

**Illinois EE Stakeholder Advisory Group
Non-Energy Impacts Working Group Meeting**

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 (Teleconference)
10:00 am – 11:00 am

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Meeting Materials

Posted on the [October 4 meeting page](#) of the SAG website:

- [October 4, 2023 SAG Reporting Working Group Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Opinion Dynamics Presentation: Ameren Illinois Income Qualified Participant Non-Energy Impacts](#)

Attendees (by webinar)

Celia Johnson, SAG Facilitator
Caty Lamadrid, Inova Energy Group (SAG Meeting Support)
Adriana Kraig, Opinion Dynamics
Andy Vaughn, Leidos
Anna McCreery, Guidehouse
Arlinda Bajrami, MEEA
Bridget Williams, Guidehouse
Chris Neme, Energy Futures Group, representing NRDC
Chris Vaughn, Nicor Gas
Darnell Johnson, Urban Efficiency Group
Diana Fuller, Walker-Miller Energy Services
Elizabeth Horne, ICC Staff
Erin Stitz, Applied Energy Group
Jason Fegley, Leidos
Jeff Erickson, Guidehouse
Jim Fay, ComEd
Jonathan Skarzynski, Nicor Gas
Jordan Folks, Opinion Dynamics
Julia Friedman, Oracle
Matt Armstrong, Ameren Illinois
Michael Brandt, Elevate
Nick Warnecke, Ameren Illinois
Patricia Plympton, Guidehouse
Phil Mosenthal, Optimal Energy, representing IL AG and NCLC
Randy Opdyke, Nicor Gas
Seth Craigo-Snell, SCS Analytics
Shannon Stendel, Slipstream
Sharon Mullen, Abacus Energy Works
Sy Lewis, Meadows Eastside Community Resource Org.

Victoria Nielsen, ScottMadden
Zach Ross, Opinion Dynamics

Opening & Introductions

Celia Johnson, SAG Facilitator

- **Meeting Purpose:** For Ameren Illinois' evaluator (Opinion Dynamics) to present income qualified participant non-energy impact (NEI) research results.
- **Brief Background on NEI Working Group:**
 - The SAG NEI Working Group was created in 2018 to discuss NEI research and methodologies. The Working Group has touched both on NEI, and economic impacts.
 - The SAG NEI Working Group meets on an as-needed basis.
 - All Non-Energy Impact research completed in Illinois are available on the SAG website.

Ameren Illinois Non-Energy Impacts Update

Adriana Kraig, Opinion Dynamics

- **Material:** [Opinion Dynamics Presentation: Ameren Illinois Income Qualified Participant Non-Energy Impacts](#)
- Presentation covers results from a multi-year study. Results are specific to the Ameren Illinois Income Qualified Program.
- An initial presentation with interim results was done in 2022, today Opinion Dynamics will share draft results from the study.
- The study addressed how much does an income-based qualified program help participants and societies?
- Study looked at participant NEIs from Ameren Illinois Income Qualified (IQ) Initiative. Study was designed to build on previous research that indicated that the IQ initiative was indeed reaching customers with housing, health, and economic issues and helping improve them. Opinion Dynamics decided to focus further on single-family channel.
- Main research topics included household characteristics, concerns about payment of energy bills, safety conditions, physical, and mental health.
- Study (web-based and telephone-based) was designed to survey a treatment group and a comparison group. Both groups were surveyed twice, once before the upgrades and once a year later. Responses came from 106 treatment group customers and 80 comparison group respondents. Data was used to estimate impacts of the initiative.
- Results:
 - Participants experienced higher levels of thermal home comfort. Opinion Dynamics asked participants how often they experienced discomfort in a year. Groups reported drafts were the most common instance prior to participation and that the recurrence of drafts decreased in the post-period.
 - Participants experienced more comfortable home temperatures after the participation.
- Monetization methods of thermal non-energy impacts:
 - The survey asked respondents to report number of medical visits that household members took due to thermal stress. The result is that the monetization of medical cost reductions due to reduced thermal stress could not be found.

Phil Mosenthal: Given that we use TRC test to look at cost-effectiveness from a societal perspective, why does it matter whether customers have insurance? Wouldn't the benefit be the avoided cost of the healthcare regardless of who's paying it?

Adriana Kraig: Measure looks at cost of visit which varies depending on whether the individual has insurance or not. We are just saying this is how much the cost is with and without insurance.

Phil Mosenthal: Are you trying to estimate what comes out of the participant's pocket or what is the societal cost?

Adriana Kraig: We are talking about the cost to the participant and later in the presentation we will talk about cost to society.

Chris Neme: When you found significant indicators of improved comfort, did you delve any further into why? Interested in whether improved comfort was a function of building envelope improvements or whether there were also changes in thermostat settings? Because people might be setting the thermostat differently because they can afford it (take-back effect).

Adriana Kraig: Both instances are due to weatherization. No insight from the study related to the specific issue of take-backs.

Zach Ross: The survey instrument was complicated to begin with. When this was developed, stakeholders participated in the process, and we tried to cover as much as possible while keeping it as simple and easy to answer. The survey results report may help answer other interesting contextual questions.

- Monetization methods of thermal non-energy impacts:
 - The survey asked respondents to report number of medical visits that household members took due to thermal stress. The result is that the monetization of medical cost reductions due to reduced thermal stress could not be found.
- Beyond thermal stress, the survey also investigated participant use of assistance programs, and found that participants used less assistance programs post-participation. This included food assistance program, medical assistance programs, and energy assistance programs. In the graph, left hand is comparison group and right hand is participant group.
- Designed a formula to monetize the avoided medical payment assistance saved for society.
- Results = a difference of about \$16 per household per year for avoided medical payment assistance. This is consistent with literature in the field.

Ana McCreery: is this just Medicare and Medicaid or also hospital assistance?

Adriana Kraig: it includes any type of medical payment assistance, not just government.

Julia Friedman: Can you say what "medical assistance" covers? Does it not cover avoided medical and hospital costs?

Adriana Kraig: In this study, medical assistance was defined as any assistance used to pay for household medical bills. We did ask participants to consider Medicare, Medicaid and other programs used to pay their medical bills.

Chris Neme: This is a reduction in the amount of payment assistance they received? What about payments they did not get assistance on that is out of their pocket?

Adriana Kraig: Somewhere else in the survey we asked how many medical visits they took and monetized this, and we did not find any significant differences. There was no difference in number of visits, out-of-pocket costs. The only difference found was on medical assistance.

Julia Friedman – via chat: And that accounts for, perhaps, a lower amount of funding overall of assistance programs?

Zach Ross: The way the survey asked about this is for folks to estimate how often or whether they used medical assistance over time, not an actual dollar amount. The dollar amount was estimated. We saw a downward change for people in the treatment groups using medical assistance. While Julia's question might be something that is happening, it should not be captured in these numbers based on how we asked the question.

Julia Friedman: Do we know if people are paying costs themselves rather than getting assistance?

Adriana Kraig: That would be possible, but we saw no differences in the number of medical visits.

- Conclusion:
 - NEI research provides actionable insights for utilities that can be used as inputs to cost-effectiveness testing.

Zach Ross: NEIs are difficult to monetize. The survey asked many questions and the findings that were presented are the things we saw changed in participant households and we are trying to assign a monetary value. Following-up on last piece, we think we have found evidence for a quantifiable monetary effect that we can use in cost-effectiveness testing for this specific program and also have found ways to extend this research.

Julia Friedman: Are you suggesting that the statistically-significant NEI that you found in this study is only applicable to Ameren or can it be applied to other programs?

Zach Ross: ComEd evaluation team is working on similar NEI research. The study is applicable to the program that was studied Ameren IQ SF channel and there could be an argument that it would be appropriate to apply to similar programs that Ameren runs with similar measures and interventions.

Jordan Folks: I agree. I would be comfortable for extending this as a deemed value for further years for this program but not extrapolating to other programs.

Adriana Kraig: At the beginning of the report, we explained why we did this program due to its unique characteristics including the fact that it targeted low-to-moderate income individuals and only on measures that we thought would help most (HVAC and weatherization). Without these qualities the monetization values would not be applicable.

Chris Neme: if this is an analysis of Ameren IQ SF program, this is separate from IWAP-channel. Correct?

Zach Ross: Yes.

Chris Neme: One observation is that the community-action agency channel has a higher penetration of weatherization measures, so I would expect their benefits to be higher. In addition, this is one year's worth of benefits, but these measures have a 20-year lifespan. If this were to be included in cost-effectiveness analysis, I think this would be discussed of as an annual value.

Zach Ross: That sounds appropriate. We have not gotten to the point of putting this into the cost-effectiveness test because we are waiting on comments on the draft study report. We would need to think about how to do this. However, there are other programs offered by Ameren that this could be applied to because they are similar in their design.

Closing and Next Steps

Celia Johnson, SAG Facilitator

- Next NEI Working Group Meeting to discuss ComEd NEI research: Wednesday, November 29 (10:00 am – 12:00 pm)
- If needed, the NEI Working Group can also follow-up on any updates to the Ameren Illinois NEI research presented October 4th.