

# PacifiCorp Equity Advisory Group (EAG)

October 2022 Meeting Notes

Wednesday October 19, 2022, 1-4pm Pacific Time

*These notes were synthesized and summarized by E Source, PacifiCorp's meeting facilitation partner, without EAG member attribution.*

## Executive Summary

This meeting focused on PacifiCorp's Residential Disconnection Reduction Plan, a brief update on PacifiCorp's Transportation Electrification proposed grant and outreach program, and a review of targeted outreach on PacifiCorp's Commercial & Industrial Demand Response and Time-of-use rates.

## Session Objectives

- Close the loop on stakeholder feedback themes and utility actions from the September EAG meeting
- Review PacifiCorp's existing residential disconnection program and get feedback on prioritizing future disconnections
- Briefly outline the Transportation Electrification proposed grant and outreach program
- Review targeted outreach on Commercial & Industrial Demand Response
- Introduce the new Time-of-use flier

**Slides available in Spanish below:**

### [October 2022 EAG Meeting Slides](#)

<b>2022 Equity Advisory Group member</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Angelica Reyes	La Casa Hogar
Jonathan Smith	Yakima County Development Association
Norman Thiel	SonBridge
Paul Tabayoyon	Asian Pacific Islander Coalition
Sylvia Schaeffer	Blue Mountain Action Council
Todd Hilmes	Northwest Community Action Center
<b>Not In Attendance</b>	
Adam Rieker	Perry Technical Institute
Erendira Cruz	Sustainable Living Center
Giovanni Severino	Latino Community Fund
Heidi Silva-Morales	Opportunities Industrialization Center
Nathan Johnson	Yakima Health District
Ray Wiseman	Yakama Power

## Opening (1:05pm)

E Source shared meeting objectives and the agenda to start the meeting.

## EAG Member Check-In (1:10pm)

All EAG members “checked-in” by responding to the prompt: *What’s your favorite part about the Fair?* Themes in their responses included taking children to see sheep, chickens, and turkeys; seeing the rodeo; looking at farm equipment, especially new electric models; and eating funnel cake.

## Community Connections and EAG Feedback Loop (1:15pm)

PacifiCorp shared updates to Community Events Calendar for October. This tool provides a snapshot of events and opportunities that members may want to consider for local partnership opportunities and provides a means to keep apprised of upcoming events. Some of the final processes around the calendar are yet to be determined, but PacifiCorp is taking EAG feedback into consideration.

PacifiCorp mentioned recent events it has participated in, including the Central Washington State Fair, Drive Electric Day at the Downtown Yakima Farmers Market, the Downtown Yakima Chalk Art Festival, and the Grandview Health Fair. Also mentioned were the upcoming Clean Buildings Accelerator Coffee Chats which will be hosted online. Dates for these sessions are November 1<sup>st</sup> from 1pm-2pm, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 11am-12pm, and January 12<sup>th</sup> from 10am-11am.

PacifiCorp shared that based on EAG feedback on calendar functions, it has added hyperlinks to the calendar so users can click on events and be directed to events’ sign-up pages or flyers.

PacifiCorp also shared that based on EAG feedback, information about PacifiCorp’s residential financing program has been added to the Energy Resource Center webpage. PacifiCorp added that it has made changes to this program to address financing issues brought up by the EAG, including expanding on-bill financing to customers who own their home but not the land it sits on such as homes on tribal lands, or homes in mobile home parks. Furthermore, the program now allows financing for repairs associated with energy-efficiency upgrades. Finally, PacifiCorp plans to invite a representative from Craft3, the program’s implementer, to speak at an upcoming EAG meeting.

EAG Members and others can contact Kimberly Alejandro about the Community Event Calendar at [Kimberly.Alejandro@PacifiCorp.com](mailto:Kimberly.Alejandro@PacifiCorp.com) to communicate any incorrect information or updates to be made, including adding new events to the 2023 Calendar.

## Washington’s Residential Disconnection Reduction Plan (1:30pm)

PacifiCorp presented the WA Residential Disconnection Reduction Plan, including:

- Washington state’s policy changes around utility disconnections
- PacifiCorp’s customer support practices to help support customers from falling behind on their utility bills and help customers avoid losing utility services
- PacifiCorp’s Disconnection Reduction Plan for memorializing COVID consumer protections, enhancing access to assistance, increasing communication on programs, and investigating new options for arrearage relief
- PacifiCorp’s available programs and offerings to reduce disconnections, as well as its bill assistance outreach and communication, and
- The Clean Energy Implementation Plan – Customer Benefit Indicator, to track the number of residential disconnections over time to decrease residential customer disconnections, especially in highly impacted communities.

Questions that EAG members posed about the WA Residential Disconnection Reduction Plan included:

- Q: Is PacifiCorp still doing door hangers (notices prior to disconnection) again this season? I'd heard you were getting rid of them and just giving notice by phone calls.
  - A: Yes, we will continue to deliver 48-hour notices to a customer's door, and in addition we encourage local field offices to also knock-on doors to make contact, not just hanging the door hanger and leaving, so that we interact with our customers. We didn't include door hangers during our COVID disconnection moratorium but did send customers past due notices and final notices.
  
- Q: Is PacifiCorp still offering a moratorium payment plan?
  - A: We haven't heard of any changes made to the process of customers qualifying through state assistance agencies for the moratorium, so we assume this will continue unless something different comes out of rulemaking.
  
- Q: In its disconnection program, can PacifiCorp consider whether a property is occupied by a renter or owner and has a history of disconnections? If it's a renting customer, this might indicate that their property owner has a history of negligence in upgrading the property for energy efficiency. Could PacifiCorp consider that or have a new policy to question property owners on energy efficiency upgrades if there's a pattern of disconnections at their properties? This might be something for PacifiCorp to consider internally when considering where energy burdens are occurring long-term and would be especially impactful given the large number of rental properties in Yakima County.
  - A: We do ask new customers about renting vs. owning, but we'll consider these suggestions and look at other available data sources on our customers in our programs.
  
- Q: In your donation program, who can access those donations? Are donations offered to customers in arrears or for energy efficiency programs?
  - A: In our donation program, we partner with three different local agencies, including the Salvation Army and the Northwest Community Action Center. On a monthly basis, we receive customer donations, PacifiCorp matches them, and those donations are sent to the agencies to distribute to income-certified customers in communities they serve. Since these donation funds are limited, we do encourage our customers to apply for other federal assistance funds, as our donation program is more of a supplement if they need additional assistance.
  
- Q: Could you talk about the funding that will be available in Washington to pay down utility arrearages?
  - A: The Washington State Department of Commerce has a \$100 million COVID fiscal recovery fund that will be available to public and private power, water, and sewer utilities, including PacifiCorp. This fund would apply to low-income customers that were in arrears from March 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021. Eligibility is based on if they have received assistance through LIHEAP or through PacifiCorp's donation programs, or if they're weatherization program participants from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2022. This process is ongoing, but Commerce is in its final stages of getting these funds to utilities.

Once PacifiCorp and Commerce finalize everything, the funds will go out to utilities and will be applied to customer accounts by December 31, 2022. As of right now, PacifiCorp hasn't received the dollar amount for identified customers in arrears. Prioritization of customers hasn't been finalized yet, but PacifiCorp will work with Commerce on that prior to its disbursement of funds to PacifiCorp.

EAG members also thanked PacifiCorp for its outreach to customers around reducing disconnections, especially through direct phone calls. One member described how PacifiCorp staff helped a customer make phone calls to receive assistance and make a plan to avoid disconnection. Another member thanked PacifiCorp for adjusting its residential financing program to include manufactured homes, which will be especially impactful in their community.

EAG Members and others can contact Amy Hoskins at [Amy.Hoskins@PacifiCorp.com](mailto:Amy.Hoskins@PacifiCorp.com) or Jason Hoffman at [Jason.Hoffman@pacificorp.com](mailto:Jason.Hoffman@pacificorp.com) to provide feedback on PacifiCorp's disconnection reduction activities and best communication touchpoints to residents in the communities they represent.

## Break (2:10pm)

## WA Residential Disconnection Reduction Plan Exercise (2:20pm)

EAG members were asked the following questions:

- Q: How are disconnections being experienced in your community and among your stakeholders?
  - Where do your community members most need help?
  - A: An EAG member listed the elderly and those on a fixed income, renters, and those that are technologically challenged as members that need the most help.
- Q: What steps can we take to better communicate with our impacted customers?
- Q: How can we build greater trust with customers and communities to increase participation in disconnection reduction measures?
  - A: An EAG member said, it's been hard, especially during winter, when electric and gas bills are high. In the past, we supported our community with emergency services to help customers with payments, but we haven't offered this since 2011. But people still call us to ask about support paying bills and we can't offer a lot of support. We hear especially from older people and renters all the time, both before, during the pandemic, and now. PacifiCorp has programs to support these customers and we refer these customers to receive assistance from the Washington OIC.

We'd like PacifiCorp's programs to provide more promotion and information to customers in our communities, to connect better with them, especially since information is often provided online. We need to support customers with technology challenges, and sometimes customers may feel overwhelmed. PacifiCorp can provide other grants, work with other organizations in the community, and with the City of Yakima. We can better split our work in communities between different organizations. There are different levels of needs in the community, so one organization is not enough to support them across a large area.

- A: An EAG member said, at the beginning of COVID, we helped our elderly AAPI community members pay at grocery store pay centers using volunteers' credit cards since these members couldn't pay in cash at the time. They also expressed that they hope that PacifiCorp checks that every single pay center accepts cash.

OIC is the only services provider for the City of Yakima, and it's located in North Yakima. It can be difficult for community members to travel to their one community service center in North Yakima. I think there's a lack of staffing for OIC as well. Several of my relatives tried to access their services and had 2–3-week delays. One service provider for this entire area is inequitable. Can we open another community service center in the lower valley to fill out applications for energy efficiency and business services programs?

I think there's a lack of investment in these community organizations, perhaps due to generational divide in perspectives on management and process. They haven't adequately paid staff to fill up these organizations. These are great organizations and are pillars of our community, but COVID showed us how financially ill-prepared they were when community needs exponentially grew. These organizations need more outreach, with multiple multilingual staff to manage their services. And the City and County of Yakima needs to be more engaged and involved with community groups in these efforts. They need more communication and support from Yakima County leaders to really create larger infrastructure changes like electrification.

## Washington Transportation Electrification Proposed Grant Program and Outreach Program (2:45pm)

PacifiCorp presented the Washington Transportation Electrification Proposed Grant Program, to deliver an exploratory grant that allows individuals in Named Communities to benefit from transportation electrification initiatives. PacifiCorp also presented the Grant's Outreach Program, to build confidence and trust in transportation electrification through effective outreach and education efforts.

EAG members were asked the following questions:

- Q: Do these proposed program designs resonate with you?
  - A: An EAG member said, I love the idea of PacifiCorp hitting fairs and community events with these outreach and education opportunities. They're a great opportunity to provide general education, like where electric vehicle charging stations are. PacifiCorp can also point customers to other resources and other organizations and hear their concerns, like the availability of charging stations in the community.
- Q: What thoughts and additional feedback do you have regarding these program designs?
  - A: An EAG member, said these efforts seem to be Yakima-centric and missing opportunities within Walla Walla County for communication and location of resources. PacifiCorp should expand its efforts to Walla Walla farmers markets and the County Fair.

- A: An EAG member suggested the idea of customers checking out E-bikes at local libraries for test drives. One public attendee suggested that a longer-term E-bike rental program would be a great idea for a PacifiCorp feasibility study or pilot program.
- A: EAG members discussed the significant opportunity to electrify transportation for the large agricultural worker community, as well as generating small-scale hydropower from irrigation ditches.

PacifiCorp also shared that it is looking at developing an educational campaign in high schools with the National Education Foundation on electric vehicles, which will target 4,000-5,000 students through live and virtual presentations. It also hosted electric vehicle, E-bike, and scooter ride-and-drive events in September and October County Fairs and plans to host more of these events and include them in its communication channels.

## Targeted Outreach: Commercial & Industrial Demand Response and Time-of-use Rates (3:05pm)

PacifiCorp provided a brief update to EAG members on its Commercial & Industrial Demand Response and Time-of-use Rates programs.

EAG members were asked the following questions:

- Q: How would you describe “demand response” to a friend and what is the value of it (English and Spanish)?
  - A: An EAG member suggested the phrase, “Get a bonus for taking a break,” or “Give your equipment a break and get a bonus.”
- Q: What would be the best way to reach small businesses?
  - A: An EAG member suggested demand-response incentives could be wrapped together like a frequent-flier program. Customers could have an app on their phones that would enable them to shed load and count the “miles” or incentives, they accumulate from changing their behavior during demand-response events. At the end of month, they’d get to see how much they’d earned by participating in the program.
  - A: An EAG member suggested it would be great if participants could funnel demand-response incentives toward energy-efficiency equipment upgrades or even get a bonus incentive if they channeled their incentives towards energy-efficiency improvements, like in credit card or airline-loyalty programs. They could even tie incentives in with lenders to purchase electric vehicles. That could be the way to really sell the transition to electric vehicles, and PacifiCorp could include education on demand response and best electric vehicle charging times.
  - A: An EAG member suggested that for businesses that may eventually have fleets of electric vehicles and on-site charging infrastructure, they can become familiar with demand response through this existing program and get accustomed to best charging times for their future charging needs.

- A: An EAG member suggested that demand-response incentives could be an ongoing revenue stream for businesses. A PacifiCorp staff member mentioned that the program's incentives are paid out quarterly and can be a good revenue stream for customers to re-invest in energy efficiency or other priorities for the businesses.
- Q: How could we partner with you to get out the message?
  - A: An EAG member suggested PacifiCorp participate in annual small business expos and provide education, outreach, and access to equipment manufacturers.
  - A: An EAG member said they will reach out to PacifiCorp to get paper flyers on time-of-use rates to share with their community members, especially for those not able to find information on websites.
  - A: An EAG member wondered how they can bring time-of-use messaging to busy working families with other priorities besides energy efficiency. They suggested using messaging that quick, easy changes, like setting timers on appliances for late-night operation can bring significant economic and ecological benefits to customers.
- Q: How do TOU rates resonate with you as a compelling strategy for people in your community?
  - A: An EAG member said it depends on the user. For small-time energy users, there may not be big savings, but for larger users, like small businesses, they could see larger savings. These energy and cost savings could make or break a business. PacifiCorp can provide estimates of the savings opportunity based on customers' building's square footage, with cost savings benefits. Program messaging should include letting customers know they can play a key part in the clean energy transition and benefit the environment.
  - A: A PacifiCorp staff member informed the EAG that any large business with energy use of over 1 MW is automatically on the time-of-use rate structure. Demand response and time-of-use rates are all part of the transition: they help users and everyone else as well.
  - A: An EAG member said, participating in this program would be hard to do personally at this point with their current appliances and technology. Perhaps later, it may be more possible as appliances become more Wi-Fi-connected, and they can switch appliances on and off remotely.
- Q: An EAG member asked if for homes with solar panels, how does that generation affect time-of-use rate savings?
  - A: A PacifiCorp staff member said that it depends on the user, but there is likely less benefit opportunity for customers with solar panels given they likely consumer less energy. However, the customer could still have large enough energy usage, even with solar, and see benefits from participating in a time-of-use rate program.
- Q: A public attendee asked if PacifiCorp has plans to target businesses in highly impacted communities through this program, with equity in mind?

- A: A PacifiCorp staff member said it is taking input from this EAG group on highly impacted community outreach and they especially like the idea of small business expos and targeted outreach in these communities. They will look at what's available in these communities and how they can increase targeted outreach to these communities.
- Q: A public attendee asked if Enel X, the program's implementer, plans to target diverse businesses and subcontractors?
  - A: PacifiCorp is working with Enel X to subcontract equipment installations out to diverse businesses. If EAG members know of small local businesses doing installation work, please let PacifiCorp know, and they can reach out to them with subcontracting opportunities.

### Public Comments (3:40pm)

There were no public comments.

### Next steps (3:55pm)

PacifiCorp closed by thanking all the EAG for their time and detailed feedback, and they are excited to get additional feedback on planned program changes.

Attendees were reminded that meeting materials and notes are posted to the website, and that the next meeting is on December 7 from 1-4 pm PT. There will not be a meeting in November.