

VOLUME I:
GENERAL GOVERNMENT
AND QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCIES

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Agency Summary

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Agency Mission

The Public Utilities Commission and Division of Public Utilities and Carriers supervise, regulate, and make orders governing the conduct of companies offering to the public in intrastate commerce energy, communication, transportation services, and water supplies for the purpose of increasing and maintaining the efficiency of the companies, according desirable safeguards and convenience to their employees and to the public, and protecting them and the public against improper and unreasonable rates, tolls and charges by providing full, fair, and adequate administrative procedures and remedies, and by securing a judicial review to any party aggrieved by such an administrative proceeding or ruling.

Agency Description

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) comprises two distinct regulatory bodies: a three-member Commission (Commission) and the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division). The Public Utilities Commission serves as a quasi-judicial tribunal with jurisdiction, powers, and duties to implement and enforce the standards of conduct under R.I. General Laws § 39-1-27.6 and to hold investigations and hearings involving the rates, tariffs, tolls, and charges, and the sufficiency and reasonableness of facilities and accommodations of railroad, ferry boats, gas, electric distribution, water, telephone, telegraph, and pipeline public utilities, the location of railroad depots and stations, and the control of grade crossings, the revocation, suspension or alteration of certificates issued pursuant to RIGL § 39-19-4, appeals under § 39-1-30, petitions under § 39-1-31, and proceedings under § 39-1-32. Through participation in the Energy Facility Siting Board, the Commission's chair also exercises jurisdiction over the siting of major energy facilities, pursuant to RIGL § 42-98. The Division, which is headed by an Administrator, who is not a Commissioner, exercises the jurisdiction, supervision, powers and duties not specifically assigned to the Commission, including the execution of all laws relating to public utilities and carriers and all regulations and orders of the Commission governing the conduct and charges of public utilities. The Division has exclusive jurisdiction over the rates, tariffs, tolls, and charges, and the sufficiency and reasonableness of facilities and accommodations of common carriers of property and passengers over the State's public roadways, pursuant to RIGL § 39-12, § 39-13, and § 39-14. Additionally, the Division supervises and regulates Community Antenna Television Systems (CATV) in Rhode Island; certifies all public utilities; and has independent regulatory authority over the transactions between public utilities and affiliates, and all public utility equity and debt issuances.

Statutory History

The PUC and its predecessor agency, the Rhode Island Railroad Commission, have regulated utilities in Rhode Island since 1839. The Railroad Commission was later abolished by an act of the legislature, leading to the creation of the more comprehensive Public Utility Commission in 1912. From 1981 to 1996, the duties of both the Administrator of the Division and the Chairperson of the Commission were combined in a single position. The Utility Restructuring Act of 1996 later divided these duties into two separate positions: Chairperson of the Commission and Administrator of the Division. The Commission and the Division are established under RIGL § 39-1-3.

Budget

Public Utilities Commission

	2019 Actuals	2020 Actuals	2021 Enacted Budget	2021 Revised Budget	2022 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	9,125,176	9,571,635	11,748,393	11,842,647	12,466,346
Total Expenditures	9,125,176	9,571,635	11,748,393	11,842,647	12,466,346
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	6,274,696	6,609,618	7,062,082	7,156,336	7,825,609
Contract Professional Services	1,364,003	1,604,345	2,609,421	2,609,421	2,927,836
Operating Supplies And Expenses	1,266,615	1,284,922	1,666,890	1,666,890	1,302,901
Capital Purchases And Equipment	0	0	250,000	250,000	250,000
Subtotal: Operating	8,905,314	9,498,885	11,588,393	11,682,647	12,306,346
Capital Purchases And Equipment	219,862	72,750	160,000	160,000	160,000
Subtotal: Other	219,862	72,750	160,000	160,000	160,000
Total Expenditures	9,125,176	9,571,635	11,748,393	11,842,647	12,466,346
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
Federal Funds	177,974	200,098	175,174	245,166	540,253
Restricted Receipts	8,947,203	9,371,538	11,573,219	11,597,481	11,926,093
Total Expenditures	9,125,176	9,571,635	11,748,393	11,842,647	12,466,346
FTE Authorization	53.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	54.0

Personnel Agency Summary

Public Utilities Commission

	FY 2021		FY 2022	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified			47.0	4,152,579
Unclassified			7.0	750,748
Subtotal	52	4,521,692	54.0	4,903,327
Overtime (1.5)		53,000		53,000
Seasonal/Special Salaries/Wages		2,300		0
Turnover		(128,121)		(137,328)
Total Salaries		4,448,871		4,886,414
Benefits				
FICA		334,015		367,462
Health Benefits		643,576		702,157
Payroll Accrual		25,948		28,173
Retiree Health		258,080		255,205
Retirement		1,247,152		1,395,277
Subtotal		2,508,771		2,748,274
Total Salaries and Benefits		6,957,642	54.0	7,634,688
Cost Per FTE Position				149,700
Statewide Benefit Assessment		198,694		190,921
Payroll Costs		7,156,336	54.0	7,825,609
Purchased Services				
Buildings and Ground Maintenance		29,000		29,000
Clerical and Temporary Services		79,000		79,000
Information Technology		93,000		93,000
Legal Services		353,000		353,000
Management & Consultant Services		2,042,908		2,042,908
Other Contracts		12,513		330,928
Subtotal		2,609,421		2,927,836
Total Personnel		9,765,757	54.0	10,753,445
Distribution by Source of Funds				
Federal Funds		232,204	0.0	527,291
Restricted Receipts		9,533,553	54.0	10,226,154
Total All Funds		9,765,757	54.0	10,753,445

Performance Measures

Public Utilities Commission

Timeliness of Motor Carrier Applications and Reports

When the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC) receives an application for authority to operate as a motor carrier (e.g., taxi, limousine, water taxi, etc.), it is docketed and a public hearing is scheduled and advertised. Following the hearing, DPUC issues a formal written report approving or denying the application. The figures below represent the percentage of motor carrier applications completed within 60 business days. [Note: Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Actual	95.83%	96.00%	0.00%	0.00%	

Timeliness of Cable Service and Telecom Inquiry Resolution

DPUC receives cable and telecom customer inquiries involving billing disputes, tariff issues, rate increases, interconnect issues, product installation, repairs, and service quality. The figures below represent the percentage of inquiries resolved within 60 business days. [Notes: FY 2019 targets have been updated. Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Actual	98.46%	98.00%	0.00%	0.00%	

Timeliness of Informal Consumer Payment Plan Process

Customers enroll in a payment plan in accordance with the Commission's rules and regulations to avoid utility service termination or to have their service restored. The figures below represent the percentage of informal consumer payment agreements processed within 60 days of an inquiry. [Note: FY 2019 targets have been updated. Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	97.30%	97.00%	0.00%	0.00%	

Timeliness of Consumer Billing Complaint Investigations

DPUC investigates complaints involving motor carriers and public utilities including electric, gas, and water providers. Non-payment related billing complaints are often attributable to clerical error, customer misunderstanding, and faulty utility meters. The figures below represent the percentage of non-payment related billing complaint investigations completed within 60 business days. [Notes: FY 2019 targets have been updated. Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	94.44%	95.00%	0.00%	0.00%	

Budget

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

Expenditures by Sub Program	2019 Actuals	2020 Actuals	2021 Enacted Budget	2021 Revised Budget	2022 Recommended
Operations	9,125,176	9,571,635	11,748,393	11,842,647	12,466,346
Total Expenditures	9,125,176	9,571,635	11,748,393	11,842,647	12,466,346
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Personnel

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

		FY 2022	
		FTE	Cost
Classified			
ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR	00145A	2.0	320,352
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCIAL AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT	00141A	1.0	121,126
ASSISTANT TO CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	0AB34A	1.0	95,467
ASSOCIATE ADM CABLE TV & LEGIS LIAIS FOR DIV/PU & CARR	00136A	1.0	95,257
ASSOCIATE PUBLIC UTILITIES ADMINISTRATOR FOR MOTOR CAR.	00140A	1.0	110,874
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OFFICER	0AB26A	1.0	63,778
CHF REGULATORY ANALYST (PUC)	0AB38A	1.0	90,543
CHIEF CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB28A	1.0	77,822
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (GENERAL)	0AB24A	1.0	59,942
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (MOTOR VEHICLES)	0AB24A	1.0	59,942
CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST	00138A	1.0	85,694
CHIEF IMPLEMENTATION AIDE	00128A	1.0	73,448
CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00139A	1.0	108,812
CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	00140A	2.0	234,650
CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB24A	4.0	222,863
DEPUTY CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00137A	6.0	575,918
IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTOR POLICY AND PROGRAMS	00140A	1.0	100,541
INFORMATION SERVICES TECHNICIAN II	0AB20A	1.0	52,251
INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	0AB28A	1.0	74,390
INVESTIGATIVE AUDITOR	00133A	1.0	97,578
MOTOR CARRIER COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR	0AB20A	1.0	55,394
PIPELINE SAFETY INSPECTOR I	0AB30A	4.0	259,192
PIPELINE SAFETY INSPECTOR II	0AB33A	2.0	144,920
PRINCIPAL POLICY ASSOCIATE(PUC)	00140A	1.0	110,643
PUBLIC UTILITIES ANALYST V	0AB33A	3.0	263,407
PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR	00146A	2.0	264,259
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0AB30A	3.0	226,432
SUPERVISING CIVIL ENGINEER (NATURAL RESOURCES)	00135A	1.0	107,084
Subtotal Classified		47.0	4,152,579
Unclassified			
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00129A	1.0	90,131
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00822A	2.0	114,176
ADMINISTRATOR- DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS	00847A	1.0	156,757
CHAIRPERSON- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00844A	1.0	128,835
MEMBER- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00841A	2.0	260,849
Subtotal Unclassified		7.0	750,748

Personnel

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Central Management

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Subtotal	54.0	4,903,327
Overtime (1.5)		53,000
Turnover		(137,328)
Total Salaries		4,886,414
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