



DISCUSSION WORKSHOP
STATEWIDE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DESIGN STUDY
DRAFT REPORT OUTLINE
January 26, 2024, starting at 2 p.m.
Hosted via online webinar, details below

Login information

- [Meeting link](#) (link)
- Meeting ID: 857 0120 0920
- Passcode: Assistance

Dial-in information

- Phone #: +1 253 215 8782
- Find your local number: <https://wastatecommerce.zoom.us/j/kqpkyyITB>
- Meeting ID: 857 0120 0920
 - Passcode: 9959316715
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BACKGROUND

This workshop is Commerce's first workshop on its statewide energy assistance program design study since October of 2023. Commerce will provide an update on what it has heard over the course of seven in-person workshops with local social service providers across Washington and a virtual workshop with low-income service providers

Background

The proviso follows 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. Meeting objectives and process	5 minutes
3. Background	10 minutes
4. Service Providers workshop series	60 minutes
5. Break	5 minutes
6. Draft report outline	30 minutes
7. Next steps	5 minutes