

# Equity Advisory Group Meeting

January 20, 2026  
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.



# Welcome and Introductions

Ishmael Nuñez, Uncommon Bridges  
Facilitator



# Safety Moment

Em Piro

Energy Equity Program Manager - Community Partnerships



# Safety Moment: After the Floods

## Know Your Resources

**Washington State Resources:**  
[FloodRecovery.WA.gov](https://FloodRecovery.WA.gov)

**Contact Your County**

## Prevention & Preparation

**Take pictures once a year** of your residence

**Familiarize yourself** with flood insurance you have or are eligible for and the details

**Document everything** - lists of damaged items, keep all receipts for cleanup supplies and temp housing

**Know your evacuation routes** and have a family communication plan

## Long-term Recovery

**Monitor indoor air quality** - persistent musty smells need investigation

**Check structural integrity** - look for new cracks, sagging, or settling



*Image from WA Red Cross*

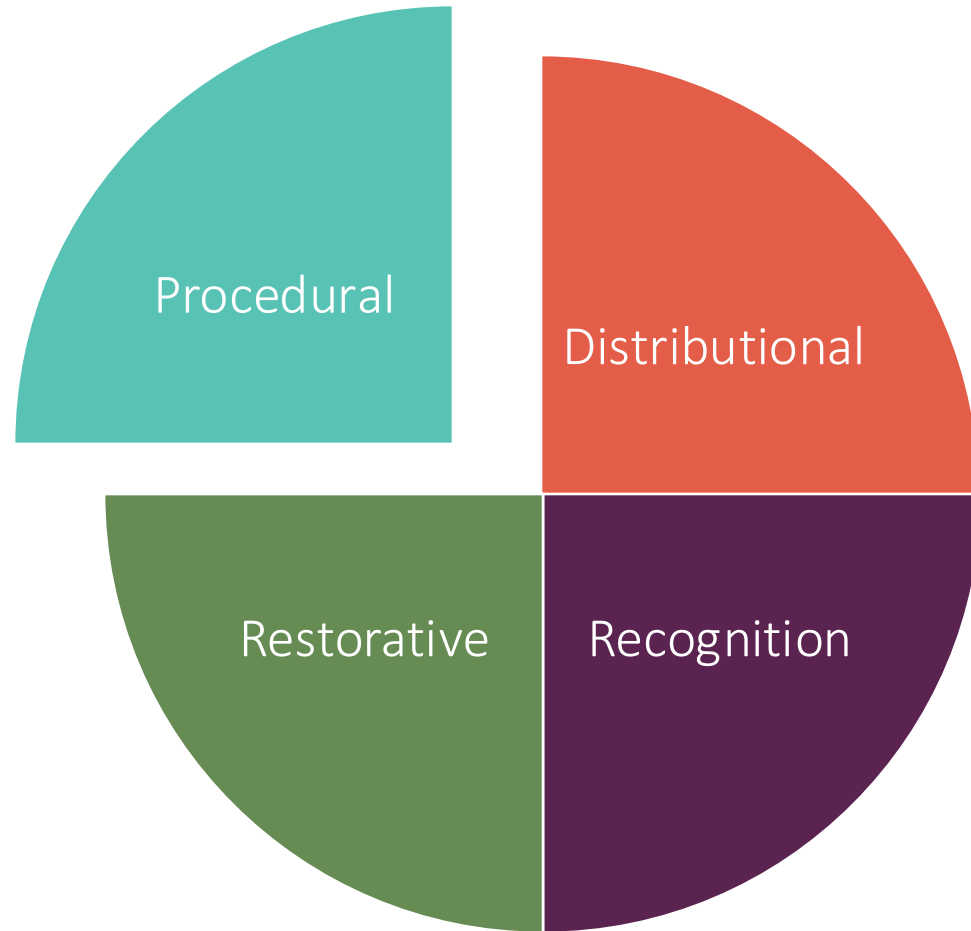
***Recovery is a process - stay vigilant after flooding!***

# Equity Moment

Marco Morales Mendez  
EAG Member



# Tonight's equity focus



# Equity Moment

**FEMA eligibility**  
and its impact on  
**undocumented families**  
in **disaster recovery**

# Equity Strategy in the 2026 General Rate Case

Troy Hutson, Puget Sound Energy  
Director, Energy Equity





# Objective

## *Equity Strategy in a General Rate Case*

For EAG members to  
consider... **the process by  
which EAG priorities are  
incorporated into Energy  
Equity strategy, as reflected  
in PSE's General Rate Case**

### EAG Feedback Level

**Consult**

**With EAG input, we will...**  
affirm and refine how EAG  
contributions shape systems-level  
Energy Equity strategies

# Who are the decision makers?

- PSE is a regulated investor-owned utility
- Utility and Transportation Commission is led by **three Governor-appointed commissioners**, supported by staff
- **Commissioners decide** what PSE can charge customers for electricity and gas, and ensure the utility serves customers safely, fairly and reliably.



Commissioner  
**Milt Doumit**



Chair  
**Brian Rybarik**



Commissioner  
**Ann Rendahl**

# UTC

Washington Utilities  
and Transportation  
Commission

Washington State Office of  
the Attorney General

Energy Facility Site  
Evaluation Council



# What is a General Rate Case (GRC)?

**GRC is a legal proceeding where regulators determine fair costs to customer from most of PSE services.**

- Commission review ensures:
  - Prudency, safety and reliability
- Commission determines if rates are in the **public interest**:
  - fair, just, reasonable, as well as
  - affordable and equitable
- Considers other aspects, such as environmental impacts

## Who participates?

- Administrative Law Judge
- PSE and legal reps
- Commission Staff
- Public Counsel
- Other Approved Intervenors, ex:
  - The Energy Project
  - Joint Environmental Advocates (NW Energy Coalition, Front & Centered, Sierra Club, etc)
  - Alliance of Western Energy Consumers
  - Federal Executive Agencies
  - Nucor, Walmart, Kroger, Microsoft



# How General Rate Cases Work



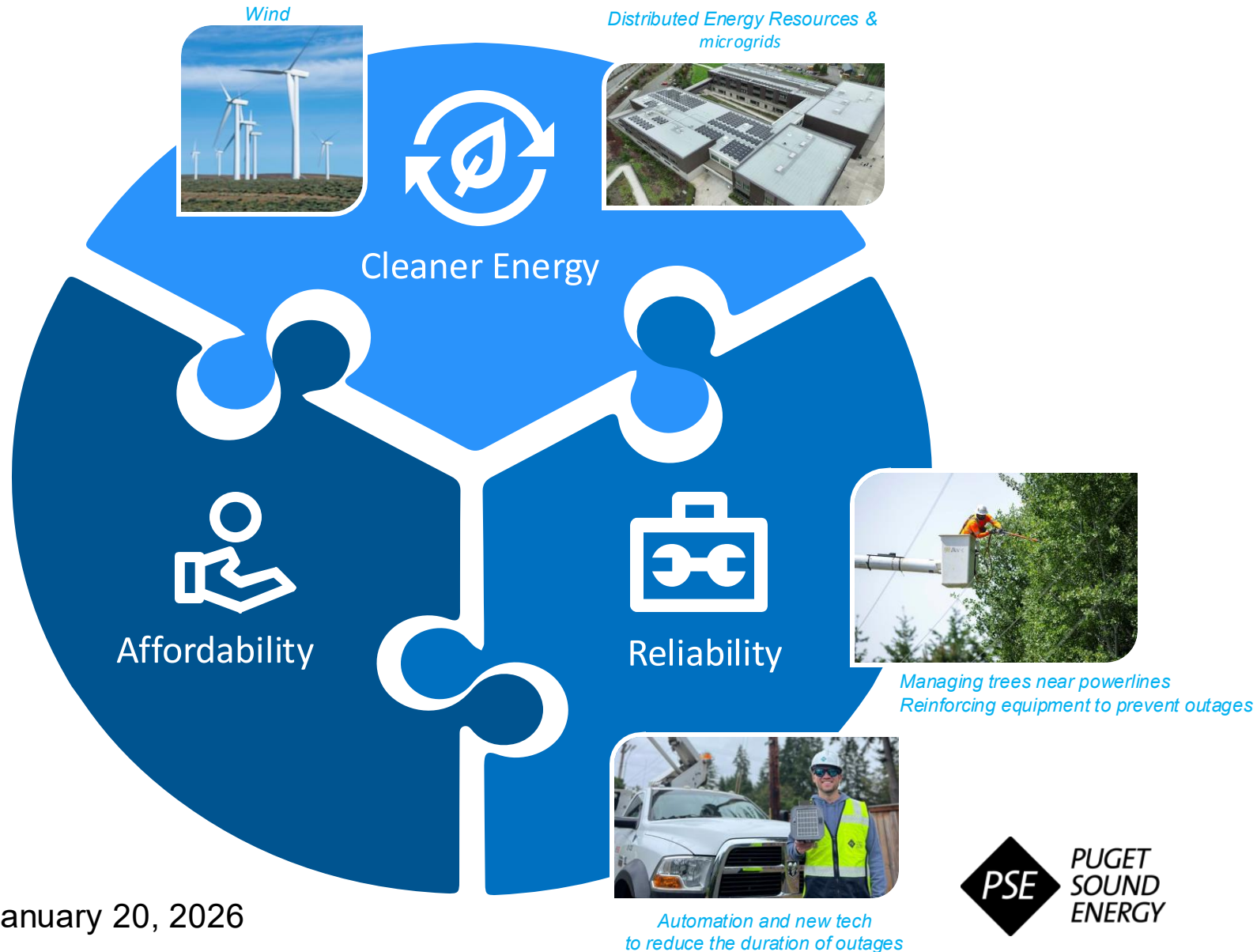
# Balancing Clean Energy, Affordability, and Reliability

## Clean Energy Transformation Act

*“....seek to ensure that **all customers** are benefiting from the transition to a **clean energy** economy, and provide **safeguards** to ensure that the achievement of this policy does not impair the **reliability** of the electricity system or impose **unreasonable costs** on utility customers”*

## PSE’s 2022 GRC Order

*energy justice focuses on ensuring that individuals have access to energy that is **affordable, safe, sustainable***



# Examples of Regulatory Equity Outcomes

## 2022 GRC

- Distributional Equity Analysis (DEA)
- Equity in Corporate Capital Planning Process
- Equity in Delivery System Planning Process
- Affordability Programs: Bill Discount Rate, Arrearage Management Program
- Targeted Electrification Pilot
- Increased low-income program funding
- Time-varying rates pilot – LI bill protection/enable technology

## 2024 GRC

- Low-Income Advisory Group (LIAC) 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Facilitation
- Language Access Plan
- Disconnection Policies Discussion with Advisory Groups
- Gas Depreciation Study
- Targeted Electrification Pilot Phase 2
- Increased low-income program funding
- Time-varying rates pilot – LI bill protection/enable technology

## ISP

*must include an assessment of energy and nonenergy benefits and reductions of burdens to named communities....*

## CEIP

- 30% clean energy benefits to named communities; proportion designated to deepest need customers
- DER “empowerment” engagement pilot with named communities

## CCA

- CCA Decarb Programs for Low-Income and Named Communities
- Elimination of Low-Income CCA burden for Gas customers
- Mitigation of CCA burdens for Electric customers

## Net Energy Metering (NEM)

- Distributional Equity Analysis (DEA) on NEM



# PSE Equity Demographics

◆ ~50% customers are estimated **low income**

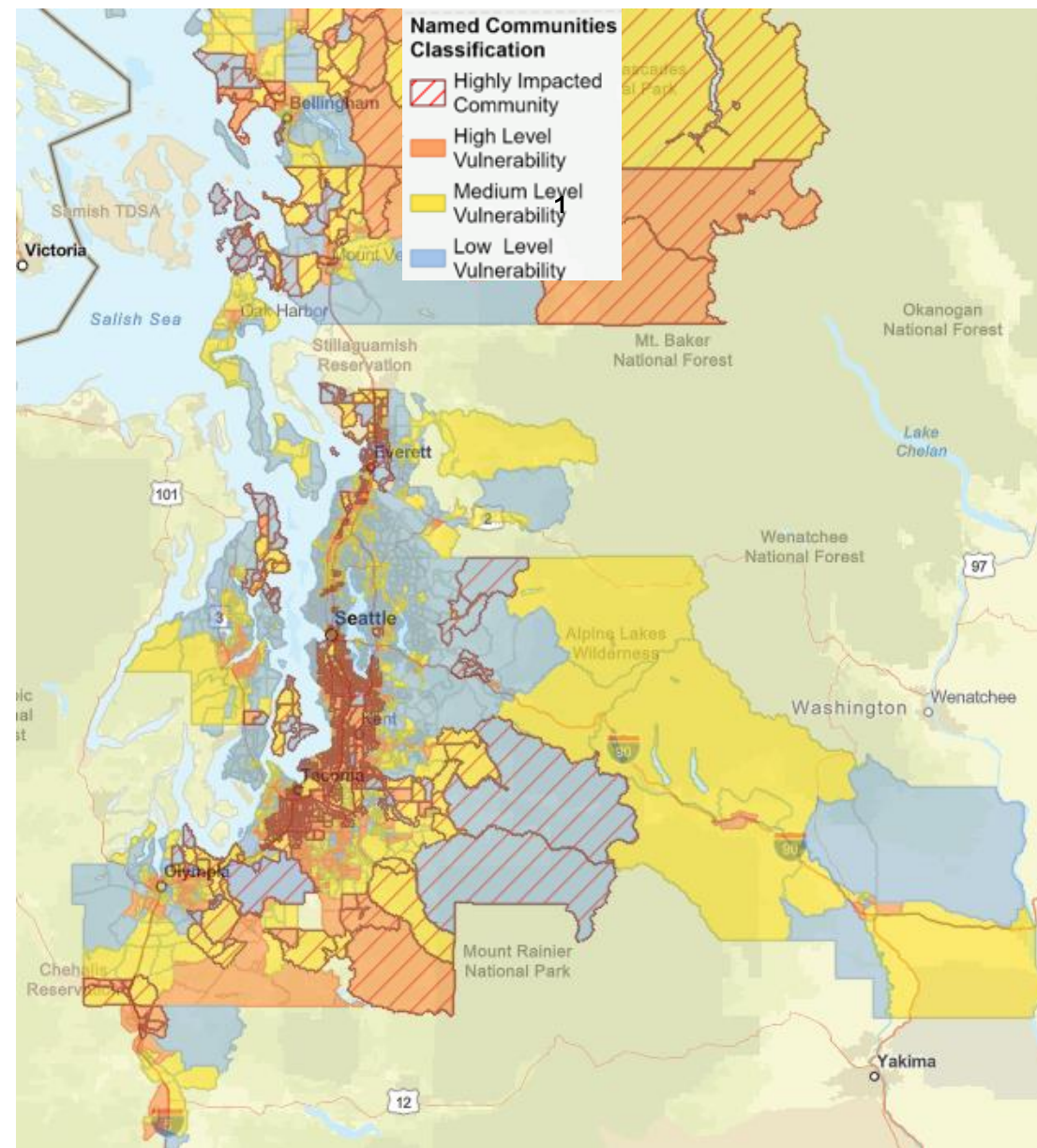
◇ **Low Income:** Generally based on Federal Poverty Level, Area Median Income and household size.

◇ ~37% are **high energy burdened**

▪ **High energy burden:** Annual energy bill is more than 6% of annual household income

◆ ~6% electric customers are **deepest need**

◇ **Deepest Need:** 10% or more energy burdened



<sup>1</sup> Named Communities: comprised of state defined Highly Impacted Communities and high-level Vulnerability  
Source: 2024 Energy Burden Analysis

# GRC Equity Strategy

## *What We've Heard:*

Affordability

Accessibility

Tech-led requirements  
miss on equity

Streamline  
Applications



# GRC Equity Strategy: *Flexible & Pragmatic*

## Affordability

- **Rate Structure**
- Focus Energy Assistance on **Energy Burdened Customers**
  - Improve **accessibility** to affordability programs

## Reliability, Resiliency

# GRC Equity Strategy: *Flexible & Pragmatic*

## Affordability

- **Rate Structure**
- Focus Energy Assistance on **Energy Burdened Customers**
  - Improve **accessibility** to affordability programs

## Reliability, Resiliency

### Adjusted two-tiered rate structure



Lower rates for basic energy use

Higher rates for high energy use



Monthly fixed charge increase for basic system maintenance costs



### *Expected impact:*

- Lower bills for **46%** of **high energy burden** customers
- Greatest improvements in **Named Communities**

# GRC Equity Strategy: *Flexible & Pragmatic*

## Affordability

- **Rate Structure**
- Focus Energy Assistance on **Energy Burdened Customers**
  - Improve **accessibility** to affordability programs

## Reliability, Resiliency

**Individual Benefits →**  
**Community Benefits**

# GRC Equity Strategy: *Flexible & Pragmatic*

## Affordability

- Rate Structure
- Focus Energy Assistance on **Energy Burdened Customers**
  - Improve **accessibility** to affordability programs

## Reliability, Resiliency

## Individual Benefits → Community Benefits

### Key Changes

Programs benefitting **individuals** who can **afford** to participate



**Community-Wide** projects that benefit entire **neighborhoods**



### Success Measures

- *Percentage benefits to named communities*
- *Reliability*
- *Community impact report*

# GRC Equity Strategy: *Flexible & Pragmatic*

## Affordability

- Rate Structure
- Focus Energy Assistance on **Energy Burdened Customers**
  - Improve **accessibility** to affordability programs

## Reliability, Resiliency

## Individual Benefits → Community Benefits

### Current:

Customers sign up and pay for their own solar panels, batteries, etc

### "Consumer-Led"



### Additional:

Utility invests in community-benefitting projects while removing financial barriers for lower-income communities

### "Utility-Led"



*Ensure clean energy benefits reach all communities, not just those who can afford it*

# Consult

## Reactions:

Is the process by which EAG priorities flow into Energy Equity strategy creating effective opportunities for systems-scale equitable changes?

## Questions or comments

on the Equity Strategy,  
and how we came to this point?

## Other thoughts?

# Year in Review, Year Ahead

Ishmael Nuñez & Ariam Ford, AICP, Uncommon Bridges  
EAG Co-Facilitators



# Year in Review

Equity Advisory Group





# 2025 Year in Review

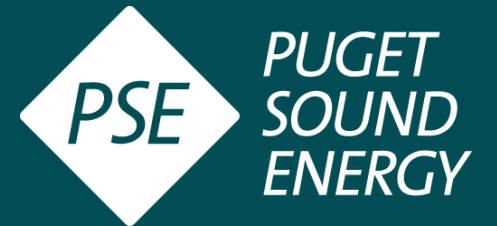
## 55+ hours of engagement!

- Raised the capacity, leadership, and impact of the EAG for systemic change;
- Supporting the shift of equity as a compliance challenge to a strategic opportunity;
- Deepened connections, collaboration, and relationships across the EAG;
- Prepared the foundation for a new era of the EAG.



# The Year Ahead

Equity Advisory Group



# The 4 A's

PSE Equity Advisory Group (EAG)  
Priority Framework

## Affordability

**Goal:** All customers, especially those in named communities, view energy affordability as standard. The cost of energy is no longer a barrier to accessing essential services. By using data and community input to guide decisions and investments, results are fair and equitable for everyone in all communities.

## Accountability

**Goal:** PSE is a reliable partner that demonstrates how commitment to equity can enhance the well-being of customers. Its accountability systems help lessen burdens and give more power to the voices of the community.

## Accessibility

**Goal:** Everyone can access PSE's programs and services with relative ease. No one faces unfair obstacles; operations are culturally responsive and respect the diverse experiences of all communities.

## Advocacy

**Goal:** Through strong partnerships and community involvement, PSE and the EAG work together to create lasting change. They advocate for fair energy policies and make sure that solutions led by the community help shape a clean and equitable energy future.



# 2026 PSE EAG Priority Action Plan

EAG Priority

Accessibility

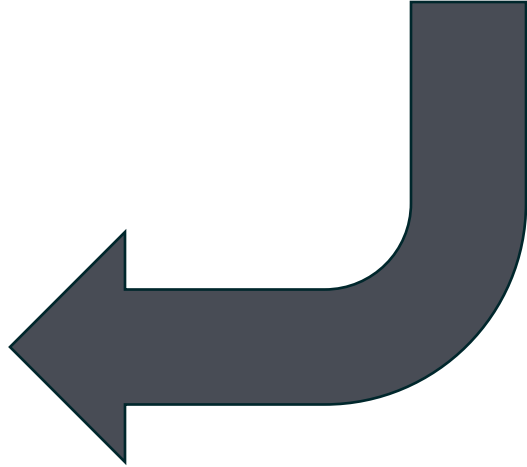
Affordability

Accountability

Advocacy

These are the EAG Priority Areas – The 4 A's.

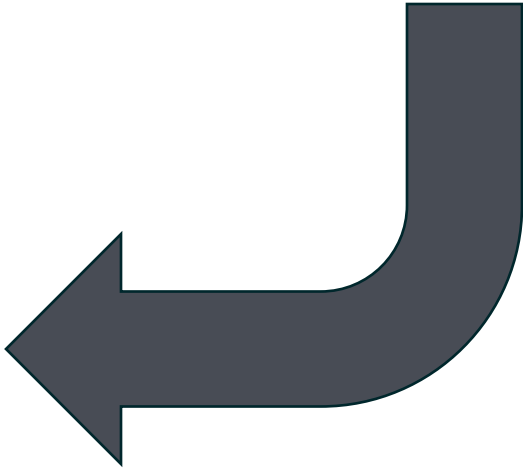
Each "A" describes a goal of the **PSE Equity Advisory Group (EAG)**.



# 2026 PSE EAG Priority Action Plan

EAG Priority	Goal Statement
Accessibility	Everyone can access PSE’s programs and services with relative ease. No one faces unfair obstacles; operations are culturally responsive and respect the diverse experiences of all communities.
Affordability	All customers, especially those in named communities, view energy affordability as standard. The cost of energy is no longer a barrier to accessing essential services. By using data and community input to guide decisions, investments, and results are fair and equitable for everyone in all communities.
Accountability	PSE is a reliable partner that demonstrates how commitment to equity can enhance the well-being of customers. Its accountability systems help lessen burdens and give more power to the voices of the community.
Advocacy	Through strong partnerships and community involvement, PSE and the EAG work together to create lasting change. They advocate for fair energy policies and make sure that solutions led by the community help shape a clean and equitable energy future.

The EAG is working towards these goals to achieve **Systems Level Impacts** identified by members at the Fall 2025 EAG Retreat.



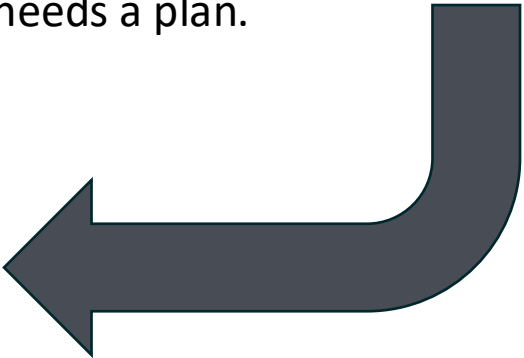
# 2026 PSE EAG Priority Action Plan

EAG Priority	Goal Statement	System Level Impact
Accessibility	Everyone can access PSE’s programs and services with relative ease. No one faces unfair obstacles; operations are culturally responsive and respect the diverse experiences of all communities.	Greater leverage of the existing connection PSE has with named communities and deepest-need customers in PSE investments.
Affordability	All customers, especially those in named communities, view energy affordability as standard. The cost of energy is no longer a barrier to accessing essential services. By using data to guide decisions, investments, and results are fair and equitable for everyone in all communities.	Elimination of high energy burden.
Accountability	PSE is a reliable partner that demonstrates how commitment to equity can enhance the well-being of customers. Its accountability systems help lessen burdens and give more power to the voices of the community.	Quantitative and qualitative results reflect the experiential results of distributional equity efforts.
Advocacy	Through strong partnerships and community involvement, PSE and the EAG work together to create lasting change. They advocate for fair energy policies and make sure that solutions led by the community help shape a clean and equitable energy future.	Policy and practice change in the areas of energy affordability, reliability, sufficiency, and abundance.

Systems level impact means addressing more than isolated symptoms.

A systems level approach seeks **deep-rooted, sustainable transformation by reconfiguring the underlying structures, feedback loops, and interconnected relationships** that govern an entire network.

To achieve their desired system level impacts, the EAG needs a plan.



# 2026 PSE EAG Priority Action Plan

EAG Priority	Goal Statement	System Level Impact	EAG Actions	PSE Alignment	EAG Meeting Topics	Other Topics
Accessibility	Everyone can access PSE’s programs and services with relative ease. No one faces unfair obstacles; operations are culturally responsive and respect the diverse experiences of all communities.	Greater leverage of the existing connection PSE has with named communities and deepest-need customers in PSE investments.	<div><div>2026 EAG Workplan</div><div>Our plan is a collection of activities, actions, and discourse topics that will help reconfigure the underlying structures, feedback loops, and interconnected relationships that govern energy equity in the PSE service area and beyond.</div></div>			
Affordability	All customers, especially those in named communities, view energy affordability as standard. The cost of energy is no longer a barrier to accessing essential services. By using data and community input to guide decisions, investments, and results are fair and equitable for everyone in all communities.	Elimination of high energy burden.				
Accountability	PSE is a reliable partner that demonstrates how commitment to equity can enhance the well-being of customers. Its accountability systems help lessen burdens and give more power to the voices of the community.	Quantitative and qualitative results reflect the experiential results of distributional equity efforts.				
Advocacy	Through strong partnerships and community involvement, PSE and the EAG work together to create lasting change. They advocate for fair energy policies and make sure that solutions led by the community help shape a clean and equitable energy future.	Policy and practice change in the areas of energy affordability, reliability, sufficiency, and abundance.				

# 2026 PSE EAG Priority Action Plan Worksheet

EAG Priority	Goal Statement	System Level Impact	2026 EAG Actions	EAG Audience	2026 EAG Activities
Accessibility	Everyone can access PSE's programs and services with relative ease. No one faces unfair obstacles; operations are culturally responsive and respect the diverse experiences of all communities.	Greater leverage of the existing connection PSE has with named communities and deepest-need customers in PSE investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for and advise on expanding systems that ease enrollment access</li> <li>Provide guidance on systemic obstacles to program participation for customers with diverse needs and circumstances</li> </ul>	PSE Staff, Community-Based Organizations and Other Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 EAG Meetings</li> <li>9 SteerCo Meetings</li> <li>Recruitment &amp; Onboarding</li> <li>1 Overnight Retreat</li> <li>Capacity Building Session – <i>Utilities 101</i></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Notes</u></b></p>
Affordability	All customers, especially those in named communities, view energy affordability as standard. The cost of energy is no longer a barrier to accessing essential services. By using data and community input to guide decisions, investments, and results are fair and equitable for everyone in all communities.	Elimination of high energy burden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for a more equitable rate structure</li> <li>Advocate and provide perspective on finding "hidden" customers who need access but are missed by current identification methods</li> </ul>	The UTC, PSE Staff	
Accountability	PSE is a reliable partner that demonstrates how commitment to equity can enhance the well-being of customers. Its accountability systems help lessen burdens and give more power to the voices of the community.	Quantitative and qualitative results reflect the experiential results of distributional equity efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and advise PSE to build trust and stronger accountability measures</li> <li>Guide and provide perspective on accountability mechanisms that demonstrate how equity commitments translate into community benefits, reflected by community experience</li> </ul>	PSE Staff	
Advocacy	Through strong partnerships and community involvement, PSE and the EAG work together to create lasting change. They advocate for fair energy policies and make sure that solutions led by the community help shape a clean and equitable energy future.	Policy and practice change in the areas of energy affordability, reliability, sufficiency, and abundance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage collaboration and influence to affect rules, laws, and business practices governing energy utilities</li> </ul>	PSE, Tribes, the UTC, and other regulators, legislatures, business communities, and Named Communities	



# 2026 PSE EAG Workplan – Breakout Group *Discussion*

## Planned EAG Activities

- 9 EAG Meetings
- 9 SteerCo Meetings
- 1 Overnight Retreat
- Recruitment & Onboarding
- 1 Capacity Building Session – *Utilities 101*

## Discussion Questions:

- A year from now, as a member of the EAG, **what will you have done that makes you proud?**
- Which **2026 EAG Actions resonate most** with your interests, experience, and network?

# Appendix

# Affordability: PSE's energy assistance program portfolio

PSE

- ◆ Improve accessibility, maximum enrollment in programs, ensure sufficient funding
- ◆ 2025-2026 program year: ~\$250M assistance
- ◆ Mitigation Efforts:
  - ◇ Energy Assistance, energy conservation programs, electrification projects
  - ◇ Reduce barriers to participation
  - ◇ Partnership with state/local agencies

