

Rural Clean Energy Work Group

Meeting #3

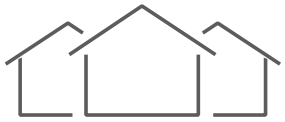
Energy Division

DECEMBER 22, 2021



Washington State
Department of
Commerce

We strengthen communities



**HOUSING
HOMELESSNESS**



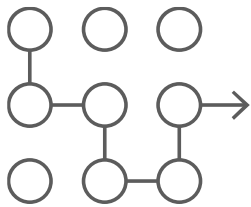
INFRASTRUCTURE



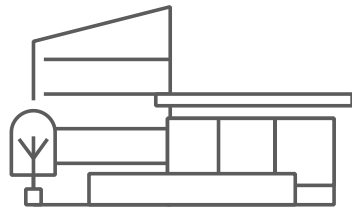
**BUSINESS
ASSISTANCE**



ENERGY



PLANNING



COMMUNITY FACILITIES



**CRIME VICTIMS &
PUBLIC SAFETY**



**COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

Virtual Meeting Reminders



- The presentation portions of the meeting will be recorded
- Raise your hand, use the chat box and then unmute to ask questions or contribute to the discussion
- If possible, turn on your camera when you are speaking
- Don't forget to mute yourself when you are not speaking
- Reach out to **Queenie Karlik** for technical help

Agenda

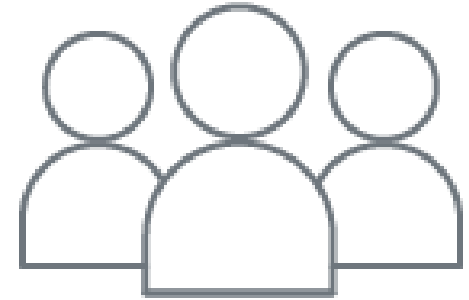
- **Welcome and introductions**
- **Community agreements and meeting guidelines**
- **Timeline**
- **Federal and alternative opportunities:**
 - USDA REAP
 - Department of Commerce
- **Breakout groups:**
 - Recommendations to address barriers
 - Review draft goals/guiding principles

Goals of Today's Workshop

- Learn about federal, state and alternative opportunities to advance clean energy
- Brainstorm policies and programs that dismantle barriers to meeting rural community needs
- Brainstorm ways to leverage federal funds
- Review draft guiding principles for rural clean energy priorities

Community Agreements

- Be present!
- Step up, step back
- Respond to and challenge ideas, not people
- Protect confidences: Stories stay, lessons leave
- Avoid jargon, acronyms, and industry language - use inclusive language that is accessible for people with varying inside knowledge



Work Group Timeline Detail

RURAL CLEAN ENERGY LEGISLATIVE REPORT		
TASK DESCRIPTION	TIMING	FOCUS
Kickoff Meeting #1	Early October	Introductory meeting: history of CEF, background, context, proviso, roles and responsibilities
Meeting #2	November	Technologies, programs and investments that address rural community priorities and align with the 2021 State Energy Strategy Breakout groups
		Report back, identify emerging ideas and themes
Meeting #3	December	Federal opportunities, and recommended strategies for leveraging federal funds with CEF; policies that dismantle barriers; review draft recommendations
Meeting #4	January 2022	Finalize recommendations and strategic plan
Public comment	January/February	Opportunity for public comment in response to recommendations from work group
Commerce process	February-June	Circulate report for internal review, and for OFM and Governor's office review and processing

Presentations

- Veronica Baer, Business and Cooperatives Program Specialist, USDA Rural Energy for America Program
- Tina Hochwender, Managing Director, Department of Commerce, Community Assistance and Research Unit

Federal Programs



Infrastructure Package

- **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**
 - The bipartisan infrastructure bill, passed 11/06/21
- **Build Back Better***
 - The Democratic budget resolution, *not currently passed*
 - Rural Partnership Program

(Some) Federal Grant and Loan Programs

- **FEMA:**
 - Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) Grant
- **Department of Interior:**
 - Office of Indian Energy
- **Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Grants:**
- **EPA:**
 - Region 10 Healthy Resilient and Sustainable Communities Grant

(Some) Federal Grant and Loan Programs

- **USDA Rural Development:**
 - Rural Energy for America Program
 - Rural Energy Savings Program
 - High Energy Cost Grant
- **USDA Forest Service:**
 - Wood Innovations Program
 - Community Wood Grant



Alternative Funding Opportunities (updated 4/2022)

- Grid Alternatives
- The Nature Conservancy

Discussion: Funding Programs

What are specific barriers that prevent access to federal or alternative opportunities?

Discussion: Funding Programs

How do we leverage federal funding with state capital investments?

(Some) State Grant and Loan Programs at Commerce

- [Weatherization Assistance Program](#)
- [Clean Energy Fund](#)
- [Energy Retrofits for Public Buildings](#)
- [Community Development Block Grants](#)
- [Washington Broadband Office](#)
- Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council has an extensive resource for drinking water and waste water, transportation and other projects!
[Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council \(IACC\) \(wa.gov\)](#)

Questions

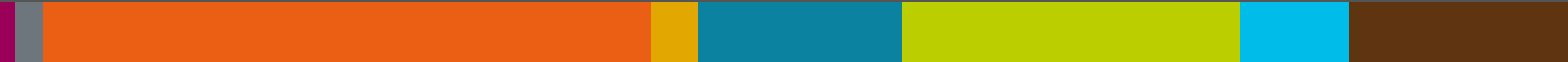


Break

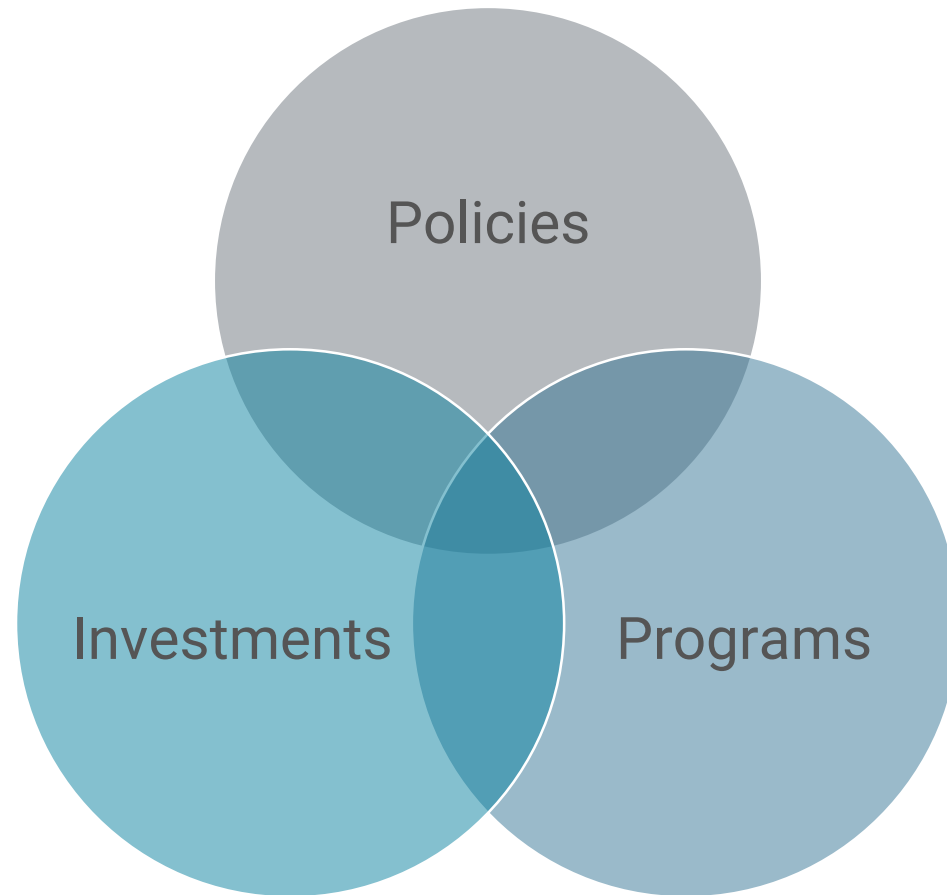
- Break ends at 10:05am



Breakout Activity



What Suite of Policy Mechanisms and Actions Dismantle Barriers



Breakout Activity

- **Exercise #1: Which policy mechanisms and actions would dismantle barriers to addressing priority areas?**
- **Things to consider in this exercise:**
 - **What types of programs, actions and policies do rural communities need that they don't have?**
 - **Is there a particular program type or policy mechanism that supports the unique needs of rural communities?**

Barriers to Meeting the Needs of Rural Communities

Score (importance x urgency)	Barrier
1.0	Lack of technical expertise for developing clean energy (projects)
1.1	Aging or inadequate rural infrastructure
1.5	Lack of programs tailored for rural use cases
1.7	Small government and rural community staffing capacity
1.8	Cultural and language barriers
2.1	Lack of workforce in rural areas to build projects
2.5	Aging or inadequate infrastructure
2.6	Access to information
2.9	Lack of access to capital
3.1	Rural utility role, mission and capacity
4.9	Global supply chain/COVID impacts
5.1	Rural communities attitudes (perceived or real)
6.0	Climate policy goals not considering forestry and agriculture industry needs

Guiding Principles

1. Prioritize sustainable, climate smart models for the agriculture and forestry sector
2. Prioritize universal broadband and digital equity
3. Bolster rural technical expertise and capacity building
4. Expand opportunities to finance resilient clean energy projects and infrastructure improvements
5. Prioritize Tribal energy sovereignty

Exercise

- What are the top goals/guiding principles for rural clean energy?
What is unique about a rural clean energy strategy?
 - View starter list
 - Each group of 2-3 people will edit one of those principles
- What is missing from this list?
- Brainstorm other goals/principles

Next Steps and Reminders

- **Commerce:**
 - Distribute summary of meeting notes and handout
 - Post presentation slides and recordings to website
 - Share homework and draft materials
- **Work Group:**
 - Share public comment form with communities

Thank you!

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Appendix



Resources

- [Spark Northwest](#)
- [Philanthropy Northwest – Rural Funders Series](#)
- [Aspen Institute – Thrive Rural](#)
- [EPA AgStar](#)