
Agency Summary

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Agency Mission

The Public Utilities Commission and Division of Public Utilities and Carriers supervises, regulates, and makes orders governing the conduct of companies offering to the public in intrastate commerce energy, communication, and 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.G.L. § 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 R.I.G.L. § 39-19-4, appeals under R.I.G.L. § 39-1-30, petitions under R.I.G.L. § 39-1-31, and proceedings under R.I.G.L. § 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 R.I.G.L. § 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 R.I.G.L. § 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.

Budget

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

	2017 Actuals	2018 Actuals	2019 Enacted Budget	2019 Revised Budget	2020 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	8,014,894	9,014,227	9,934,831	10,623,497	12,212,583
Total Expenditures	8,014,894	9,014,227	9,934,831	10,623,497	12,212,583
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	5,960,744	6,099,135	6,604,281	6,641,891	7,853,116
Contract Professional Services	1,295,935	1,896,448	1,990,525	2,609,421	2,677,171
Operating Supplies And Expenses	703,636	862,422	1,240,025	1,272,185	1,268,096
Assistance And Grants	0	0	0	0	4,200
Subtotal: Operating	7,960,315	8,858,005	9,834,831	10,523,497	11,802,583
Capital Purchases And Equipment	54,579	156,222	100,000	100,000	410,000
Subtotal: Other	54,579	156,222	100,000	100,000	410,000
Total Expenditures	8,014,894	9,014,227	9,934,831	10,623,497	12,212,583
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
Federal Funds	118,808	165,815	168,378	168,378	178,002
Restricted Receipts	7,896,086	8,848,412	9,766,453	10,455,119	12,034,581
Total Expenditures	8,014,894	9,014,227	9,934,831	10,623,497	12,212,583
FTE Authorization	51.0	54.0	53.0	53.0	60.0

Personnel Agency Summary

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

	FY 2019		FY 2020	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified	47.0	3,630,932	54.0	4,388,083
Unclassified	6.0	624,106	6.0	654,904
Subtotal	53.0	4,255,038	60.0	5,042,987
Overtime (1.5)		53,000		53,000
Seasonal/Special Salaries/Wages		2,300		2,300
Turnover		(175,295)		(243,063)
Total Salaries		4,135,043		4,855,224
Benefits				
FICA		309,764		370,599
Health Benefits		628,077		762,640
Payroll Accrual		23,582		27,853
Retiree Health		243,970		319,195
Retirement		1,113,784		1,316,009
Subtotal		2,319,177		2,796,296
Total Salaries and Benefits	53.0	6,454,220	60.0	7,651,520
Cost Per FTE Position		121,778		127,525
Statewide Benefit Assessment		187,671		201,596
Payroll Costs	53.0	6,641,891	60.0	7,853,116
Purchased Services				
Buildings and Ground Maintenance		29,000		29,000
Clerical and Temporary Services		79,000		79,000
Design and Engineering Services		0		55,000
Information Technology		93,000		93,000
Legal Services		353,000		353,000
Management & Consultant Services		2,042,908		2,055,658
Other Contracts		12,513		12,513
Subtotal		2,609,421		2,677,171
Total Personnel	53.0	9,251,312	60.0	10,530,287
Distribution by Source of Funds				
Federal Funds		155,416		165,040
Restricted Receipts		9,095,896		10,365,247
Total All Funds		9,251,312		10,530,287

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>				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	97.50%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Actual	97.50%	94.80%	95.83%	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>				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	98.80%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Actual	98.80%	96.20%	98.46%	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>				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	95.50%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	95.50%	96.70%	97.30%	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>				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	98.60%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Actual	98.60%	99.40%	94.44%	0.00%	

Budget

Agency: PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Central Management

Expenditures by Sub Program	2017 Actuals	2018 Actuals	2019 Enacted Budget	2019 Revised Budget	2020 Recommended
Operations	8,014,894	9,014,227	9,934,831	10,623,497	12,212,583
Total Expenditures	8,014,894	9,014,227	9,934,831	10,623,497	12,212,583
Expenditures by Object					
Salary and Benefits	5,960,744	6,099,135	6,604,281	6,641,891	7,853,116
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Operating Supplies and Expenses	703,636	862,422	1,240,025	1,272,185	1,268,096
Assistance And Grants	0	0	0	0	4,200
Subtotal: Operating	7,960,315	8,858,005	9,834,831	10,523,497	11,802,583
Capital Purchases And Equipment	54,579	156,222	100,000	100,000	410,000
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Personnel

Agency: PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Central Management

		FY 2019		FY 2020	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR	00145A	2.0	287,693	2.0	310,498
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	0AB31A	1.0	86,488	1.0	89,693
ADMINISTRATOR- FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	00137A	1.0	94,601	1.0	98,173
ASSISTANT TO CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	0AB34A	1.0	95,407	1.0	98,926
ASSOCIATE ADM CABLE TV & LEGIS LIAIS FOR DIV/PU & CARR	00136A	1.0	91,337	1.0	94,786
ASSOCIATE PUBLIC UTILITIES ADMINISTRATOR FOR MOTOR CAR.	00136A	1.0	94,250	1.0	97,698
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OFFICER	0AB26A	1.0	55,487	1.0	59,310
CHF REGULATORY ANALYST (PUC)	00138A	1.0	88,592	1.0	95,279
CHIEF COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR	0AB30A	1.0	78,396	1.0	81,278
CHIEF CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB28A	1.0	66,220	1.0	72,344
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (GENERAL)	0AB24A	1.0	54,395	1.0	59,002
CHIEF FIELD INVESTIGATOR (MOTOR VEHICLES)	0AB24A	1.0	54,774	1.0	59,324
CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST	00138A	1.0	104,297	1.0	108,167
CHIEF IMPLEMENTATION AIDE	00128A	1.0	65,485	1.0	70,828
CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00139A	1.0	100,913	1.0	108,289
CHIEF PUBLIC UTILITIES ACCOUNTANT	00140A	1.0	88,179	1.0	97,486
CONSUMER AGENT (DPUC)	0AB24A	4.0	192,282	5.0	259,367
DEPUTY CHIEF OF LEGAL SERVICES	00137A	3.0	272,166	3.0	286,251
GENERAL MANAGER (RI WATER RESOURCES BOARD)	00137A	0.0	0	1.0	93,498
INFORMATION SERVICES TECHNICIAN I	0AB16A	2.0	92,325	2.0	95,731
INFORMATION SERVICES TECHNICIAN II	0AB20A	1.0	42,234	1.0	45,547
INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	0AB28A	1.0	64,829	1.0	69,614
INVESTIGATIVE AUDITOR	00133A	1.0	93,735	1.0	97,116
MOTOR CARRIER COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR	0AB20A	2.0	97,021	2.0	101,726
PRINCIPAL AUDITOR	0AB28A	1.0	67,385	1.0	69,929
PRINCIPAL POLICY ASSOCIATE(PUC	00140A	1.0	101,319	1.0	105,144
PROGRAMMING SERVICES OFFICER	00131A	2.0	127,242	2.0	139,324
PUBLIC UTILITIES ANALYST III	0AB24A	0.0	0	1.0	50,035
PUBLIC UTILITIES ANALYST V	0AB33A	4.0	338,538	4.0	353,761
PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR	00146A	2.0	247,280	2.0	266,744
PUBLIC UTILITIES ENGINEERING SPECIALIST II	0AB28A	4.0	240,067	6.0	377,628
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL	00134A	2.0	147,995	2.0	162,067
STAFF DIRECTOR (WATER RESOURCES BOARD)	00137A	0.0	0	1.0	106,954

Personnel

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		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Classified					
SUPERVISING CIVIL ENGINEER (WATER RESOURCES)	00135A	0.0	0	1.0	106,566
Subtotal Classified		47.0	3,630,932	54.0	4,388,083
Unclassified					
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	00822A	2.0	107,406	2.0	113,610
ADMINISTRATOR- DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS	00847A	1.0	145,885	1.0	151,393
CHAIRPERSON- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00844A	1.0	131,109	1.0	136,059
MEMBER- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	00841A	2.0	239,706	2.0	253,842
Subtotal Unclassified		6.0	624,106	6.0	654,904
Subtotal		53.0	4,255,038	60.0	5,042,987
Overtime (1.5)			53,000		53,000
Seasonal/Special Salaries/Wages			2,300		2,300
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