



E-docket: U-20757

Lansing Board of Water & Light Energy Waste Reduction Program Continuity Plan - 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic Response

The Lansing Board of Water & Light (BWL) remains committed to its customers during these uniquely challenging times. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and associated Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order, BWL has prepared a Continuity Plan to address the implementation of its Residential and Business Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) programs. This plan has been broken down into three sections, Suspension, Continuation and Return Plan.

1. Suspension

Shut offs - Before the state mandate, the BWL suspended all utility shut-offs, and will continue to do so until COVID-19 is better controlled. The BWL has encouraged all customers who are struggling financially to reach out to the BWL's Customer Service Center to setup a payment plan so as to not fall behind when the moratorium is lifted, as well as connecting customers to state and local resources available to help pay utility bills. Further resources for customers on the BWL's response to COVID-19 can be found at www.lbwl.com/covid-19.

EWR Programs - As of March 13, 2020, the BWL and its Residential and Business program implementation contractors, Michigan Energy Options and Franklin Energy Services respectively, began working remotely and immediately suspended all in-field program activity for the following categories:

- *Residential* - Appliance Recycling, Home Energy Assessments (including appliance replacement), Multifamily Direct Install.
- *Business* - On-site pre and post inspections and assessments for all programs under the commercial and industrial portfolio.

2. Continuation

BWL has actively continued all non-contact EWR program activities, including:

- *Residential* - Online and telephone access to the Rebate Application, Home Energy Audit, Resource Library, and Kids Korner; upstream lighting sales, retail incentives, trade ally engagement, phone consultation and virtual home assessments.

Additionally, for a limited time, the BWL is offering a free kit of multiple LED bulbs by mail to all residential electric customers. The free bulbs are available by calling 800-573-3503 or signing up at www.lbwl.com/hometownhelp.

- *Business* - Online and telephone access to the Rebate Application; photographic pre and post inspections; trade ally engagement; phone consultations with customers.

- *Communication and Marketing* - BWL immediately adapted to use appropriate “non-contact” outreach and marketing to customers through participation in virtual community and business meetings, Connections (BWL’s newsletter bill insert), targeted neighborhood postcard mailings, social and print media, emails, and local community newsletters. Although the BWL’s typical hometown “grass roots” approach of attending multiple events and providing presentations has been impacted, our community partners and trade allies have supported our efforts to capture new program participants by sharing information about free LEDs with their clients.

Despite the fact that the implementation of several of BWL’s 2020 EWR programs have been impacted by the effects of the pandemic and the resulting social distancing requirements, we anticipate that the adaptations made by BWL staff, contractors and trade allies will allow the programs to still be delivered successfully.

3. Return Plan

In addition to the aforementioned continuation of non-contact activities, the BWL is taking the necessary steps to safely return to in-field operations as restrictions are eased. As of June 1, 2020, the BWL has begun taking the following actions:

- *Training field staff* to follow established safety requirements for return to on-site activity;
 - BWL and its contractors have detailed return to work safety requirements based on CDC recommendations, including maintaining social distance and wearing appropriate PPE.
- *Bonus Incentives* for:
 - Residential seasonal products (AC tune-ups, central ACs, etc.);
 - Small Businesses who perform multiple upgrades
- *Ramped-up marketing* of all programs
 - *Residential* - Messaging includes trade ally engagement and asking our nonprofit community partners to include program information in their communications with their clients. Local nonprofits that assist vulnerable populations have received facility energy grants over the past four years from BWL and have been eager to share our offer of free LED bulbs via their newsletters.
 - *Business* - Outreach includes utilizing electronic and virtual communications tools such as Questline, as well as existing business associations (if they are still meeting) or trade allies (if they are still in operation) to help drive program participation.
- *Evaluation* - In regard to program evaluation, the Michigan Energy Measure Database (MEMD) defines the savings. Follow up in-person visits or virtual QCs shall be conducted as safety conditions allows. The BWL is working with our evaluator to confirm our best course of action to verify that eligible measures were installed. While our implementation contractor is placing an emphasis on EM&V, BWL anticipates that the programs may receive lower than average evaluation and verification numbers for customers in 2020 due to the inherent nature of running programs remotely and not having a face to face interaction with a customer.

- *Residential*

- *Appliance Recycling* has wait-listed interested customers. These customers are now being contacted to schedule the appliance pick-ups and the program will be marketed heavily.

With this program having been put on hold and Recycle Rama and Recycle East Lansing cancelled, there is a possibility we may not be able to achieve the kWh goal for Appliance Recycling using our standard approach. We are looking into a number of different options, including increased program advertisements and moving incentive dollars and kWh goal from the recycling program into other programs that can achieve the savings necessary.

- *Hometown Help Energy Assessment* (Includes Low Income) is wait-listing customers of all incomes and/or offering phone and virtual consultation. Customers are mailed free LED bulbs so that they can get a head-start on the visit by installing them in their home.

Low Income Kit: 17 LED A19 9W & 2 LED Nightlights: 528.5 kWh and possible Appliance Replacement (refrigerators, room air conditioners and dehumidifiers). Units identified during a consultation will be flagged for follow up replacement and recycling.

Market Rate Kit: 6 LED A19 9W, 4 LED A21 15W & 2 LED Nightlights: 403.8 kWh. A full-page marketing piece is included with the kit directing customers to take advantage of the BWL online energy assessment tool.

- *Multifamily Programs* (i.e., direct install for Low Income and Market Rate Customers) are postponed indefinitely. BWL is offering options to disperse lighting measures to multifamily properties with minimal person-to-person contact. Options include shipping lighting measures directly to the multifamily for maintenance staff to install and/or creating unit specific kits (one bed, two bed, etc.) to be dropped off at the door with instructions for tenants. Both of these would still require a field visit for QC but will significantly reduce the field time and exposure risks for employees, contractors and customers.

Opportunities to replace wall-air conditioners and refrigerators in low income multifamily properties may fulfill a significant amount of the low-income kWh savings goal.

- *Business*

- *Small Business, Prescriptive & Custom Programs* are running remotely, and we are tapping into our current network of trade allies to send in applications for customers, while our energy advisors are available online and by phone for customers who are looking for more advice or long-term guidance. Pre and post inspection verifications are taking place via photograph or video, typically with a customer, but sometimes with a trade ally. All proposed projects have been able to be handled remotely. While there



has been a downturn in the number of projects submitted by trade allies, BWL does expect to hit kWh savings goals by the end of the year.

- *Safety*

BWL and its contractors have prepared detailed plans for in-field re-entry that includes proper PPE protection and safety precautions based on recommendations and guidelines from the CDC and State of Michigan.