

EAAC – Education & Outreach Subcommittee Meeting

March 24, 2022

Noon – 1:00 PM



Michigan Public Service Commission

Welcome & Meeting Focus

Agenda Items		
Noon – 12:10 PM	Welcome, Group Agreements, and Announcements	Briana DuBose, <u>Ecoworks</u>
12:10 – 12:15 PM	Commission Charge and Subcommittee Purpose	Anne Armstrong Customer Assistance Division Director MPSC
12:15 – 12:25 PM	Synergistics Efforts within the Commission	Anne Armstrong Customer Assistance Division Director MPSC
12:25 – 12:40 PM	The Commission's Outreach Parameters	Reka Holley Voelker Communications Section Manager MPSC
12:40 – 12:50 PM	Practical Opportunities for this Committee	Briana DuBose, <u>Ecoworks</u>
12:50 – 1:00 PM	Conclusion and Next Steps	Briana DuBose, <u>Ecoworks</u>

Group Agreements

- Be accountable and actively listen to others.
- Use “I” statements when speaking.
- Remember that we are here for a bigger purpose.
- Celebrate each other’s sharing and ideas.
- Agree to disagree.
- Contribute to a space of care; keep each other safe.
- Practice making space for others when you have talked a lot and speak up when you can. Call in others.
- Lead with impact over intentions; ask for clarification from a place of curiosity when in doubt. Let us be mindful of our actions.
- Take the time to address issues in the moment, reflect on issues in real time, take responsibility to honor our commitments.
- Umoja Principle: If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.

Commission charge to the subcommittee and subcommittee purpose

Anne Armstrong
Customer Assistance Division Director
MPSC

Commission Charge

Feb. 10, 2022, [order](#) in [U-20757](#)

- Establish regular mechanism for stakeholders to provide input on improving communications and materials
- Broaden outreach to groups traditionally not a part of utility communications
- Improve the dissemination of energy assistance information to difficult to reach customers

Synergistic efforts within the Commission

Anne Armstrong
Customer Assistance Division Director
MPSC

Synergistic stakeholder efforts within the Commission

- Low-income EWR workgroup
- MI Power Grid – Customer Education and Participation Workgroup
- Commission’s Diversity Equity and Inclusion initiative

MI Power Grid – Customer Education and Participation Workgroup

Commission Charge

- Identify areas of focus for customer outreach and education
- Identify opportunities for MPSC outreach and education
- Explore targeting customers who would benefit from specific rate offerings

Overview

- 4 total workgroup meetings held May – Aug 2021
 - ✓ 2 sessions focused on Data Access and Privacy
 - ✓ 2 sessions focused on Customer Education and Participation
- Bifurcated recommendation review by stakeholders
 - ✓ Data Access and Privacy recommendations sent Jan. 19, responses due Feb. 8
 - ✓ Customer Education and Participation recommendations sent Feb. 9, responses due Feb. 22
- Final report due March 25

MI Power Grid – Customer Education and Participation Workgroup

Research informing MPG – CEP recommendations

- 2020 advocates meeting and follow up survey
- 2021 MPG CEP sessions
- Conversations with MPG CEP presenters
- Papers and reports
 - *Customer Engagement in Regulation*, Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation, The London School of Economics & Political Science (Sept. 2019)
 - *Stakeholder Participation and Regulatory Policymaking in the United States*, The George Washington University Regulatory Studies Center (Oct. 2014)
 - *Public Engagement and Transparency in Regulation: A Field Guide to Regulatory Excellence*, Prepared for the Penn Program on Regulation's Best-In-Class Initiative (June 2015)
 - *The Office of Public Participation*, The FERC (June 2021)
 - *Public Utility Commission Stakeholder Engagement: A Decision-making Framework*, NARUC (Jan 2021)
 - *Promoting Transparency and Public Participation in Energy Regulation, A Communications Primer for Utility Regulators*, NARUC in partnership with USAID (Sept. 2019)
 - *OECD Best Practice Principles on Stakeholder Engagement in Regulatory Policy – Draft for Public Consultation*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2016/2017)
 - *Working with Customers to Improve Regulation*, Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment (June 2017)
 - *Public Utility Commission Stakeholder Engagement: A Decision –Making Framework*, NARUC (January 2021)

MI Power Grid – Customer Education and Participation Workgroup

Guiding principles for MPG - CEP recommendations

- Building and maintaining trust
- Ensuring transparency
- Visibility and accessibility

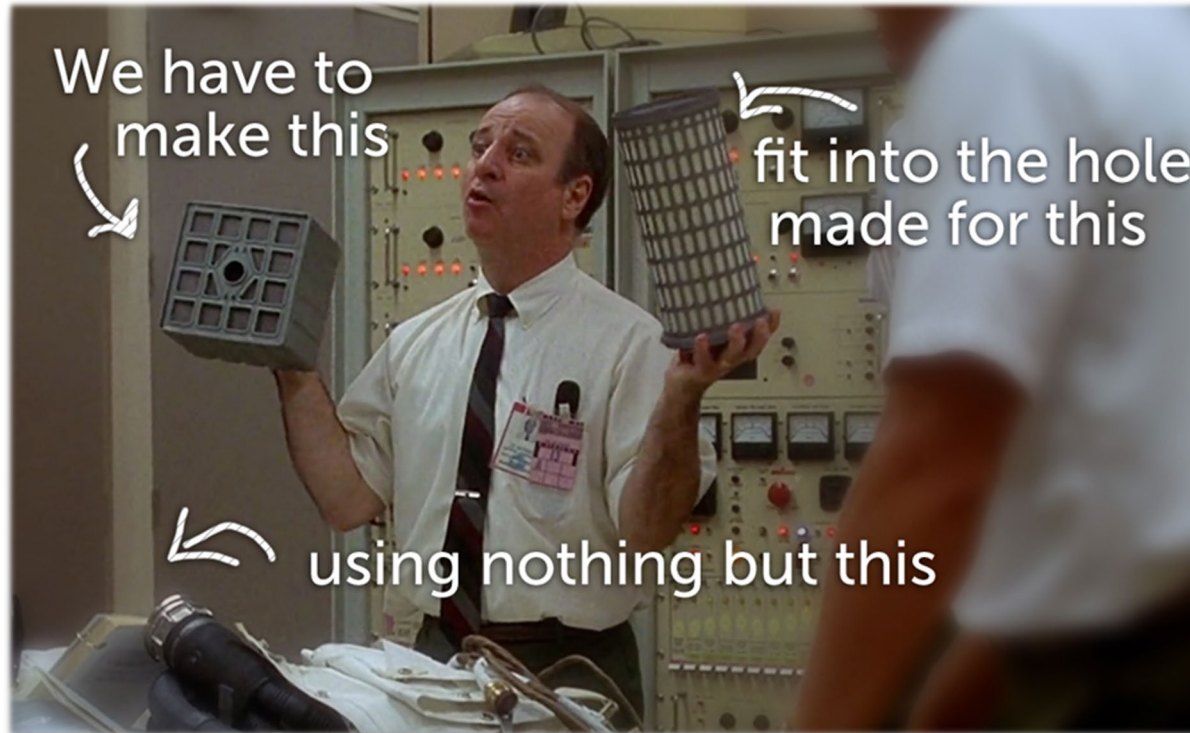
Recommendation categories

- Customer engagement in the regulatory process
- Improving customer participation and education regarding their energy use and program options
- Customer education
- General outreach and engagement
- Additional research, meetings, and study

Commission's outreach parameters

Reka Holley Voelker
Communications Section Manager
MPSC

MPSC outreach parameters



Statutory Walls

- Required statutory processes
- Ex Parte Rules
- Procedural Rules
- Evidentiary Requirements

Operational Walls

- Staffing considerations and constraints
- Budgetary considerations
- Neutrality

Customer Outreach: Statutory Walls

- **Authorizing Statutes**: Commission is a creature of statute with its authority defined in statute and in judicial opinions ruling on the statutes that create that authority.
- **Decision making process**: Many decisions must be made through contested cases, rulemakings, or other legal processes which require formal intervention in order to participate. Issues considered under these processes are subject to *ex parte* limitations on Commissioner communication.
- **Decision making standards**: Decisions made in a contested case must be based on the law and the record of evidence in the case with appropriate justification.

Customer Outreach: Operational Walls

- Staffing considerations
- Budgetary considerations
- Neutrality

Commission Outreach: A Timeline

Pre-2019

- Staff:
 - Outreach and Education/External Affairs Staff at MPSC then MAE (2015) plus Strategic Communications; 7 FTEs
- Key functions:
 - Attend “table” events to share information and take complaints
 - Speak at organization events as requested
 - Develop external facing communications materials for customers
 - Assist with Commission hosted events
- Key Commission engagement
 - Consumer Forums
 - Public hearings

2019 - 2021

- EO 2019 – 6 transferred External Affairs and Strategic Communications to EGLE
- Commission established the Communications Section
 - Key Functions: Manage external communications (except for media relations); Materials development; Establish outreach presence; Manage Commission hosted events
 - Staff: 4 FTEs; Planned for additional staff capacity
- Key Commission engagement
 - Redesign of Commission Website (2019)
 - Public hearings
 - MI Power Grid Launch
- March 2020 – 2021 – COVID-19 pandemic
 - Materials development
 - Engagement with utilities, MEAP Grantees, Com. Action Agencies, Stakeholders to share assistance information
 - Materials translations

2022

- Addition of 1 FTE to Communications Section to increase capacity
- Key Communications Functions
 - Manage external communications, including materials development
 - Customer engagement
 - Identify customer outreach opportunities
 - Plan, coordinate, and staffing Commission hosted events
 - Attending events as capacity allows
- Key Commission engagement
 - Public hearings
 - Listening sessions and customer focus groups

Current Commission Outreach

MPSC
Michigan Public Service Commission

Official Social Michigan.gov

MI Public Service Commission ✓
@MichiganPSC Follows you

We serve the public by ensuring safe, reliable, accessible energy and telecommunications at reasonable rates. Need utility help? Call 1-800-292-9555.

📍 Lansing, MI 🌐 michigan.gov/mpsc 🕒 Born February 15, 1939
📅 Joined October 2010

518 Following 2,543 Followers



MPSC
Michigan Public Service Commission

Issue Brief

Consumers Energy Integrated Resource Plan

1. Does Michigan's 2016 energy laws require electric utilities to file Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs)? What is an IRP and why is it important?

An Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is a roadmap for how an electric utility will meet its future electricity needs to serve customers in a cost-effective, reliable manner. A plan addresses issues such as the utility's expected

ENERGY ASSISTANCE
OUTREACH TOOLKIT

MPSC
Michigan Public Service Commission

R-CA-12/16/2021

MPSC
Michigan Public Service Commission

January 2021

2020 HOME HEATING CREDIT

Residential Customers

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) doesn't want you to miss your chance to receive the Home Heating Credit (HHC) from the state of Michigan! The HHC can help pay your winter heating bills and is funded by the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). If you use a large portion of your monthly income to pay heating costs, you may be eligible for the HHC for the 2020 tax year.

WHO is eligible to apply?

Eligible customers must meet all of the following requirements:

- ✓ Your homestead (where you live) is in Michigan.
- ✓ You own or rent a home where you live (e.g. a rented apartment or mobile home on a lot in a mobile home park).

Income Guidelines	
Exemptions	Income Ceiling
0 - 1	\$14,043
2	\$18,986
3	\$23,900

Visioning an Expanded Outreach

The MPSC's 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan

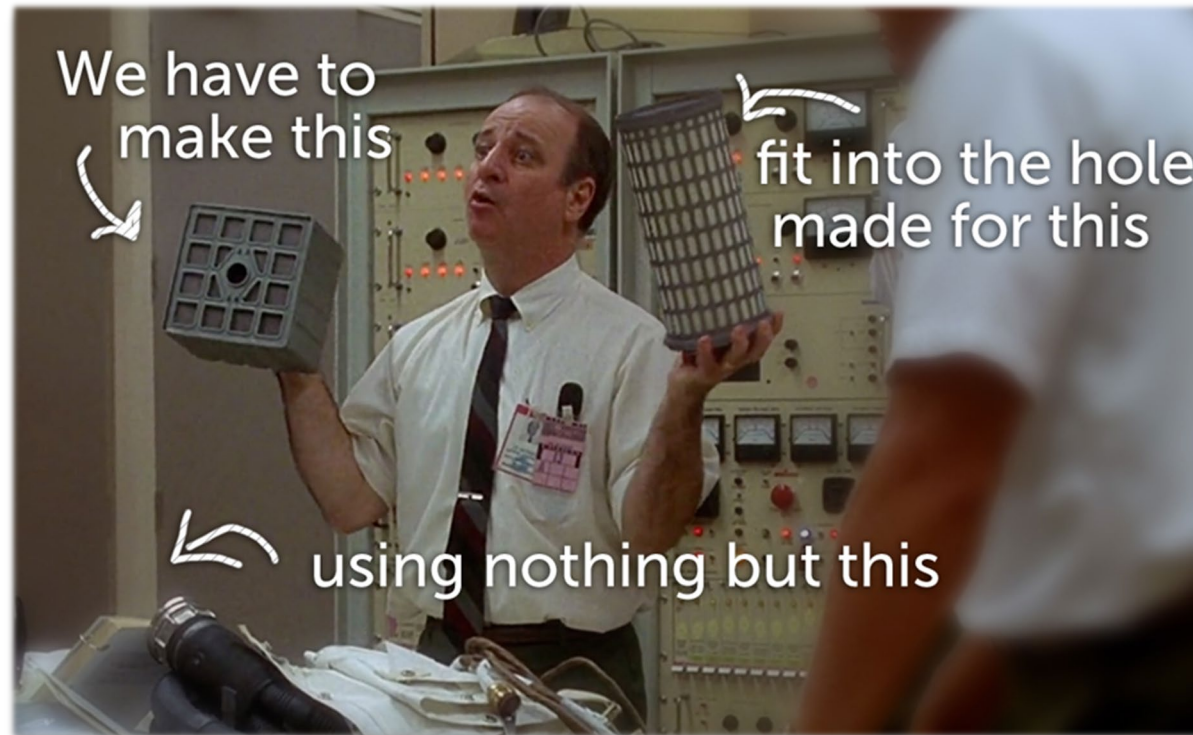
Improving communications and access to information regarding utility offerings

- Developing and deploying an inventory of utility offered customer programs on the MPSC's website
- Improving promotion of new customer options from rate cases and other proceedings

Direct, local engagement within our local communities

- Reestablish the MPSC's outreach team to improve local outreach capacity
- Establish regular, regional engagement for hearings and informational sessions
- Reinitiate consumer forums or an alternative program to engage directly with customer throughout the state
- Explore options and opportunities for hosting (or co-hosting) webinars on topics of interest

MPSC outreach: Thinking Creatively Inside the Box



Statutory Walls

- Required statutory processes
- Ex Parte Rules
- Procedural Rules
- Evidentiary Requirements

Operational Walls

- Staffing considerations and constraints
- Budgetary considerations
- Neutrality

Practical opportunities for this Committee

Briana DuBose
Ecoworks

Practical Opportunities for this Committee

- Identify opportunities to create or build relationships and pursuing those
- Identify communications best practices
- Inform outreach opportunities and communications materials
- Problem solving

Conclusion and Next Steps

Briana DuBose
Ecoworks