**Technical Advisory Group for RCW 19.405.120**

**Background**

Washington’s 100% clean electricity standard, the Clean Energy Transformation Act ([SB 5166, 2019](http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5116-S2.SL.pdf?q=20210822161309)) 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](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.405.120). This section requires utilities to make assistance funds available to low-income households and demonstrate progress towards providing energy assistance to them. Utilities are required to submit data to the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) to assess progress under subsections three and four of the statute. Subsection six 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 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](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=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 a data dictionary for Sec. 120
* 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]](#footnote-1)

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. 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.

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| --- | --- |
| **May 2022** | **First advisory group meeting on May 2:** Introductions, Review Sec. 120, past data collection efforts, and charter  **Second advisory group meeting on May 3:** Review and redesign of reporting template  **Third advisory group meeting on May 16:** Continue work to clarify categories and terminology for energy assistance reporting  **Fourth advisory meeting:** Subsection 6 evaluation and assessment of mechanisms for assistance (3 hours) |
| **June 2022** | **First stakeholder workshop:** Discussion ofadditional mechanisms for energy assistance and mechanisms to prioritize assistance toward low-income households with a higher energy burden  **Fifth advisory group meeting:** Review data collected under Feb. 1 report (3 hours) |
| **July 2022** | Commerce aggregates data for RCW 19.405.120(3)(a)  **Sixth advisory group meeting:** DOE and utility data dashboard presentations (3 hours)  **Second stakeholder meeting:** Discussion of Feb. 1 reports |
| **August 2022** | **Seventh advisory group meeting:** Review and provide input on Commerce’s draft report outline  **Third stakeholder meeting:** Discussion of Feb. 1 reports, subsection (3)(a) data, and report outline  **Eighth advisory group meeting:** Draft report  **Fourth stakeholder meeting:** Draft report |
| **Sept. 2022** | **Ninth stakeholder meeting:** Finalize report  **Advisory group work concludes** |
| **Oct. 2022** | Commerce finalizes report |

1. List of 2019 advisory members: [↑](#footnote-ref-1)