

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.

Because the Commission and the Division are located in the same facilities, share office services, have similar names, and some overlapping regulatory authority, the two agencies are often confused with each other by those not familiar with the roles of the agencies.

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

Budget

Public Utilities Commission

	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Enacted Budget	2022 Revised Budget	2023 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765
Total Expenditures	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	6,609,618	6,896,524	7,825,609	8,256,742	8,369,197
Contract Professional Services	1,604,345	1,424,512	2,927,836	3,807,836	3,326,836
Operating Supplies And Expenses	1,284,922	853,963	1,302,901	1,302,901	1,343,732
Subtotal: Operating	9,498,885	9,174,998	12,056,346	13,367,479	13,039,765
Capital Purchases And Equipment	72,750	28,395	410,000	410,000	380,000
Subtotal: Other	72,750	28,395	410,000	410,000	380,000
Total Expenditures	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
Federal Funds	200,098	223,657	540,253	566,124	582,689
Restricted Receipts	9,371,538	8,979,736	11,926,093	13,211,355	12,837,076
Total Expenditures	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765
FTE Authorization	52.0	52.0	54.0	54.0	54.0

Personnel Agency Summary

Public Utilities Commission

	FY 2022		FY 2023	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified	48.0	4,453,795	48.0	4,630,062
Unclassified	6.0	717,617	6.0	741,181
Subtotal	54.0	5,171,412	54.0	5,371,243
Overtime		55,940		57,079
Turnover		(180,000)		(169,125)
FY 2021 Retro COLA Payment		108,095		0
Total Salaries		5,155,447		5,259,197
Benefits				
Contract Stipends		37,500		37,500
FICA		388,317		396,359
Health Benefits		713,487		746,113
Payroll Accrual		28,780		0
Retiree Health		266,282		230,239
Retirement		1,463,365		1,492,822
Subtotal		2,897,731		2,903,033
Total Salaries and Benefits	54.0	8,053,178	54.0	8,162,230
Cost Per FTE Position		149,133		151,152
Statewide Benefit Assessment		203,564		206,967
Payroll Costs	54.0	8,256,742	54.0	8,369,197
Purchased Services				
Buildings and Ground Maintenance		29,000		46,000
Clerical and Temporary Services		79,000		69,000
Information Technology		93,000		93,000
Legal Services		603,000		603,000
Management & Consultant Services		2,672,908		2,172,908
Other Contracts		330,928		342,928
Subtotal		3,807,836		3,326,836
Total Personnel	54.0	12,064,578	54.0	11,696,033
Distribution by Source of Funds				
Federal Funds	0.0	553,162	0.0	569,727
Restricted Receipts	54.0	11,511,416	54.0	11,126,306
Total All Funds	54.0	12,064,578	54.0	11,696,033

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>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Actual	96.00%	95.00%	95.00%	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>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	95.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Actual	98.00%	98.00%	99.00%	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>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	95.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	97.00%	95.00%	96.00%	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>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	95.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	95.00%	95.00%	96.00%	0.00%	

Budget

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

Expenditures by Sub Program	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Enacted Budget	2022 Revised Budget	2023 Recommended
Operations	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765
Total Expenditures	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765
Expenditures by Object					
Salary and Benefits	6,609,618	6,896,524	7,825,609	8,256,742	8,369,197
Contract Professional Services	1,604,345	1,424,512	2,927,836	3,807,836	3,326,836
Operating Supplies and Expenses	1,284,922	853,963	1,302,901	1,302,901	1,343,732
Subtotal: Operating	9,498,885	9,174,998	12,056,346	13,367,479	13,039,765
Capital Purchases and Equipment	72,750	28,395	410,000	410,000	380,000
Subtotal: Other	72,750	28,395	410,000	410,000	380,000
Total Expenditures	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
Federal Funds	200,098	223,657	540,253	566,124	582,689
Restricted Receipts	9,371,538	8,979,736	11,926,093	13,211,355	12,837,076
Total Expenditures	9,571,635	9,203,393	12,466,346	13,777,479	13,419,765

Personnel

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

		FY 2022		FY 2023	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR	00145A	2.0	301,788	2.0	315,025
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCIAL AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT	00141A	1.0	127,012	1.0	130,067
ASSISTANT TO CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	0AB34A	1.0	89,519	1.0	93,341
ASSOCIATE ADM CABLE TV & LEGIS LIAIS FOR DIV/PU & CARR	00136A	1.0	100,078	1.0	102,580
ASSOCIATE PUBLIC UTILITIES ADMINISTRATOR FOR MOTOR CAR.	00140A	1.0	110,778	1.0	119,249
ASSOC PUBLIC UTIL ADMIN FOR ENG AND PIPELINE SAFETY	00140A	1.0	122,084	1.0	131,516
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OFFICER	0AB26A	1.0	64,818	1.0	66,439
CHF REGULATORY ANALYST (PUC)	00138A	1.0	110,244	1.0	117,602
CHIEF CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB28A	1.0	81,716	1.0	83,737
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (GENERAL)	0AB24A	1.0	62,976	1.0	64,550
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (MOTOR VEHICLES)	0AB24A	1.0	62,976	1.0	64,550
CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST	00138A	1.0	98,401	1.0	104,756
CHIEF IMPLEMENTATION AIDE	00128A	1.0	77,165	1.0	79,094
CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00139A	1.0	114,153	1.0	116,926
CHIEF OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT- TRAINING & CONT QUAL IMPROV	00135A	1.0	97,937	1.0	100,349
CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	00140A	2.0	246,414	2.0	252,518
CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB24A	4.0	234,179	4.0	246,300
DEPUTY CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00137A	5.0	509,076	5.0	530,811
HUMAN SERVICES BUSINESS OFFICER	0AB22A	1.0	55,517	1.0	56,905
IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTOR POLICY AND PROGRAMS	00140A	1.0	111,014	1.0	113,789
INFORMATION SERVICES TECHNICIAN II	0AB20A	1.0	54,843	1.0	56,903
INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	0AB28A	1.0	78,115	1.0	80,049
INVESTIGATIVE AUDITOR	00133A	1.0	102,303	1.0	104,755
MOTOR CARRIER COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR	0AB20A	1.0	58,137	1.0	59,560
PIPELINE SAFERY INSPECTOR II	0AB33A	1.0	94,814	1.0	97,134
PIPELINE SAFETY INSPECTOR I	0AB30A	4.0	287,025	4.0	304,950
PIPELINE SAFETY INSPECTOR II	0AB33A	1.0	77,502	1.0	82,334
PRINCIPAL POLICY ASSOCIATE(PUC)	00140A	1.0	115,990	1.0	118,765
PROGRAMMING SERVICES OFFICER	00131A	1.0	72,440	1.0	77,048
PUBLIC UTILITIES ANALYST V	0AB33A	1.0	99,658	1.0	102,116
PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR	00146A	2.0	324,524	2.0	332,584
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0AB28A	1.0	63,888	1.0	67,823

Personnel

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

		FY 2022		FY 2023	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0AB30A	2.0	150,180	2.0	157,054
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0AB33A	1.0	96,531	1.0	98,883
Subtotal Classified		48.0	4,453,795	48.0	4,630,062
Unclassified					
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00129A	1.0	94,608	1.0	96,932
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00822A	1.0	59,976	1.0	61,476
ADMINISTRATOR- DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS	00847A	1.0	164,451	1.0	174,225
CHAIRPERSON- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00844A	1.0	143,654	1.0	147,246
MEMBER- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00841A	2.0	254,928	2.0	261,302
Subtotal Unclassified		6.0	717,617	6.0	741,181
Subtotal		54.0	5,171,412	54.0	5,371,243
Overtime			55,940		57,079
Turnover			(180,000)		(169,125)
FY 2021 Retro COLA Payment			108,095		0
Total Salaries			5,155,447		5,259,197
Benefits					
Contract Stipends			37,500		37,500
FICA			388,317		396,359
Health Benefits			713,487		746,113
Payroll Accrual			28,780		0
Retiree Health			266,282		230,239
Retirement			1,463,365		1,492,822
Subtotal			2,897,731		2,903,033
Total Salaries and Benefits		54.0	8,053,178	54.0	8,162,230
Cost Per FTE Position			149,133		151,152
Statewide Benefit Assessment			203,564		206,967
Payroll Costs		54.0	8,256,742	54.0	8,369,197
Purchased Services					
Buildings and Ground Maintenance			29,000		46,000
Clerical and Temporary Services			79,000		69,000
Information Technology			93,000		93,000
Legal Services			603,000		603,000
Management & Consultant Services			2,672,908		2,172,908

Personnel

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

	FY 2022		FY 2023	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Purchased Services				
Other Contracts		330,928		342,928
Subtotal		3,807,836		3,326,836
Total Personnel	54.0	12,064,578	54.0	11,696,033
Distribution by Source of Funds				
Federal Funds	0.0	553,162	0.0	569,727
Restricted Receipts	54.0	11,511,416	54.0	11,126,306
Total All Funds	54.0	12,064,578	54.0	11,696,033