

How can our company/organization help our customers/clients better manage their energy costs?

- Failure is not an option.
- Established message and shared with all our clients (5th grade level).
 1. What if questions?
 2. From the agency – lends credibility.
- Change the message from “charity” to “better our society.”
 1. Improved energy usage.
 2. Savings.
 3. Fewer resources used.
- Education required along with assistance; changing behavior.
- Target those who don’t “need” the service.
- We know the target audience; existing partners know the programs are available and how.
- Better coordinate among agencies to meet goal.
 1. Look at bigger picture.
 2. Share resources and information.
 3. Don’t be preoccupied with turf wars.
 4. Release some fear.
- Shared vision and shared ownership.
- Agree on consensus goals.
 1. Move forward to those that are consensus.
 2. Try not to step on toes of programs/agendas not on consensus issues.
- Shared vision with an understanding of different goals.
- Shared savings programs – some areas already doing; get the money invested by utility companies; savings to those investors.
- Educate customers on what energy conservation can really do for our customers, starting with the ones who are struggling.
- Educate customers on helpful payment plans available from customers utility companies.
- Educate customers on how to read/understand billings.
- Better locating of utility company’s energy assistance funds to hit most affected areas.
- Work with housing authorities on low-income weatherization.
- Educate customers to apply for assistance earlier before it’s too late.
- Networking – making each entity know what resources are offered by individual agencies.
- Educate customers about use of level payment plan.
- Weatherization assistance only available to property owners.
- Housing enforcement issues keeping properties up to Code.
- Better communication network between utilities and housing enforcement.
- Education on income vs. costs.
- LIHEAP.
- Focus on these programs to maximize their benefits.
- Focus on things we know work – big bang for buck and energy.
- Educate to get individual to report problems sooner rather than later in the process to avoid immediate crisis.
- Assistance agencies and utilities need to coordinate; presently have monthly meeting energy assistance agencies. Problem: Agencies all have different policies; mission and boards are different.
- Need all monies pooled in one agency (utilities) for energy assistance (Salvation Army and Red Cross); still have other support agencies.
- Need to continue to improve communication between utilities and city (code enforcement) and support agencies.
- School nurses and pediatricians – allies in detection.
- Consumer education/partner with churches other groups to offer neighborhood assistance.
- Energy audits – low cost/reasonable.
- Utility rebates for energy improvements.
- Education starts in primary schools.
- Incorporate energy requirements to housing codes.
- Partner with LIHEAP state program and City of Omaha Planning Dept.
- Education/workshops with incentives/rewards offered at conclusion.
 1. Buyer ed workshops.
 2. Outreach workshops.
- Financial stability efforts.
- Incentive programs through utility providers.
- Joint educational campaigns (educate on payday lenders, cash advance services, etc.).
- Offer financial planners to low-income clientele, middle class.

How can we all work together?

- Be the first to step up and start the process of coming together.
 - Make contact with your local school districts to get them involved.
- Provide more opportunities share information.
- Develop area/client specific programs to help customers more in need of the support.
- Look into possible reduced rate programs for customers meeting low-income criteria.
- Work with regulatory bodies to be more aware of the customer current situations.
- Symposium situation with discussions to share.
- Fragmentation of intake – ways to streamline communication with or among agencies.
- Communication tree knowing what agencies are available and funding sources.
- To build houses on new construction rate on energy star standards.
- Need funding vehicle to deal with weatherization improvements.
- All houses S/B upgraded.
- Whoever is not here today – we need to get them here. Who do we know who's not here? Building trades, independent contractors, chamber of commerce.
- Send the message how important this is and how it impacts everyone.
- Propane costs – bring manufacturers to the table.
 - Recognize self interest of the people at the table – enlightened self interest, we are part of the policies contributes or takes away from our bottom line.
 - Bring it around to how it impacts “your” self interest.
- Buildings use 40% of the energy.
 - Reduce consumption – educate.
 - Get people back to work.
 - Infrastructure to bring back to work.
- Address “storm chasers.”
 - Trained; set infrastructure vs. “get the job done.”
 - Certification required and how to train.
- Word to customers on how to find certified low income – 200% FPL – come to agency with program.
- Common message to consumers/Campaign – \$ Assistance, Energy Star rating.
- Local coalitions, continuums, etc.
 - Use as a way for service providers to share information.
 - Invite businesses, schools, medical providers, etc... to events such as this.
 - Tap into other service providers' services.
 - Money management.
 - Home buyer education.
 - Credit counseling.
- How can we help better manage energy cost?
 - Education – Do customers know how much energy they are using?
 - Utilities – Anyway to red flag large users, research why and educate them.
 - Coordinate data of square footage of house to how many kWh used. Then inform customers in neighborhoods how much energy they are using relative to other houses.
 - Start young, educate children in schools, for example OPPD has a You Tube video contest to make a video about energy conservation.
 - People know they have high energy however are unable to reduce their energy costs either because they can't fund or do it themselves.
 - Collaborate with agencies handling WAP.
 - Problem – disjointed here many different players, for example M.U.D., OPPD, Salvation Army, American Red Cross. They need to coordinate better.
- Steps for community –
 - Utility companies should push alternative sources of energy.
 - Networking – inter-agency meeting to discover what is offered by other agencies.
 - Develop resource lists for public and allies among all business segments.
- Manage Energy Costs.
 - Energy Education – It is needed, but where do you get the resources?
 - Utilities have the information to share however not the resources or technology.
 - Assurance 16 – advocate to LIHEAP office.
 - Budget Management – good examples of how to teach people to better manage all bills. Idea of using incentives to keep people engaged.
 - Rehab work – set an example and raise attention – pay more attention to energy bills/ employ the Habitat model where the client is an active participant.
- How can we all work together?
 - Utilities refer service agencies to clients and state.

- 2-1-1 emergency United Way number. Need for businesses ongoing action to be aware of the problem. Use of newspapers, community public service announcements.
- Building together, work with reaching other programs.
- State – essential for coordination of federal and new funds for energy efficiency, keep proactive measures. Prime pressure is utility who may be able to recognize clients are in trouble.
- Need for referral to social agencies, i.e. OPPD community service coordinator. Need all agencies and utilities to unite.

What are the next steps for our communities?

- Increasing access to energy efficiency measures.
- Volunteer groups to do CFL exchange program or another energy-efficient device.
- Join NEAN.
- Collaboration/cooperation to create networks; include:
 1. Teachers union.
 2. Association of pediatricians.
 3. AARP.
 4. Representatives of immigrant populations.
 5. Look for resources in such things as leadership.
 6. Look at list Roger mentions: Public health, safety, hungry, etc.
 7. Look at expanding networks.
- Challenges in funding for organizations like NEAN; burden now falling to a few partners.
- Manage energy costs.
- Education/budgeting/partnering with other agencies.
- More case management – proactive.
- Conservation and ways to cut down costs.
- Tap into media in promoting programs/services.
- Research other programs and use what is being done.
- Adapt existing program to fit needs of our area(s).
- Communication among city/county/state levels.
- Coordination of efforts.
- Increase community awareness.
- Working together on legislative issues.
- Statewide plan to change policies.
- Work with churches, community centers, schools.
- Get word out to public about energy issues.
- Educate families/public about energy issues affecting other areas (food, education, etc.).
- Research energy grants.
- Agency coordination.
- Facilitate agency networking.
- Contact local LIHEP director and partner with City of Omaha Planning Dept. to become active with NEAN.
- Lobby legislature.
- Identifying stimulus.
- How do we all work together?
- How can we get our clients?
- Do what we can do for ourselves – homeowners do the work:
 1. House leaks – easy to fix – saves money.
 2. \$500 savings – simple low-cost – no waiting – low-hanging fruit.
- Store soup model – who brings what?
- More meetings with interested partners; then target population or area, etc.
 1. Commit to working groups.
 2. Who brings resources for that target?

- NEAN focusing on seniors, etc.
- Case management approach – develop a comprehensive plan.
- Service learning projects to bring in capital.
- New Jersey model:
 1. Work from or look at budget, costs.
 2. How is it paid?
- Deciding who's willing to be partners – may not step up – how does it impact me? How does it fit in what I do? Who I help?
- Identifying stimulus package and how it impacts us; effect of stimulus \$\$\$.
- More communities need to understand it is a community problem and not just an individual problem.
- Communicating more directly with the groups that need more assistance.
- Adapting to the new challenges and market and changing the programs to meet the new needs.
- Community awareness campaign to draw attention to all other areas affected besides just the energy education, hunger and health, for example.