

## **Proposed Policy for Version 3.0: New Income Qualified Accountability Committee Section**

**Submitted By:** The following Illinois Energy Efficiency for All (IL EEFA) Coalition Members and EE Settlement Groups: ACES 4 Youth, City of Chicago, Community Investment Corporation (CIC), Citizens Utility Board (CUB), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), People for Community Recovery (PCR), National Consumer Law Center (NCLC) / Community Organizing on Family Issues (COFI)

### **Question 1: Proposed Policy and Rationale**

**Proposed Policy:** Add a Low-Income Energy Efficiency Accountability Committee (IQ Accountability Committee) section into the Policy Manual, similar to Section 3 of the Policy Manual with details on the Illinois EE Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). This new IQ Accountability Committee section could include information about what the IQ Accountability is, any clarification needed on statutory interpretation, who can be involved (e.g. open to all), details about the leadership committee (leadership from community-based organizations), how to get involved, resources available for participation, committee purpose, etc. This language should be developed in collaboration with current IQ Accountability Committee Leadership. This language should also be posted on the SAG website or another webpage in order to explain who is eligible to participate in the IQ, how to get involved, and provide a specific point of contact to assist interested parties in getting involved.

**Background/Rationale:** The Low-Income Energy Efficiency Accountability Committee is an essential forum for organizations working with and representing low-income and under-served communities to both learn about utility energy efficiency programs, advise on better policies, practices and program delivery, and hold utilities accountable to IQ program commitments. Members of the IQ Leadership Committee have advocated the need to bring in more stakeholders with a variety of lived experiences and expertise on various issues including housing, energy, policy and more. In order to do so, it is crucial to demystify the process for entry and engagement with the IQ Committee.

In addition, the Policy Manual currently includes a section describing details on the Illinois EE SAG - section 3 starting on page 11. This section would serve a similar purpose but for the IQ EE Accountability Committee.

### **Question 2: Utility Impact**

By reducing barriers to participation to allow more meaningful participation in the Low Income Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee, Illinois utilities stand to benefit. Prioritizing transparency and accessibility will allow utilities to hear more about the lived experiences of low-income stakeholders to better understand the impacts of utility programs and policies at the community level. Those closest to the issues generally have the best program and policy solutions. By hearing directly from a wider range of stakeholders, utilities will be equipped to better serve low-income households and improve programs. Doing so will help utilities gain the trust of and earn a stronger reputation in low income communities, creating a better working relationship which will then reinforce momentum toward stronger program delivery.

### **Question 3: Background Research**

***Provide any background research completed in preparing this template, including source references and links, as applicable.***

***Questions to consider:***

- 1. Are you aware of other jurisdictions or utilities that address this policy issue?***
- 2. Have any national or regional energy efficiency organizations addressed this policy topic? If so, please provide reports and any other relevant sources.***

Transparency and accessibility are widely recognized as core principles for public engagement. Frontline organizations have a long history of advocating for transparency and accessibility when it comes to engaging with utilities, local governments, and corporate developers. Likewise, municipalities and utilities have adopted these principles for public engagement across the country, with utility companies getting creative when it comes to creating accessible engagement strategies.

Resources:

[Five Steps for Utilities to Foster Authentic Community Engagement](#), Rocky Mountain Institute

[Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing](#), frontline leaders convened by Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ), Jemez, New Mexico

[Core Principles for Public Engagement](#), *National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and the Co-Intelligence Institute*