

IL EE Stakeholder Advisory Group: Non-Energy Impacts Working Group

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Teleconference Meeting

Attendees and Meeting Notes

Attendees (Webinar)

Celia Johnson, SAG Facilitator

Nick Hromalik, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA), Meeting Support

Alaina Boyle, E4 the Future

Ian Champ, CLEAResult

Ann Collier, Opinion Dynamics

Eric DeBellis, Illinois Attorney General's Office

Leanne DeMar, Nicor Gas

Nick Dreher, MEEA

Brian Eakin, Navigant

Mary Ellen Guest, Chicago Bungalow Association

Randy Gunn, Navigant

Grace Halbach, Navigant

Jim Jerozal, Nicor Gas

Katherine Johnson, Johnson Consulting

Chelsea Lamar, Navigant

Karen Lusson, Illinois Attorney General's Office

Anna McCreery, Elevate Energy

Jessica Minor-Baetens, Navigant

Fernando Morales, Ameren Illinois

Jennifer Morris, ICC Staff

Phil Mosenthal, Optimal Energy

Chris Neme, Energy Futures Group, representing NRDC

Theo Okiro, Future Energy Enterprises

Randy Opdyke, Nicor Gas

Patricia Plympton, Navigant

Michelle Pulce-Flynn, IL Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA)

Ellen Steiner, Opinion Dynamics

Mark Szczygiel, Nicor Gas

Andy Vaughn, Leidos

Ted Weaver, First Tracks Consulting, on behalf of Nicor Gas

Angie Ziech-Malek, CLEAResult

Chris Vaughn, Nicor Gas

Erin Daughton, ComEd

Bruce Liu, Nicor Gas

Meeting Notes

Action items are identified **in red**.

Opening and Introductions

Celia Johnson, SAG Facilitator

- Navigant (ComEd's evaluator) and Opinion Dynamics (Ameren IL's evaluator) are conducting research on NEIs in two parts: 1. NEIs for Income Qualified EE Programs and 2. Jobs and economic impacts of EE Portfolios.
- Our last working group meeting in March provided an opportunity for the evaluators to share a research and methodology update on quantifying NEI impacts of income qualified EE programs. Stakeholders had an opportunity to provide feedback during and after the March meeting.
- The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss stakeholder questions and feedback on NEI metrics for income qualified programs and for the evaluators to provide a methodology and progress update.

Joint Evaluator Presentation from Navigant and Opinion Dynamics

Ann Collier, Opinion Dynamics; Patricia Plympton and Jessica Minor-Baetens, Navigant

IQ Program NEI Research: Participant NEIs

- Goals – to quantify those NEIs in IL that are measurable and monetizable, to be able to include associated benefits or costs of EE programs into the TRCs.
- Tool for participant NEIs = a participant survey. There are other ways to quantify, but the survey tool is what the evaluators have at their disposal.
- **Big Picture:**
 - For IQ single family we have good participant contact info.
 - Multi-family:
 - Evaluators are still looking at how to overcome the gaps in our data sets for MF buildings (contact info). This is a high priority for the working group. Evaluators are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to quantify NEIs in MF buildings as well; looking at how to overcome data gaps.
 - Evaluators recognize multi-family is a critical segment of the population.
- **Request for stakeholder feedback on multi-family:**
 - Chris Neme: Think about NEIs for MF buildings in two categories: 1) for occupants of apartments; and 2) for building owners.
 - For #1, it would be helpful to further discuss the obstacles.
 - For #2, this would require interviews with MF building owners over time regarding their experiences with tenant turnover, operation and maintenance cost savings, etc.
 - Patricia Plympton: Surveying building owners is fairly straightforward. Information gaps are related to tenants. We have survey instruments for both, including good data on which qs have had findings that are statistically significant. The issue is getting participant surveys into the hands of someone that has either 1) participated or 2) is on a waiting list.
 - Evaluators are following up with Mick Prince, DCEO, to further discuss weatherization and waiting lists.
 - Ann Collier: We have been working with Ameren IL's IQ implementation teams to figure out how the waiting list dynamics and enrollment timeframe(s) vary across the different channels used. We will also regroup with DCEO if needed. The obstacle is the way program tracking data has historically been provided.

Implementers don't report-out on individual units. This is being further discussed with implementers.

- Chris Neme: Has Ameren IL been treating IQ multi-family buildings? There is currently a policy under discussion in the Policy Manual update process to help utilities verify multi-family buildings.
- Karen Lusson: Is this an issue in both ComEd and Ameren IL service territories?
 - Patricia Plympton: Yes; for ComEd, we don't necessarily know tenant contact information (address, email phone #, etc). We have both email and paper survey options.
 - Karen Lusson: Identifying tenant contact information should be part of the process for implementers.
 - Anna McCleary, Elevate Energy: We will put Navigant in touch with Elevate implementation team.
 - Karen Lusson: Suggests evaluators connect with Resource Innovations to discuss tenant contact information issue. (SAG Facilitator will connect RI with evaluation teams).
- Phil Mosenthal: One possibility is surveying people that have gone through the state weatherization program in Ameren's territory, for multi-family buildings.
- Ann Collier: In 2018, Ameren served close to 60 multi-family properties, close to the number served through the market rate channel. This should be enough program activity to assess. One option – spending time in 2019 to work on the method and fielding the survey next year. This is one option for the multi-family sector. Stakeholder feedback?
 - Chris Neme: If there weren't enough participants in 2018, we may need to wait. But if there are enough units that have been treated, the tenant contact information issue should be worked out with IQ implementers. Would like to start this earlier rather than later.
 - Chris Neme: I believe Ameren IL has done about 20 MF units with cold climate ductless heat pump retrofits. I expect the occupants of those units potentially have different reactions to the impacts of the IQ EE program, compared to a participant that received an EE kit. Evaluators should think about tracking tenant responses differently for that reason.
 - Karen Lusson: Include a survey question to ensure tenants are continuing to receive the benefits of the efficiency and that the building owner has not increased rent as a result of the improvements in the building, such as for weatherization.
 - Next steps: Evaluators will work with IQ implementers to figure out a way to identify tenant information for surveys.
- Feedback from Stakeholders on Suggested Additional Metrics
 - Suggestion: Consider graduation rates and other education outcomes
 - There is a study that has looked at reducing missed days of school. Evaluators are looking at other studies that have quantified this.
 - Suggestion: Impact of service disconnection on household wellbeing
 - There are questions in the survey on the impacts of service disconnection, so this will be quantified.
 - Connection between service disconnection and household wellbeing is more difficult. Not sure how this can be monetized – evaluators will look at this when results are available.
 - Phil Mosenthal: There is other literature out there, would it be better to look at other data instead of including in our own survey?

- Karen Lusson: Agrees; suggests contacting the Nat'l Energy Assistance Directors Association. This is an umbrella organization that promotes and advocates for LIHEAP.
- Ann Collier: This is a balancing act the evaluators are currently working on. We are trying to keep the surveys at a reasonable and management length; some of the other NEI surveys get very lengthy. The more we can identify areas of research that have been done outside IL, that helps the evaluators preserve a better participant experience by shortening the survey.
- Jim Jerozal: Request to clarify what type of benefit we are looking at related to service disconnection.
 - Chris Neme: Cost savings are more tangible at the utility; in addition, there are customer benefits due to lower stress on individuals that are not at risk of disconnection.
 - The evaluators will look at both treated and untreated groups.
- Karen Lusson: Evaluators may need to look at weather impacts and also whether the customer is/isn't on an alternative supplier. If a customer is on an alternative supplier the efficiency savings may not be realized. There has been a specific targeting of low-income customers by alternative suppliers. This needs to be considered.
 - Ann Collier: Evaluators will look at whether information is being tracking on alternative suppliers.
- Suggestion: Improved building durability, therefore less repair and maintenance.
 - Patricia Plympton: We will be able to identify at least some of the impact on this.
 - Jessica Minor-Baetens: This is a benefit to the building owner / property manager; may not be seen by the tenants. We are thinking of this more for multi-family than single family.
 - Chris Neme: There are potentially a whole range of measures that can reduce home maintenance costs, for single and multi-family building owners.
 - Karen Lusson: Are you aware of the ACEEE/EEFA report on "Lifting the Energy Burden"? There is also a report that points to utility costs resulting in higher %s of payday loans.
 - Evaluators: Yes. We have also reviewed useful reports from the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative. There are questions in the survey related to payday loans.
- Suggestion: Improve mental health and reduce chronic stress
 - Patricia Plympton: There are survey questions on mental health, but this is more difficult because there are more factors to consider. We are attempting to quantify this. Survey questions ask about mental health in a specific timeframe.
 - Jessica Minor-Baetens: Research in this area is fairly new.
 - Anna McCreery: What types of questions are being included on mental health? Are the qs linked to the measures or are they broader? Suggests questions that measure stress overall. People may not consciously link their stress to a particular energy issue.
 - Chris Neme: This may not be easy to perfectly match. A pre- / post- may better identify impacts.

- Jessica Minor-Baetens: Mental health / stress questions are generalized, not specific to measures.
 - Suggestion: Consider adding “radon exposure”
 - Ann Collier: We reviewed the LBNL study on changes in radon contributions in homes. LBNL found a small change on radon concentration due to air sealing, but the effect was due to preexisting radon conditions in the home. LBNL did not look at subsequent impacts on health.
 - Evaluators plan to include a section in the NEI report on NEIs that were excluded, but could potentially be reviewed in the future.
 - IL AG, NRDC and ICC Staff – this is a good idea.

IQ Program NEI Research: Utility NEIs

- Big picture
 - Ann Collier: Both evaluation teams are still in the data discovery phase. We are attempting to go after a few different utility-side impacts, depending on the availability of utility data.
 - Expect to find:
 - Arrearages
 - Bad debt write-offs
 - Customer calls & collections
 - Disconnections and reconnections
 - May find:
 - Safety related emergency calls
 - Price hedging
 - Rate discounts
 - Chris Neme: Agrees this is a good list of impacts to review. The question of how we assign dollar values to these impacts is another question.
 - Jessica Minor-Baetens: We think the utilities will have cost information that allow us to monetize the values.
 - Karen Lusson: Consider looking at ‘cash working capital.’ In rate cases, the utilities get an allowance for ‘cash working capital’ that reflects the rate and timing of the revenues that come in. To the extent the need is reduced for ‘cash working capital’. This tends to be based on assumptions for when payments are made.
 - Theo Okiro: What are the evaluators looking at related to customer calls?
 - Patricia Plympton: We expect to be able to differentiate between calls about thermal stress vs. high utility bills, to see if there was a reduction on the thermal stress calls.
 - Jessica Minor-Baetens: We are still working on getting connected with ComEd CARE to confirm what information is tracked.
 - Chris Neme: Suggests re-framing as “customer contacts.” There could be a reduction in calls that the utility has to field due to reduced customer thermal stress.
- Data Gathering and Metrics for Utility NEIs
 - Ann Collier: We will be taking into account other factors that may have changed bill payment behavior, above saving energy from the IQ EE program. For example, due to a bill forgiveness program from the utility.
 - Chris Neme: For metrics that may be harder to identify and obtain, what are the evaluators planning?

- Ann Collier: Our goal is a quantitative analysis; the data discovery phase is likely to take some amount of time. It will take longer to resolve than initially envisioned. We will regroup with the Working Group if not enough data is available.

Possible Implications of NEI Research for Gas Utility EE Programs

- Patricia Plympton: We have not yet found a best practice for apportioning NEIs for joint electric and gas utility programs. Many of these are associated with shell improvements, air sealing and insulation. One thing we could do is come up with an approach based on whether the customer has an electric or gas furnace. Thoughts or feedback?
 - Phil Mosenthal: We should think about what we are using these numbers for. The TRC test includes all costs/benefits.
 - Evaluators have not had this detailed discussion yet. **This topic will be addressed at a future NEI Working Group meeting – specifically a detailed discussion on what are the TRC implications of monetized NEIs?**
 - Jennifer Morris: Currently for joint programs there are two separate TRC impact numbers reported to each utility, before being combined.
 - Ted Weaver: Agrees we don't want to double-count the benefits. There are two other allocation issues: 1) are these gas or electric furnaces? 2) With FEJA, ComEd is funding some low income gas projects entirely so this needs to be considered.
 - Chris Neme: We may want to think about this as heating vs. cooling. We can assign them to either gas or electric.
 - Phil Mosenthal: As long as we can identify what benefit goes with gas or electric, can we apportion that way? Cautions against identifying this at the measure level.
 - Ted Weaver: We should look at allocation per NEI.
 - Karen Lusson: Look at utility operational savings, such as eliminating 'truck rolls' for disconnections.
 - **Chris Neme: Is the same credit and collection analyses being done with Nicor Gas, Peoples and North Shore Gas?**
 - Patricia Plympton: Not at this time, may be due to a budget limitation.
 - Jim Jerozal: Will consider taking this on next year. We didn't have the budget for the current study.
 - **Chris Neme: We should discuss during evaluation planning for 2020. (SAG Facilitator Note: SAG calls to discuss evaluation plans are anticipated in early December).**
 - Phil Mosenthal: Consider the fact that gas disconnection is not allowed during winter months.

Next Steps for NEI Working Group

- There may be a need for another check-in call on methodology progress. SAG Facilitator will follow-up with evaluators to schedule a placeholder call in July.
- A follow-up discussion on gas implications of NEI research will be addressed at a future NEI Working Group meeting, specifically the TRC implications of monetized NEIs.
- Preliminary NEI study results are anticipated in November, at least for utility NEIs.
- Preliminary economic impact study results were anticipated in mid-summer (July), however this has been updated to early fall. A call is anticipated in September to present results.