

# Illinois Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Advisory Group

2020 SAG Portfolio Planning Process  
Proposed Energy Efficiency Ideas Template

**Submitter Contact Information**

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**Energy Efficiency Idea Questions**

Please check the boxes below to identify 1) the type of idea; 2) which Illinois utility or utilities will be impacted by the idea; and 3) which EE sector the idea impacts.

Check	Type of Energy Efficiency Idea
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Measure or New Program Idea
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proposed Program Approach
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovative Idea

Check	Illinois Utility Impacted by Energy Efficiency Idea
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ameren Illinois
<input type="checkbox"/>	ComEd
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nicor Gas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peoples Gas & North Shore Gas
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All Illinois Utilities

Check	Energy Efficiency Sector Targeted by Energy Efficiency Idea
<input type="checkbox"/>	Residential Customers – Single Family (non-income qualified/income eligible)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Residential Customers – Multifamily (non-income qualified/income eligible)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Residential Customers – Single Family Income Qualified/Income Eligible
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Residential Customers – Multifamily Income Qualified/Income Eligible
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Business Customers (commercial & industrial sector)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium/Large Business Customers (commercial & industrial sector)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (research & development, emerging technologies, market transformation)

### **Additional Questions**

1. **Description of Idea:** Describe the proposed idea, including the purpose of the suggested idea and rationale. Describe whether this is an idea that could be implemented in an existing EE program, or whether the idea involves establishing a new measure or program. Please indicate whether additional research may be required before implementation.

*Questions to consider: What issue will this proposed change resolve? Will the proposed change increase participation and result in increased energy savings? Will this reduce costs? Will this increase customer satisfaction? Will this help achieve statutory goals? Will this help increase program penetration?*

NCLC has previously suggested to the utilities in the Income Qualified (IQ) North and South meetings, as well as in the larger Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) meetings, that efforts should be made by the utilities to coordinate the delivery of bill affordability information to low-income customers as it markets and delivers energy efficiency programs to customers. Similarly, energy efficiency program information should be provided to customers seeking bill payment assistance. Thus, this program implementation proposal has two components.

The first involves embracing a holistic approach to income qualified program delivery that would ensure that those customers who receive energy efficiency services are also provided information about bill affordability rights and protections, energy assistance programs and utility-specific programs that assist customers in remaining connected to the utility network. That means developing materials and customer service representative scripts that provide critical information to customers seeking bill payment assistance as well as those customers engaging with IQ programs. NCLC again calls upon the energy efficiency departments to communicate and coordinate with utility collections departments, and vis versa.

For example, materials should be developed so that when a contractor enters a weatherization client’s home, information is provided that assists the customer in accessing all available payment options, such as extended deferred payment arrangements, budget billing, as well as information about LIHEAP, PIPP and utility-specific assistance programs. This information, too, should encourage the customer to check their bill to make sure they are not enrolled with an alternative energy supplier, with a reference to the recently enacted HEAT Act, which forbids the enrollment of LIHEAP/PIPP customers in alternative supplier offerings unless that supplier has obtained an order from the Illinois Commerce Commission that the proposed plan is a Commission-

approved savings guarantee plan, as described in Section 16-115E(b) and 19-116(b) of the Public Utilities Act. 220 ILCS 5/16-115E(b), 19-116(b).

The second prong of the proposal involves coordination between the billing and collection department and the energy efficiency department. When customers call the utility for assistance in avoiding disconnection due to unaffordability of the bill, the collections department should inform customers of energy efficiency opportunities as a part of the customer communication. Customers facing disconnection should be targeted by the energy efficiency department for IQ program delivery so that IQ program efforts are targeted to those most in need. In particular, these customers should be added to existing IQ weatherization marketing efforts.

2. **Implementation:** How will this idea be delivered to the target market? Describe marketing strategies used to reach the target market and minimize market confusion.

See explanation above.

3. **Background:** Describe where the idea originated from, including whether this idea has been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions. Provide specific background information that will help utilities and SAG participants understand the proposed idea.

*Questions to consider: In what jurisdiction has this idea been successfully implemented? Do you have information on eligible customers, participation achieved, and/or savings achieved? Do you have access to reports describing the successful idea / program approach?*

See **Sources**, below.

4. **Idea Impact:** Provide additional information on the customer segment that will be targeted with the program idea, including how and why this idea will have a positive impact on customers participating in Illinois EE programs.

*Questions to consider: What level of impact will this idea have on current EE programs? How much additional market share do you estimate this change will impact?*

The goal of increasing the affordability of utility service through energy efficiency programs has always been present, but never more so than now, as the country and state face the fallout of a global pandemic that has shutdown significant portions of the economy. In Illinois, through the five weeks from March 1 to April 4, Illinois received 513,173 initial unemployment claims. That is greater than the total number of initial claims for the entirety of 2019 (489,831) and five times greater than the claims filed in the first five weeks of the 2008 great recession. See

<https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/sfc/servlet.shepherd/document/download/069t000000AiYIGAA3?operationContext=S1>

Today, following the economic tsunami triggered by the coronavirus outbreak, millions more Illinoisans have lost their incomes or have seen paychecks diminish as businesses struggle to remain open. The proportion of customers who would qualify as “low-income” has significantly increased in light of the new unemployment and reduced employment figures. Customer communications within both utility billing and collection and energy efficiency departments need to reflect this new reality. Likewise, due to the significant increase in the number of financially struggling customers within every Illinois utility service territory, new marketing efforts and ways to identify those most in need of energy efficiency services should be implemented.

5. **Duration:** Is this idea intended to be offered for the duration of the 4-year EE Plan or as a pilot measure or program?

Yes.

6. **Estimated Budget:** Provide the total estimated budget for each program year (2022 – 2025).

TBD, but these are internal processes that should not involve significant additional spending.

7. **Estimated Participation:** Provide participation totals for each program year (i.e. number of measures installed, number of customer participants, etc.)

This proposal should increase the number of interested participants in income-qualified programs, although it is difficult to determine an approximate number.

### **Sources**

If any sources will be useful to Illinois utilities in reviewing ideas, please either provide links within this template or send attachment(s) to the SAG Facilitator with the Energy Efficiency Idea submittal.

This concept was discussed in direct testimony submitted by Illinois Attorney General witness Roger Colton in four uncollectible rider reconciliation dockets: ICC Docket Nos. 18-1486 (Ameren), 18-1464/65 (Peoples Gas/North Shore); 18-1456 (ComEd) and 18-1437 (Nicor). See, e.g., <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/P2018-1456/documents/284636>