

**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

For budgeting and other administrative purposes, the agency name “Public Utilities Commission” has historically been used as a short-hand reference to refer to two distinct agencies that are located in the same offices and share many of the same office services – the agency which is officially referred to as the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) and its sister agency, the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division”). Collectively, throughout this document, the two separate entities are referred to as the “Agencies.”

In general terms, the Commission serves in a capacity similar to an administrative court of law, primarily addressing matters such as changes in rates, approval of certain utility programs, energy-procurement contracts, and similar matters that require regulatory approvals. These take place in the context of proceedings that often are litigated with testimony, witnesses, and lawyers, which mirrors court proceedings. In contrast, the Division serves different purposes. One of its primary purposes is to serve as a “ratepayer advocate” in the proceedings before the Commission. In those instances, the Division is a party to the legal proceedings. In addition, the Division has many other regulatory responsibilities that compliments the Commission authority over the utilities and other entities that are regulated. For example, the Division addresses utility customer complaints, investigates violations, enforces Commission orders, does inspections of utility facilities under its authority, and performs other regulatory functions that supervise the utilities and other entities under its jurisdiction.

More specifically and technically, the Commission serves as a quasi-judicial tribunal with jurisdiction, powers, and duties to implement and enforce the standards of conduct under §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 §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 Chapter 42-98.

The Division, which is headed by an Administrator, 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 Chapters 39-12, 39-13 and 39-14.2. 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

	2024 Actuals	2025 Actuals	2026 Enacted Budget	2026 Revised Budget	2027 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	0	0	0	0	0
Central Management	11,444,995	11,695,029	15,508,274	15,668,120	16,017,352
Total Expenditures	11,444,995	11,695,029	15,508,274	15,668,120	16,017,352
Expenditures by Object					
Salary and Benefits	8,834,643	9,293,890	10,707,411	10,658,776	11,133,108
Contract Professional Services	1,791,339	1,530,908	3,623,239	3,651,239	3,621,239
Operating Supplies and Expenses	812,864	794,477	1,082,624	1,263,105	1,168,005
Assistance and Grants	0	20,000	0	0	0
Subtotal: Operating	11,438,846	11,639,275	15,413,274	15,573,120	15,922,352
Capital Purchases and Equipment	6,149	55,754	95,000	95,000	95,000
Subtotal: Other	6,149	55,754	95,000	95,000	95,000
Total Expenditures	11,444,995	11,695,029	15,508,274	15,668,120	16,017,352
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
Federal Funds	592,218	709,130	753,555	771,107	759,025
Restricted Receipts	10,852,777	10,985,899	14,754,719	14,897,013	15,258,327
Total Expenditures	11,444,995	11,695,029	15,508,274	15,668,120	16,017,352
FTE Authorization	54.0	57.0	57.0	57.0	57.0

Personnel Agency Summary

Public Utilities Commission

	FY 2026		FY 2027	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified	52.0	5,907,380	52.0	6,142,248
Unclassified	5.0	709,425	5.0	740,386
Subtotal	57.0	6,616,805	57.0	6,882,634
Overtime		62,330		62,330
Turnover		(88,500)		22,912
Total Salaries		6,590,635		6,967,876
Benefits				
FICA		496,394		518,292
Health Benefits		1,054,504		1,127,468
Payroll Accrual		37,977		39,179
Retiree Health		211,834		209,249
Retirement		2,078,412		2,067,228
Subtotal		3,879,121		3,961,416
Total Salaries and Benefits	57.0	10,469,756	57.0	10,929,292
Cost Per FTE Position		183,680		191,742
Statewide Benefit Assessment		189,020		203,816
Payroll Costs	57.0	10,658,776	57.0	11,133,108
Purchased Services				
Buildings and Ground Maintenance		60,375		60,375
Clerical and Temporary Services		169,000		169,000
Information Technology		60,000		60,000
Legal Services		753,000		753,000
Management & Consultant Services		2,565,587		2,535,587
Other Contracts		28,513		28,513
Training and Educational Services		14,764		14,764
Subtotal		3,651,239		3,621,239
Total Personnel	57.0	14,310,015	57.0	14,754,347
Distribution by Source of Funds				
Federal Funds	0.0	760,145	0.0	748,063
Restricted Receipts	57.0	13,549,870	57.0	14,006,284
Total All Funds	57.0	14,310,015	57.0	14,754,347

Budget

Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

Expenditures by Sub Program	2024 Actuals	2025 Actuals	2026 Enacted Budget	2026 Revised Budget	2027 Recommended
Operations	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0
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Expenditures by Object					
Operating Supplies and Expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal: Operating	0	0	0	0	0
<hr/>					
Total Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0

Budget

Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

Expenditures by Sub Program	2024 Actuals	2025 Actuals	2026 Enacted Budget	2026 Revised Budget	2027 Recommended
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Personnel

Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

		FY 2026		FY 2027	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR	0145 A	2.0	347,030	2.0	363,548
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	0A24 A	2.0	148,735	2.0	153,196
ADMINISTRATOR, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	0137 A	1.0	118,923	1.0	122,491
ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OFFICER	0A19 A	1.0	54,521	1.0	56,157
ASSISTANT TO CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	0A34 A	1.0	111,917	1.0	115,206
ASSOCIATE ADM CABLE TV & LEGIS LIAIS FOR DIV/PU & CARR	0138 A	1.0	123,013	1.0	126,703
ASSOCIATE PUBLIC UTILITIES ADMINISTRATOR, FINANCE & ADMINIST	0142 A	1.0	146,699	1.0	151,099
ASSOCIATE PUBLIC UTILITIES ADMINISTRATOR FOR MOTOR CAR.	0142 A	1.0	149,611	1.0	154,013
ASSOC PUBLIC UTIL ADMIN FOR ENG AND PIPELINE SAFETY	0142 A	1.0	169,783	1.0	174,813
BILINGUAL (SPANISH) CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0A24 A	2.0	138,544	2.0	148,394
CHF REG ENFORCE INSPEC (DPUC)	0A28 A	1.0	83,599	1.0	89,228
CHIEF CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0A32 A	1.0	117,191	1.0	120,707
CHIEF ECONOMIC AND POLICY ANALYST	0145 A	1.0	143,313	1.0	153,974
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (MOTOR VEHICLES)	0A24 A	1.0	78,085	1.0	80,428
CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST	0138 A	1.0	105,351	1.0	112,481
CHIEF IMPLEMENTATION AIDE	0128 A	1.0	80,484	1.0	82,898
CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	0141 A	5.0	713,523	5.0	730,348
CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	0142 A	2.0	313,311	2.0	322,531
CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0A24 A	2.0	143,300	2.0	149,926
DEPUTY CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	0139 A	3.0	331,738	3.0	351,804
INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	0A28 A	1.0	96,733	1.0	99,612
INVESTIGATIVE AUDITOR	0133 A	1.0	116,755	1.0	120,131
OFFICE MANAGER	0123 A	1.0	62,445	1.0	67,062
PIPELINE SAFETY INSPECTOR II	0A30 A	1.0	83,319	1.0	85,818
PIPELINE SAFETY INSPECTOR II	0A33 A	4.0	450,300	4.0	471,228
PRINCIPAL AUDITOR	0A28 A	1.0	83,079	1.0	88,921
PRINCIPAL POLICY ASSOCIATE(PUC)	0140 A	1.0	142,575	1.0	146,778
PUBLIC UTILITIES ANALYST V	0A33 A	2.0	228,539	2.0	235,355
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE COURT OFFICER	0134 A	1.0	92,355	1.0	98,607
PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR	0146 A	2.0	351,232	2.0	361,590
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0A30 A	1.0	100,668	1.0	103,498
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0A33 A	1.0	118,721	1.0	122,208
PUB UTILITIE ENGINEERING SPIII	0A33 A	1.0	106,960	1.0	112,803

Personnel

Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

		FY 2026		FY 2027	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
REG ENFORCE INSPECTOR (DPUC)	0A24 A	1.0	65,854	1.0	70,096
SENIOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY ANALYST	0134 A	1.0	89,679	1.0	92,370
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL	0136 A	1.0	99,495	1.0	106,226
Subtotal Classified		52.0	5,907,380	52.0	6,142,248
Unclassified					
ADMINISTRATIVE CLERK II	0826 A	1.0	75,039	1.0	80,595
ADMINISTRATOR- DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS	0847 A	1.0	192,562	1.0	198,338
CHAIRPERSON- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	0844 A	1.0	164,816	1.0	169,760
MEMBER- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	0841 A	2.0	277,008	2.0	291,693
Subtotal Unclassified		5.0	709,425	5.0	740,386
Subtotal		57.0	6,616,805	57.0	6,882,634
Longevity Pay			293,148		302,350
Regular Wages			6,323,657		6,580,284
Turnover			(88,500)		22,912
Total Salaries			6,590,635		6,967,876
Benefits					
FICA			496,394		518,292
Health Benefits			1,054,504		1,127,468
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Performance Measures

Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

Timeliness of Consumer Billing Complaint Investigations

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC) investigates complaints related to motor carriers and public utilities, including electric, gas, and water services. Non-payment-related billing complaints often stem from clerical errors, customer misunderstandings, or faulty utility meters. The figures below represent the percent of non-payment-related billing complaint investigations completed within 45 business days. [Note: For FY 2023, completion times are reported within a 60-business-day standard. Beginning in FY 2024, DPUC adjusted the target timeframe to 45 business days or less.]

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Actual	100.0%	95.5%	80.0%	--	--

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 percent of informal consumer payment agreements processed within 45 days of an inquiry. [Note: For FY 2023, completion times are reported within a 60-business-day standard. Beginning in FY 2024, DPUC adjusted the target timeframe to 45 business days or less.]

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Actual	100.0%	80.9%	85.0%	--	--

Timeliness of Consumer Service Complaint Investigations

Examples of service complaints include reports of poor customer service, downed wires, service fluctuations, gas leaks and explosions, and injuries to utility worker or person(s) attributable to utility services. The Consumer section takes these complaints and relays them to the appropriate utility. The figures below represent the percent of the complaints that are addressed and reached customer satisfaction within 45 days. [Note: For FY 2023, completion times are reported within a 60-business-day standard. Beginning in FY 2024, DPUC adjusted the target timeframe to 45 business days or less.]

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Actual	100.0%	80.5%	80.0%	--	--
