COVID-19 Impacts and Responses in the Midwest Energy Efficiency Industry

MEEA Staff
April 15, 2020
State of the Midwest
Policy Responses
Program Impacts
Post-COVID Preparation
State of the Midwest

Policy Responses

Program Impacts

Post-COVID Preparation
State of the Midwest

Stay-at-home orders
Widespread customer protection actions
Utility program suspensions
Stay-at-Home Orders in the Midwest

9 of 13 States with an Order

Order Effective Date
- Week 12, 2020
- Week 13, 2020
- Week 14, 2020
- Week 15, 2020
- No order yet as of beginning of Week 16
Most of the Midwest’s utilities have suspended at least some EE programs as a result of the COVID virus.

Utility Program Suspensions

- Focus on worker & customer safety
- In accordance with state stay-at-home orders
- Suspension of customer-contact programs
- Some continuation of no-contact programs
# Midwest State-Level Customer Protection Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Utility Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Suspend utility shut-offs</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Suspend utility shut-offs &amp; late fees</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Sewer, Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>Suspend utility shut-offs</td>
<td>Executive Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Sewer, Water, Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Suspend utility shut-offs</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Sewer, Water, Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>Suspend utility shut-offs</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Water, Sewer, Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>Order for water reconnects</td>
<td>Executive Order</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Request utilities take customer protection actions</td>
<td>Commission Request</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>Approve utility reconnect &amp; late fee tariff variances</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utilities voluntarily suspend utility shut-offs, late fees</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Electric, Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>No specific actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Allow reimbursement for low-income broadband services</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Extend winter disconnect order</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orders utility review disconnect policies</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Sewer, Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orders water reconnects, suspend shut-offs &amp; disconnects</td>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>No specific actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Commission investigation to ensure services</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suspend shut-offs &amp; require reconnects</td>
<td>Commission Order</td>
<td>Electric, Gas, Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NARUC State Response Tracker
How have our legislatures and regulators responded?

Policy Responses

State of the Midwest

Program Impacts

Post-COVID Preparation

MEEA - Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Policy Responses

- Midwest legislative sessions
- Midwest regulatory procedures
- Federal stimulus legislation
## Midwest State Legislative Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Session suspended for 30 days on 3/15; voted on 4/9 to extend suspension until at least 4/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Session suspended on 3/16 until the call of the chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>Session adjourned sine die on 3/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Session ended. Scheduled veto session pushed back to 4/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>Session convened less often than scheduled; met on 4/1 to vote on budget and 4/14-15 for veto override</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>Session convening less often than scheduled; meeting sporadically to address COVID-related legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Session suspended on 3/16 until the call of the chair; has been experimenting with legislating virtually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>Session not suspended formally, but session has convened less often than scheduled. Last met on 4/7 for COVID legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>No session dates were scheduled for 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Session suspended on 3/16 until the call of the chair; did meet on 3/23-25 for COVID response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Session suspended on 3/16 until 4/22; met on 3/25 for COVID response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>No changes to session; session wrapped up on previously scheduled day 3/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Session adjourned in late February; any dates on calendar in March have been postponed, extraordinary session will likely occur in April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Midwest State Executive Responses

State Executive Orders

Many governors have acted through executive orders

• State of emergency declarations, school closures, shelter in place orders
• Quicker to respond through executive action due to extremely fluid nature of crisis

Some legislator pushback

• Complaints about the amount of executive orders certain governors have made

Virtually no executive orders have dealt with energy

• IN and KS have issued utility shutoff moratoria via EOs
State legislative actions thus far have not focused on energy

- Moving funds to COVID response
- Unlocking state funds through the CARES Act

Little to no movement on energy-related COVID legislation

- Focus on has been around utility shutoffs and payment plan structures
- Possibility that MN and IL will act
- MEEA will watch for the inclusion of EE in any future legislation

Additional state aid for small businesses and workforce

- Would apply to many EE businesses
What about pending energy legislation?

**Illinois / Clean Energy Jobs Act**
- Unlikely to be picked up in spring session
- Chance that certain elements of legislation can be added to COVID relief and stimulus bills

**Kansas / Independent Commission & State Energy Plan Executive Order**
- Under Kansas rules, only one chamber needs to vote to veto any executive order
- House voted down this executive order prior to COVID-related suspension

**Minnesota / Clean Energy First Act**
- Senate and House are experimenting with virtual committee meetings
- Aside from COVID-related legislation, seems to be willingness to pass bills that have wide and bipartisan support
- CEFA and others (e.g. ECO) would likely not fall under this category due to assumption that they would require a conference committee
## Midwest Regulatory Procedures Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Commission</th>
<th>Best COVID Info Page</th>
<th>Description of Changes</th>
<th>Office Open to Public</th>
<th>Staff Remote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>IUB</td>
<td>news page</td>
<td>streaming meetings, encourage electronic docket commenting</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>COVID info page</td>
<td>streaming meetings</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>IURC</td>
<td>homepage</td>
<td>waive paper filing requirements, waive notarized signature requirements, streaming meetings &amp; conferences, extended timelines</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>KCC</td>
<td>COVID info page</td>
<td>streaming meetings</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>KY PSC</td>
<td>homepage</td>
<td>suspend paper filings, encourage converting non-electronic cases, delay routine reporting, extend filing deadlines, streaming meetings &amp; conferences</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>MPSC</td>
<td>COVID info page</td>
<td>streaming meetings &amp; hearings, postpone smaller meetings, public comments by email</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>MN PUC</td>
<td>news page</td>
<td>suspend all public meetings, encourage electronic commenting on open comment periods</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>MO PSC</td>
<td>COVID info page</td>
<td>streaming meetings &amp; hearings</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND PSC</td>
<td>homepage</td>
<td>streaming meetings, limited size in-person meetings</td>
<td>by appt</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>NE PSC</td>
<td>COVID info page</td>
<td>streaming meetings; allow some approvals without quorum</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>PUCO</td>
<td>homepage</td>
<td>minimal staffing levels, online contact form</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SD PUC</td>
<td>homepage</td>
<td>dial-in for meetings</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>PSC of WI</td>
<td>homepage</td>
<td>extend some filing deadlines</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Michigan 3/15 COVID order includes EE in the Regulatory Response

• Broad order on operation and continuity of service issues from COVID-19
• **First COVID-related order in the Midwest to directly address EE programs**
• Directs Staff to develop a plan and workgroup to investigate how to mitigate impacts on savings targets and continue serving low- to moderate-income households
• Staff will file an update by July 15 on efforts

Order in **Cause U-20757**

New information post-webinar
Midwest Regulatory Issues

- **MO Office of Public Counsel Request**
  - Rate case request to remove ratepayer charge for EE to reduce cost to customers
  - OPC has since withdrawn request

- **Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel Request**
  - Request to redirect ratepayer funding for two EE funds to bill payment assistance
  - Low-income weatherization programs would be impacted
  - OCC also proposed eliminating all EE programs for non-low-income customers

- **Prioritizing vulnerable customers**
  - Conversations around the Midwest looking at reassessing energy savings strategies, portfolio budgets and customers in need of energy efficiency and energy assistance
Three Stimulus Packages So Far

Federal COVID-19 Emergency Legislation

**Supplemental appropriations**
- Focused mostly on medical response

**Families First**
- Increased FMLA, emergency sick leave, expanded unemployment

**CARES Act**
- $900M for increased LIHEAP through 2021
- Cash payments for taxpayers
- Disaster relief funding
- No other substantial energy provisions, but some of the business & tax provisions do apply to our industry
- Some eligibility under SBA Paycheck Protection Program depending on company size and NAICS code
SBA Paycheck Protection Program (Section 1102)

- $349 billion allocated
  - Individual loans of lesser of $10 million or 2.5 months of payroll
- Eligibility based on size and NAICS code
  - Generally 500 or fewer employees for most NAICS codes
  - Electric Power Distribution and Gas Distribution up to 1000 employees
  - Up to $10 million per company available as forgivable small business loans
- 501(c)(3) non-profits are eligible for PPP loans
- Eight weeks of assistance for qualifying employers, must retain employees on payroll through **June 30, 2020**
- Allowable uses of the loan include payroll support, salaries, mortgage payments, rent, utilities and any other debt obligations incurred before the covered period.
The Next Stimulus

Federal Legislation

Despite advocacy, major energy provisions were not included in relief programs so far.

There will be more stimulus, and we need to be in it.

There will be additional stimulus/relief (there has to be)

- Calls for Action slide at the end of the presentation
- Several proposals for major EE stimulus programs
- Individual companies are important right now for policymaker outreach – numbers overall & key districts

Advocacy opportunities to support our industry
Federal Legislation

The Next Stimulus

BPA
- HOPE4HOMES sign-on letter

ASE
- Small business retrofit grant proposal
- RIGHT proposal for mission critical facilities
- Transportation/infrastructure priorities
- Tax proposal
Policy Response in Non-MEEA States

Notable Regulatory Actions in Other Regions

California PUC

• March 23 executive director letter to utilities requesting advance payment of 30 days to Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) program contractors

• April 7 follow-up: of 78 contractors, 51% accepted offers, 34% declined, and 15% suggested alternative proposals

Connecticut PURA

• Expanded scope of energy affordability investigation to include C&I customers
Policy Responses Q&A

Please use the question box
What is happening with utility EE programs?
Program Impacts

- Statewide EE collaboratives
- General/widespread responses
- Changes to programs that are still running
- Impacts on MEEA members
Statewide EE Collaboratives

Peer Information Sharing About EE Program Responses

27 Mar.
MI EWR Collaborative
• Utility program impacts & updates discussion
• Discussion of impacts on research, evaluation, TRM update schedules
• Limited guidance from staff so far on performance metrics

IL Stakeholder Advisory Group (IL SAG)
• Utility impacts review
• Discussion of ideas for program changes and innovations
• Identify topics for further SAG discussion
• Group coordination of responses
• Consensus on priorities
• Income Qualified Advisory Group also met

14 Apr.

30 Apr.
MO EE Advisory Collab. (MEEAC)
• Meeting scheduled
• Low-Income Workgroup will also meet
Utility Energy Efficiency Programs

General/Common Responses by Midwest Utilities Under First Weeks of Stay-at-Home

Suspend customer-contact programs

- Audit & direct install
- Appliance recycling
- Outreach events
- Field inspection, QA/QC
- Some C&I installs continuing depending on state/utility

Continue no-contact programs

- Rebate processing
- Online marketplace
- Home energy reports & behavior programs
- Multifamily common areas/equipment room
In Places Where Field Programs are Still Operating

Program Changes for Continued Operation

Some utilities are still operating C&I install programs

• Most residential field programs have been suspended, however
• Call volumes & project pipelines still seeing steady rates right now, though some of the projects are wrapping up and new ones are being scheduled for later in the year so there may be a gap
• Many of the installs are happening at contractor discretion and may be tapering off as health & safety concerns grow

Good practices being used to reduce risks in field

• PPE & safe contact procedures for operating field crews
• Allow for virtual inspection/proof of installation
Question:

In what ways has COVID-19 impacted your organization’s delivery/evaluation of energy efficiency programs?

Please use the question box and MEEA staff will share your resources and comments in the chat box.
Workforce Impacts at MEEA Members
What We Have Heard About Program Staff in Stay-at-Home States

Job Changes
- Remote work
- Furloughs
- Layoffs
- Salary reductions
- Staff reassignment

- Hard to quantify how much of each yet
- Likely some correlation to size of company for layoffs
- C&I implementation contractors not as hard hit as residential side
Program Impacts Q&A

Please use the question box
What do we need to get our industry back to work?
Post-COVID-19

- Official guidance
- Workforce readiness
- Program innovation
What do we need from governors & state/federal agencies?

**The green light**
- Lifted stay-at-home orders
- Determination of services that could be provided under “essential” status

**Health & safety protocols for workforce**
- From CDC and/or OSHA, state health departments
- Uniform, statewide or nationwide standards & training materials

**Address liability issues**
- How can utilities/contractors be protected from the risks associated with worker or customers becoming infected?
What do we need from regulators?

**Approval of program changes**
- Altered field protocols like virtual inspections & verifications
- Updated EM&V plans

**Guidance on programs & portfolios**
- Reallocation or roll-over of unspent budgets
- Reporting missed targets
- Performance incentives & LRAM reconciliation

**Timelines & requirements**
- Alterations to filing deadlines for reports & plans
- Guidance on meeting public participation requirements

What else?
What do we need to get back into homes & businesses?

**Develop new protocols for field staff**
- Necessary PPE, along with training & safety protocols
- Talking to homeowners about safety
- Virtual inspection / verification methods
- Protocols for no-contact installs

**Retain skilled workforce**
- Shift staff to planning & analysis tasks
- Online training to increase skills (e.g. building performance, use of equipment, installation practices, certifications, even defensive driving...)

**Get ready for onboarding**
- Develop fast-boot trainings to bring new hires up to readiness for field operations rapidly

What else?
Question:

What other issues need to be addressed?
What resources would be helpful?

Please use the question box and MEEA staff will share your resource ideas and comments in the chat box.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are utilities &amp; implementers doing right now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasize no-touch programs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marketplaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online self-audits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Virtual Treasure Hunt” in SEM program (ComEd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support self-installation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Handyman hotline” through community partner (Ameren Illinois)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk delivery of measures to property managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo verification of installs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How-to videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing changes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend EE tips that don’t require trips to the store or having someone into the home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer segment-specific webinars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income &amp; other vulnerable populations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What else?
### Program Innovation in a Time of Isolation

**Expanding Our Efforts to Bring Back Programs**

| Find opportunities for lower risk installs and retrofits | Empty commercial buildings & schools  
No-contact exterior installs  
Would need clearance to work, safety procedures, PPE first |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Shift more activities online**                       | Training & education programs that have traditionally been offered in-person  
Expand/launch marketplaces  
Develop & approve procedures for virtual inspections, QA/QC |
| **Demonstrate the value for community recovery**        | Position EE as an economic recovery tool  
Target program funding & outreach to low-income programs  
Target hiring efforts from hardest hit communities |

**What else?**
Question:

What other adjustments have you made to your delivery/evaluation of programs?

Please use the question box and MEEA staff will share your resources and comments in the chat box.
Post-COVID Q&A

Please use the question box
Wrap-Up

Trackers, info pages & calls to action
## National Energy Sector COVID Information

### Some Useful Trackers We Have Found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Trackers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NARUC</td>
<td>• State Response Tracker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE</td>
<td>• COVID response info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEE</td>
<td>• PowerSuite COVID Response Tracker (paywall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public interactive map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESource</td>
<td>• Shared utility response tracker (google docs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUAC</td>
<td>• COVID-19 Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UtilityDive</td>
<td>• US power sector coronavirus news tracker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGA</td>
<td>• State actions tracker</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# State Regulator COVID Info Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Commission</th>
<th>Best COVID-related Info Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>IUB</td>
<td>news page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>COVID info page</td>
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<td>IN</td>
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<td>MPSC</td>
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<td>MN</td>
<td>MN PUC</td>
<td>news page</td>
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<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>MO PSC</td>
<td>COVID info page</td>
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<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND PSC</td>
<td>homepage</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>NE PSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>PUCO</td>
<td>homepage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SD PUC</td>
<td>homepage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>PSC of WI</td>
<td>homepage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Calls For Action

**Efforts You Can Support to Help Our Industry Recover**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E4TheFuture / Faces of EE</th>
<th>• Tell your COVID story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BPA</td>
<td>• HOPE4HOMES sign-on letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ASE                      | • Small business retrofit grant proposal  
|                           | • RIGHT proposal for mission critical facilities  
|                           | • Transportation/infrastructure priorities  
|                           | • Tax proposal |
| ACEEE                    | • Call to Action blog post |
MEEA Annual Meeting

Save the Date

Upcoming Events

Tues., June 30
Milwaukee, WI or Virtual

On the Agenda

Electrification & EE Workshop – Mon., June 29
COVID-19 impact and response
State clean energy update
What Are Your Responses?
We Need Information to Help Support Our Industry

Please share your business & program impacts

- Interested in impacts at utility, implementation contractor, evaluator & other businesses
- Workforce changes
- Suspended programs
- Remaining active programs
- Program changes

Email us covidimpacts@mwalliance.org
Thank you!

Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

Email us: covidimpacts@mwalliance.org