



Technical Advisory Group for RCW 19.405.120

Background

Washington's 100% clean electricity standard, the Clean Energy Transformation Act ([SB 5166, 2019](#)) enshrines four principle values into Washington electricity policy. These four principles are best described with the acronym:

CARE: Clean, affordable, reliable, equitable

A key component of the last letter of the acronym, i.e. "equitable," is [RCW 19.405.120](#). This section requires utilities to make assistance funds available to low-income households and demonstrate progress in providing energy assistance. Utilities are required to submit data to the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) to assess progress under subsections (3) and (4) of the statute. Subsection (6) requires Commerce to submit a biennial report to the Legislature, summarizing the agency's findings and evaluating the effectiveness of additional measures to improve low-income energy assistance. Commerce aims to submit the first report to the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2023.

Purpose

The technical advisory group provides leadership and guidance to Commerce in the implementation of [RCW 19.405.120](#). This includes providing constructive input on both the data collection, aggregation, and analysis conducted under subsections three and four, and policy evaluation under subsection six.

Advisory group meetings are to be constructive and collaborative with members being dedicated to advancing the Legislature's intent: to demonstrate progress toward making energy assistance funds available to low-income households consistent with the policies identified in Sec. 120.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Review 2019 data collected under subsection three and identify data gaps and areas in need of improvement
- Advise Commerce on data aggregation under subsection 3(a)

- Develop and improve the data tool used for aggregating data under subsection 3(b) and review and analyze the data from the 2022 survey once it has been collected
- Advise Commerce on data aggregation under subsection 4
- Offer constructive solutions and ideas to promote the usability of aggregated data and data visualization on Commerce's website
- Offer advice and solutions to issues and problems arising in the course of data collection and aggregation
- Develop ideas to address data gaps and other resource needs for future data collection and to promote intent of RCW 19.405.120
- Assist Commerce in the evaluating the effectiveness of additional optimal mechanisms for energy assistance, including but not limited to:
 - Customer rates
 - A low-income specific discount
 - System benefits charges
 - Public and private funds
- Advise Commerce on mechanisms to prioritize energy assistance towards low-income households with a higher energy burden
- Present or co-present ideas at stakeholder workshops

Structure and participation

The advisory group will consist of at least one representatives from the following groups:

- (1) Commerce
- (2) Utilities and Transportation Commission
- (3) Investor Owned Utility
- (4) Public Utility District
- (5) Rural Electric Coop
- (6) Municipal Utility
- (7) Community Action Program
- (8) Low-Income Ratepayer Advocate
- (9) Environmental Advocate

Commerce intends for the advisory group to be a small to encourage interactive discussions among members. Participation is voluntary. Member organizations from the 2019 data advisory and technical assistance group will be asked if they would like to remain on the advisory group.¹

¹ List of 2019 advisory members:

Advisory group members can invite guest speakers subject to need and the agenda of a particular meeting. Advisory members agree to consult with the group prior to confirming guest participation.

Commerce may limit the number members on the committee. Stakeholders not on the committee will have the opportunity to provide input at public meetings.

A complete list of advisory group members will be posted on Energy Assistance webpage once members are selected.

Calendar

The advisory group calendar will be driven by Commerce’s proposed deadline of Jan. 1, 2023, for the biennial report. This means the agency will need to have concluded most of its work by Oct. 1, 2022. Commerce anticipates the advisory group will meet biweekly in the spring to leave enough time for utilities to report data from the biennial survey required under Sec. 120(3)(b) and for Commerce to aggregate the data. The advisory group will meet regularly in the summer and fall to discuss the other portions of Sec. 120.

Meeting locations and logistics

All meetings will be virtual through Zoom.

Agendas

Commerce intends to draft agendas for advisory group meetings. Meeting agendas will be made available to members prior to each meeting.

Timeline of Upcoming Work

The following table lays out both statutory and proposed dates for work provided in RCW 19.405.120. Specific dates and times will be determined using a survey. The proposed timeline below is subject to change. Meetings are expected to be three hours unless otherwise indicated.

April 2022	First advisory group meeting: Introductions, charter, proposed calendar, and review subsection (3) data from 2020
May 2022	Second advisory group meeting: 2022 data survey for subsection (3)(b) and subsection (4) data aggregation results

	<p>Stakeholder webinar: 2022 biennial survey launch (1 hour)</p> <p>Fourth advisory meeting: How to structure subsection (6) conversations (1.5 hour)</p> <p>Stakeholder workshop: 2020 subsection (3) results and solutions for subsection (4) data gaps</p>
June 2022	<p>Utilities begin to submit data for subsection (3)(b)</p> <p>Fifth advisory group meeting: Discussion of additional optimal mechanisms for energy assistance</p> <p>Sixth advisory group meeting: Discussion of mechanisms to prioritize assistance toward low-income households with a higher energy burden</p>
July 2022	<p>Commerce aggregates data for RCW 19.405.120(3)(a)</p> <p>Stakeholder meeting: Subsection (4) aggregation results</p> <p>Seventh advisory group meeting: Draft report outline</p> <p>Stakeholder meeting: Draft report outline</p>
August 2022	<p>Utility data collection ends for subsection (3)(b)</p> <p>Eighth advisory group meeting: Draft report</p> <p>Stakeholder meeting: Draft report</p>
Sept. 2022	<p>Commerce aggregates subsection (3)(b) data</p>

Oct. 2022	Advisory group work concludes Commerce finalizes report
------------------	---

DRAFT