



COVID-19 Workshop #1 – Questions

Please be prepared to discuss your responses to the questions below at Workshop #1 on Tuesday, June 30 from 1-5 p.m. The agenda and meeting format details will be provided soon.

If you would like to submit written comments, please do so by 8 a.m. Monday, June 29 to shelly-ann.maye@state.or.us.

Questions for All Participants

1. What obstacles have customers identified when dealing with utility bill arrearages? How are those obstacles unique for different customers, such as individuals without bank accounts, low-income and other vulnerable populations, and urban vs. rural customers, among others?
2. What opportunities and resources are available, or could be made available to assist customers with their utility costs, or to assist them with utility programs? (Including voluntary assistance programs as well as increased programmatic and assistance funding; also including Energy Trust).
3. What recommendations do you have to address past due bills? This could include debt forgiveness, not adding interest payments, multi-year payment plans, deferral of debt payments, and rate discounts, among others.
4. When should the suspension of utility disconnections, late payment notices, late fee assessments, and other temporary COVID-related measures end? What information should be considered when making these decisions, such as declining unemployment filings, Phase 3 re-opening, seasonal utility load increases, number of payments in arrears, or other economic conditions? Are there changes that should be permanently made on these topics, even once the moratorium is lifted?
5. Once a utility has determined a date they will be lifting service suspensions, what customer notification should be required?
6. What recommendations do you have to improve programs for low-income utility customers?
7. If the PUC had the legal authority to allow differential rates for low-income and/or energy-burdened customers, what recommendations do you have on how rates should be structured and administered?

8. Do you have any additional regulatory mechanisms that you would recommend be implemented during the time of dealing with a pandemic or similar situation? This could include decoupling, power cost mechanisms, deferrals, adjustment clauses, or other.
9. What data is currently available to evaluate changes over time and effectively maintain situational awareness? What additional data is needed that's not currently available?
10. What current rules or practices need to be amended or added to allow utilities increased flexibility in assisting customers during this pandemic?

Additional Questions for Utility Service Providers

1. How many of your customers are currently in arrears by 30, 60, and 90 days? Additionally, please break down this data by customer classes (residential, commercial, industrial). How does that compare to 2019?
2. What accommodations are you offering to assist customers with past-due balances? This could include enhanced time payment agreements, applying deposits to bills, or others.
3. What is your current uncollectible rate? How does it compare to historical and in current rate cases?
4. How does the CARES Act or other federal or state stimulus funds or insurance proceeds factor into utilities' financial impacts caused by the pandemic?
5. How has your utility been financially impacted by the pandemic?

COVID-Impact Process

- The PUC is planning to host a series of workshops to address this topic. Agendas and meeting format (webinar vs. conference call) details will be provided prior to each scheduled workshop. Your input throughout this process will help inform future workshops and discussions.
- In addition to the stakeholders who participated in the recent Special Public Meeting on June 9 on this topic, the PUC has expanded our stakeholder list to include a wide range of utilities and organizations that can provide beneficial input. To review the list and provide input on others who should be included, email Kandi.young@state.or.us.
- This series of workshops will be designed to inform and benefit future discussions and decisions made by the PUC.