



Targeted TAG #4 – TAG Meeting

In the Community to Serve®

Date & time: 03/28/2024, 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM

Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Presenters: Noemi Ortiz, Brian Robertson

In attendance: Brian Robertson, Abe Abdallah, Bruce Folsom, Byron Harmon, Kathleen Campbell, Mark Chiles, Eric Shierman, Becky Hodges, Abbie Krebsbach, Scott Madison, Michael Freels, Noemi Ortiz, Rachel Preece, Alyn Spector, Tom Pardee, Quinn Weber, Matthew Doyle, Nick Sayen, Garret Senger, Dan Kirschner, Tim Dorpinghaus, Vincent Morales, Bailey Steeves, Ashley Stowkowy, Lori Blattner, Brian Stewart, Kary Burin, Debra Campbell, Caroline Moore, Carra Sahler, Chad Stokes, CNGC IRP, Corey Dahl, Damon McEnaney, Danielle Vitoff, Patrick Darras, Jennifer DeBoer, Ed Finklea, Heather Moline, Travis Hey, Brian Hoyle, Jeff Endler, Jim Griffith, JP Batmale, Kacia Brockman, Kim Herb, Laura Feinstein, Mahon Walsh, Marty Saldivar, Matt Steele, Devin McGreal, Mike Meyers, Nicole Singh, Russ Nishikawa, Tammy Nygard, Mike Paruszkiewicz, Michael Parvinen, Pat Delaquil, Phillip Popoff, Rebecca Eaton, Caleb Reimer, Chris Robbins, Rose Monahan, Samantha Christenson, Samuel Crawford, Kathi Scanlan, Sebastian Weber, Mark Sellers-Vaughn, Renie Sorensen, Zachary Sowards, Carolyn Stone, Tamy Linver, Timolin A., Tommy Brooks, Nathan Tyssen, Eric Wood, Jennifer Gross, Gabe Forrester, Melissa Martin, Cecelia Tanaka, Joshua Dennis, Jennifer Coulson, Daniel Tillis, Pete Marinace, Linda McFadden, Bobbi Morago, Chinelle Carrington, Domenica Frausto, Algje Au

Brian Robertson, Supervisor of Resource Planning, opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking stakeholders for participating in Cascade's IRP Process. Brian reminded folks that we wouldn't be doing introductions at the beginning of the meeting but asked if/when people interjected throughout the meeting to please introduce themselves.

Presentation #1 – Safety Moment

- Brian Robertson gave a quick safety moment on careful cleaning.

Presentation #2 – What is Equity?

- Noemi Ortiz, the energy efficiency manager who also oversees the equity advisory groups in Oregon and Washington and also within Cascade, introduced herself. She explains that equity in the energy sector aims to achieve energy justice by addressing disparities among customers, ensuring fair access to natural gas services, energy efficiency, and bill pay assistance. She emphasizes that energy justice also involves remedying social, economic, and health burdens faced by marginalized communities and including them in decision-making processes for energy policies and projects. Noemi references guidance from the Washington Legislature's office of equity, which emphasizes distributing and prioritizing resources to marginalized groups, eliminating systemic barriers, and promoting fairness and respect for all people.

Presentation #3 – What is Energy Justice?

- Noemi discussed the concept of equity in the energy sector, focusing on energy justice and its four tenets. She explained that equity aims to achieve energy justice by addressing disparities among customers, ensuring fair access to natural gas services, energy efficiency, and bill pay

assistance. She emphasized the importance of remedying social, economic, and health burdens faced by marginalized communities and including them in decision-making processes for energy policies and projects. She also mentioned that the Washington Legislature's office of equity provided guidance emphasizing the distribution and prioritization of resources to marginalized groups, the elimination of systemic barriers, and the promotion of fairness and respect for all people.

Question: Byron asked if the team would be looking at the distributional breakdown, how customers might respond to various market signals and elasticities, and if the team intends to look at demographic data to understand the impacts of electrification scenarios on different customer groups.

Answer: Jennifer Gross responded that much of the cost benefit analysis is still being explored, and Cascade is developing the process at the executive team level. They are not far enough along to share specific details but plan to discuss the analysis in future meetings. Regarding Byron's question, Brian mentioned that they are collecting data and considering various options, including a macro perspective model with case studies to deal with smaller datasets.

Question: Quinn asked if Cascade would be developing cost benefit analyses to look at projects post hoc as a way of informing restorative justice strategies.

Answer: Noemi responded that the cost benefit analysis process is still being developed, and they are working with their equity advisory group on it. They plan to use it as a decision-making tool for projects such as pipeline upgrades.

Question: Byron asked if there were more details available on the pilots and enhanced targeted conservation programs mentioned earlier, or if that information would be provided later.

Answer: Noemi responded that more details would be provided later. Cascade expects to consider more proposals for restorative justice, but the company understands that restorative justice is the last step in the process of applying the equity lens. They still need to collect and analyze data and observe trends for the restorative proposals. Noemi mentioned that it's a collaborative process that they will go through with the Equity Advisory Group (EAG) tag and the Cares Advisory Group for this IRP. At this early stage, the company cannot speak on what the proposals or outcomes will be.

Presentation #4 – What Has Cascade Done to Make Energy Justice Part of its Daily Operations?

- Noemi outlined the actions Cascade has taken to incorporate energy justice into its operations. In 2022, Cascade conducted a low-income needs assessment study and hired Noemi to oversee equity, ensuring equity is integrated into decision-making processes. In 2023, Cascade mapped its low-income customers and merged this data with billing data to identify trends. It also mapped census tracts likely to be low income. Cascade established an Equity Advisory Group in 2023, comprised of members who represent vulnerable populations, with monthly meetings to discuss regulatory proceedings and outreach. In response to feedback from the Equity Advisory Group, Cascade improved the accessibility of its customer communications for linguistically isolated customers, offering support in over 240 languages and translating its website into multiple languages. Cascade also launched the CARES program in 2023, implementing bill discounts and arrearage relief, designed in collaboration with the Cares advisory group. Additionally, Cascade is piloting the use of community-based organizations for outreach to hard-to-serve customers.

Presentation #5 – What Will Cascade Be Doing to Make Energy Justice Part of its Daily Operations?

- Noemi mentioned that a vice president equity sponsor will be responsible for training executives for top-down integration of equity. She also discussed Cascade's plans to create a benefit-cost analysis template for projects, collaborating with the EAG on its development and integrating its use for company projects. Additionally, Cascade will continue engagement with the Washington Equity Advisory Group and expects discussions on the multi-year rate plan, the IRP, and the Climate Commitment Act. They are also working to establish the Oregon Advisory Group and have identified vulnerable populations in the state to solicit community representatives for collaboration. Cascade will also continue engagement with the technical advisory group on the development of the IRP and work with the Cares Advisory Group on low-income assistance and the Conservation Advisory Group on energy efficiency programs.

Presentation #6 – When Will We Be Done?

- Noemi Ortiz discussed the ongoing process of incorporating energy justice into Cascade's daily operations. She emphasized that adopting an equity lens is an iterative process that will take time. Noemi highlighted the need to continue adjusting perceptions of what they are doing, how they are doing it, and how it affects others. She stressed that applying an equity lens is an ongoing collaborative process and requested help, grace, and patience from others as Cascade makes this paradigm shift. Noemi expressed the company's commitment to remaining open and engaging and asked others to do the same.

Presentation #7 – Feedback for Cascade

- Byron expressed appreciation for the hard work the team has put in, acknowledging that they have been asked to move mountains and recognizing their efforts. He wanted to ensure that the team knows their work is appreciated and acknowledged.

Question: Quinn asked if the Equity Advisory Group (EAG) meetings are open to the public.

Answer: Noemi responded that currently, the EAG meetings are not open to the public. Only the members, public council, and staff are allowed to attend. She mentioned that opening the meetings to the public has not been considered yet. Quinn thanked her for the clarification.

Presentation #8 – 2025 WA IRP Schedule

- Brian outlined the schedule for upcoming meetings, including discussions on customer load forecast, CCA compliance modeling, and resource integration. He emphasized the importance of feedback and stated that slides would be provided a week in advance of meetings. Brian also mentioned the transition from targeted tags to regular tag meetings, where they would discuss changes and recommendations for the IRP. He highlighted the need for feedback, especially for additional changes, and outlined the timeline for filing the IRP. Brian concluded by reminding participants of the next meeting on customer load forecast and encouraged them to reach out with any questions or feedback.

The Meeting was Adjourned

Per Cascade Commitment #8 (Stakeholder Engagement Design Document, 2/22,2022: “Provide TAG minutes that include the action items from bullet #7 as well as any upcoming deadlines for feedback on the IRP”), here are additional action items to track, coming out of the Targeted TAG 4 meeting:

1. Cascade will look into the EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool that was provided by WUTC.