



Clean Energy Implementation Plan

Public Participation Plan

Draft Equity Advisory Group Charter

Equity Advisory Group

2023 Charter

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Introduction

Washington’s Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), passed by legislature in 2019 requires utilities to ensure an equitable distribution of energy benefits and a reduction of energy burdens on vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities.

Avista Utilities (Avista or “Company”) is forming an Equity Advisory Group (EAG or “Group”) that will inform the development of the Company’s Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP) to meet regulatory requirements of CETA, as well as advise and provide guidance on other company activities.



Background

On May 7, 2019 Governor Jay Inslee signed into law Senate Bill 5116, or CETA, which commits Washington to an electricity supply free of greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. To meet this standard, utilities will need to replace coal-based resources with renewable power sources. The law includes provisions to protect customers with special attention for those who are economically disadvantaged and those most impacted by climate change and environmental pollution. Utilities have new requirements to provide energy assistance to low income customers, while also tailoring programs to meet the needs of marginalized populations and households with high energy burdens.

The legislation also requires utilities to use a framework that enables the facilitation of public participation and oversight while working to meet reduction goals. Specifically, the law requires utilities to convene an equity advisory group per WAC 480-100-655.

WAC 480-100-655(1)(b)

A utility must maintain and regularly engage an external equity advisory group to advise the utility on equity issues including, but not limited to, vulnerable population designation, equity customer benefit indicator development, data support and development, and recommended approaches for the utility's compliance with WAC 480-100-610 (4)(c)(i). The utility must encourage and include the participation of environmental justice and public health advocates, tribes, and representatives from highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations in addition to other relevant groups

The formation of Avista’s EAG provides a forum for interested parties to engage with the Company in meaningful dialogues to ensure that a clean energy future does not disproportionately impact marginalized population groups and communities that tend to experience undue challenges pertaining to energy as well as other environmental, health and economic impacts.

Purpose

Avista's Equity Advisory Group will provide consultation for various endeavors across the Company to ensure that all customers are benefiting from the transition to clean energy through the equitable distribution of energy and nonenergy benefits and reduced energy burdens to vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities.

Initially, the group will be responsible for providing review, input, and feedback on the following topics as they relate to Avista's current and future Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP).

Vulnerable Population Designation – Washington State Department of Health's (DOH) Cumulative Impact Analysis identifies highly impacted communities within Avista's service territory. The EAG will provide additional insights into these communities, as well as identifying other communities and populations that may not have been identified in the impact analysis.

Equity Indicator Development – The EAG will integrate equity considerations into the development of customer benefit indicators (CBI) and measurements for the impacted populations and include them in energy planning and decision making. This work is critical for ensuring that all customers benefit from the transition to clean energy through the equitable distribution of energy and nonenergy benefits and reduction of burdens.

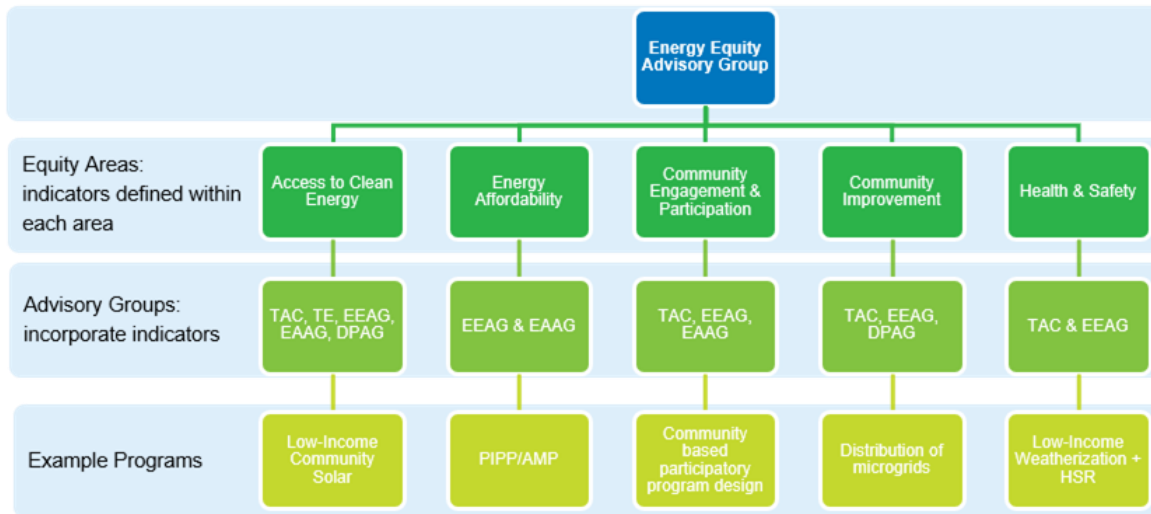
Data Support and Development – The Group will assist in reviewing and identifying data needed to inform the development and analysis of equity indicators and vulnerable population designation.

Recommended Approaches for Equitable Distribution of Benefits – The EAG may be called upon to inform and advise on the Company's energy equity priorities and other Company projects as needed. This may include providing feedback on Avista's products and services, service resiliency objectives, validating if strategy and tactics are appropriate for implementation and, most importantly, share objective comments on the activities such as the Company's Electrification Transportation Initiative.

Ultimately, the Group will provide guidance and support activities to incorporate equity considerations into the Company's future Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), with significant emphasis on the inaugural – and future – Clean Energy Implementation Plans. To guarantee that the benefits of clean energy transformation efforts are accessible and affordable, that burdens are reduced and mitigated, and that the Company is held accountable for these equity aspects, the EAG will:

- Highlight and mitigate barriers to customer participation
- Help the Company develop understanding of equity issues

Avista has a variety of existing advisory groups for initiatives related to its Integrated Resource Plan, Energy Efficiency, Energy Assistance, Transportation Electrification, and Distribution Planning. The following chart illustrates how the EAG will inform the various Company advisory groups and their initiatives.



Acronym	Advisory Group Purpose
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee – advisory group to the Integrated Resource Plan process – roadmap for how Avista will meet customers energy needs 20 years from now; revised every two years.
EEAG	Energy Efficiency Advisory Group – advisory group to the energy efficiency implementation department that offers rebates for efficiency improvements to homes and businesses.
TE	Transportation Electrification Stakeholder Group – incorporation of electric vehicles and related infrastructure to the energy grid
EAAG	Energy Assistance Advisory Group – advisory group for bill assistance programs
DPAG	Distribution Planning Advisory Group

Goals

The goals for the EAG include the support of Avista’s CEIP, conditions related to the CEIP, and overseeing 500k in the Named Communities Investment Fund (NCIF). The group also discusses CBIs that are utilized to ensure that Avista’s efforts are making progress in reducing burdens and ensuring the benefits of clean energy are experienced by all customers equitably.

This charter provides an overview of the EAG purpose and goals, as well as Group and meeting construct. To help with the completion of a Charter a preliminary consultative group comprised of community representatives determined the essential Group concepts such as membership requirements, appropriate meeting schedules (i.e., daytime, evenings or weekends) and compensation, and any other factors that may help to provide an adequate foundation for the EAG.

Additionally, the EAG group provides recommendations for engaging with populations designated as impacted and/or marginalized to recruit for EAG membership and public participation opportunities.

With the Equity Advisory Group in place, conversations will continue in determining the indicators and weighting factors that will be used to confirm the Company is advancing its work in an equitable manner towards a cleaner energy future. The Group also help identify the vulnerable population determinates based on the preliminary analytical work conducted by Avista and the DOH Cumulative Impact Analysis and associated map.

Group Composition and Structure

In accordance with *WAC 480 100 655(1)(b)* the Equity Advisory Group should include participants from the areas of:

- Environmental Justice;
- Public Health Advocates;
- Tribes;
- Representatives from highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations, that may include seniors, veterans, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), low-income, and individuals living with disability;
- Urban and rural representation; and
- Additional individuals/organizations that may be identified by the Group members.

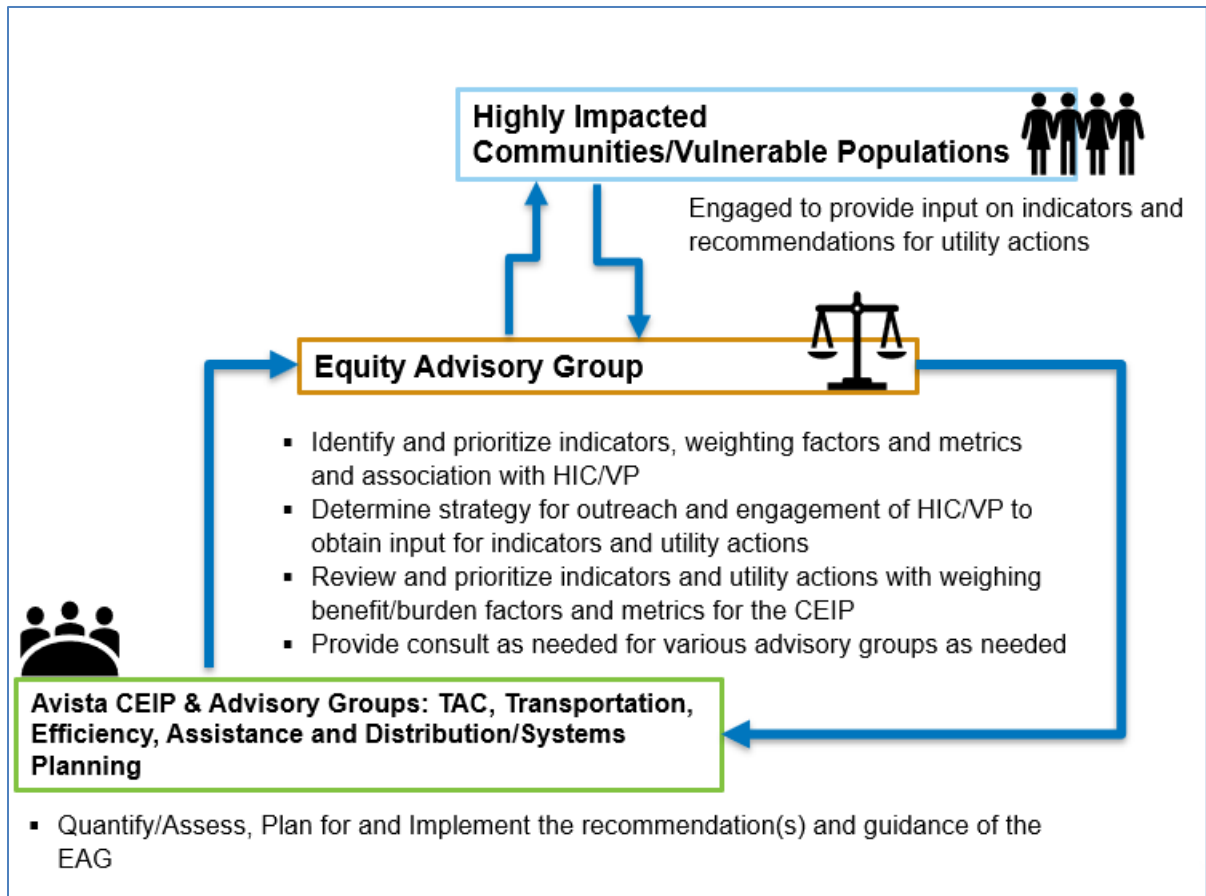
The EAG includes members who provide “lived experience” and expertise and have the potential to receive the benefit of the Company’s efforts relating to compliance with CETA.

To ensure that the benefits to clean energy transformation are accessible and affordable, the energy burdens are reduced and mitigated, and the Company is accountable for these equity aspects, the EAG will:

- Highlight and develop ways to mitigate barriers to customer participation;
- Help the Company develop better understanding and incorporation of equity issues; and,
- Shape the processes and construct for the EAG

Information obtained from the EAG in these areas will be shared and discussed with the Company’s other existing advisory groups to disseminate appropriate strategies to mitigate barriers to customer participation and to ensure adequate representation from highly impacted communities or vulnerable populations are included in all advisory groups.

The chart below provides an illustration of the activities the EAG will undertake and how their consult will inform the Company’s activities and advisory groups.



Member Recruitment

The Company is committed to obtaining membership that reflects diverse representation of its customer base with emphasis on those who have been marginalized and/or adversely affected by energy generation and delivery.

Membership in the EAG is defined as any interested person who can actively consult on equity concerns related to the strategic planning, resource coordination, and management of the Company's clean energy initiatives.

Interested individuals are invited to complete a **Member Interest Form** that will provide a tool for considering candidates for the EAG.

Meetings

Meetings will be conducted in a virtual setting until the Company resumes standard, in-person, business practices or if EAG members would like to meet in-person.

Meetings will be facilitated by Avista staff or its contracted EAG facilitator.

Meetings are open to all customers, including EAG members, related Avista staff, and additional guests. The 2023 meeting schedule, topics, and meeting times can be found on Avista’s clean energy website located at: <https://www.myavista.com/about-us/washingtons-clean-energy-future>.

Presentations

All members of the EAG will help identify projects and initiatives that should be shared by presentation to the Group.

Presentations will be available to members in advance of the meeting (3 days as required per WAC 480-100-655 (g)).

Meeting and Group Activity Archive

Meeting notes will be taken and shared with members. Meeting notes, recordings, and presentations will be available on the Company’s website.

2023 Meeting Schedule

The chart below includes tentative topics to be reviewed and discussed at each meeting.

Tentative EAG Schedule & Topics 2023

Date	Agenda Items
January 18 & 20, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named Communities Investment Fund • Condition #10 - Named Communities Specific Action • Public Participation
February 15 & 17, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named Communities Investment Fun Project Prioritization
March 15 & 17, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named Communities Investment Fund • Spokane Tribe Energy Partnership • Public Participation
April 19 & 21, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition #38 – Two CBI’s/5 Subsets in Named Communities • Equity Refresher
May 17 & 19, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfire Mitigation Plan and Outreach
June 21 & 23, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition #23 – Joint Advocate Customer Benefit Indicators • Named Communities Investment Fund
July 19 & 21, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spokane Tribe Energy Partnership • Condition #10 - Named Communities Specific Action
August 23 & 25, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Participation Update • Condition #24 – Indoor Air Quality Metric
September 20 & 22, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Bill Discount Program Overview

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEIP Biennial Report Filing
October 18 & 20, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named Communities Investment Fund • Regulatory Discussion – How Rates are Calculated
November 15 & 17, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 EAG Structure • EV Transportation Program Update
December 13 & 15, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tentative

Member Compensation

Members who express need will be compensated \$90 for their participation in each EAG session. Members can opt to attend both sessions each month, but will only be compensated for one session each month.

For in-person meetings, if they occur, reimbursement for travel and transportation expenses will be provided for travel that is beyond 10 miles of the meeting location.

Meeting Norms: Guidance for Group Participation

1. Members are encouraged to actively participate in discussions
2. Each member will be provided time to speak
3. Healthy and civil debate is encouraged
4. Members should be open to new ideas and concepts
5. Members are respectful of differing opinions
6. Collectively the group should strive to align varying options (e.g. identify shared goals for different perspectives)

Decision Model

Should the group discussion result in need for a decision, the decision will be made by consensus.

The Gradients of Agreement will be utilized, combined with collaborative dialogue to gauge the level of support for a proposal to ensure each member has had the opportunity to express ideas and better understand what is important to each member. The solution should then have broad level of support and will enhance the commitment and success of the resulting decision.

Gradients of Agreement: Better Vocabulary

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Whole-hearted Endorsement	Agreement with a Minor Point of Contention	Support with Reservations	Abstain	More Discussion Needed	Don't Like but Will Support	Serious Disagreement	Veto
"I really like it"	"Not perfect, but it's good enough"	"I can live with it."	"This issue does not affect me."	"I don't understand the issues well enough yet."	"It's not great but I don't want to hold up the group"	"I am not on board with this – don't count on me."	"I block this proposal."

If all the responses from the group members are 1, 2, 3, or 4, consensus is achieved, and the group can proceed.

If most of the group answers 1 to 4, and one or more member answers 5, then the initiative will move forward with a minority report written by those members who voted 5.

If less than 60% of the EAG votes 1 to 4, the initiative will go back to the Group for further consideration.

Roles and Responsibilities

EAG Members

This is an active advisory group that will consist of participants from community-based, public health, government, and social service organizations, along with individuals with relevant experiences who will provide a consultation to assure the needs of their particular area or interests are considered as it relates to potential benefits or detriments that a clean energy future may bring to their community.

The EAG is expected to provide a voice for marginalized customers and will assist in the development of the inputs to be considered for future energy resource planning processes.

Company Representatives

The company's lead staff along with a contracted EAG facilitator will facilitate regularly occurring EAG meetings with an internal group of Avista representatives who will be updated on the EAG's activities and progress. This group will provide oversight to assure the group's activities are aligned with other company activities and initiatives, resources are leveraged and the recommendations of the EAG are distributed to the related advisory group or company program or project.

Representation for the company's internal group includes:

- Executive Sponsor: Latisha Hill
- Lead Staff: Tamara Bradley
- Avista Advisors:
 - Rates & Regulatory: Shawn Bonfield, Amanda Ghering
 - IRP Manager: James Gall
 - CEIP Manager: Kelly Dengel
 - Avista's Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Strategy: Kristine Meyer
 - Communication: Annie Gannon
- Related company initiatives:
 - Biennial Conservation Plan: Meghan Pinch
 - Affordability: Nicole Hydzik
 - Solar: Stephanie Meyers
 - Transportation Electrification: Rendall Farley

Lead Staff Responsibilities

1. Lead EAG Meetings
2. Coordinate all meeting support activity (i.e. schedule meetings, provide agenda and meeting materials to members)
3. Document meeting notes and action items
4. Send out meeting notes, action items and ensure follow-up of action items
5. Serve as company liaison for all EAG activities

Resources

For the development of this document the following resources were used:

1. Avista's Economic Vitality Charter, dated 11/20/2020
2. Spokane Regional Emergency and Disaster Healthcare Coalition: Core Member Advisory Group Charter, dated: 4/1//2019
3. Justice in 100 Metrics: Tools for Measuring Energy Equity
4. WUTC Draft Area Metrics and Examples
5. Spokane City's Sustainability Action Subcommittee: Overview