



**DISCUSSION WORKSHOP**  
**STATEWIDE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DESIGN STUDY**  
**ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM DELIVERY**  
**August 21, 2024, starting at 1 p.m.**  
*Hosted via online webinar, details below*

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**Login information**

- [Meeting link](#) (link)
- Meeting ID: 826 3853 7290
- Passcode: Assistance

**Dial-in information**

- Phone #: +1 253 215 8782
- Find your local number: <https://wastatecommerce.zoom.us/j/82638537290>
- Meeting ID: 826 3853 7290
  - Passcode: 5304802692
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This discussion-based workshop will focus on the type of monthly bill assistance mechanism to be used to assist households, and how funding choices may impact a program's ability to deliver assistance to households and program design. Stakeholders will have four weeks to submit formal written comments following the workshop.

**Background**

The Washington 2023 Operating Budget requires Commerce submit a report to the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2024, with recommendations on a design for a statewide energy assistance program to address the energy burden and provide access to energy assistance for low-income households. Commerce is working with the Legislature and Office of Financial Management to finalize a six-month extension on the report deadline.

These requirements follow the publication of the Department of Commerce's [Low-Income Energy Assistance 2023 Legislative Report](#) required by [RCW 19.405.120](#) (Sec. 120). A key finding from that report was that utility programs statewide serve only a small percentage of low-income households compared to individual statewide programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), that have similar eligibility standards. Commerce is required by the Legislature under Sec. 120

to evaluate additional mechanisms to energy assistance, including adoption of system benefits charge, which could be used to fund a state administered low-income energy assistance program. Commerce found multiple potential benefits to a statewide approach to low-income energy assistance, including, but not limited to:

- Universal access to energy assistance
- Increased program participation
- Improved targeting of assistance to those with the most need
- Protection from potential rate hikes
- Reduced administrative costs
- Reliable funding (with a system benefits charge)

[The Low-Income Energy Assistance 2023 Legislative Report](#) makes no recommendations, and Commerce will not be making a recommendation for the creation of a statewide program in its upcoming study.

The statewide low-income energy assistance program discussed in [the Low-Income Energy Assistance 2023 Legislative Report](#), and that will be explored in Commerce’s upcoming study, is separate and different from the federal block grant program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP offers limited assistance to low-income households and has distinct federal requirements.

#### Agenda

1. Welcome	5 minutes
2. Background and meeting objectives	15 minutes
3. Bill assistance mechanisms	45 minutes
4. Context for funding discussion	15 minutes
5. Break	10 minutes
6. Climate Commitment Act	45 minutes
7. State General Fund	20 minutes
8. System benefits charge	20 minutes
9. Next Steps	5 minutes