the Urban Weatherization Initiative. She explained that the program's purpose is three-fold: increase energy efficiency in homes, job creation, and to stimulate local economy and that the Board's primary responsibility is to approve and deny grants. She explained that this will be a competitive bid, RFP process. Resource fairs will be held at the same time as information sessions about the program are held throughout the state. Engagement of the program will be at a very local, grass roots level in order to gain access to those people who are underemployed or unemployed. Funding for this initiative will be coming from the Capital Bill, which prevents the initiative from being bound to the stricter Federal standards (i.e. extremely low income), but does then make it dependent on bond sales. Ms. Norington-Reaves said that they are hoping for \$10 million during this first fiscal year, but that this amount will increase to \$425 million over the next 5 years. The RFP for this program will be drafted in the coming weeks for review/revision and comment by the Board.

Role of Board

Members and agency: Ms. Niemann explained that as members of this Board, everyone is required to complete annual ethics training administered by the State of Illinois. This requirement will be made effective after formal Senate confirmation of the Board members. She also explained that members will be required to fill out a Statement of Economic Interest which asks broad based questions on sources of income, real estate, capital gains, etc. She noted that all members need to be mindful of potential conflicts of interest with regard to who is applying for these grant dollars and if there are any connections between the applicants and Board members.

Ms. Norington-Reaves explained to the Board that there is a staggered expiration of Board members' terms. The following list names each Board member, their assigned length of service on the Board, and the date of expiration of service: Percy Harris (1 year; 02/19/11), Kurt Summers Jr. (2 years; 02/19/12), Camille Lilly (3 years; 02/19/13), Deborah Harrington (4 years; 02/19/14), Lester McKeever Jr. (5 years; 02/19/15). There are a total of 5 voting members and 4 ex-officio members. To have a quorum, only 3 of the 5 Board members need to be present to make and bind decisions (members can be present via telephone if need be); a unanimous vote is required when only 3 voting members are present. This Board is subject to the Open Meetings Act, which means that all meetings and meeting minutes are open to the public. There will be a great deal of transparency via the Governor and DCEO's grant tracking website, but at the same time the Board will be kept insulated from factors that can compromise fairness/objectivity. DCEO will manage and administer the program and a DCEO attorney will be assigned to handle all legal matters for the Board. Ms. Norington-Reaves will serve as DCEO's primary administrator and contact person for the program and stated that the agency hopes to have 4 new hires in the next 8-12 weeks.

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Program Tasks:

Guidelines

Ms. Norington-Reaves stated that program guidelines need to be drafted. The Board proceeded to go through the Urban Weatherization Initiative Act and highlight key points of the Act such as: "No more than 2% of funds used for grants may be retained by the Department for administrative costs, program evaluation, and technical assistance activities"; "Grant recipients must submit quarterly reports of their grant activities to the Department in accordance with rules adopted under this Article"; "A grant recipient may not be awarded grants totaling more than \$500,000 per fiscal year." A common question surrounding the statute is whether an organization is awarded \$500,000 for the current fiscal year, all collaborating organizations listed in their application will also receive \$500,000; this remains an unresolved question for which the Board will seek guidance. Rep. Dunkin stated that he consulted with Rep. Burns, the drafter of the statute, and that Rep. Burns' understanding was that each organization would receive \$500,000. The Board will further discuss this issue. The Board discussed and agreed that there needs to be a better interpretation of "priority grants" listed in the Urban Weatherization Initiative Act, Page 3, Section 40-30.

Consumer Criteria

Mr. Harris stated that when reviewing future grant applications, members need to look at proposed outcomes stated by the applicant relative to the amount of funding they are requesting. Ms. Norington-Reaves explained that this is the single largest initiative to come out of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus in its history and that if these funds are not handled properly, they will never see dollars like this again. Mr. Stauter added that this Initiative is the largest program at DCEO, exceeding the amount of capital spending. The Board agreed that if/when a collaboration of organizations submit an application, there should be one lead organization and one lead contact person within that organization. The Board also suggested possibly limiting the number of collaborations any one organization may have.

RFP

Ms. Norington-Reaves explained that when applications are submitted, there needs to be strong commitment and partnerships on the local level between the applicant organization and local entities and MOUs need to be provided as well. She will be forwarding a copy of DCEO's EOGP RFP to the Board members to get an idea of the extent of detail that will be requested of these applicants. She noted that there need to be reputable auditors supporting the Board.

Miscellaneous:

Ms. Norington-Reaves stated that at the May meeting a draft RFP and guidelines will be provided. At the April meeting, a Chair will be elected, there will be further discussion related to ethics, and employees from the Bureau of Energy and Recycling and Weatherization will be in attendance.

Upcoming Meetings:

April 16, 2010 10am-12pm at JRTC/DCEO
May 14, 2010 10am-12pm at JRTC/DCEO
June 18, 2010 10am-12pm at JRTC/DCEO

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 12:01pm by Karin Norington-Reaves

Respectfully Submitted,

Claudine Najjar

Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity