



UTC

Washington Utilities
and Transportation
Commission

U-210595

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UTIL. AND TRANSP.
COMMISSION

Participatory Funding Implementation

June 3, 2022

Docket: U-210595

Agenda

- 9:30 a.m.** Welcome and introductions
- 9:45 a.m.** **Commission Staff presentation of participatory funding implementation plan**
- 10:15 a.m.** Participant Q&A and feedback discussion on Staff implementation plan
- 10:45 a.m.** **Break**
- 11 a.m.** Discussion of Commission public engagement and learning opportunities prioritizing highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations.
- 11:30 a.m.** **Workshop adjourns**



Short intro to the UTC and RCW 80.28.430

The Utilities and Transportation Commission regulates the investor-owned utilities in Washington:

- Avista
- Puget Sound Energy
- Pacific Power
- NW Natural
- Cascade Natural Gas

RCW 80.28.430:

- Statutory authority for energy utilities to provide financial assistance to certain organizations participating in UTC regulatory processes.
- The Commission must approve/reject/modify agreements as well as set certain standards.
- Requires prioritization of vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities.



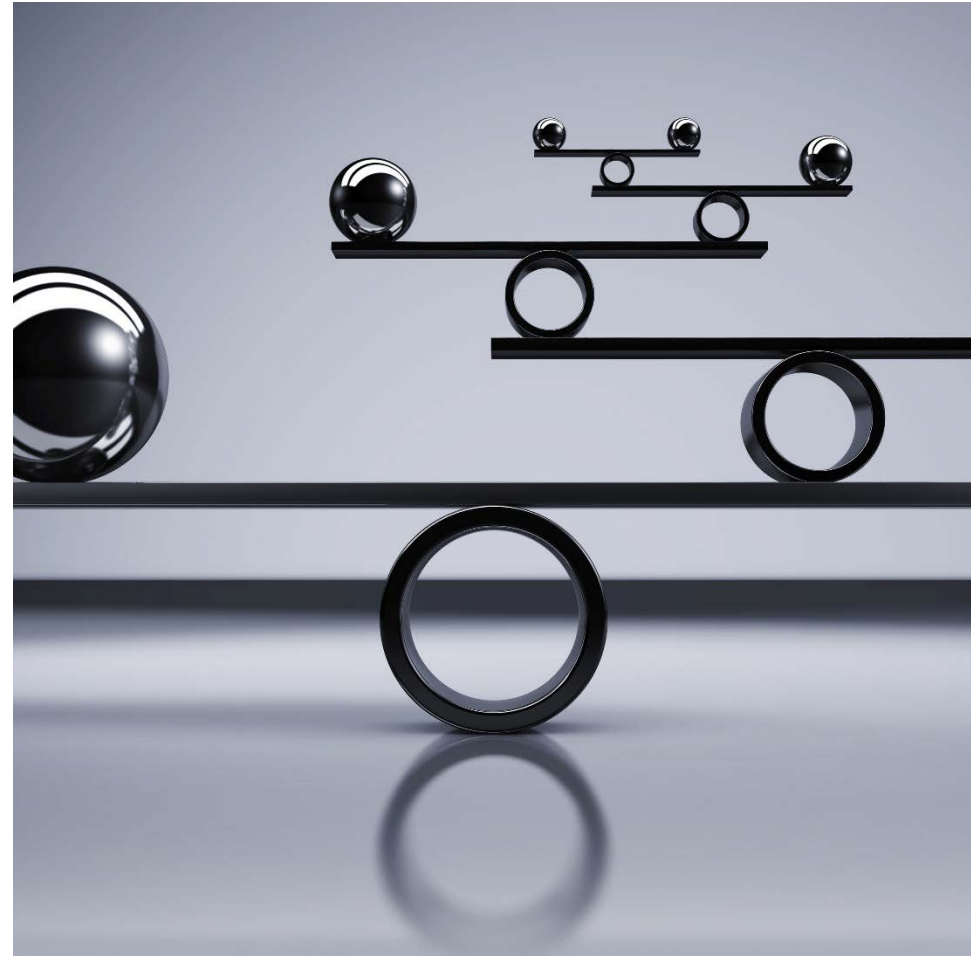
RCW 80.28.430 Implementation Timeline

November 2021 policy statement:

- Funding caps
 - *At least 1/3 reserved for prioritized organizations*
- First year of funding is a learning opportunity
- Continued outreach and engagement with prioritized organizations
- Administrative process outline

February 2022 interim agreement:

- Largely modeled from Oregon agreement with provisions to meet Commission policy statement
- Negotiated between utilities and interested parties
- More detailed administrative processes and timelines for those seeking funding to meet
- Commission approved the agreement with modifications



Workshop Goals, Do's, and Don'ts

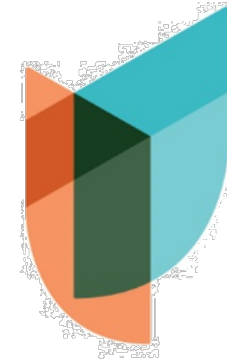
Goals:

- Provide an update and discuss the Commission's plans for implementing Participatory funding, including additional outreach and engagement work.
- Gather feedback on plans and provide a forum to discuss upcoming engagement opportunities.

Webinar presentation instructions:

- ✓ Do try to participate using your computer.
- ✓ Do mute your mics unless you are speaking.
- ✓ Please use raise hand feature to provide comments.
- ✓ Feel free to keep your camera on (or not) to encourage discussion.
- Don't forget this is a public workshop.





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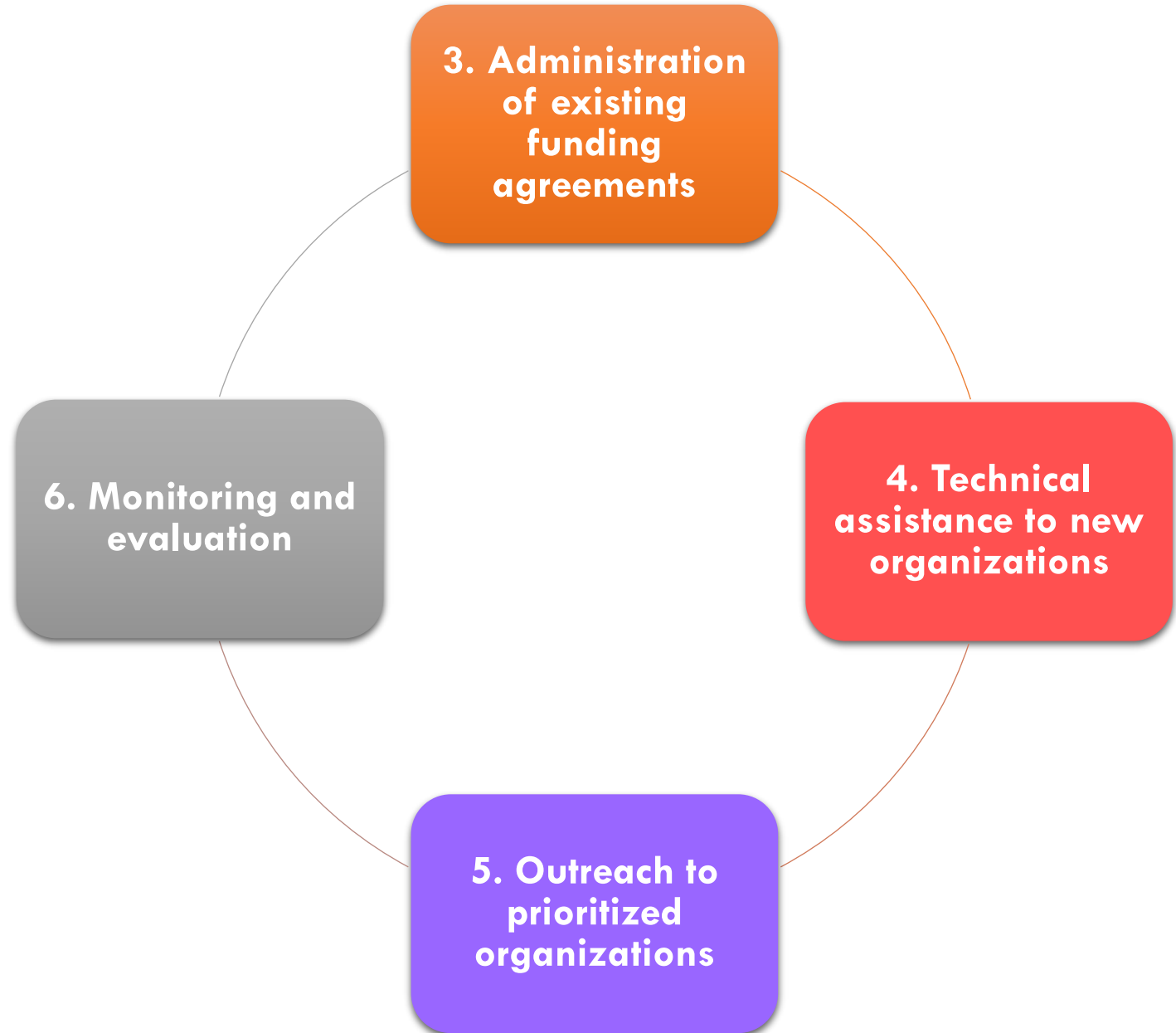
Questions?



Concurrent Phases of Implementation

Phases 1 and 2 are complete:

1. Develop and issue interim funding policy statement guiding initial agreements and program – COMPLETED Nov. 19, 2021
2. Commission review and approval of an interim joint utility-stakeholder participatory funding agreement – COMPLETED Feb. 24, 2022



Phase 3: Administration of Agreements

- Administration takes place during the proceeding for which a participant is requesting funding, as well as the generic policy statement docket (U-210595), and includes review of requests for funding, budgets, and requests for payments.
 - Lead sections: Administrative Law Division/Policy/Commissioners
 - Timing: On-going
 - Opportunities:
 - Customer notice and disconnection fees rulemaking: [U-210800 Customer Notice & Fees Rulemaking](#)
 - Potential use for funding in adjudication of CEIPs
 - Performance-based rate-making docket
 - Rate cases



Phase 4: Technical Assistance

- Includes procedural and issues-based technical assistance:
 - onboarding new organizations
 - providing Commission 101 information, definitions, case summaries, and issue explainers
 - explaining procedural dates and requirements
- Comingles with administration of existing agreements as new parties have questions about UTC work and comingles with outreach work.





Participatory funding for technical assistance

“...The Commission also makes clear that training and education that provides technical assistance to organizations representing highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations about the subjects of utility regulation and Commission proceedings and case law are considered eligible uses for funding.”

– Policy statement, paragraph 52



UTC plans for 2022 technical assistance

- Developing fact sheets and website information with funding program information, including amounts of funding still unallocated for the year
- All questions to ald@utc.wa.gov
- Planning a workshop to introduce the commission and its work as well as the participatory funding program for July.
 - Survey to interested groups about topics to include and date options expected for week of June 6



Phase 5: Outreach to Prioritized Organizations

- Includes the additional work discussed by the commission in its policy statement such as direct outreach to prioritized organizations for policy and procedural feedback on funding program design and to explain existing opportunity
- Comingles with technical assistance as organizations with whom the UTC is engaging have fundamental questions about UTC work

“The Commission acknowledges there is additional work to be done engaging organizations that represent highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations to better understand how to design a participatory funding program that meets and prioritizes their needs as required by the statute.”

— Policy statement,
paragraph 56





Participatory funding for outreach

“...at least for the first year of this program, [participatory funding] may be used for the purposes of conducting outreach and developing awareness of participation opportunities for vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities.”

– Policy statement, paragraph 51



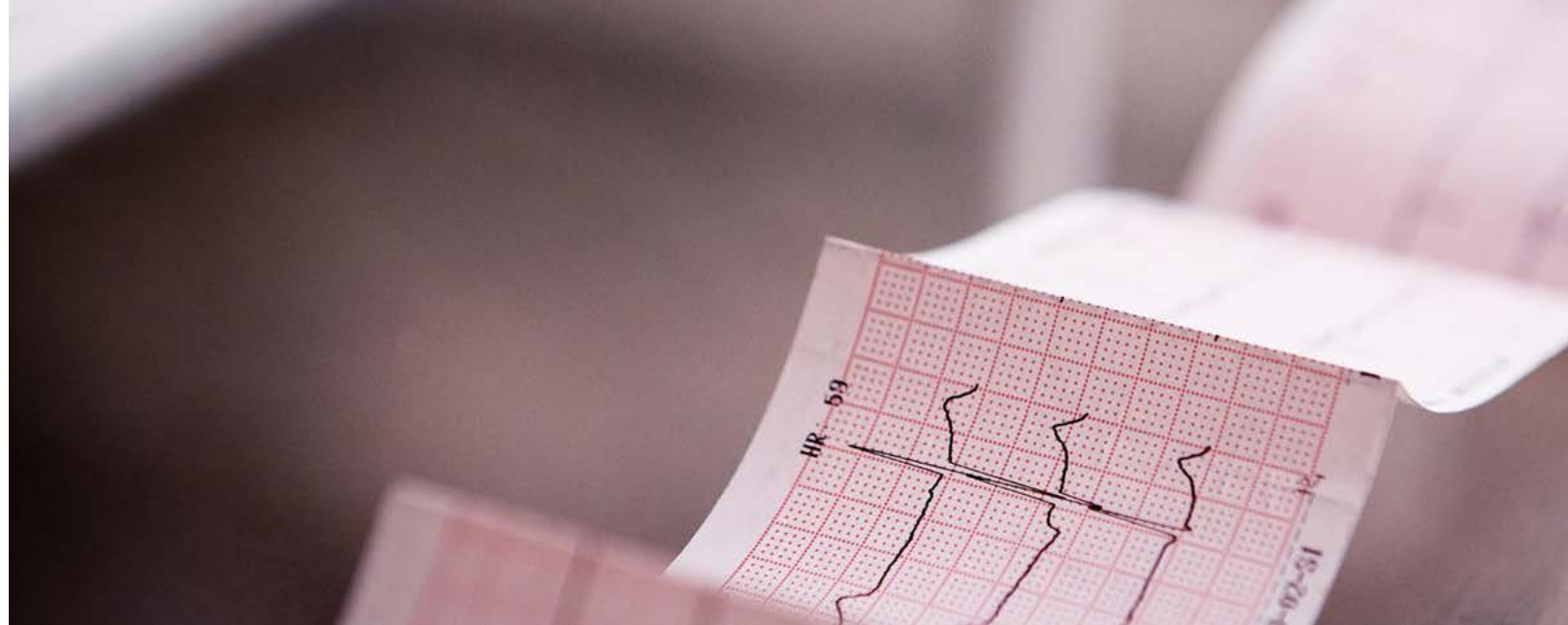
UTC plans for 2022-2023 outreach

- Issuing an RFP this summer to hire a consultant to conduct engagement research. Expecting a report outlining prioritized organizations who would benefit from funding opportunities, barriers to engagement, and recommendations for engagement opportunities. UTC will use report recommendations to strategize additional work.



Phase 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitoring and evaluation of interim policy statement, interim funding agreement, and implementation of funding program to inform additional policy guidance after the first year of implementation



“... The Commission may provide additional guidance after administering these initial funding agreements and gaining more experience and insight into the needs of organizations representing prioritized communities.”

— Policy statement, paragraph 4

“...We will measure the program’s success, in part, by surveying new participants to ensure they have a clear understanding of how our processes work, by the feedback we receive from those participants on whether they have had an effective opportunity to participate in our regulatory proceedings, and by the feedback we receive from prioritized communities about whether they feel heard and represented in our proceedings.”

— Policy statement, paragraph 15



Technical Assistance

Training and administrative assistance for organizations that represent vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities to better equip these organizations to navigate energy utility regulation and UTC proceedings.

Example: Orientation workshops providing information about the UTC's role in the Clean Energy Transformation Act, explaining how organizations can participate.

Outreach

Engagement with prioritized organizations to both inform diverse, non-utility groups about the availability of funding and to gather their input regarding additional program design to create an equitable mechanism for participatory funding.

Example: Focus groups to gather input about barriers community organizations face accessing funding and resources to participate in UTC proceedings.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Gathering learning across program areas, including administration and outreach, to inform potential future policy guidance that guides the participatory funding program.

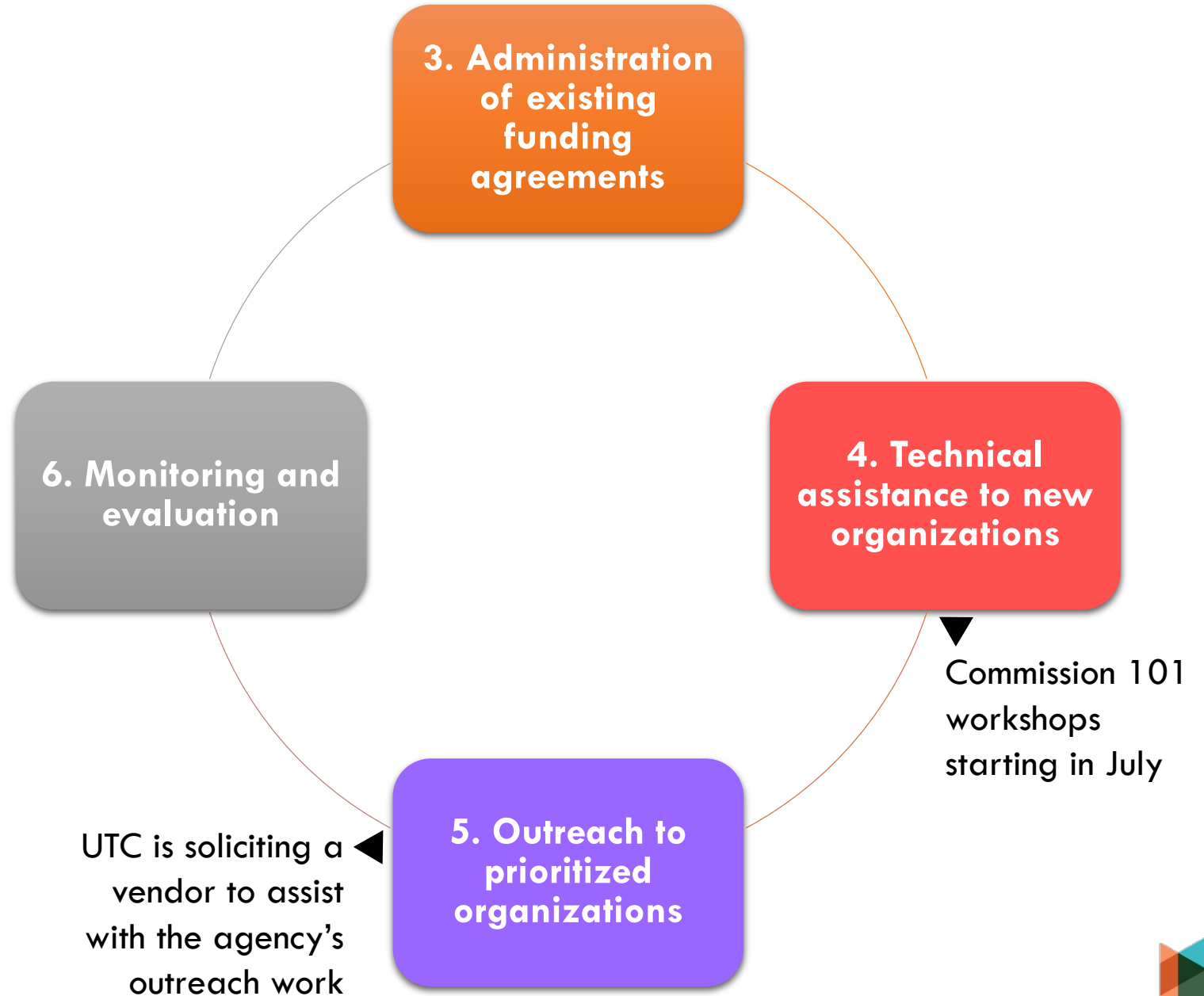
Example: Survey to program participants about accessibility of the program.



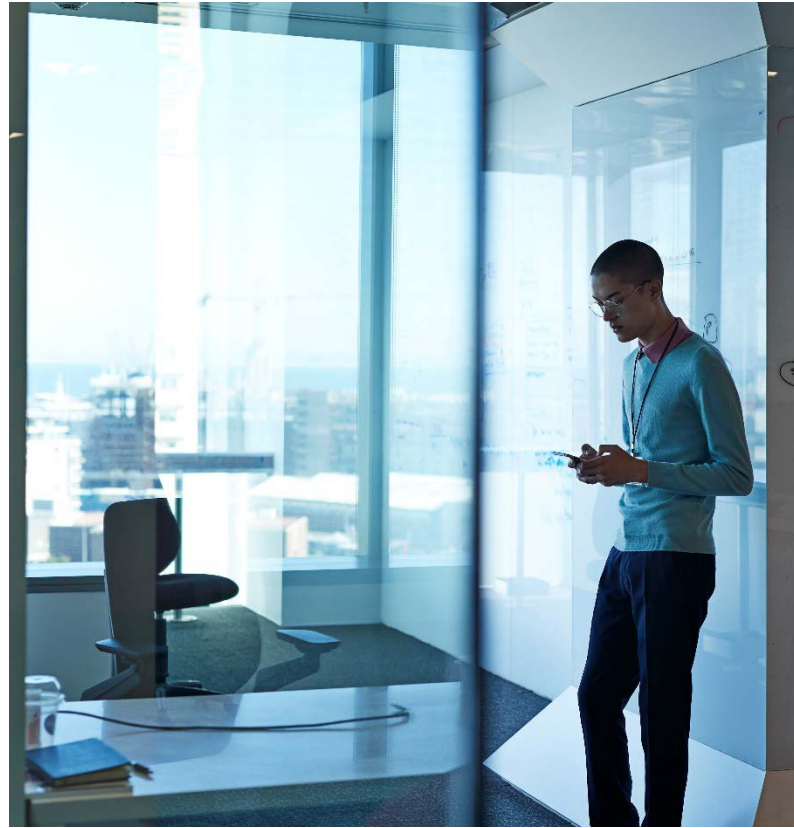
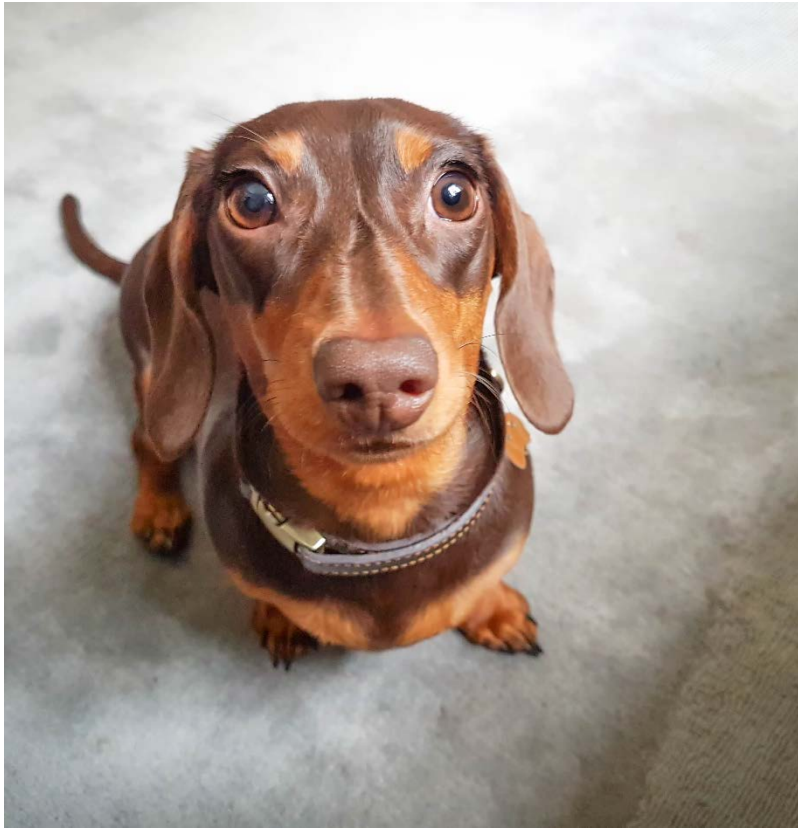
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Questions or feedback?



15-minute stretch break!

Upcoming engagement work

Solicitation of engagement vendor

- Work to focus on engagement with organizations representing vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities
- Survey of organizations who would benefit from funding; recs for Commission engagement
- Timeline: RFP posted this summer



Questions or feedback?

Upcoming engagement work



Commission 101 workshop

- Look for survey of dates, times, and topics next week
- Survey will be open for one week
- Any suggested topics now?
- Any suggested organizations to add to mailing list to receive survey?
- Interest in panel discussion?



Questions or feedback?

Next Steps and Adjourn



RCW 19.405.020 defines vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities

"Vulnerable populations"

Communities that experience a disproportionate cumulative risk from environmental burdens due to: Adverse socioeconomic factors, including unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, access to food and health care, and linguistic isolation; and sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.

"Highly impacted community"

A community designated by the department of health based on the cumulative impact analysis required by RCW 19.405.140 or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially on "Indian country," as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151.