

AEP OHIO EXHIBIT NO. _____

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application of)	
Ohio Power Company for Authority to)	Case No. 23-23-EL-SSO
Establish a Standard Service Offer)	
Pursuant to §4928.143, Ohio Rev. Code,)	
in the Form of an Electric Security Plan.)	

In the Matter of the Application of)	
Ohio Power Company for Approval of)	Case No. 23-24-EL-AAM
Certain Accounting Authority)	

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
ANGIE M. RYBALT
IN SUPPORT OF AEP OHIO'S
ELECTRIC SECURITY PLAN

Filed: January 6, 2023

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ANGIE M. RYBALT

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BEFORE
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
ANGIE M. RYBALT
ON BEHALF OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY

1 **I. PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

2 **Q1. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS.**

3 A. My name is Angie Rybalt and my business address is 700 Morrison Road, Gahanna, Ohio
4 43230.

5 **Q2. BY WHOM ARE YOU EMPLOYED AND WHAT IS YOUR POSITION?**

6 A. I am employed by Ohio Power Company, (“AEP Ohio” or the “Company”) as Director of
7 Customer Experience.

8 **Q3. WOULD YOU PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND**
9 **PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND?**

10 A. I graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Communications and Behavioral Science
11 from The Ohio State University in 2004. I started my career in the financial industry in
12 2004 with Wells Fargo in Business Development and within a year was managing a local
13 branch. In 2008, I brought my financial industry and business development knowledge to
14 the energy field as an Energy Consultant with Linc Mechanical, developing relationships
15 and using financial models to cost justify energy efficient and capital business solutions to
16 clients. In 2010, I was recruited by an energy consulting firm KEMA (now DNV) and hired
17 to implement AEP Ohio’s Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction (“EE/PDR”)
18 programs driven by Senate Bill (“SB”) 221. I worked on the AEP Ohio EE/PDR program
19 for several years until I was hired as an AEP Ohio employee as the Energy Efficiency and

1 Peak Demand Programs Outreach Manager in 2013, managing a team of energy advisors
2 working with AEP Ohio's largest Commercial & Industrial customers. I was promoted to
3 my current position Director of Customer Experience in 2021.

4 **Q4. WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER**
5 **EXPERIENCE?**

6 A. I am responsible for all customer service activities for the Columbus region of AEP Ohio,
7 including customer and community account managers, working with villages, towns and
8 cities, customer service representatives working with residential and small- to medium-
9 business customers and customer account managers working with large business and
10 industrial managed accounts to meet their needs for service, contracts, account
11 maintenance and reliability. I am responsible for developing a customer-centric culture, to
12 uncover and meet the evolving needs, desires and expectations of AEP Ohio's diverse
13 customer base in the Columbus Region. I develop and support strategies and oversee goal
14 achievement for the continuous improvement of the customer experience, AEP Ohio's
15 value proposition and brand reputation. I am also responsible for outreach activities to
16 trade allies and solution providers in support of beneficial electrification, energy efficiency
17 and activities to help customers save energy, manage their demand and optimize their
18 billing. In addition, I am responsible for the development of new "smart" distribution-
19 related technologies for customers, as well as projects and opportunities to benefit
20 customers of all classes. Examples of these activities have been smart cities, electric
21 vehicles ("EV"), EV charging/infrastructure and all beneficial electrification outreach and
22 offerings.

1 **II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY**

2 **Q5. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?**

3 A. The purpose of my testimony is to support the Company's proposed Reliability and
4 Infrastructure Communication Plan ("RICP") and the Economic Development Plan
5 ("EDP").

6 The RICP is designed to inform customers about electric infrastructure investments
7 the Company is making to improve reliability and to keep customers informed about
8 progress towards restoration and estimated times of restoration for customer planning
9 needs during outage restoration events.

10 The EDP is designed to work in partnership with state, regional, and local economic
11 development partners and private sector leaders to attract new investment and job growth
12 in economically distressed communities and rural areas throughout AEP Ohio's service
13 territory.

14 **Q6. ARE YOU SPONSORING ANY EXHIBITS?**

15 A. Yes, I am sponsoring the following exhibits:

- 16 • Exhibit AMR-1 AEP Ohio Economic Development Plan

17 **III. RELIABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMUNICATION PLAN ("RICP")**

18 **Q7. PLEASE EXPLAIN THE NEED FOR THE COMPANY'S PROPOSED RICP.**

19 A. As outlined in Company witnesses Kratt's and Forbes' testimony, AEP Ohio has developed
20 a distribution work plan to make reliability improvements throughout the Company's
21 service territory. The distribution activities proposed in this ESP V and taking place over
22 the ESP V term requires AEP Ohio to significantly increase communications to keep

1 customers informed. For example, in the central Ohio area alone, nearly 600 projects have
2 been identified in the work plan.

3 Customers expect to be informed when that service is disrupted and want to know
4 what AEP Ohio is doing to improve the overall reliability of electric service to their homes,
5 businesses, and the broader community. The Company is informed of these customer
6 expectations through the ongoing research AEP Ohio completes including its 2022 AEP
7 Customer Insight Panel, focus group sessions, residential customer community meetings,
8 and large customer update meetings. Specifically, customers communicated to AEP Ohio
9 that is very important for the Company to make them aware of their infrastructure
10 maintenance activities and efforts to improve electric reliability. Customers most
11 frequently mentioned wanting to hear about these activities and efforts via bill
12 insert/attachment, website, service map, social media, mobile app, print mail and e-mail.
13 Additionally, according to the studies, less than one-quarter of customers recall seeing,
14 reading or hearing any communication about their infrastructure maintenance activities,
15 indicating a critical need to do more.

16 The Company also projects a need to share electric safety information throughout
17 the term of the ESP V. As AEP Ohio invests in activities that improve reliability, make
18 the distribution system more resilient and impact the lives of customers, the Company's
19 ability to connect with customers to inform them of these activities needs to increase as
20 well. To that end, in order to effectively communicate with customers about the Company's
21 investment activities, how the investments impact their customer experience, and enhance
22 general connection with customers, the Company has put together a comprehensive
23 communication plan (the RICP) for the ESP V term.

1 **Q8. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE RICP THE COMPANY IS PROPOSING IN THIS**
2 **PROCEEDING.**

3 A. The RICP is designed to provide the level and type of communications that customers
4 desire and need.

5 Specifically, the Company has adopted a “meet customers where they are”
6 approach, which means communicating with customers in the manner customers they
7 prefer to receive information.

8 At the same time, the Company wants to maximize outreach to keep customers
9 informed through multiple touchpoints. In addition to increasing and enhancing traditional
10 communications in outage events, the RICP will focus on proactive communications to
11 keep customers informed of the Company’s infrastructure improvements and maintenance
12 to improve reliability and reduce future outage events. In addition to outage
13 restoration/information and service improvements, the RICP also focuses on creating
14 educational content about electrical safety and savings opportunities. Informing customers
15 about important issues like safety, reliability, consumer scams, outage information,
16 infrastructure and vegetation management work in their area, available assistance
17 programs, billing and customer programs are all critical components in meeting customer
18 needs and keeping the public safe. To that end, the RICP contains the following
19 components:

20 Reliability Communication Materials & Collateral Development and Delivery- As
21 outreach efforts are expanded, the Company will need to develop customer materials
22 outlining reliability investments and infrastructure improvements, including videos,
23 photography, web pages, PowerPoint presentations and handouts. Additionally, as part of

1 the RICP, the Company will send targeted direct mail postcards with specific information
2 on what customers can expect as it relates to infrastructure improvements and projects in
3 their area — explaining why, when and how, as well as any potential impacts to customers
4 during the life of the project (outages, traffic impacts, etc.). Direct mail postcards are an
5 effective way to reach customers, especially those not on email or social media.

6 Communication Alert System Campaign- Recent storms have led to more expanded
7 discussions with community partners and customers. During those discussions, the
8 Company received feedback that mobile alerts would have helped them better prepare for
9 outages. Therefore, as part of the RICP, AEP Ohio would develop and execute an ongoing
10 campaign to support the rollout of a new notification process to share the importance of
11 remaining enrolled in the mobile alert platform while ensuring the secure protection of
12 customer mobile phone numbers.

13 Annual Focus Groups- The Company will conduct a mixture of in-person and virtual focus
14 groups throughout AEP Ohio's service territory to measure the pulse of the customer and
15 better understand their needs and expectations. These meetings are an effective way to
16 measure customer feedback on service levels, as well as improvements customers would
17 like to see over the course of the ESP V term.

18 Major Accounts Business Roundtable- AEP Ohio will conduct a minimum of two
19 roundtables per year for commercial and industrial ("C&I") customers. These roundtables
20 provide C&I customers the opportunity to learn about programs and services unique to
21 their segment and to hear from peers how they are leveraging energy improvement ideas
22 in their facilities. Additionally, it's an opportunity for AEP Ohio to get feedback from its
23 C&I customers on needs and evolving expectations.

1 Digital Media Production- The Company will produce and capture engaging multimedia
2 assets highlighting electrical safety, payment assistance options, mobile alerts and other
3 important customer messaging.

4 Community Outreach Events- These events will allow AEP Ohio employees to attend key
5 community events and have face-to-face interactions with customers to answer questions
6 about service, reliability, billing and customer programs such as payment assistance and
7 payment plans. These events will provide an opportunity to reach all areas within the
8 Company's service territory to help customers with questions and address concerns they
9 have and help build and support community relations.

10 **Q9. HAS AEP OHIO DEVELOPED A COST ESTIMATE FOR THE RICP?**

11 A. Yes. Figure AMR-1 provides an annual breakdown of the total RICP costs and the
12 estimated costs for each component of the RICP detailed above.

1

Figure AMR-1

Communications Activity	Activity Cost
Reliability Communication Materials & Collateral Development and Delivery	\$275,000
Communication Materials & Collateral Development	\$45,000
Communication Alert System Campaign	\$35,000
Annual Focus Groups	\$65,000
Major Accounts Business Roundtable	\$25,000
Digital Media Production	\$30,000
Community Outreach Events	\$125,000
Total	\$600,000

2

3 **Q10. WILL THE RICP REQUIRE THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT?**

4 A. Yes. The proposed reliability communications require resources above and beyond what
5 AEP Ohio currently has available. Therefore, the Company will secure third-party support
6 needed to supplement current communications resources to create and execute the
7 proposed RICP.

8 **Q11. ARE THE RICP COSTS REASONABLE?**

9 A. Yes. Effective communication is central to the mission of AEP Ohio – to provide safe,
10 reliable electricity to our customers – and helping customers understand efforts taken on
11 their behalf to restore power, improve infrastructure for greater reliability and growth and
12 keep customers informed on those critical topics. Relative to the number of customers
13 served, AEP Ohio has maintained a small team and limited the expenditure of resources

1 for customer communications, all while prices continue to rise for paper, postage and
2 production as inflation continues to impact most industries.

3 However, as detailed above, AEP Ohio has repeatedly heard from customers that
4 they expect to be informed about the electrical system work that will impact their daily
5 lives. The currently available resources fall well short of allowing the Company to meet
6 these customer expectations. In order to keep customers informed and avoid complaints
7 caused by a lack of adequate information, the Company needs the funding to communicate
8 what is being done to improve service in a timely manner. The RICP is a targeted plan to
9 address customer needs and expectations by keeping customers informed while supporting
10 the Company's overall effort to provide safe and reliable service and, as such, the annual
11 \$600,000 budget is reasonable.

12 **Q12. HOW DOES THE COMPANY PLAN TO RECOVER THE COSTS ASSOCIATED**
13 **WITH THE RICP?**

14 A. As further described by Company witness Heitkamp, the costs associated with the RICP
15 will be recovered through the Customer Experience Rider ("CER"). As the costs above are
16 estimated, the Company proposes to have the flexibility to shift program dollars between
17 programs to maximize resource effectiveness and meet customer needs.

18 **IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

19 **Q13. PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE COMPANY'S EDP PROPOSAL.**

20 A. The EDP proposal is designed to promote investment and job growth specifically in the
21 economically distressed and rural areas of the Company's service territory. The two
22 components of the EDP are the Strategic Investment Program and the Local Economic
23 Advancement Program. The programs are described in more detail in Exhibit AMR-1. The

1 Company's EDP is proposed to spend \$2 million per year for the ESP term, or a total of
2 \$12 million, funded 50% through rates and 50% through shareholders to support economic
3 development. As the costs are estimated, the Company proposes to have the flexibility to
4 shift program dollars between EDP components and years as needed to maximize
5 economic development benefits..

6 **Q14. PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC INVESTMENT**
7 **PROGRAM.**

8 A. The Strategic Investment Program ("SIP") will have an annual budget of \$1,200,000 to be
9 used to assist selected areas with the advanced deployment of electric utility infrastructure,
10 including line extensions, circuit development, and substation expansion or construction,
11 to promote economic development job creation in the community. Eligible projects are
12 limited to economically distressed and rural communities that may be experiencing high
13 population growth or difficulty attracting economic development prospects for new,
14 expanded or retention opportunities. In addition, SIP Program funds may be used to support
15 initial electric utility infrastructure for designated JobsOhio Authenticated Sites, electric
16 service to new industrial parks and sites, new industrial shell buildings, and existing
17 customer electric service relocations and/or upgrades. Grant application and approval
18 process will be established working with Ohio Department of Development as well as local
19 and regional economic development organizations.

20 **Q15. PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL ECONOMIC**
21 **ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM.**

22 A. The Local Economic Advancement Program will have an annual budget of \$800,000 to be
23 used to support economic development activity and organizations at the local and regional

1 levels for economically distressed and rural communities. Up to a maximum of \$40,000
2 will be granted toward eligible projects and funding requests in a given year. The grants
3 can be used for programs or projects such as site readiness, shell building development,
4 site marketing, retention and expansion surveys, wage and benefit surveys, retaining
5 existing industries, attracting new industries, conducting special studies and research
6 projects or other creative ideas. These funds can be designated to assist with the cost of
7 utility infrastructure. Additionally, funds can be used to support the ongoing operations
8 and programming of local and regional economic development organizations. AEP Ohio
9 seeks programs or projects that will provide the maximum local benefit from grant funds.
10 Grant application and approval process will be established working with Ohio Department
11 of Development as well as local and regional economic development organizations.

12 **Q16. HOW DOES THE PROPOSED EDP BENEFIT ALL OF AEP OHIO**
13 **CUSTOMERS?**

14 A. Economic development is important to maintain and increase AEP Ohio's customer base
15 in order to better control rates. Economic development projects attract new commercial
16 customers. Moreover, as economic development projects create new jobs in AEP Ohio's
17 service territory, new residential customers are added to AEP Ohio's customer base. The
18 Company's efforts are aimed at recruiting industry and capital investment in its service
19 territory, thereby increasing employment opportunities and expanding the tax base. AEP
20 Ohio's proposed EDP focuses on key aspects of economic development: industry retention,
21 industry expansion, industry attraction, and site development. New and diversified
22 economic activity in the Company's economically distressed and rural portions of the

1 service territory benefits customers, communities, and the Company. The Company's EDP
2 is targeted to accomplish that goal.

3 **Q17. WILL THE EDP HAVE A SPECIAL FOCUS ON HELPING ECONOMICALLY**
4 **DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES AND RURAL AREAS?**

5 A. Yes. Exhibit AMR-1 describes the details for the two areas of focus the funding will be
6 used. The Strategic Investment and Local Economic Advancement programs are both
7 funded 100% toward economically distressed communities and rural areas. This would
8 include AEP Ohio service territory defined as distressed, labor surplus and situational
9 distressed rural counties as defined by the Ohio Revised Code. The urban and rural area
10 classification the Company will use is the same used for eligibility for Ohio Department of
11 Development's Rural Industrial Park Loan Program. This would also include AEP Ohio
12 service territory residing in a census tract with income at or lower than 80% of the state
13 median income, or poverty to be greater than 20%. This is the same definition used for
14 eligibility for New Market Tax Credits. AEP Ohio has a long history of helping
15 communities across its service territory grow and prosper. Its work helps companies make
16 investment decisions in Ohio. AEP Ohio works closely with its local and regional
17 economic development partners, as well as JobsOhio, the Ohio Department of
18 Development and the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (the "Commission"), to recruit
19 new companies and investments, retain and support existing businesses, and help prepare
20 communities for economic growth opportunities. Economic development is beneficial to
21 the communities AEP Ohio serves, but also for AEP Ohio and its customers.

22 **Q18. IS IT IMPORTANT FOR AEP OHIO TO OFFER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
23 **OPPORTUNITIES?**

1 A. Yes. Utility offerings are an important part of a coordinated business attraction strategy.
2 The role of the utility in the economic development process must not be limited to
3 providing reliable service at reasonable rates. To further support growth in the volume and
4 size of economic development opportunities in Ohio, the State will need more available
5 economic development funding to be able to compete with other states, particularly in
6 economically distressed communities and rural areas. To support Ohio competitiveness
7 for new capital investment and job creation and retention, the Company has identified a
8 need to rapidly support new and expanding businesses with their electric infrastructure
9 needs and make electric infrastructure investments to help make industrial sites and
10 buildings ready for economic development prospects.

11 Specifically, for many companies engaged in the site selection process, the initial
12 costs of establishing a new facility are a higher priority for site selection than the on-going
13 operating costs of the facility. Up-front capital cost savings, including any concessions on
14 costs for high voltage interconnections, redundant feeds, or enhancements for power
15 quality and system protection, can be especially persuasive to help a prospect choose Ohio
16 over other states. Additionally, given the importance of site selection for commercial or
17 industrial facilities and the need for redevelopment in underdeveloped areas and
18 economically distressed communities, AEP Ohio is in a unique position to support
19 economic development opportunities throughout its service territory in these specific areas
20 that need the most assistance.

21 **Q19. WHY DOES AEP OHIO BELIEVE IT IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO**
22 **ALLOCATE FUNDS UNDER THE EDP?**

1 A. While economic development projects do receive state and local economic development
2 incentives, AEP Ohio has a unique opportunity through the EDP to offer additional targeted
3 support in economically distressed communities and rural areas. Through the Local
4 Economic Advancement Program, AEP Ohio may be the only entity offering an incentive
5 to attract investment and increase the number of site ready projects for potential economic
6 development prospects to choose Ohio. Site selection for commercial or industrial facilities
7 is a contest, and the utility must compete along with other political and commercial
8 players. Redevelopment in underdeveloped areas and vulnerable communities is critically
9 important to Ohio's economy.

10 Additionally, the Strategic Investment Program allows AEP Ohio to make
11 investments in economically distressed rural areas of its service territory that are rapidly
12 growing or that have strong economic development potential but for electric infrastructure.
13 Most economic development prospects expect electric utilities to be in place or to have an
14 expedited service timeline and this program could help AEP Ohio deliver on that
15 expectation.

16 Through the Local Economic Advancement Program, AEP Ohio can support local
17 and regional economic development projects that create or retain jobs and advance the
18 economic competitiveness of a local community. AEP Ohio can fill a funding gap needed
19 in many of its rural and economically distressed communities.

20 **Q20. DOES THE COMPANY'S PROPOSED EDP SUPPORT STATE POLICIES**
21 **OBJECTIVES?**

22 A. Yes. Specifically, the Company's proposal supports R.C. §4928.02(N) by providing Ohio
23 with tools to compete with other countries and states. In economic development it is critical

1 that Ohio can meet the customer expectations when they want service, or risk losing them
2 to other jurisdictions. The ability to shorten the time to deliver service, or expand their
3 service, can mean millions in revenue to the customer and could make the difference in
4 retaining those jobs or locating their site to Ohio versus leaving the state.

5 **Q21. WHERE WILL THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN BE RECOVERED?**

6 A. Fifty percent of these incentives to bring more targeted Economic Development to the AEP
7 Ohio service territory will be recovered in the CER, which is supported by Company
8 witness Heitkamp. The remaining fifty percent will be funded by AEP Ohio shareholders.

9 **Q22. WHAT ARE YOUR METRICS FOR SUCCESS?**

10 A. AEP Ohio tracks economic development projects in terms of jobs, capital investment and
11 load (MW). AEP Ohio will disburse, manage and track resulting investments made in its
12 service territory from the use of these funds. AEP Ohio will also track, and report activity
13 associated with the recipients of the funding, including the entity name, dollar amount of
14 funding, and use of funds. The Company will also track the job growth as a result of these
15 investments.

16 **Q23. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?**

17 A. Yes.

AEP Ohio Economic Development Plan

January 2023

Overview

The AEP Ohio Electric Security Plan (PUCO Case No. 23-0023-EL-SSO) introduces the Economic Development Plan (EDP). The proposed \$12 million fund is designed to work in partnership with state, regional, and local economic development partners, and private sector leaders to attract new investment and job growth throughout the economically distressed and rural areas of AEP Ohio's service territory. The \$2 million total annual program cost for the 6-year term of the ESP will support economic development specifically for the economically distressed communities and rural areas served by AEP Ohio. The plan will be funded 50% through shareholders and 50% through rates.

AEP Ohio Economic Development Rationale

Utility offerings are an important part of a coordinated business attraction strategy with state, regional and local economic development organizations, public and private.

The role of the utility in the economic development process must not be limited to providing reliable service at reasonable rates. As the volume and size of economic development opportunities increases at a rapid pace in Ohio, AEP Ohio works collaboratively across various internal teams (economic development, customer services, distribution, and transmission) to promote a rapid response culture with focus on achieving the customer's desired energy needs in their desired timelines.

In order for Ohio to be competitive for new capital investment and job creation and retention, the Company has identified a need to rapidly support new and expanding businesses with their electric infrastructure needs, while also coordinating investments to make industrial sites and building sites ready for business.

For many firms engaged in the site selection process, the initial costs of establishing a new facility are a higher priority for site selection than the on-going operating costs of the facility. Up-front capital cost savings — including any concessions on costs for high voltage interconnections, redundant feeds, or enhancements for power quality and system protection — can be especially persuasive. Site selection for commercial or industrial facilities is a contest, and the utility must compete in this game along with other political and commercial players. Redevelopment in underdeveloped areas and economically distressed communities is critically important in Ohio's economic development plan.

The Company has identified a need to provide funding support to regional and local economic development partner organizations to enhance their programming and fill gaps that local funding and state resources do not provide. Special consideration is needed for areas in AEP Ohio's service territory that are economically distressed and rural.

The AEP Ohio Economic and Business Development (EBD) Team will partner with local, county, and regional ED organizations, JobsOhio, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, and directly with customers to identify eligible projects under EDP. AEP Ohio will evaluate and recommend the funding levels for eligible projects. Below are the proposed programs budgets recommended for to attract new business, or grow existing business in the AEP Ohio service territory.

Economic Development Programs	Annual Budget
Strategic Investment Program	\$1,200,000
Local Economic Advancement Program	\$800,000
TOTAL	\$2,000,000

Proposed Programs

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Program Summary

The Strategic Investment Program (SIP) will provide funding to assist selected areas with the advanced planning and development of electric utility infrastructure, including line extensions, circuit development, and substation expansion or construction, to promote economic development job creation in the community.

The AEP Ohio EBD Team will partner with local, county and regional ED organizations, JobsOhio, and directly with industries to identify eligible projects. AEP Ohio will evaluate and recommend the funding levels for each eligible project.

Amount

\$1,200,000 has been designated annually for the SIP Program.

Eligibility

In collaboration with AEP Ohio Distribution Planning personnel, the AEP Ohio EBD team will work with local communities experiencing both high urban population growth in economically distressed communities to identify areas targeted for future expansion. In addition, SIP Program funds may be used to support initial electric utility infrastructure for designated JobsOhio Authenticated Sites, electric service to new industrial parks and sites, new industrial shell buildings, and existing customer electric service relocations and/or upgrades.

100% of program funds will go to projects located in:

- Distressed, labor surplus and situational distressed rural counties as defined by the Ohio Revised Code. (Same classification used for eligibility for Ohio Department of Development's Rural Industrial Park Loan Program: <https://development.ohio.gov/static/business/stateincentives/10012021-RIPL-map.pdf>)
- A census tract with income at or lower than 80% of the state median income, or poverty to be greater than 20%. (Same definition used for eligibility for New Market Tax Credits: <https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/ohio-new-markets-tax-credit-program>)

Use of Funds

Funds will be used to advance system resource planning and engineering studies, as well as for the development of electric utility infrastructure, including line extensions, circuit development, and substation expansion or construction, to both shorten the lead time for infrastructure development and increase the competitiveness of areas identified for industrial and commercial job growth.

Application

Grant application and approval process will be established working with Ohio Department of Development as well as local and regional economic development organizations.

LOCAL ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

Program Summary

The Local Economic Advancement Program (LEAP) provides support for economic development activity and organizations at the local and regional level.

Amount

\$800,000 has been designated annually for the LEAP Program.

Eligibility

Local units of government and local economic development organizations within the AEP Ohio service territory are eligible for funding. Funding requests must demonstrate the capacity to create or retain jobs and advance the economic competitiveness of the local community.

100% of program funds will go to projects located in:

- Distressed, labor surplus and situational distressed rural counties as defined by the Ohio Revised Code. (Same classification used for eligibility for Ohio Department of Development's Rural Industrial Park Loan Program: <https://development.ohio.gov/static/business/stateincentives/10012021-RIPL-map.pdf>)
- A census tract with income at or lower than 80% of the state median income, or poverty to be greater than 20%. (Same definition used for eligibility for New Market Tax Credits: <https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/ohio-new-markets-tax-credit-program>)

Use of Funds

Up to a maximum of \$40,000 will be granted toward eligible projects and funding requests. The grants can be used for programs or projects such as site readiness, shell building development, site marketing, retention and expansion surveys, wage and benefit surveys, retaining existing industries, attracting new industries, conducting special studies and research projects or other creative ideas. Funds can also be used to support the ongoing operations and programming of local and regional economic development organizations. AEP Ohio seeks programs or projects that will provide the maximum local benefit from grant funds. These funds can be designated to assist with the cost of utility infrastructure.

Application

Grant application and approval process will be established working with Ohio Department of Development as well as local and regional economic development organizations.

Summary

Ohio's economically distressed communities will benefit from the proposed EDP. In addition, economic development also makes AEP Ohio's rates more affordable for all customers. As economic development projects create new jobs, new residential customers are added to AEP Ohio's customer base.

In accordance with Rule 4901-1-05, Ohio Administrative Code, the PUCO's e-filing system will electronically serve notice of the filing of this document upon the following parties. In addition, I hereby certify that a service copy of the foregoing Ohio Power Company's Direct Testimony of Angie M. Rybalt was sent by, or on behalf of, the undersigned counsel to the following parties of record this 6th day of January 2023, via electronic transmission.

/s/ Steven T. Nourse

Steven T. Nourse

EMAIL SERVICE LIST for ESP IV:

mpritchard@mwncmh.com
William.michael@occ.ohio.gov
Bojko@carpenterlipps.com
rkelter@elpc.org
paul@carpenterlipps.com
Stephanie.Chmiel@ThompsonHine.com
Kurt.Helfrich@ThompsonHine.com
Michael.Austin@ThompsonHine.com
ctavenor@theOEC.org
mkurtz@BKLlawfirm.com
kboehm@BKLlawfirm.com
jkylercohn@BKLlawfirm.com
lhawrot@spilmanlaw.com
dwilliamson@spilmanlaw.com
charris@spilmanlaw.com
sean.mcglone@ohiohospitals.org
ssheely@bricker.com
callwein@keglerbrown.com
mjsettineri@vorys.com
glpetrucci@vorys.com
ibatikov@vorys.com
michelle.d.grant@dynegy.com
rdove@keglerbrown.com
mdortch@kravitzllc.com
joliker@igsenergy.com
mnugent@igsenergy.com
whitt@whitt-sturtevant.com
kennedy@whitt-sturtevant.com
rsahli@columbus.rr.com

tony.mendoza@sierraclub.org
joe.halso@sierraclub.org
cpirik@dickinsonwright.com
todonnell@dickinsonwright.com
vvorys@dickinsonwright.com
sechler@carpenterlipps.com
rocco.d'ascenzo@duke-energy.com
jeanne.kingery@duke-energy.com
Larisa.vaysman@duke-energy.com
elyse.akhbari@duke-energy.com
william.wright@ohioattorneygeneral.gov
Greta.see@puc.state.oh.us

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Case No(s). 23-0023-EL-SSO, 23-0024-EL-AAM

Summary: Testimony DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ANGIE RYBALT ON BEHALF OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY electronically filed by Mr. Steven T. Nourse on behalf of
Ohio Power Company