

Income Qualified North Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee:
2019 Program Feedback Working Group
Discussion Questions

1. **Integrating Income Qualified EE Programs with Other Customer Assistance**

Efforts: Using IQ Programs to help Bill Assistance and Address Energy Burden faced by IQ Customers:

- a. **Integration with Other Utility Low-Income Initiatives:** How can the utilities (ComEd, Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas – North Shore Gas) share information about IQ EE programs with other customer assistance initiatives?
 - b. **Marketing and Outreach:** How can EE be used to engage with IQ customers that are financially struggling to pay their energy bills? How can these tactics be integrated into program designs and marketing strategies?
 - i. **Potential Working Group Deliverable:** Develop a fact sheet with information on customer (bill) assistance and how it relates to EE. (IL Attorney General’s Office shared an example of a NY Consumer Fact Sheet and would like to discuss further). This fact sheet will be a cross-promotional product featuring each utility.
 - ii. **Potential Working Group deliverable:** A report that pulls data from bill-payment assistance programs, EE programs, and meter data to provide a comprehensive analysis of participation and impact.
2. **Energy Efficiency Education and Providing Information to Customers:** How can the utilities (ComEd, Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas – North Shore Gas) effectively address the knowledge gap faced by IQ customers and the importance of EE?
- a. **Advocacy Organizations:**
 - i. **Advocacy Organization Outreach:** Are CBOs and CAAs performing outreach for the IQ Portfolios?
 - o Feedback from the CAAs and CBOs on how they can be best supported in conducting EE education and outreach?
 - ii. **Coordination with IL Solar for All Outreach:** There will be a grassroots education component to the IL Solar for All Program.
 - o Can information about IQ EE programs also be shared as part of that outreach?
 - o How can the Working Group better support *IL Solar for All* efforts?
 - b. **Potential Working Group Deliverable:** Flyers developed explaining the link between and integrating EE with solar for communities.

3. **Addressing In-Home Repairs:** How can the utilities (ComEd, Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas – North Shore Gas), and the IQ North Committee best coordinate resources and information to address in-home repairs prior to and during service delivery?
 - a. **Formalizing Referral Networks:** *Rebuilding Together* and *CEDA* have created a referral network to collaborate on in-home repairs during IHWAP projects. Are there lessons that can be learned from this approach?
 - b. **CDBG Recipients:** How can we coordinate with CDBG recipients during projects (via DCEO) to address in-home repairs?
 - c. **Other Approaches:** What other approaches can be used so that IQ programs don't have to turn away customers whose homes need repair prior to weatherization?

4. **Addressing Other IQ Customer Barriers to Participation:**
 - a. **“Wet” Signatures:** Can IQ programs (including IWAP) eliminate requirements for “wet” signatures so that customers with limited ability to travel (such as seniors etc.) can participate?
 - i. **Potential Working Group Deliverable:** A customer experience map for each program design AND/OR small pilots to test different solutions to customer experience barriers for income eligible participants.
 - b. **Fear of “Predatory Programs”/Scams:** Do IQ programs need to address customer trust issues - given prior predatory practices by ARES? If so, what can be done to communicate that utility-funded IQ programs are not predatory?
 - i. How do we prevent scams in low-income communities?
 - c. **Immigrants/Refugee Participation:** Are programs facing drop off from immigrants/refugees due to fears that participation will compromise their immigration status? Are there any actions the programs can take to address these concerns?
 - d. **User Experience/Transactional Cost:** Feedback has been shared that program design for IQ Customers is currently weighted towards program implementer needs. There is a need for better hand-off between programs.
 - i. What is the user experience and transactional cost that IQ customers encounter when participating in IQ programs? for instance, it has been shared that IQ customers have to pay a transactional fee over the phone when paying their utility bills. How are such fees creating a barrier for them?
 - ii. Is there a difficulty from the IQ customer perspective in engaging with the utilities?
 - iii. How can we enhance IQ customer user experience?

5. **Best Practices and Bridging Communication Gaps:** What are other jurisdictions doing that have worked? What are lessons learned?
 - a. **Best Practices:** What are other jurisdictions effectively doing to integrate information about bill assistance into their EE offerings for IQ customers?

- i. What are other best practices?
 - b. **Arrearages:** Can EE programs be targeted to or provide additional assistance to customers who are likely to be in arrears or are in arrears to delay or avoid disconnection? Do other jurisdictions have examples of this?
 - c. **Braided Funding:** What are other providers of other programs or services doing to braid offerings into theirs? Since IQ\$ are braided into IHWAP, can we braid into other systems as well, such as home repair programs?
6. **Other Program Feedback and Questions:**
- a. **Diversity within IQ Customer base:** How can we address differences in income eligible demographics and how we deliver programs?
 - i. **Potential Working Group Deliverable:** Memo summarizing potential income qualification strategies for upstream programs.¹
 - b. **Utility Budgets:** Can the utilities consider a budget to build local agencies capacity? How will this look? Perhaps a stipend to allow agencies to go to state's 9-week training that covers all or part time staff's time in training.
 - i. **Equipment Purchase:** Also provide any connections or provide discounts to equipment purchase for assessments.
 - c. **Green and Healthy Homes:** How can the utilities find funding sources to coordinate on addressing this?
 - d. **Additional Questions:** Are there specific programs that the IQ north utilities or Working Group participants would like to give feedback on?

¹ Please note that ComEd is the only utility currently providing 'Upstream Programs.' This suggestion is an ICC change; hence a member of the ICC staff will need to be a part of this conversation.