



Taking Customer Assistance to the Next Level

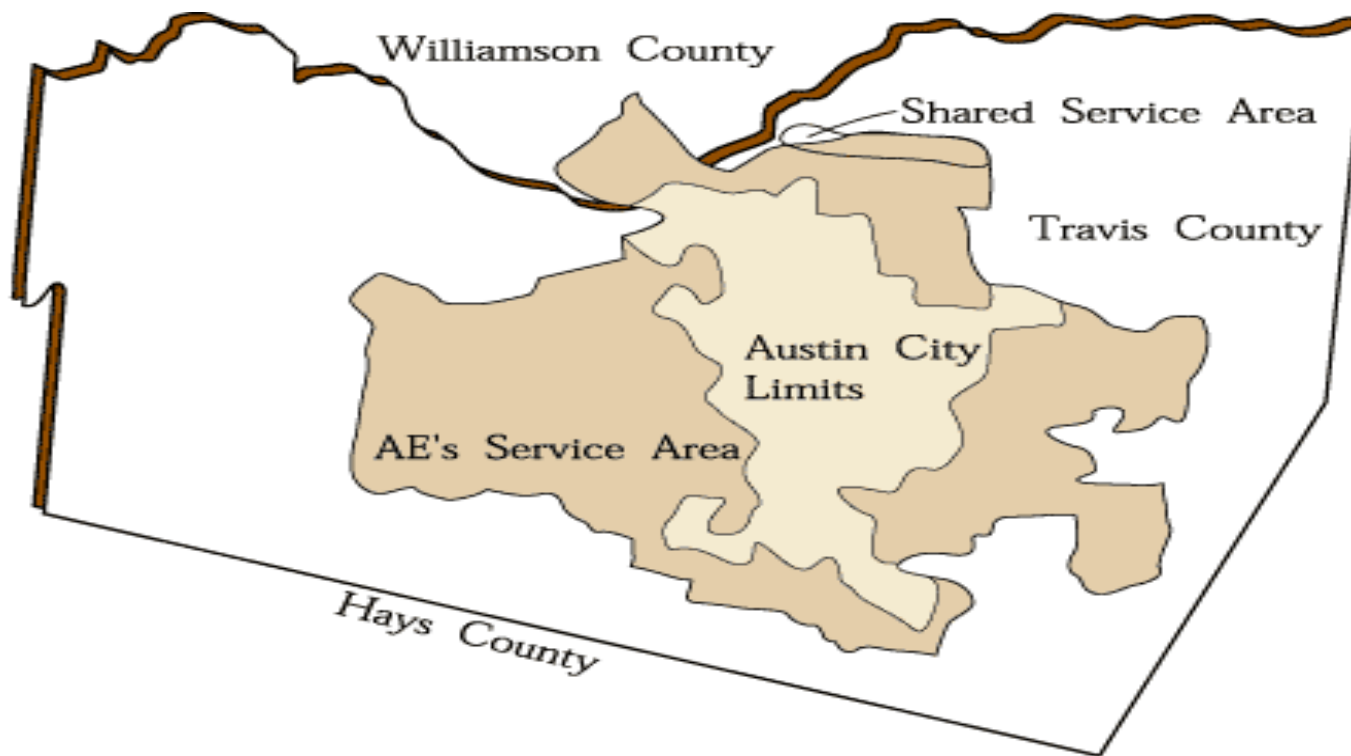
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Overview of Austin Energy

- Nation's 9th largest community-owned utility
- Serves more than 420,000 customers
- Annual revenues total \$1.2 billion





Customer Assistance Programs

Who are we?

The Customer Assistance Program (CAP) encompasses all of the City of Austin sponsored programs designed to assist moderate to low-income customers in regards to their utility bill.

What we do?

The goal of the Customer Assistance Program is to maximize the participation of eligible City of Austin utility customers by better promoting and presenting these programs to utility customers, civic, public, and private organizations.

Why?

Austin Energy promotes programs designed to provide assistance to customers in the areas of financial support, case management, dispute resolution, energy efficiency improvements and water conservation.



Program Components

- **Discounts**
- **Financial Support Plus 1**
- **Medically Vulnerable Registry**
- **Education Classes**
- **Weatherization**
- **Community Connections Resource Fair**
- **Case Management Project**
- **Affordable Energy Policy Summit**
- **Refugee Project**



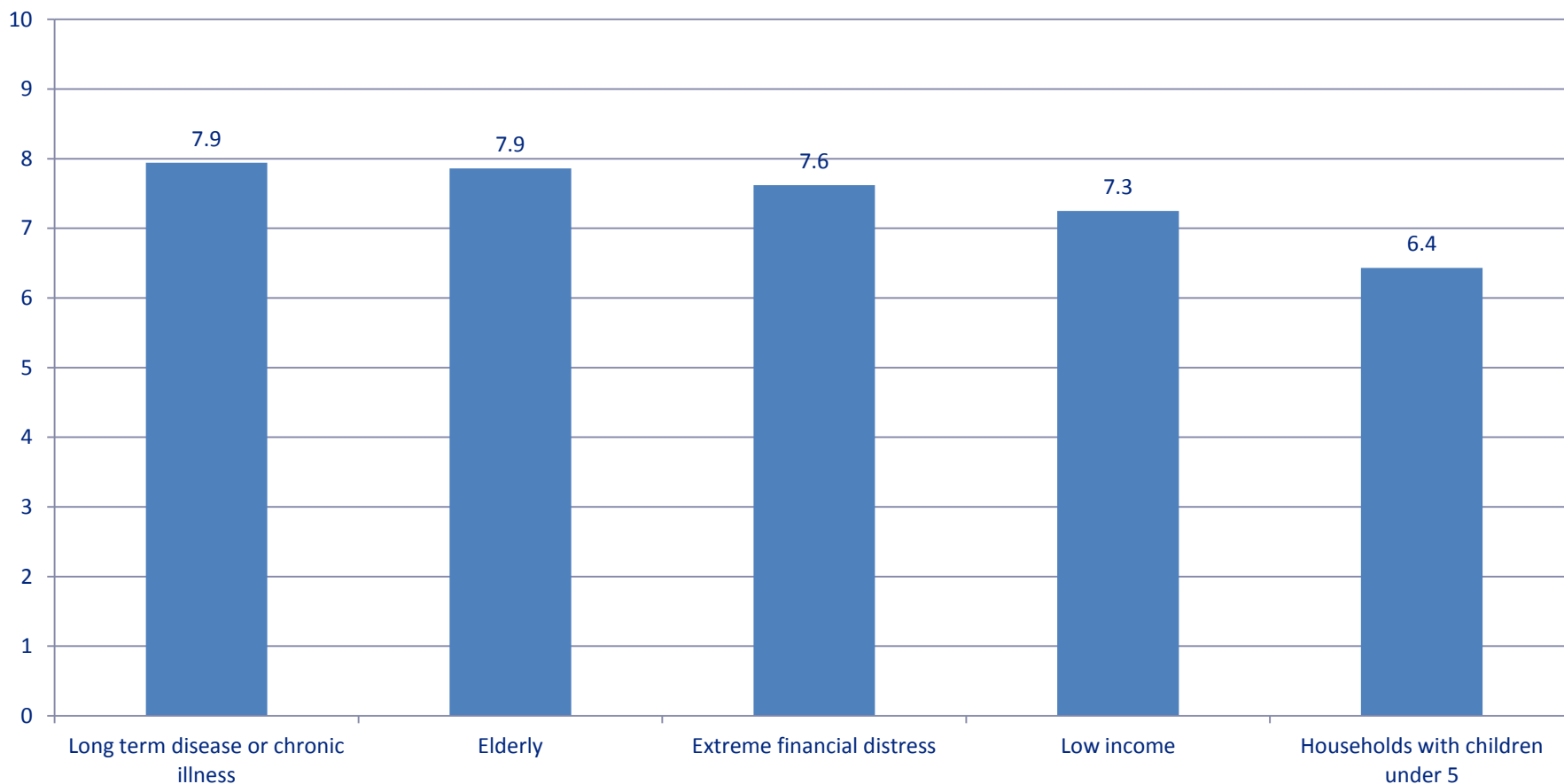
Community Challenges

- We don't do enough?
- We do too much?
- Why not this program?
- Why do I have to pay for it?
- Why can't we just forgive the debt?
- Why are services concentrated in this area?
- What are you doing to help low income families?
- Why can't we decide what is important to fund?
- Who is overseeing these programs?



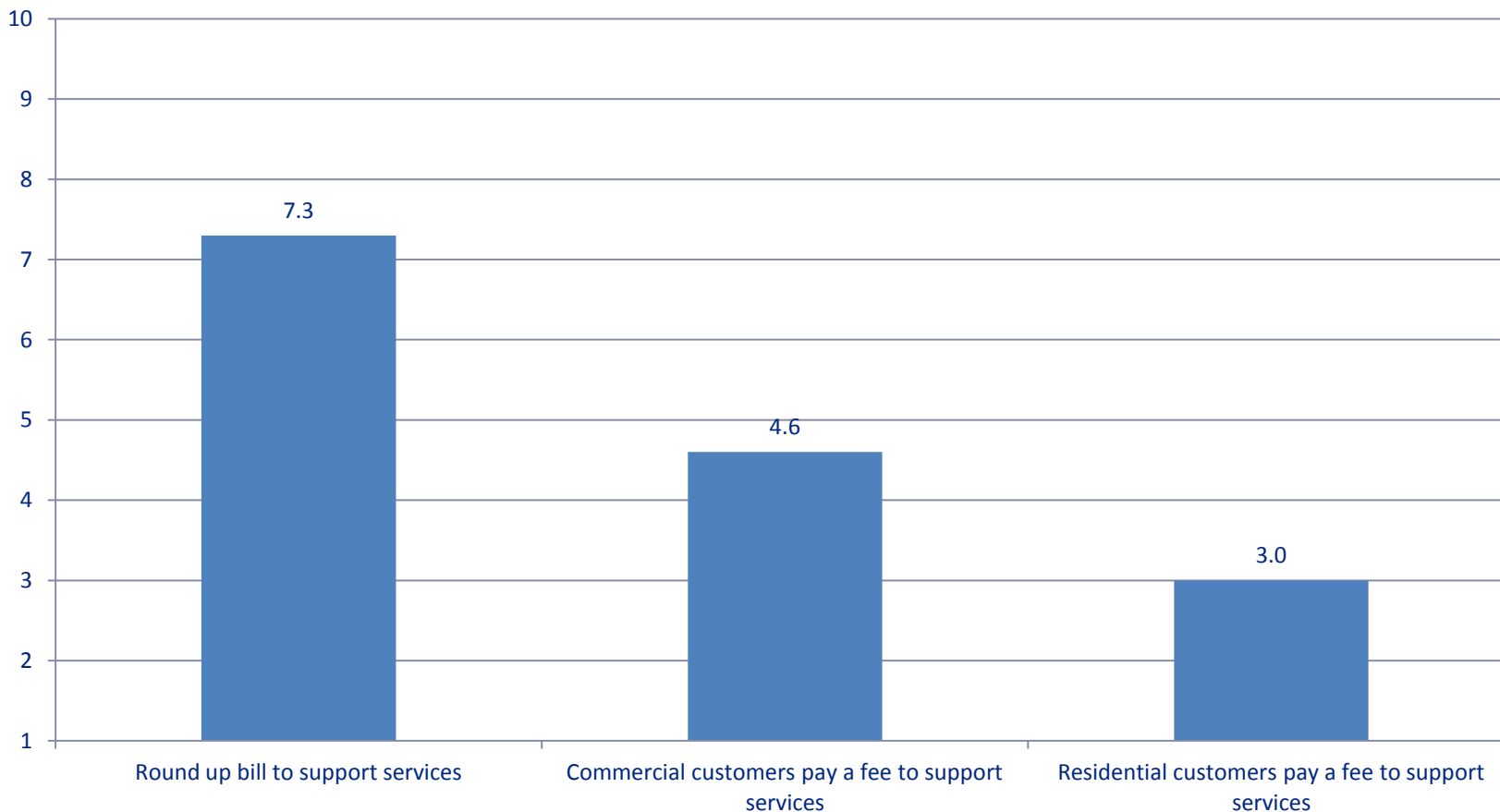
Evaluation

Who do you support receiving these services?



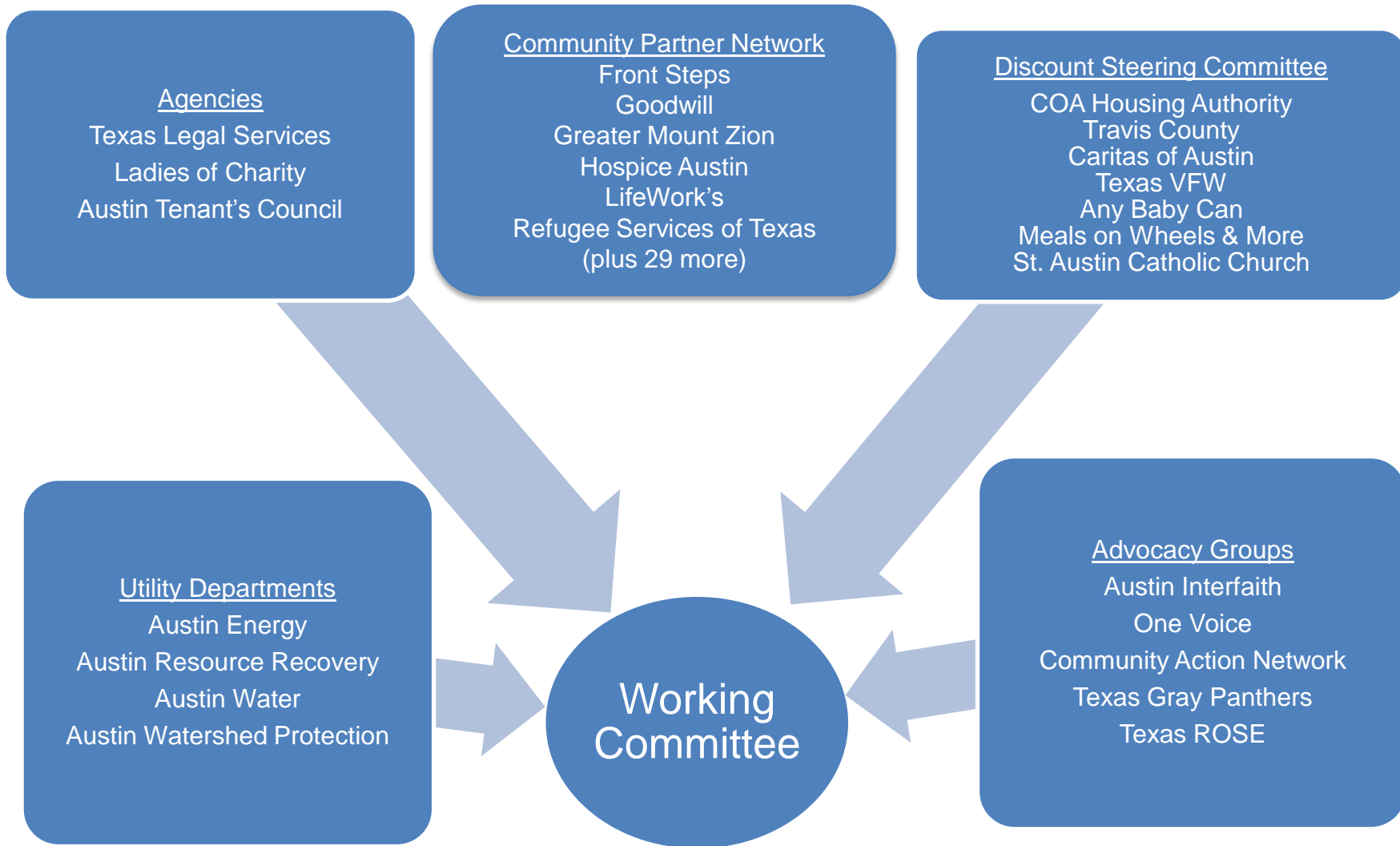


Willingness to pay for support services





Collaborations





Community Advocacy Group (CAG)

- Comprised of advocacy groups
- Created to assist on policy change recommendations
- Works to garner broad community support on issues related to vulnerable customers
- Changes this group spearheaded
 - Summer and winter disconnects moratorium
 - Medically vulnerable program changes
 - Payment Arrangement Policy
 - Arrearage Program



Community Collaborations

Discount Steering Committee (DSC)

- Comprised of community agencies that have direct collaborations/agreements with AE
- Designed for AE to work with community partners who provide direct service
- Gives partners an opportunity to provide guidance on key issues
- Makes recommendations on assistance program implementation and structure
- Changes this group spearheaded
 - Expansion of the Discount Program
 - Oversight on Weatherization and Education Components
 - Payment Arrangement Policy
 - Arrearage Program



Community Collaborations

Community Partner Network (CPN)

- Comprised of community agencies that have direct collaborations/agreements with AE
- Designed for AE to assist with disseminating emergency financial utility assistance
- Develop plan for ensuring utility services remain intact

Any Baby Can	Front Steps	Society of St. Vincent De Paul
Aids Services of Austin	Goodwill	St. Albert
Burnet Family Resource Center	Greater Mount Zion	St. Austin
Webb & Dobie Family Resource Center	Hospice Austin	St. John Neumann
Bethany United	Housing Authority City of Austin	St. Louis
Capital Idea	Lifework's	St. Matthew's
Caritas	Meals on Wheels & More	St. Paul
Catholic Charities	Refugee Services of Texas	UT - Student Emergency Services
Christian Service Center	Sacred Heart	UP Lift
David Chapel	Safe Place	TX VFW
Foundation Communities	St. Louise House	Travis County
Foundation for the Homeless	St. Mary's Church	



Discount Program-Expansion

Discount Program

- 50% growth – enrollment
- 75% growth – funding
- New qualifiers
 - All Medicaid types
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
 - Telephone Lifeline Program
 - Travis County Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)
 - Medical Access Program (MAP)
- Automatic enrollment



Discount Program-Expansion

- Electric Service Customer Charge waiver
- Discount (10%) on total electrical usage
- Discount on Community Benefit Charge (CAP)
- Water Service Customer Charge waiver
- Water Tiered Fixed Charge Waiver
- Water Volume Charge discount
- Wastewater Service Customer Charge waiver
- Drainage Fee 50% discount



Discount Program-Expansion

Education Component

- Required pre-requisite for all weatherization program participants
- One interactive 4 hour class for the whole family
- Flexible class schedules
- Spanish classes available

Curriculum Research & Development

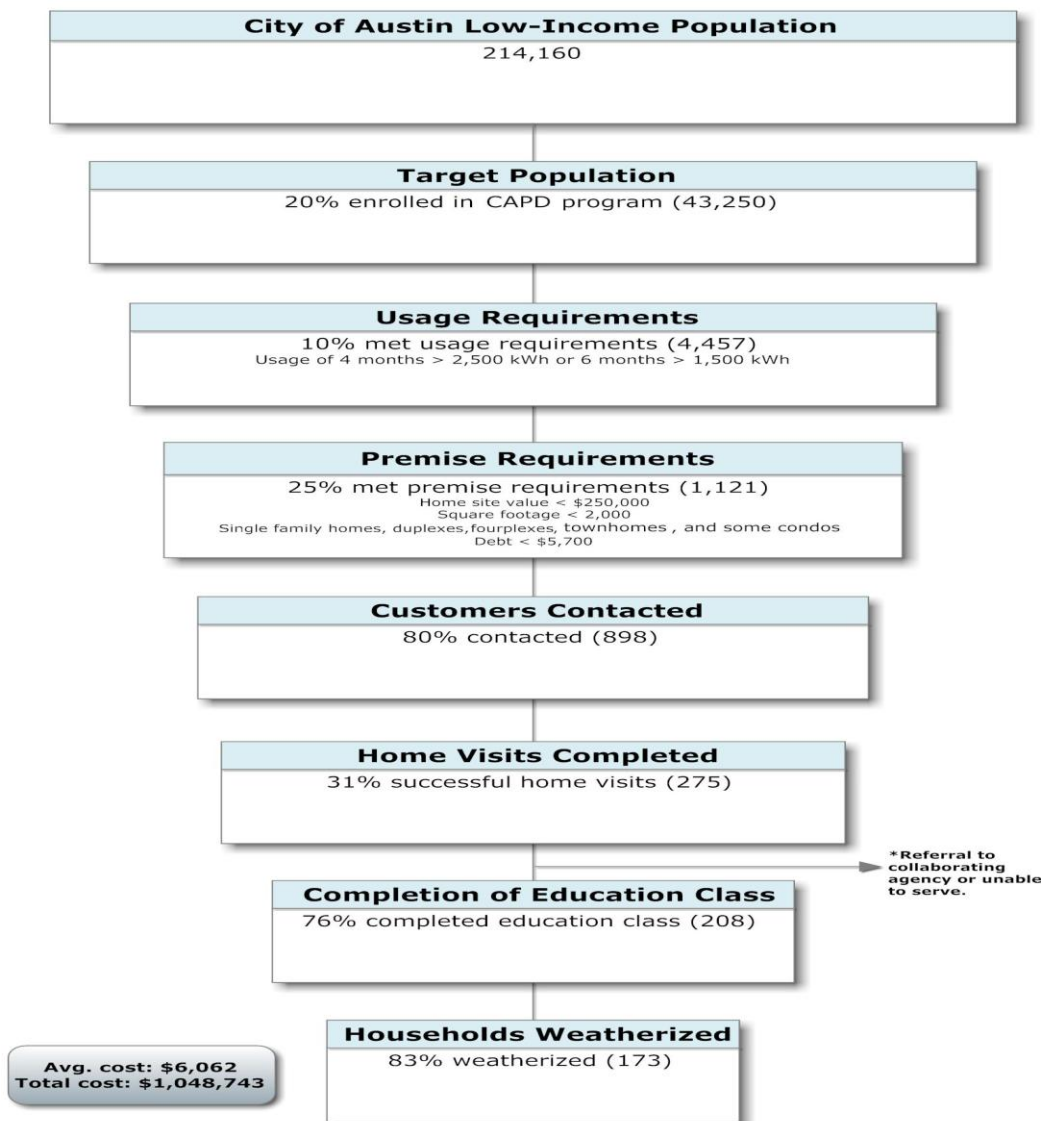
- Understanding your usage and bill
- Energy and water conservation
- Indoor air quality
- Budgeting
- Source of energy and water
- Reduce/reuse/recycle
- Safety hazards
- Tenant rights



Discount Program-Expansion

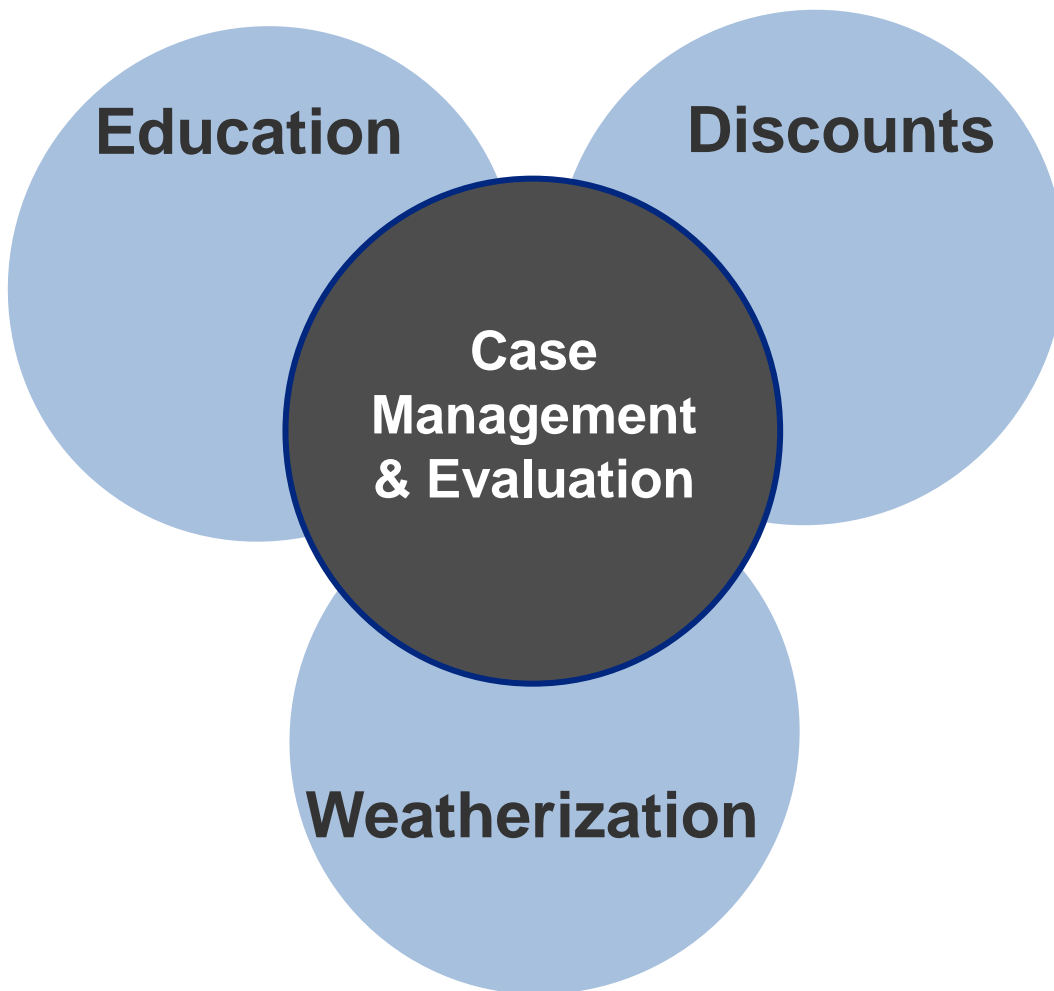
Weatherization Program

- Targets high usage customers
- Home Assessment
- Case Management
- Serves Renters & Homeowners
- Structural Referrals





Discount Program-Expansion





Discount Program-Expansion

- Evaluation Components
- Pre and Post Tests after each session
- Overall comprehension after course completion
- Energy and Water consumption tracked
- 6 months prior to energy efficiency measures
- 18 months after energy efficiency measures
- Self-Assessments conducted 6, 12 and 18 months



Plus 1-Expansion

Financial Support Plus 1 Program

- Internal yearly customer segmentation
- External customer segmentation from 2-1-1
 - Data provides two perspectives
 - Internally what is happening with customer base
 - Externally what are our customers struggling with on a daily basis
- Identifies service gaps within service territory
- Identifies outreach target areas
- 35 Partner Network
- Expanded Funding (\$1,200,000)
- Agency Budget Plan



Medically Vulnerable Program

- Expanded protections
 - Life Support equipment (238 HH)
 - Critical Illness (47 HH)
 - Serious Illness (45 HH)
- Home visits
 - New enrollments
 - Yearly contact
- Referrals to other social service providers
- One-on-one case management
- Manual collections process
- Third party notification



Case Management Project

- Community based organizations serving high risk populations
 - Families with children who have severe medical issues
 - Elderly low income
 - Families struggling with HIV/AIDS
 - Homeless veterans
- Single point of contact from Austin Energy
 - Customer Solution Coordinators (CSC)
 - Direct contact with agencies
 - Create comprehensive action plans
 - Flexibility in policy decisions



Other Program Components

Affordable Energy Policy Summit

- Introduces utility changes to the community
- Communication avenue for community partners
- Community Input
- Targets local social service providers
 - Non-profits
 - Faith-based groups
 - Government agencies
 - Advocacy groups
 - Low income housing representatives



Other Program Components

Community Connections Resource Fair

- Utility meets customer at community level
- Holistic approach to customer service
- One-stop place to reach basic needs services
- Targets low to moderate income customers
- Focuses on high poverty zip codes
- Over 800 participants with over 90 community agencies represented



Refugee Project

- Two agency collaboration
 - Refugee Services of Texas
 - Caritas
- Customers denied services because of inability to provide a valid ID
- Worked within the confines of our service regulations
 - Potential customers were vetted by federal government
 - Utilized I-9 ID's as a temporary ID
 - 6 weeks later social security number is provided
- Account case managed by Austin Energy
 - Accounts in customer's own name
 - Accounts are managed until social security numbers are provided
- Customer case managed by Referring Agency
 - Education about utility bill
 - Understanding a utility bill
 - How to manage their utility bill
 - Paying their utility bill

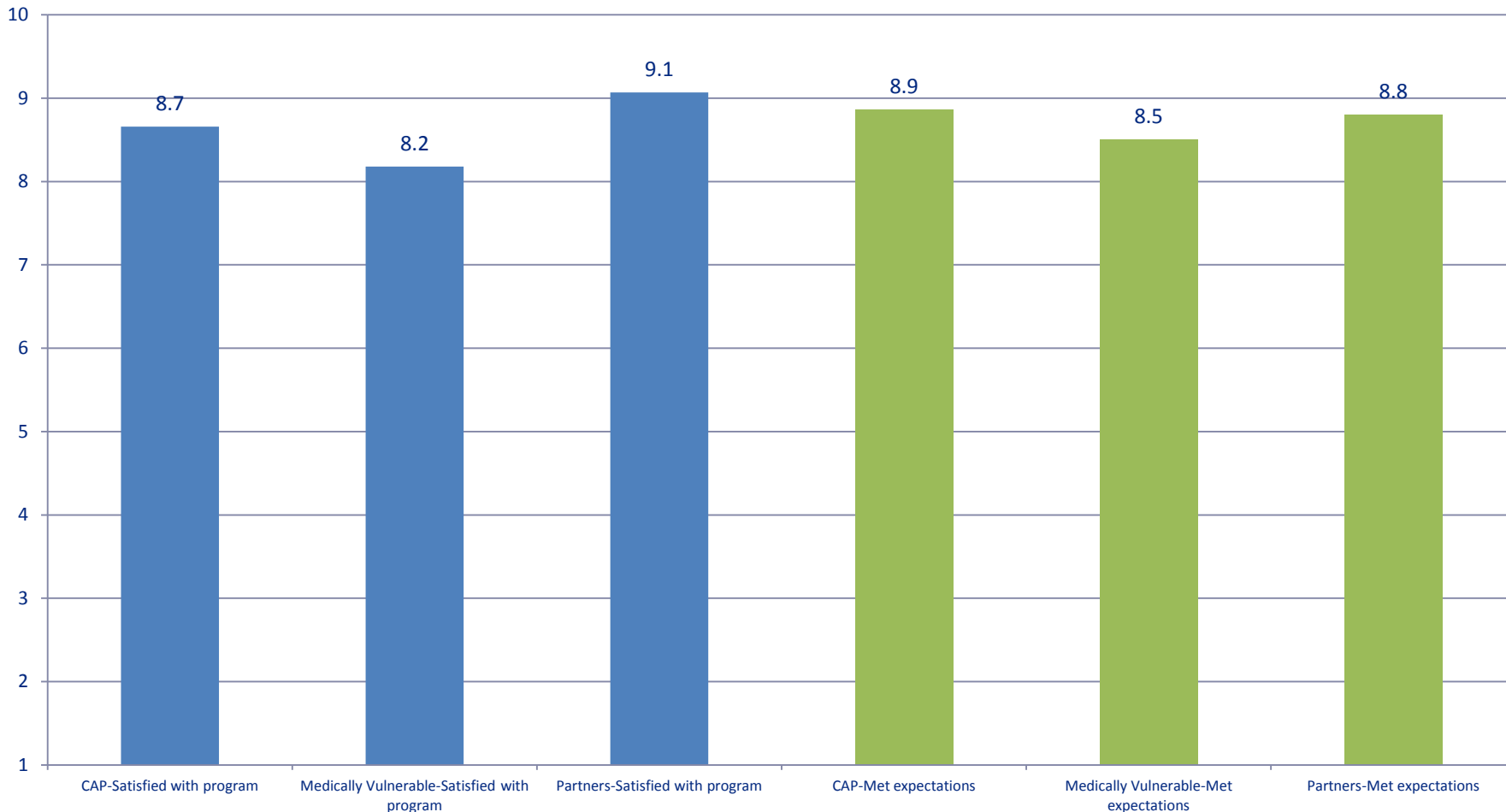


Success

- Ongoing community dialogue
- Internal cross-functional programming
- Coalition building
- Utility Financial Integrity
- Interpersonal dynamics with customer base
- Utility awareness of community conditions
- Understanding individual customer needs
- Customer segmentation
- Community perception of the utility
- True partner for a multi-faceted community



Overall Program Ratings





Questions?