
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

	2018 Actuals	2019 Actuals	2020 Enacted Budget	2020 Revised Budget	2021 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	9,014,227	9,125,176	11,382,980	11,369,924	11,658,234
Total Expenditures	9,014,227	9,125,176	11,382,980	11,369,924	11,658,234
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	6,099,135	6,274,696	7,106,801	7,047,602	7,341,923
Contract Professional Services	1,896,448	1,364,003	2,609,421	2,609,421	2,609,421
Operating Supplies And Expenses	862,422	1,266,615	1,256,758	1,302,901	1,296,890
Capital Purchases And Equipment	0	0	250,000	250,000	250,000
Subtotal: Operating	8,858,005	8,905,314	11,222,980	11,209,924	11,498,234
Capital Purchases And Equipment	156,222	219,862	160,000	160,000	160,000
Subtotal: Other	156,222	219,862	160,000	160,000	160,000
Total Expenditures	9,014,227	9,125,176	11,382,980	11,369,924	11,658,234
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
Federal Funds	165,815	177,974	178,002	175,928	178,744
Restricted Receipts	8,848,412	8,947,203	11,204,978	11,193,996	11,479,490
Total Expenditures	9,014,227	9,125,176	11,382,980	11,369,924	11,658,234
FTE Authorization	54.0	53.0	52.0	52.0	54.0

Personnel Agency Summary

Public Utilities Commission

	FY 2020		FY 2021	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified	45.0	3,745,292	47.0	3,923,255
Unclassified	7.0	713,931	7.0	722,555
Subtotal	52.0	4,459,223	54.0	4,645,810
Overtime (1.5)		53,000		53,000
Seasonal/Special Salaries/Wages		2,300		2,300
Turnover		(102,476)		(128,121)
Total Salaries		4,412,047		4,572,989
Benefits				
FICA		331,237		343,509
Health Benefits		628,887		672,201
Payroll Accrual		25,369		26,370
Retiree Health		289,876		265,322
Retirement		1,188,006		1,282,992
Subtotal		2,463,375		2,590,394
Total Salaries and Benefits	52.0	6,875,422	54.0	7,163,383
Cost Per FTE Position		132,220		132,655
Statewide Benefit Assessment		172,180		178,540
Payroll Costs	52.0	7,047,602	54.0	7,341,923
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		12,513
Subtotal		2,609,421		2,609,421
Total Personnel	52.0	9,657,023	54.0	9,951,344
Distribution by Source of Funds				
Federal Funds	0.0	162,966	0.0	165,782
Restricted Receipts	52.0	9,494,057	54.0	9,785,562
Total All Funds	52.0	9,657,023	54.0	9,951,344

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>				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Actual	94.80%	95.83%	96.00%	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>				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Actual	96.20%	98.46%	98.00%	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>				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	96.70%	97.30%	97.00%	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>				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	99.40%	94.44%	95.00%	0.00%	

Budget

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

Expenditures by Sub Program	2018 Actuals	2019 Actuals	2020 Enacted Budget	2020 Revised Budget	2021 Recommended
Operations	9,014,227	9,125,176	11,382,980	11,369,924	11,658,234
Total Expenditures	9,014,227	9,125,176	11,382,980	11,369,924	11,658,234
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Operating Supplies and Expenses	862,422	1,266,615	1,256,758	1,302,901	1,296,890
Capital Purchases And Equipment	0	0	250,000	250,000	250,000
Subtotal: Operating	8,858,005	8,905,314	11,222,980	11,209,924	11,498,234
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Personnel

Agency: Public Utilities Commission

Central Management

		FY 2020		FY 2021	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR	00145A	2.0	310,806	2.0	320,352
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCIAL AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT	00141A	1.0	109,899	1.0	109,899
ASSISTANT TO CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	0AB34A	1.0	95,006	1.0	95,467
ASSOCIATE ADM CABLE TV & LEGIS LIAIS FOR DIV/PU & CARR	00136A	1.0	94,786	1.0	95,257
ASSOCIATE PUBLIC UTILITIES ADMINISTRATOR FOR MOTOR CAR.	00136A	1.0	97,698	1.0	98,170
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OFFICER	0AB26A	1.0	59,317	1.0	61,896
CHF REGULATORY ANALYST (PUC)	0AB38A	1.0	96,432	1.0	96,912
CHIEF COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR	0AB30A	1.0	81,278	1.0	81,672
CHIEF CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB28A	1.0	71,318	1.0	71,318
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (GENERAL)	0AB24A	1.0	59,002	1.0	59,942
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (MOTOR VEHICLES)	0AB24A	1.0	59,324	1.0	59,942
CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST	00138A	1.0	108,167	1.0	108,696
CHIEF IMPLEMENTATION AIDE	00128A	1.0	70,842	1.0	73,448
CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00139A	1.0	108,289	1.0	108,812
CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	00140A	1.0	112,386	1.0	118,803
CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB18A	1.0	50,893	1.0	50,893
CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB24A	4.0	210,944	4.0	214,006
DEPUTY CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00137A	4.0	380,545	4.0	385,539
INFORMATION SERVICES TECHNICIAN I	0AB16A	1.0	40,410	1.0	41,392
INFORMATION SERVICES TECHNICIAN II	0AB20A	1.0	49,193	1.0	50,582
INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	0AB28A	1.0	67,943	1.0	68,277
INVESTIGATIVE AUDITOR	00133A	1.0	97,116	1.0	97,578
MOTOR CARRIER COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR	0AB20A	2.0	101,731	2.0	103,663
PRINCIPAL AUDITOR	0AB28A	1.0	69,929	1.0	70,278
PRINCIPAL POLICY ASSOCIATE(PUC)	00140A	1.0	110,120	1.0	110,643
PROGRAMMING SERVICES OFFICER	00131A	1.0	66,024	1.0	67,463
PUBLIC UTILITIES ANALYST III	0AB24A	0.0	0	1.0	59,723
PUBLIC UTILITIES ANALYST V	0AB33A	2.0	167,965	2.0	171,474
PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR	00146A	2.0	268,774	2.0	271,791
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0AB28A	3.0	195,541	4.0	259,461
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0AB33A	1.0	91,558	1.0	92,001
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL	00134A	2.0	156,730	2.0	162,579
SUPERVISING CIVIL ENGINEER (NATURAL RESOURCES)	00035A	1.0	85,326	1.0	85,326

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Classified					
Subtotal Classified	45.0	3,745,292	47.0	3,923,255	
Unclassified					
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00129A	1.0	89,889	1.0	89,889
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00822A	2.0	113,610	2.0	114,176
ADMINISTRATOR- DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS	00847A	1.0	136,059	1.0	139,104
CHAIRPERSON- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00844A	1.0	136,059	1.0	136,736
MEMBER- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00841A	2.0	238,314	2.0	242,650
Subtotal Unclassified	7.0	713,931	7.0	722,555	
Subtotal	52.0	4,459,223	54.0	4,645,810	
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