

Equity Advisory Group Charter

Last updated 10/10/2022

Purpose

The Equity Advisory Group (EAG or “Group”) is established to advise Puget Sound Energy (PSE) on the equitable delivery of benefits and burden reduction related to the planning and implementation of Washington’s clean electricity standard, enacted into law as the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA). It will contribute to the fulfillment of PSE responsibilities related to Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP) and Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) requirements.¹

The EAG was formed to advise PSE on specific areas related to advancing equity in clean electricity planning and implementation with a focus on frontline, vulnerable and highly impacted communities in PSE’s service area.

The EAG:

- Provides advice and guidance to PSE related to implementation of the Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP) and other equity-related matters.
- Supports cooperation and communication between PSE and their community networks.
- Offers recommendations for PSE program improvement with a focus on equity.
- Advises PSE staff on economic development opportunities in the community.
- Assists the CEIP program in setting priorities, including participating in ongoing planning activities.
- Facilitates third-party endorsements, introductions to community organizations, and attending meetings when appropriate.
- The EAG serves as a conduit to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities within PSE’s service territory to ensure the CEIP specifically addresses clean energy benefits for named communities.

EAG Guiding Principles

The EAG will be founded on the principles of openness, transparency, communication, and accountability to its members. Transparency requires dialogue and participation in a collaborative process. While group members have primary responsibility for the work of the EAG, its meetings are open to the public for observation and public comment.

The EAG will work to address the principles of equity embedded in assuring accessibility, affordability, and accountability.

¹ The provisions of the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) and the regulations supporting the CEIP process provide additional guidance on roles and definitions. For rules guiding the CEIP public participation process, including the Equity Advisory Group, refer to Washington Administrative Code 480-100-655 <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=480-100-655>

The Inaugural EAG, in partnership with PSE, created CEIP implementation guiding principles during the fall of 2021. On December 13, 2021, the EAG adopted/approved the Guiding Principles. See **Attachment A**.

PSE Commitments

In addition to the Guiding Principles, PSE will adhere to the following commitments:

- Commit to the principle that those who are most impacted by climate change should play an active role in addressing equitable solutions to climate change.
- Recognize the privilege and power PSE holds and actively seek to create an equitable and inclusive environment.
- Respect Tribal sovereignty and use the appropriate channels with tribal governments and customers.
- Recognize that an equitable process is integral to developing equitable energy solutions.
- Be clear about the level of decision-making power the EAG and community groups will have throughout the process to not misalign expectations or misinform.
- Work to understand the historical burdens on and environmental harms to low-income communities and BIPOC communities in order to create more equitable systems moving forward.
- Learn alongside the EAG and commit to an ongoing and iterative learning process.
- Be accountable to EAG recommendations by explaining how EAG feedback was used or was not used.

EAG Commitments

EAG members commit to:

- Participate in facilitated discussions about PSE's electric energy resource planning, programs, and investments to ensure energy efforts are accessible, affordable, and accountable.
- Work collaboratively with PSE on equitable energy outcomes for customers.
- Provide advice, experience, and perspectives on social, economic, racial, tribal, and environmental equity, and assist in identifying best practices for improving and expanding equity to inform how PSE develops metrics and measures performance.
- Recommend best practices and actively support community outreach planning and engagement.
- Commit to ongoing education and training on clean electricity and equity.
- Be available to complete surveys, attend ad hoc/executive meetings, and one-on-one calls with facilitation team.
- Other duties as assigned.

EAG Membership, Terms of Service, and Organizational Structure

The EAG will consist of a minimum of 11 members who reside and/or work throughout PSE's electric and combined service area². Diversity of geographic representation throughout PSE's service area will be actively encouraged and managed during recruitment and selection processes. The vision for the Group is a diverse group of individuals with connections to the communities we serve, including those communities at the frontline of climate change (e.g., highly impacted communities, BIPOC, and other vulnerable populations). To see organizational structure, please refer to the bylaws.

Group Conduct

It will be important that EAG members adhere to a code of conduct designed to promote a transparent, open and candid exchange of ideas and concerns. The EAG will adhere to the following guidelines for conduct during meetings:

- Listen to and appreciate the diversity of views and opinions.
- Actively participate in the group (i.e., keep camera on during virtual meetings).
- Behave constructively and courteously towards all participants.
- Attend all meetings in a timely manner.
- Respect the role of the facilitator to guide the group process.
- Silence electronic devices.

Disagreement and differences of opinion are acknowledged, explored, understood, and appreciated. Should conflict arise, it will be addressed with the guidance of the EAG facilitator. Recurring inappropriate individual behavior may result in an individual being respectfully excused from the EAG.

Roles and Responsibilities

Below is a summary of the roles and responsibilities associated with the EAG.

Puget Sound Energy

PSE is the convener of the EAG. PSE will ensure that the EAG meets the requirements of the CEIP and other guidance from the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC). PSE provides the services of independent third-party neutral facilitators to support this project. PSE will help appoint future EAG members and will approve the EAG's annual work plan and any subgroup's plan. PSE is also responsible for ensuring the accessibility accommodations listed below.

² Reference: https://www.pse.com/-/media/PDFs/1213_ServiceAreaMap_web.pdf?modified=20200922215317

The Equity Advisory Group

The EAG will provide advice to the PSE Clean Energy Strategy Team on specific areas related to advancing clean electricity planning and its impact on vulnerable and highly impacted communities and customers (see the “Purpose” section for more details). EAG members may suggest agenda topics to the facilitator. The EAG will work with PSE on an annual work plan. EAG members from established organizations may designate one alternate to represent the organization in the event the primary participant cannot attend.

Meeting Facilitator(s)

Meeting facilitators neutrally and impartially support all participants, maintain the integrity of the process, and facilitate communication about the process among participants and other interested parties. The facilitator will work collaboratively with the project team to prepare process designs, meeting agendas, pre-work materials and final EAG products. Private conversations between an EAG participant and the facilitator will be considered confidential unless otherwise identified. Any written communications are considered public records and may be subject to public disclosure.

Observers/Members of the Public

Per the CEIP rules, EAG meetings are open to the public and non-members, who will be known as observers. Observers are welcome to attend and contribute to meetings through comments submitted in written form or during the prescribed portion of the agenda dedicated to public comment. Observer participation is facilitated by making the meeting schedule and joining details publicly available.

Observers must respect the need for the EAG to reach conclusion in its discussions and may not participate in any polling or voting. EAG meetings are typically public meetings, unless in Executive Session or discussing non-CEIP topics.

Accessibility

To make EAG meetings accessible to EAG members, PSE will offer the following:

- Provide language interpretation if needed.
- Provide assistive technology to EAG members with disabilities, or provide other accommodations as needed (e.g. large-size print documents, documents formatted for screen readers, etc.).
- Choose Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible venues if meetings are held in person.
- Choose transit-accessible venues if meetings are held in person.
- Choose virtual meeting platforms with call-in options to be mindful of internet and data limitations.

Tribal Participation

PSE enthusiastically encourages tribal communities and tribal members within PSE's service area to participate in the EAG. PSE's commitment to open and respectful communication with Tribes as sovereign governments is not dependent on participation in the EAG.

Charter Adoption and Charter Amendments

This Charter for the EAG is considered a living document and as such, a work in progress. The adoption of the inaugural EAG charter was achieved through a facilitated discussion and required a two-thirds vote for adoption.

The EAG Charter may be amended consistent with the terms and processes agreed to by PSE and the Group. Typically, adjustments to the Charter are considered to support any significant changes proposed for conducting the business of the Group. The facilitator will work with PSE and the EAG to periodically evaluate if adjustments to the Charter and Operational Agreements are warranted.

Charter adopted March 21, 2022

Charter amended October 10, 2022

Attachment A – Guiding Principles for Implementation (from Chapter 8 in the CEIP)

As we work to create a new clean energy future and consider the urgent need to address climate change, we must do so in a way that ensures all our customers, especially those who shoulder an outsized share of the climate burden, have a voice in and benefit from the transition to clean energy. In listening to and learning from our new Equity Advisory Group, guiding principles arose. PSE will use these principles to help guide CEIP implementation.

PSE and the Equity Advisory Group met multiple times and worked together to develop the following guiding implementation principles to help ensure accessibility, accountability, and affordability to accelerate equity in the clean electricity transition.³

Overarching principles

- Equity requires we ensure all customers benefit from clean electricity through an intentional effort to engage and advance the interests of vulnerable communities.
- Vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate burden of environmental risk and have historically faced barriers to clean electricity benefits, particularly low-income, senior, immigrant and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.⁴
- In this work, we seek to increase equity in electricity for vulnerable communities by addressing accessibility, affordability, and accountability during the clean electricity transition and beyond.

Accessibility principles

- **Increase community participation and sense of ownership in the clean electricity transition** by broadening customer awareness, education, and understanding of clean electricity technology and benefits.
- **Meet people where they are using education and outreach strategies that remove barriers and are intentional, multidimensional, flexible, and continuous.** Educational materials must be simple, accessible, visually engaging, and culturally, generationally, and linguistically relevant using conventional and emerging technologies.

³ These are living principles, and PSE and the EAG may adjust these further during implementation.

⁴ Our understanding of vulnerable communities is consistent with Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act WAC 480-100-605 definitions for highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations, and we will continually update our understanding of these communities as we work to broaden and deepen our relationships with our customers.

Accessibility principles continued:

- **Create a reciprocal process to build community capacity** by strengthening and expanding our relationships and sharing knowledge and resources with non-traditional organizations. This creates benefits for vulnerable communities such as job creation, training, recruitment, small business opportunities, supplier diversity, and community economic development.

Affordability principles

- **Create, evaluate, and continuously improve programs that increase vulnerable communities' ability to afford the resources they need** while providing additional opportunities for renters, multi-family residents, small businesses, and low-income households to participate.
- **Factor the unique socioeconomic considerations of vulnerable communities into program design** to advance the interests of these communities.

Accountability principles

- **Design programs that produce the outcomes desired by vulnerable communities** by creating an iterative process that prioritizes input from these communities and explains how we used their ideas.
- **Commit to a future that reduces or eliminates harmful impacts to vulnerable communities by continually** working together to understand historic, systemic, and environmental burdens and addressing those harms through program design, implementation, and reporting.
- **Consistently review and reflect upon practices that could potentially harm vulnerable communities** during and beyond the planning and implementation stages of the clean electricity transition.
- **Diligently and transparently measure, track, refine, and communicate results-driven metrics** for vulnerable communities, including customer benefit indicators, clean electricity costs, and delivery on clean electricity targets and programs.

During 2022 and beyond, PSE will continue to engage with our customers, especially those in highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations, in accordance with the Public Participation Plan in [Appendix C](#). PSE will also continue to engage with customers, advisory groups, stakeholders, and tribal governments on these issues as part of the public participation process.