



MEMORANDUM

To: Jamey Neal, Nick Warnecke, Matt Armstrong, Ameren Illinois Company; Seth Craigo-Snell, SCS Analytics; and Elizabeth Horne, ICC Staff

From: The Opinion Dynamics Evaluation Team

Date: February 17, 2025

Re: AIC Community Action Agency Staffing Pilot Process Research Findings

This memorandum presents findings from Opinion Dynamics' process research exploring the Ameren Illinois Company (AIC) Community Action Agency (CAA) Staffing Pilot. Launched and implemented in 2022 and 2023, the pilot aimed to provide long-term solutions to CAAs' ongoing staffing and resource capacity issues by recruiting, training, and placing supplemental staff called Traveling Specialists with CAAs experiencing staffing shortages. The pilot concluded in September 2023. AIC has since transitioned staffing pilot activities, including training, management, and placement of Traveling Specialists with CAAs, to the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA). Since the Staffing Pilot aimed to help address CAAs' staffing needs in the long term, the evaluation team conducted this process research to understand the current state of the CAA channel and any lasting benefits of the pilot.

INTRODUCTION

CAAs have long been affected by staffing shortages, even before partnering with AIC. In 2021, the IACAA surveyed CAAs serving AIC service areas and found that almost three-quarters (16 of 22 respondents) reported needing help recruiting qualified staff to conduct energy audits, perform final inspections in participating households, and provide administrative or office support.¹ In response to this staffing shortage, the CAA channel implementation team launched the CAA Staffing Pilot in 2022. By providing a pipeline of supplemental staff and transferring pilot activities to the IACAA, the CAA Staffing Pilot aimed to provide long-term, action-oriented solutions to CAAs' ongoing staffing and resource capacity issues, which affected nearly all CAAs partnered with the Income Qualified (IQ) Initiative. In 2023, the CAA Staffing Pilot completed the following three phases:

- Phase 1: Assigned existing Walker-Miller staff to help CAAs with energy assessments (begun in 2022 and finished in 2023)
- Phase 2: Hired and trained new staff called Traveling Specialists or Traveling Assessors to help with energy assessments
- Phase 3: Identified CAAs with staffing needs and worked on placement of Traveling Specialists with CAAs in need, utilizing AIC funds to cover the salary and associated costs of the Traveling Specialists

¹ Source: Fuller, Diana. "A 3-Phase Approach to Solving Staffing Issues for Community Action Agencies in Illinois." *Building Performance Association Journal*, (April 15, 2023). <https://building-performance.org/bpa-journal/a-3-phase-approach-to-solving-staffing-issues-for-community-action-agencies-in-illinois/>

After exhausting the remaining AIC funds for the CAA Staffing Pilot, the pilot's activities, including recruitment, training, management, and placement of the Traveling Specialists, were transferred to the IACAA in September 2023.

In this memo, we provide answers to the following research questions:

- How was the CAA Staffing Pilot implemented in 2023, and what changes have been made since AIC transferred all pilot activities (i.e., recruiting, hiring, training, placement, and management) over to IACAA? What are the underlying reasons for these changes?
- What pilot implementation processes have worked well, and what could be improved?
- Did the focus on building staff capacity address the needs of CAAs? What needs do CAAs have that have not yet been addressed?
- How has the pilot contributed to perceived CAA channel resilience and/or success?

To provide answers to these research questions, the evaluation team conducted a review of relevant documents, including newsletters and journal articles found via online research on the CAA Staffing Pilot. The evaluation team also conducted in-depth interviews with CAA channel implementation staff and three of the six CAAs who participated in the Staffing Pilot.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Finding # 1:** In 2023, AIC implementation staff continued recruiting and training Traveling Specialists as part of the pilot's second phase and identified CAAs to place the Traveling Specialists with as part of the pilot's third phase. After exhausting the funds allocated for the pilot, AIC implementation staff turned over the pilot's activities to the IACAA in September 2023. The IACAA introduced a pay-for-service payment scheme for CAAs to cover the cost of employing Traveling Specialists. In 2024, the IACAA also began recruiting and training supplemental staff who can provide administrative support to Weatherization Coordinators.
- **Finding # 2:** In terms of the implementation process, the pilot effectively recruited, hired, and trained Traveling Specialists very well. All three interviewed CAAs reported that the pilot worked well in hiring and providing supplemental staff. One of the CAAs mentioned that AIC did an excellent job selecting and training the two Traveling Specialists. The pilot was also able to identify CAAs that needed supplemental staffing support and place Traveling Specialists with CAAs, which allowed CAAs to complete projects they would not have been able to otherwise. However, while the pilot was able to provide a solution, the CAAs reported that the pilot could have run longer as they could only participate and benefit from the utility-funded staff toward the end of the pilot. The pilot could have also provided the Traveling Specialists with practical or hands-on training by partnering with Program Allies (PAs) or other larger CAAs that were not experiencing staffing issues at the time of the pilot. This partnership would allow Traveling Specialists to observe how to conduct energy audits properly and comprehensively, helping to minimize errors or missed opportunities on the job.
 - **Recommendation:** The AIC implementation team and the IACAA should consider including practical or on-the-job training to complement the Training and Certification Program (TCP) training for the Traveling Specialists. For instance, where feasible, the IACAA could partner with larger CAAs with experienced energy auditors, and the Traveling Specialists could shadow while performing energy assessments. Also, AIC could talk to PAs and discuss potential on-the-job training opportunities, such as having Traveling Specialists accompany PAs during an energy audit to observe and learn how to properly and thoroughly conduct energy audits.
- **Finding # 3:** The pilot's focus on building staff capacity addressed the needs of CAAs in the short term; however, it fell short in addressing the CAAs' need for full-time staff. The pilot provided a temporary, action-oriented solution to the longstanding issue that CAAs have faced regarding staffing. The staffing shortages are mainly due to the

nature of an energy auditor’s job. CAAs have reported that one of the primary reasons for their ongoing staffing shortages is the nature of the job, which involves health and safety hazards but offers minimal pay. Additionally, the role of an energy auditor provides limited opportunities for growth or career advancement. As a result, CAAs face challenges in recruiting and retaining permanent or full-time employees. While a solution was provided through the pilot, CAA staffing issues persist. In addition, CAAs also reported experiencing staffing shortages with administrative staff who could provide office support for the Weatherization Coordinator, and at least one CAA noted the need for financial assistance to cover the salary of the Traveling Specialist once wages transitioned to a pay-for-service basis.

- **Recommendation:** Future efforts to support CAAs should include recruitment and training of staff who can provide office and administrative support as well as energy auditor support.
- **Finding # 4:** The pilot contributed to the CAA channel’s resilience and/or success by enabling CAAs to complete projects they would not have been able to without the supplemental staff. In addition, the pilot gave the CAAs confidence and a sense of security by creating a talent pool they could tap into if needed. The pilot also provided an alternative solution to a longstanding problem that has been difficult to resolve. Despite these, some uncertainty remains as not all CAAs have the funds to pay for supplemental staff. CAA funding varies yearly, and staffing shortages persist in both field and office or administrative roles.

METHODS

The evaluation team reviewed documents such as the program implementation plan (PIP), online newsletters and literature, as well as CAA Channel staff interview transcripts and notes. From this review, we developed an in-depth interview guide for participating CAAs (Appendix A). We also submitted a data request to AIC implementation staff for a list of key contacts at participating CAAs.

The evaluation team reached out to all six participating CAAs via email to schedule an interview. We were able to conduct three interviews out of six participating CAAs. The evaluation team attempted to contact the remaining three CAAs five times, four times via email and one follow-up phone call.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes.

DETAILED FINDINGS

This section details the findings from this CAA Staffing Pilot process research.

STAFFING PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

In the first half of 2023, the CAA Staffing Pilot continued recruiting and training Traveling Specialists, conducted outreach toward CAAs, identified CAAs with staffing needs, and assigned Traveling Specialists to CAAs that needed supplemental staff using AIC funding. The CAAs where the Traveling Specialists were placed had to sign a participation agreement. Both interviewed implementation staff and CAAs who participated in the Staffing Pilot reported that in 2023, pilot activities included recruitment of Traveling Specialists and having them undergo TCP training as part of the pilot’s second phase. The pilot also began placing Traveling Specialists with CAAs who needed staffing support as part of the pilot’s third phase. Notably, the Staffing Pilot was open to all CAAs serving AIC territories, and CAAs learned about the pilot through outreach activities by the pilot or by word-of-mouth through other CAAs.

Upon engagement with the pilot for supplemental staff, prior to the assignment of Traveling Specialists with CAAs, participating CAAs reported having to sign a participation agreement that stated the terms of employment of the Traveling Specialists and the duration of the assignment. Traveling Specialists' main responsibilities were those of energy auditors, which entailed performing site visits in participant households, identifying opportunities for energy efficiency upgrades, and health and safety remediation. However, two CAAs reported that the Traveling Specialists also helped them with administrative work, such as populating WeatherWorks.²

Changes to the implementation of the pilot after it was turned over to the IACAA in September 2023 included establishing the pay-for-service model to cover the cost of employing supplemental staff and recruiting and training for office support in addition to the Traveling Specialists. Interviewed CAAs reported three significant changes to the pilot's implementation after AIC funding had been exhausted and the management of the pilot was turned over to the IACAA. The first and most significant change was the IACAA's establishment of the pay-for-service model to cover the salaries and other costs associated with placing Traveling Specialists with CAAs. The second change, which occurred in 2024, was recruiting and training supplemental staff to help support Weatherization Coordinators in their offices. The third change involved the process of requesting supplemental staff. Under the IACAA, CAAs needing supplemental staff must email a request to the IACAA. They would then sign a contract or agreement, which included terms of payment (i.e., pay-per-service or pay-per-energy assessment). Traveling Specialists would then begin working with the requesting CAA after eight to nine business days. CAAs and implementation staff also reported the switch to a new program tracking platform from WeatherWorks in July 2024. The new platform is called the Illinois Weatherization (IWx) tool. This change was due to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) concerns about data security with WeatherWorks. While this change in the program tracking data tool was not part of the pilot, it did affect Traveling Specialists. They also had to learn to use the new platform, as they had to enter project information gathered during the energy assessments into it. Notably, CAAs anticipate that once the new platform is fully implemented and working properly, they will be able to accommodate more participants, potentially increasing the need for supplemental staff, both Traveling Specialists and administrative staff.

STAFFING PILOT STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Staffing Pilot's main strength was that it provided a solution to CAAs' staffing shortages and enabled CAAs to complete projects that they would not have been able to without the supplemental staff in the short time that AIC implemented the pilot. All three interviewed CAAs reported that the pilot worked well in providing supplemental staff, allowing them to complete energy-saving projects that they would not have been able to complete without additional support. While the CAAs perceived the pilot as a short-term solution, they found it effective in solving their staffing shortages when implemented. The pilot also freed up the Weatherization Coordinators' time and allowed them to focus on administrative and other work, which they would have had to delay or deprioritize due to the need for them to help complete energy assessments themselves due to staffing shortages.

“It [the pilot] freed myself and my other assessor as we were doing this procurement process, and that just takes months and months to get it right to the state's specifications. So, to get out two, three, four times a week and try to get an assessment in there, get it entered into WeatherWorks at that time, he [the Traveling Specialist] fell into place at exactly the same time.”

² WeatherWorks was the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program's (IHWAP) certified energy assessment software, which CAAs used to track their program activities including IHWAP participant information and information collected during energy audits as well as completed weatherization projects.

Another strength of the pilot was that it provided an example of how staffing shortages could be addressed promptly and effectively in the short or long term. Staffing shortages have affected CAAs for quite some time now. However, the issue worsened after the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the reasons why CAAs are short-staffed is due to high staff turnover. CAAs reported that the job responsibilities of field staff, particularly those who conduct energy assessments, can be challenging and sometimes unpleasant or unsafe. These assessments sometimes require staff to go into parts of homes that one may not want to go to unless necessary, such as basements or attics. In addition, the nature of the work is not always appealing to career-minded individuals or people looking for more lucrative work. These challenges make it hard to find and retain suitable employees. The pilot has shown that there are other options besides hiring full-time staff and that having a pool of temporary or supplemental staff available is also effective and useful. One CAA noted that the pilot did an excellent job selecting and training the two Traveling Specialists.

Opportunities for improvement include a longer implementation period by AIC, recruitment, training, and placement of supplemental staff who could help with administrative work, and adding or including on-the-job training for supplemental staff. When asked what things could have been done better, two of three CAAs noted that the third phase of the pilot could have run longer as they participated when AIC funding was nearly exhausted and could have used the financial assistance for Traveling Specialists' salaries. CAAs also reported needing administrative support at the time, and as such, the pilot could have also recruited and trained supplemental staff to support the Weatherization Coordinator with office work. All three CAAs reported that the Traveling Specialists could have used on-the-job training before being assigned to them, as they were new to the workforce and energy assessments. While CAAs appreciated the Traveling Specialists and found them helpful, they reported that there were things that Traveling Specialists missed during the first few energy assessments, such as health and safety remediation needs. CAAs attributed this to the Traveling Specialists' lack of on-the-job experience, which they believe could have been learned through more practical or on-the-job training.

"Maybe they should have sent those guys out as trainees with other assessors just on a dozen homes. When you're sitting in that classroom and then you get out in the field, it's a totally different world out there. I think a little bit of experience with some experienced guys up front would've been helpful for them."

CAA NEEDS

The pilot addressed the CAAs' need for additional field staff in the short term and provided a solution for temporary staffing shortages. All interviewed CAAs reported that the pilot helped address their need for additional staff to conduct energy assessments in 2023. However, a couple of CAAs reported needing support in the long term.

Some CAAs need additional staff who could work with them for extended periods or until they can fill open positions. CAAs could also use supplemental staff to help with office or administrative work and financial support to hire a Traveling Specialist. Two CAAs indicated that they need staff, whether supplemental or permanent, who can work with them for an extended period. CAAs also noted that they also needed administrative support at the time the pilot was implemented. The IACAA is now addressing this by hiring and training staff to support Weatherization Coordinators with office or administrative work. One CAA noted their need for financial assistance in order to request a Traveling Specialist, as there is no room in their budget for additional staff, whether temporary or permanent.

STAFFING PILOT'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAA CHANNEL

The pilot enabled participating CAAs to complete more energy-saving projects in their communities, solved CAAs' staffing shortages in the short term, and provided some security among participating CAAs that help is available when needed. In addition to enabling CAAs to complete more energy-saving projects, serve more community members, and temporarily solve staffing shortages, the pilot provided CAAs with a sense of security. The availability of supplemental staff has given them more confidence in their ability to complete the work needed to serve their community members even in staffing shortages, as they can request assistance from the Traveling Specialists when necessary. CAAs also find it advantageous that the Traveling Specialists have already received some training compared to an entirely new hire.

CAA SATISFACTION WITH STAFFING PILOT

CAAs were generally satisfied with the pilot and the Traveling Specialists. However, CAAs reported some opportunities for improvement when it comes to training and preparing Traveling Specialists for their first energy assessments. All three CAAs reported being satisfied with the pilot and found the fees for the pay-for-service payments reasonable. The CAAs also reported being satisfied with the Traveling Specialists overall despite recognizing the need for on-the-job training. One CAA also mentioned that it would be helpful to have more Traveling Specialists as each Traveling Specialist can only be assigned one CAA at a time for a maximum of three months. Since more CAAs needed staffing support, having more Traveling Specialists available would have been useful.

APPENDIX A. CAA STAFFING PILOT IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Ameren Illinois Company (AIC) Income Qualified (IQ) Community Action Agency (CAA) Staffing Pilot Participant Interviews

Instrument Type: Interview Guide

STUDY OVERVIEW

Table 1 includes key characteristics of the instrument.

Table 1. Study Overview

Descriptor	This Instrument
Instrument Type	In-depth Interview
Estimated Time to Complete	45 minutes
Population Description	CAA Staffing Pilot Participants
Population Size	TBD
Contact List Size	TBD
Completion Goal(s)	6 – 8 completes
Contact List Source and Date	Implementation Staff
Type of Sampling	Census
Incentive Types and Amounts	None
Outreach Methods	Email invite and email and phone follow-up

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Table 2 maps the research objectives and questions to specific questions in the instrument.

Table 2. Research Objectives

Research Objective/Statement	Associated Instrument Section/Questions
How was the CAA Staffing Pilot implemented in 2023, and how has the Supplemental Staffing Pilot changed since it was turned over to the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA)? What are the underlying reasons for these changes?	Q7 - Q13
What pilot implementation processes have worked well and what could be improved?	Q14 - Q16; Q22
Did the focus on building staff capacity address the needs of CAAs? What needs do CAAs have that have not yet been addressed?	Q17 - Q20
How has the pilot contributed to perceived CAA Channel resilience and/or success?	Q21
How satisfied or dissatisfied were the participating CAAs in the supplemental staff who came from the pilot and the pilot overall?	Q23 - Q24

INTERVIEWER INFORMATION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In 2021, the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA) conducted a survey that identified that nearly all CAAs partnered with AIC's Income Qualified Initiative were experiencing staffing challenges. To help address these staffing challenges, in 2022, AIC launched a CAA Staffing Pilot, which aimed to provide long-term solutions to CAAs' staffing and resource capacity issues. The CAA Staffing Pilot consisted of the following three phases:

- Phase 1: Assigned existing Walker-Miller staff to help CAAs with energy assessments (from February 2022 to June 2022);
- Phase 2: In 2022, the pilot began hiring and training new staff called Traveling Specialists or Traveling Assessors to help with energy assessments;
- Phase 3: Identified CAAs with staffing needs and worked on placement of Traveling Specialists, utilizing AIC funds to cover the salary and associated costs of the Traveling Specialists (started in early 2023 and finished in September 2023).

In September 2023, after spending the remaining AIC funding for the CAA Staffing Pilot, the IACAA transitioned the Traveling Specialists from being solely utility-funded to a fee-for-service model.

OUTREACH

EMAIL INVITE



Subject Line: Interview Request for Ameren Illinois 2022-2023 CAA Staffing Pilot

Hi [CAA CONTACT NAME],

On behalf of Ameren Illinois, Opinion Dynamics, an independent research company, is conducting a study on the Ameren Illinois Supplemental Staffing Pilot, a program through which the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program Community Action Agency (CAA) Channel provided additional funding to hire, train, and identify qualified staff who would be able to work with CAAs to complete weatherization projects in the Ameren Illinois service territory in 2022 and 2023. We are reaching out to CAA staff like you, who are most knowledgeable about your organization's participation in the Staffing Pilot, to learn more about your organization's experience with the pilot.

If there is a different staff member who would be a better resource regarding your organization's experience with the Staffing Pilot, please let us know.

The information we will be gathering through the interviews will only be used in aggregate and will be kept confidential,

The interview should take 30 to 45 minutes. If you are available within the next two weeks and would be willing to speak with us, please click the following link to schedule the interview.

[LINK TO CALENDLY]

Thank you,

Opinion Dynamics Evaluation Team

FIRST FOLLOW-UP EMAIL



Subject Line: First Follow-up Invite for Interview About Ameren Illinois 2022-2023 CAA Staffing Pilot

Hi [CAA CONTACT NAME],

We are following up on an interview request we sent on [DATE EMAIL INVITE SENT]. We are reaching out to key CAA staff like you, who are most knowledgeable about your organization's participation in the Staffing Pilot, through which the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program Community Action Agency (CAA) Channel provided additional funding to hire, train, and identify qualified staff who would be able to work with CAAs to complete weatherization projects in the Ameren Illinois service territory in 2022 and 2023.

The information we will be gathering through the interviews will only be used in aggregate and will be kept confidential,

The interview should take about 30 to 45 minutes. Should you be available this week and would be willing to speak with us, please click the following link to schedule the interview.

[LINK TO CALENDLY]

If there is a different staff member who would be a better resource regarding your organization's experience with the Staffing Pilot, please let us know.

Thank you,

Opinion Dynamics Evaluation Team

SECOND FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Subject Line: Final Follow-up on Your Feedback on the Ameren Illinois 2022-2023 CAA Staffing Pilot

Hi [CAA CONTACT NAME],

We are following up on an interview request we sent on [DATE EMAIL INVITE SENT]. We are reaching out to key CAA staff like you, who are most knowledgeable about your organization's participation in the Staffing Pilot, through which the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program Community Action Agency (CAA) Channel provided additional funding to hire, train, and identify qualified staff who would be able to work with CAAs to complete weatherization projects in the Ameren Illinois service territory in 2022 and 2023.

The interview should take 30 to 45 minutes. If you are available within the next few days and would be willing to speak with us, please click the following link to schedule the interview.

[LINK TO CALENDLY]

If there is a different staff member who would be a better resource regarding your organization's experience with the Staffing Pilot, please let us know.

Thank you,

Opinion Dynamics Evaluation Team

INSTRUMENT

Thank you for speaking with me today. This interview concerns the Supplemental Staffing Pilot that Ameren Illinois, along with its implementation partner Walker-Miller Energy Services, launched in 2022 to help provide long-term solutions to staffing challenges that CAAs like your organization have been facing for the past few years. We will cover topics like the design and implementation of the pilot, its successes and challenges, and its impact on your organization.

Before we start, for note-taking purposes, would it be okay if we record this conversation?

[IF PERMISSION GRANTED, START RECORDING]

[AFTER RECORDING STARTS] Thank you for allowing me to record.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The first set of questions is regarding your role at <ORGANIZATION NAME> in general and your role as it relates to the CAA Supplemental Staffing Pilot (or Staffing Pilot),

- Q1. Could you please describe your roles and responsibilities with <ORGANIZATION NAME>?
 - a. How would you describe your role in the CAA Supplemental Staffing Pilot (or Staffing Pilot)? [PROBES: COORDINATION WITH WALKER-MILLER ON SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF, SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF SCREENING AND/OR TRAINING, ASSIGNING TASKS OR PROJECTS TO SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF, SERVED AS SUPERVISOR TO SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF, ETC.]
- Q2. How long has your organization been in operation?
- Q3. How many full plus part-time staff do you have? Do all of them work on AIC-funded projects?
- Q4. [ASK IF NO] How many of your staff work on AIC-funded projects?
- Q5. Do these include staff (i.e., Traveling Specialists) from the Supplemental Staffing Pilot? [ASK IF NO] How many of the staff you work with were from the pilot?
- Q6. What did your participation in the Staffing Pilot entail? [PROBE ON PARTICIPATION IN TERMS OF TRAINING, RECEIVING SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF, PARTNERING WITH THE STAFFING PILOT]³

³ Per a journal article, as of April 2023, seven agencies were participating and four had completed placements. The pilot developed thirteen new partnerships which created a pipeline of qualified candidates and engagement opportunities for students and community groups.

IMPLEMENTATION

Based on our understanding, the Supplemental Staffing Pilot had three phases [IF NEEDED: Phase 1: Assigned existing Walker-Miller staff to help CAAs with energy assessments (began in 2022 and finished in 2023); Phase 2: Hired and trained new staff called Traveling Specialists or Traveling Assessors to help with energy assessments; Phase 3: Identified CAAs with staffing needs and worked on placement of Traveling Specialists with CAAs in need].

We would like to learn more about your experience while the Pilot was being implemented. So, my next set of questions are focused on the Pilot's design and implementation in 2022 and 2023.

- Q7. Could you describe how the pilot was implemented in 2022 and 2023 [IF NEEDED: prior to transitioning to the fee-for-service model]?⁴
- Q8. What was your experience overall with the pilot in 2022 and 2023?
- Q9. [IF TRAVELING SPECIALISTS WERE PLACED IN AGENCY] What sorts of tasks or activities did the Traveling Specialists complete for your agency?
- Q10. The pilot ended in 2023, and funding for supplemental staff has since been transitioned over to IACAA from Ameren Illinois. Has IACAA continued any of the recruitment, hiring, training, and/or placement of Traveling Specialists? What, if any, activities of the pilot are still being carried out to date?
- Q11. [ASK IF PILOT ACTIVITIES ARE STILL IN PLAY] Have there been any changes to these activities since the switch to the fee-for-service model? What changes have been made since the transition from AIC or Walker-Miller to IACAA? [PROBE: funding sources – AIC vs. agency paid fee-for-service, recruitment, hiring, training, and placement of supplemental staff, etc.]⁵
- Q12. [ASK IF THERE WERE CHANGES] What were the reasons for these changes? [PROBE: FUNDING CONCERNS, LACK OF STAFF OR OTHER RESOURCES, ETC.]
- Q13. [ASK IF THERE WERE CHANGES] How did these changes impact the current implementation and design of the pilot?

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

- Q14. From your perspective, what were the successes of the Supplemental Staffing Pilot? [PROBE: WHAT WORKED WELL; TRAINING, RECRUITMENT, PLACEMENT, ADDITIONAL STAFF, ABILITY TO COMPLETE MORE PROJECTS AND/OR MEET GOALS, PROVIDING LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO STAFFING SHORTAGES, ETC.]
- Q15. What could have been improved as far as the implementation or design of the pilot?

Source: Fuller, Diana. "A 3-Phase Approach to Solving Staffing Issues for Community Action Agencies in Illinois." Building Performance Association (BPA) Journal (April 2023): <https://building-performance.org/bpa-journal/a-3-phase-approach-to-solving-staffing-issues-for-community-action-agencies-in-illinois/>

⁴ By the end of 2023, after exhausting AIC funding, the Supplemental Staffing Pilot transitioned to a fee-for-service model, wherein CAAs would shoulder the cost of employing staff from the Pilot.

⁵ Traveling Specialists underwent a 10-week Training and Certification Program (TCP) funded by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

Source: Fuller, Diana. "A 3-Phase Approach to Solving Staffing Issues for Community Action Agencies in Illinois." Building Performance Association (BPA) Journal (April 2023): <https://building-performance.org/bpa-journal/a-3-phase-approach-to-solving-staffing-issues-for-community-action-agencies-in-illinois/>

Q16. Did your organization or supplemental staff experience any challenges working together? [PROBE ON CHALLENGES IN DOCUMENTATION PROCESS, USE OF CAA TOOLS SUCH AS WEATHERWORKS, COMMUNICATION, SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF TIME WITH CAA, ETC.] How were these challenges overcome?

IMPACT ON CAAS

Q17. Prior to the Staffing Pilot, how did staffing or resource challenges affect your organization on a day-to-day basis? What sorts of AIC project-related tasks were impacted by these challenges?

Q18. Did the pilot's focus on training and providing supplemental staff address your organization's immediate and/or long-term needs? If so, how? If not, how?

Q19. Besides addressing staffing shortages, has the pilot had any other short or long-term benefits to your organization?

Q20. Outside of staffing, does your organization have any other needs that have not been met? What other types of assistance does your organization need to adequately serve community members within the AIC service territory?

Q21. How, if at all, has the pilot contributed to your organization's success and ability to continue providing services in your community?

Q22. What, if any, lessons did your organization learn from the pilot?

Q23. How would you rate your satisfaction on the supplemental staff, if any, who came from the pilot? Were you extremely dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, satisfied, or extremely satisfied? [PROBE ON REASON FOR SATISFACTION]

Q24. Using the same scale, thinking about the pilot as a whole (including implementation, design, working with implementation staff and DCEO, level of funding), how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the pilot before it was transitioned to IACAA? [PROBE ON REASONS FOR SATISFACTION OR DISSATISFACTION]

Q25. How would you rate your satisfaction with the pilot after it was transitioned to IACAA? [PROBE ON REASONS FOR SATISFACTION OR DISSATISFACTION]

CLOSING

Q26. Those are all the questions I have for you. Is there any other topic or information you could think of that we have not discussed that would be helpful for us to know?