



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

*621 Woodland Square Loop S.E. • Lacey, Washington 98503*  
*P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250*  
*(360) 664-1160 • TTY 1-800-833-6384 or 711*

November 18, 2020

**NOTICE OF WORKSHOP**  
**(Scheduled for December 1, 2020, at 1 p.m.)**

**AND**

**NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS**  
**(Due by December 11, 2020, at 5 p.m.)**

RE: Related to Energy Assistance in the Clean Energy Transformation Act, Docket UE-200629

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Section 12 of the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), codified as RCW 19.405.120, includes provisions regarding energy assistance, or utility programs undertaken to reduce customer energy bills. Section 2 of CETA, codified as RCW 19.405.020, includes four definitions related to energy assistance: low-income, energy burden, energy assistance, and energy assistance need. Of the four definitions, CETA directed the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) and the Washington Department of Commerce (Commerce) to establish levels within the definitions of “low-income” and “energy assistance need.”

The Commission and Commerce received stakeholder input regarding definitions related to energy assistance through their respective CETA rulemakings, including the Commission’s Energy Independence Act (EIA) rulemaking in Docket UE-190652 and the Commission’s Integrated Resource Plan rulemaking in Docket UE-190698, which has been consolidated with the Commission’s Clean Energy Implementation Plan rulemaking in Docket UE-191023. Those definitions, as included in the Commission’s CR-102 for the EIA rulemaking, are as follows:

- “Low-income” means household incomes that do not exceed the higher of eighty percent of area median income or two hundred percent of federal poverty level, adjusted for household size;
- “Energy burden” means the share of annual household income used to pay annual home energy bills [statutory definition];
- “Energy assistance” means a program undertaken by a utility to reduce the household energy burden of its customers.
  - Energy assistance includes, but is not limited to, weatherization, conservation and efficiency services, and monetary assistance, such as a grant program or discounts for lower income households, intended to lower a household's energy burden.
  - Energy assistance may include direct customer ownership in distributed energy resources or other strategies if such strategies achieve a reduction in energy burden for the customer above other available conservation and demand-side measures [statutory definition]; and
- “Energy assistance need” means the amount of assistance necessary to achieve an energy burden equal to six percent for utility customers.

With the energy assistance definitions from Section 2 of CETA substantively established, the Commission has opened a Staff Investigation on energy assistance in Section 12 of CETA in this docket (UE-200629) with the intention of issuing a policy and interpretative statement on energy assistance by early 2021. The Commission received stakeholder input regarding CETA’s energy assistance provisions in response to its Notice and Opportunity to Provide Comment issued in this docket on September 15, 2020.

The upcoming workshop will include an overview of current utility energy assistance programs and a discussion of the requirements in RCW 19.405.120(2) related to programs and funding, demonstrating progress, and prioritizing energy assistance to low-income households with the highest energy burden. The workshop will be structured around stakeholder comments received in response to the September 15, 2020, notice to provide stakeholders the opportunity to supplement previous comments and respond to comments made by other stakeholders. The agenda, as well as specific discussion questions, are provided below.

## **PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS**

This workshop will be virtual. Although interested persons may participate by telephone, participation by computer will make it easier to facilitate the discussion.

**Teams Meeting link:** [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_M2IxNDg1NWMTYzViNi00MDNmLTk3OWQtMjk5NzgZExZDA5%40](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_M2IxNDg1NWMTYzViNi00MDNmLTk3OWQtMjk5NzgZExZDA5%40)

[thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2211d0e217-264e-400a-8ba0-57dcc127d72d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22e087eca4-4cd8-416f-8fc0-53ed60dbc833%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/join/7b22Tid22%3a2211d0e217-264e-400a-8ba0-57dcc127d72d22%2c22Oid22%3a22e087eca4-4cd8-416f-8fc0-53ed60dbc83322%7d)

**Join by phone:** (253) 372-2181

**Conference ID:** 396 931 752#

This virtual workshop will be conducted using Microsoft Teams. The Commission recommends that participants try to access the Teams link or call-in number in advance of the workshop to troubleshoot any technology issues. Instructions for connecting to the Teams link or joining by phone are included in Attachment A to this Notice. Please ensure your computer microphone and/or your phone are muted when participating in the meeting unless you are speaking. If joining by computer, please keep your camera off except when speaking. Ensuring all participants are muted and off camera will improve technology functionality and provide a less distracting environment for those speaking. If you experience technical difficulties in joining the workshop or at any point during the workshop, please contact Ryan Smith at (360) 915-3646 or [ryan.smith@utc.wa.gov](mailto:ryan.smith@utc.wa.gov).

To assist members of the public who may not be familiar with our processes, the Commission has included an informational guide as Attachment B to this Notice to help participants better understand how to interact with the Commission during this virtual workshop.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The Commission is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to participants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for this workshop, please contact the Commission at least one business day prior to the workshop by calling 1-360-664-1132 or by sending an email to [human\\_resources@utc.wa.gov](mailto:human_resources@utc.wa.gov). For TTY service, please call the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1 or 1-800-833-6384.

If you wish to participate and need an interpreter, one will be provided at no cost to you. If you need an interpreter, please contact the Commission at least one business day prior to the workshop by Paige Doyle at (360) 664-1140 or [paige.doyle@utc.wa.gov](mailto:paige.doyle@utc.wa.gov).

This workshop will be recorded, and the recording will be available on the Commission's website in Docket UE-200629 on the following business day.

If you wish to receive further information related to this docket you may (1) call the Commission's Records Center at (360) 664-1234 or, (2) e-mail the Commission at [records@utc.wa.gov](mailto:records@utc.wa.gov) and ask to be included on the mailing list for Docket UE-200629.

## AGENDA

- 1:00 Welcome and overview of statute and Commission decisions to-date
- 1:30 Utility presentations on current programs
- 2:10 “Programs and funding” discussion
- 2:40 Break
- 3:00 “Demonstrate progress” discussion
- 3:40 “Prioritization” discussion
- 4:20 Scoping of Commission guidance: What guidance does the Commission need to provide by when?
- 4:40 Open comment
- 4:50 Next steps

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As mentioned above, the workshop will largely be structured around the comments received in response to the September 15, 2020, notice issued in Docket UE-200629. To facilitate a robust conversation, Commission Staff recommends that stakeholders review the comments of other stakeholders in advance of the workshop. Additionally, Commission Staff provides the following discussion questions in advance to allow stakeholders time to consider their responses.

- RCW 19.405.120(2) includes three distinct requirements regarding (1) programs and funding, (2) demonstrating progress, and (3) prioritizing low-income households with the highest energy burden. Which of the principles provided by stakeholders in response to the September 15, 2020, notice should the Commission include in its guidance? Are there any other principles that were not addressed, but should be included?
- Regardless of the total number of utility programs, how many programs must be available to all low-income households (i.e., household incomes the greater of 80 percent AMI or 200 percent FPL, adjusted for household size)?
- How should the Commission interpret “short-term and sustained energy burden reduction” in RCW 19.405.120(4)(a)(i)?
- How might energy assistance programs be structured to prioritize low-income households that have the highest energy burden without delaying provision of assistance to applicants?

- For each of the three requirements (*i.e.*, programs and funding, demonstrating process, and prioritizing assistance), when and in what type of proceeding should the Commission determine compliance for investor-owned utilities?
- Are there any topics not covered in the September 15, 2020, notice or the workshop discussion questions that you think the Commission should consider as it develops guidance on energy assistance as that term is used in CETA?

### WRITTEN COMMENTS

Stakeholders will have the opportunity to file written comments to supplement their remarks at the workshop. Written comments are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 11, 2020.

If you have questions about this workshop or opportunity to provide written comments, you may contact Commission policy advisor Kendra White at (360) 701-5363 or [kendra.white@utc.wa.gov](mailto:kendra.white@utc.wa.gov).

MARK L. JOHNSON  
Executive Director and Secretary