

Puget Sound Energy

Narrative portion of the response to question #4: "Outreach activities in April 2021, both a narrative and the specific number of contacts the company made by phone, mail, email, etc."

OUTREACH TYPE	DESCRIPTION/COMMENTS
<p>MARKETING OUTREACH</p>	<p>Communication and outreach actions</p> <p>PSE has created a comprehensive communications and outreach plan to reach out to customers with past due balances regarding the availability of energy assistance and the resumption of disconnections. PSE has launched an advertising and public relations campaign that reaches two audience segments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All of PSE’s service territory, including stakeholders and local elected officials for broad awareness (referred to as “Securing the trust”); and 2. Specific customer segments most likely to benefit from the assistance (referred to as “Serving the need”) <p>The plan continues to focus on generating broad awareness of PSE’s efforts to help its customers during the COVID-19 pandemic across PSE’s service territory, with primary goals of being a proactive community partner in getting customers back on track with their energy bills and providing customers who need support with their energy bills the information they need to get assistance.</p> <p>PSE is using a broad array of communications and outreach tactics, including paid social media ads, digital banner ads, NPR sponsorship, and media partnerships with KOMO (English) and KUNS (Spanish). The June issue of “The Voice” (a monthly publication sent to our customers by mail or email depending on their preference,) is dedicated to education and awareness about PSE’s assistance programs, as well as the end of the disconnect moratorium, and it reaches an audience of 1.45 million customers. Email marketing campaigns continue, as well as updates to the website and app, in-language videos on social media, and digital banner ads that target audiences by zip code. Additionally, PSE can segment messages by a variety of languages, including Spanish. PSE will have radio sponsorships run across 20+ radio stations in the Puget Sound region, and ads will run adjacent to weather and traffic reports in English and Spanish. Broadcast radio reaches a broader audience and these ads will run from May through July.</p> <p>In addition to the Spanish channels where PSE is advertising, PSE will purchase ad space in the following publications, including the Seattle Chinese Post, NW Asian Weekly, The Seattle Medium, The Facts, South Seattle Emerald, Converge Media and Tulalip News.</p> <p>In addition to the marketing and outreach efforts described above, PSE staff will engage directly in the community through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations at virtual events and meetings, including city and county council meetings with an emphasis on cities where PSE provides natural gas; and • Partnership toolkit distribution to existing and new community partners, elected officials, government agencies, and other community validators. <p>In order to reach our target audiences of customers that qualify for CACAP 2, PSE will engage the following individuals and organizations to circulate program information to drive applicant numbers:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local elected officials • Government agency communications staff, including public health, Office of Economic Development, transportation, etc. • Other utilities • Other organizations providing COVID assistance • Fire, police, and emergency management public information officers (PIOs) • Community organizations • Tribal leaders and Tribal personnel <p>To ensure PSE is reaching “in need” communities, PSE will engage with community non-profits throughout its service territory to communicate energy assistance information to their clients, targeting areas with the highest concentration of income qualified and language challenged customers. PSE will be providing written communications to these agencies in English, Spanish, Hindi, Mandarin and Vietnamese to distribute to their clients who may need assistance.</p>
<p>OUTBOUND CALLING</p>	<p>On April 13, 2021, PSE launched a proactive campaign targeting specific past due customers. PSE Customer Care Representatives began making outbound phone calls to both residential and commercial customers PSE believes may be new to the collections process/new to being past due on their energy bill during the pandemic. These individualized agent calls were made specifically to customers who had not been past due in the 12 months prior to the pandemic but as of April 13th were at least 60+ days past due.</p> <p>The goal of these on-going phone calls is to ensure that customers who may be new to being behind on their energy bill, are aware of all the available options they may be eligible for, and to increase participation in PSE's long-term payment plans. Of the over 3,000 calls attempted by Customer Care Representatives, roughly 30% of customers took some type of action on their account. This includes engaging in payment arrangements, making a payment or partial payment, or having some type of lock placed on the customer's account to allow additional time to seek help (e.g. seeking energy assistance locks).</p> <p>PSE is continuing to make outbound phone calls to targeted customers during May 2021 and will evaluate adding additional customer contacts beyond the current target audience.</p>
<p>PAST DUE BALANCES</p>	<p>Throughout the pandemic, PSE has continued to send past due balance notifications/messaging, with <u>modified pandemic verbiage</u> to all applicable customers. These include auto dialers, emails, and direct physical mailers to customers whose accounts are past due for energy services. <u>Please note</u>, the verbiage has been modified to inform customers that PSE <u>"will not be disconnecting customers for non-payment."</u></p> <p>The communications provide information on how much the customer owes, along with information on where they can find options/resources such as payment plans, payment assistance, were/how to make a payment, and contact information for local energy assistance agencies.</p>

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	<p>The same customer may receive multiple types of past due communications depending on how long their balance has been outstanding.</p>
<p>AUTOMATIC CUSTOMER NOTIFICATIONS</p>	<p>PSE sends numerous types of automatic customer notifications (e.g. outage, billing, start service, etc.). Applicable to the disconnection moratorium and customer arrearages, PSE sends out the following types of automatic email/SMS communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DL80 Payment Arrangement Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In late March 2021, PSE began sending automated emails to customers who are at risk of future collections. These emails are sent specifically to customers who historically have a good/satisfactory payment history with PSE, and are currently behind on their balance. These emails provide information on the long term and flexible payment arrangement options PSE has available. • Bill Due Reminder: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSE sends out automatic bill due reminder emails and/or texts to customers who have opted into receiving these notifications. They include information on the amount due, due date, links to view and/or pay the bill, along with links for customer service. These are not specific to customers who are past due, but are available to all customers should they opt into receiving them.