



# PAPUC FORWARD

**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
Strategic Plan 2025-2029**

September 25, 2024



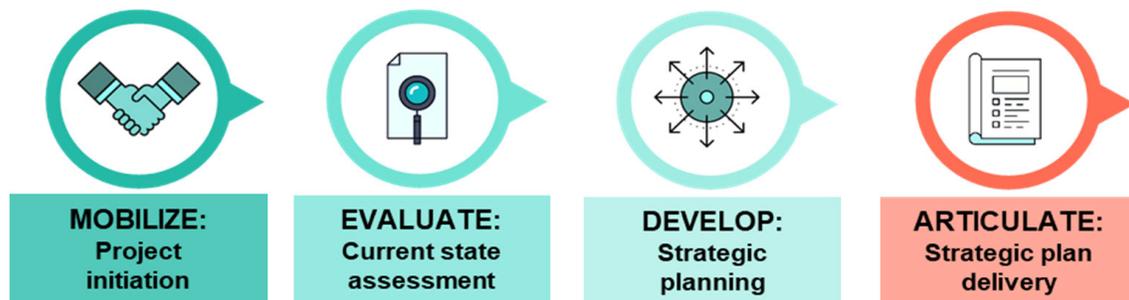
# Introduction and Preview

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) is proud to officially launch our new five-year strategic plan for 2025 to 2029. “PAPUC Forward” is designed to ensure the Commission remains a leader in state utility regulation as we approach our 90th anniversary in 2027 – the midpoint of this operational strategy.

It’s been over a decade since the Commission last undertook such a comprehensive planning process. The PUC’s preceding long-term strategic plan, created internally by senior leadership, primarily focused on external policy goals related to safety and reliability, competitive markets, infrastructure, economic development, and the environment.

New responsibilities from the General Assembly, leadership changes at the Commissioner, Executive Director and Bureau Director levels in late 2023, and evolving work practices in a post-pandemic environment made it necessary for a new roadmap to help propel our agency successfully into the future. While the Commission itself changed in a substantial way, state government also has evolved with increased expectations of providing less complicated, more efficient services.

Recognizing the urgent need for a structured approach to integrate new leadership and navigate a changing landscape, the PUC sought outside assistance to help develop a strategic plan.



In March 2024, the PUC engaged Baker Tilly to assist with developing a comprehensive operational strategy that the PUC can leverage for years to come while also aligning all bureaus, divisions and leaders around a collective plan. Over the following four-and-a-half months, Baker Tilly worked with the PUC’s Strategic Planning Core Team; reviewed anonymous quarterly employee surveys; solicited input from external jurisdictional utilities and consumer advocates; and interviewed Commissioners, Bureau Directors and Managers.

Using this analysis, Baker Tilly facilitated the creation of a new vision for the agency. This vision incorporates a renewed commitment to the longstanding mission statement; identifies our core, guiding values; and articulates five strategic focus areas, 13 key objectives, and new initiatives that flow from the objectives.

“PA PUC Forward” is an operational plan. At its core, it is about enhancing our agency’s staffing, operations and the services that we proudly provide to all Pennsylvanians. We will, of course, consider our unique regulatory landscape while optimizing operations. We also will move forward consistent with all related statutes and regulations governing our operations and those we regulate.

Our plan seeks to support our employees and their needs in important ways, all focused on ensuring our Commission is a leader among agencies statewide and regulatory agencies worldwide while making the Commission an even better place to work and to serve the public.

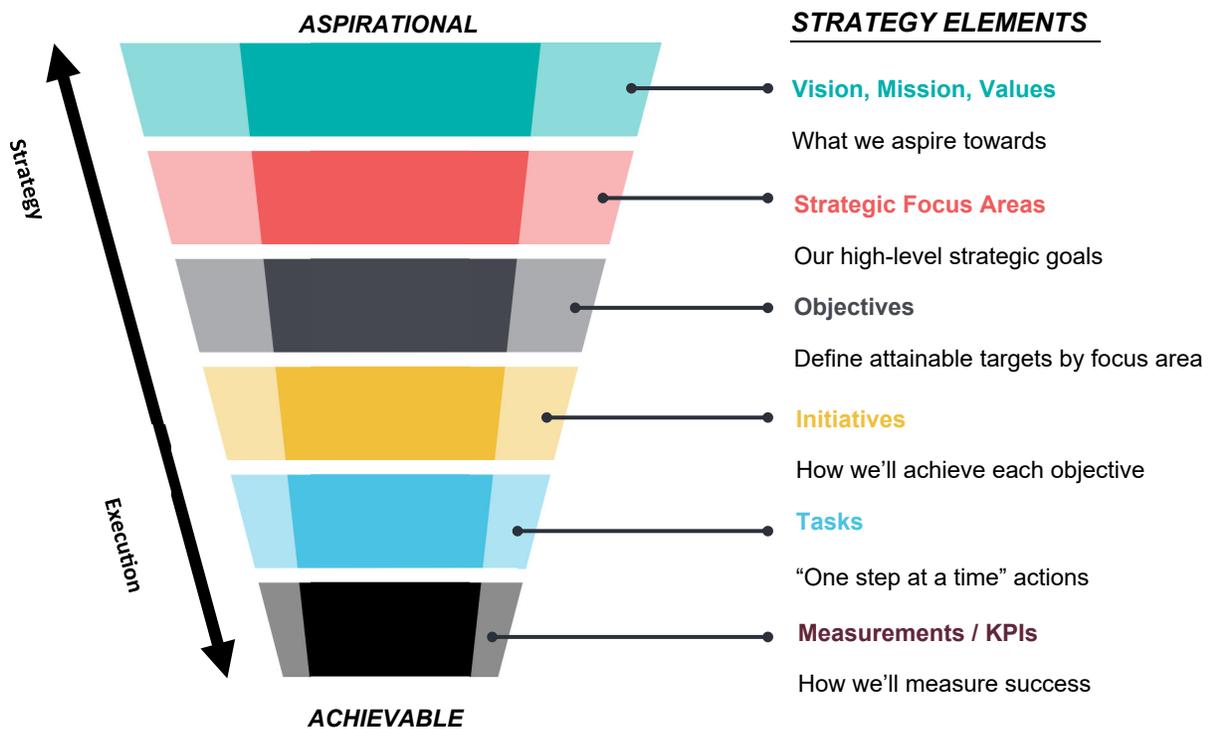
Here is a preview of our plan:

- ❑ Developing and enhancing our staff’s professional skills by offering mentorship and training opportunities to create a pipeline of experienced professionals for the jobs of tomorrow.
- ❑ Attracting and recruiting skilled, talented staff to fill vacancies – allowing bureaus to advance customer service offerings and improve workload processing times.
- ❑ Assessing flexible work arrangements to meet modern workforce demands while ensuring workload needs are efficiently met.
- ❑ Creating career pipelines that open opportunities for promotion and advancement within the Commission.
- ❑ Enhancing employee engagement and recognition to foster a positive work culture that aids in retaining our staff.
- ❑ Encouraging and nurturing more interaction and collaboration among bureaus to develop stronger relationships among all staff and areas of the Commission.
- ❑ Exploring options for diversity programs and opportunities that create a culture of acceptance and intentionality in our everyday work.
- ❑ Creating a process excellence framework that utilizes core principles of project management, develops an in-house process improvement mindset, and streamlines workflow tasks to create efficiencies.
- ❑ Developing an “Innovation Engine” to encourage creative problem solving and workshopping to improve the way we work and the services we provide to Pennsylvanians.
- ❑ Communicating with staff more transparently and consistently so we are aligned on priorities and there is a positive feedback loop to proactively address issues expeditiously.
- ❑ Modernizing technology to leverage technological efficiencies that eliminate unnecessary manual processes so we can focus on creating and finetuning a quality work product or customer service.

As we begin implementing the strategic plan, there are some critical strategy assumptions that the Commission will need to consider when setting priorities:

- Prioritization and leadership will need to support strategic initiatives over other projects that compete for time and resources.
- Open positions need to be filled to create capacity to focus on initiatives.
- Financial resources will need to be allocated to source the skills and capabilities necessary to execute projects that invest in our operations.
- More significant investments in technology will be necessary.

We also need an organized and deliberate approach to be successful. The strategic plan provides a structure for our efforts to achieve our key operational objectives of the five strategic focus areas that will drive us to be successful in fulfilling our mission and vision. Our values are the guiderails we will use to carry out initiatives and tasks successfully.





## Vision

To be leaders in state utility regulation with creative, forward-thinking, proactive oversight services, anticipating and addressing the rapidly evolving utility needs of Pennsylvania consumers.



## Mission

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission balances the needs of consumers and utilities; ensures safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protects the public interest; educates consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; furthers economic development; and fosters new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.



## Values

- **Integrity and Accountability**  
Upholding honesty, transparency, and ethical behavior in all our actions as we take ownership of our responsibilities, actions and decisions.
- **Innovation**  
Embracing forward-thinking solutions and technological advancements.
- **Collaboration**  
Fostering teamwork, trust, positive relationships and open communication.
- **Resilience**  
Demonstrating adaptability to an evolving landscape and new technology and meeting challenges and change with strength.
- **Public Service**  
Approaching our work duties with a commitment to providing the highest standard of service, while fairly considering the impacts on all Pennsylvanians, and serving as a responsible steward of public funds.

# Strategic Focus Areas

Baker Tilly conducted a current state assessment through interviews, surveys and reviews of extensive documentation. The major themes that emerged from the process facilitated by Baker Tilly were people, technology and innovations, project management and operational efficiency, organizational structure and alignment, risk management and strategic planning, and organizational governance and decision-making.

These themes led directly to five strategic focus areas to serve as a guide toward fulfilling the PUC's mission:



## People and Culture

The PUC seeks to foster a positive and supportive culture by enhancing professional development and advancement opportunities for our staff; attracting more talent by modernizing our recruitment strategy; and improving workplace culture and exploring tools to provide diverse opportunities and to boost employee engagement.



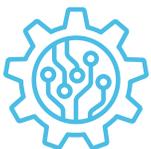
## Project Management Capability

The PUC seeks to create project management capability by establishing a process excellence framework for project execution. The framework would establish both project portfolio management and project governance capabilities.



## Process and Operational Excellence

The PUC will create an "Innovation Engine" to promote ideation that drives operational efficiency and effectiveness; standardize and evolve operations for common and consistent workflow execution; and refine the Commission's operating model while standardizing roles and responsibilities.



## Technology Modernization

The PUC will deliver modernization throughout the agency, by ensuring staff has modern technology applications and office productivity solutions to carry out their duties in the most efficient manner and provide customer service that aligns with modern expectations; and by building out the skill and capacity of IT services and support to meet the needs of the Commission as it evolves.



## Communication

The PUC will strengthen internal credibility and trust as well as enhance workplace culture by broadening our communication focus; promoting transparent and consistent information sharing; employing new technology initiatives to improve our communications capabilities; and enhancing consumer education to better inform Pennsylvania ratepayers by streamlining outreach opportunities between the Office of Communications and the Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS).

# Objectives and Initiatives

Strategic objectives are the specific outcomes or achievements that the Commission aims to accomplish within each strategic focus area. Objectives are composed of initiatives that drive the objectives to completion.

Strategic initiatives are the actual projects or programs undertaken to achieve the defined objectives within each focus area. These initiatives translate high-level strategic objectives into actionable plans and activities. Initiatives answer the question: “How will we achieve our objectives?”

By aligning initiatives with strategic objectives, the PUC can ensure our efforts are focused on activities that directly contribute to achieving desired outcomes. Aligning resources and efforts with strategic initiatives will allow the PUC to drive progress toward our goals and fulfilling our mission and vision.



## People & Culture

### **Objective:**

Enhance Professional Development and Advancement Opportunities

### **Initiatives:**

1. Assess, design and implement career progression pathways, including examining job classifications and building additional career ladder opportunities.
2. Assess existing talent management capabilities and design and implement tailored training and mentorship programs for all employees.
3. Develop and execute succession planning initiatives that include skill assessments and augmented skill development.

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### **Objective:**

Evolve Recruitment Strategy to Attract Skilled Talent

### **Initiatives:**

1. Design, develop and implement a holistic student hiring strategy, leveraging internships, fellowships and educational partnerships.
2. Improve and modernize recruitment processes, focusing on using modern digital recruitment applications, leveraging career fairs, adding additional capacity to help with recruitment, streamlining recruitment processes, and exploring alternative hiring practices.

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### **Objective:**

Improve Our Workplace Culture While Promoting Diversity and Enhancing Employee Engagement

**Initiatives:**

- Explore employee retention and engagement best practices to establish new and enhance current programs, including the PUC's existing employee recognition program.
- Assess existing flexible work arrangements, such as telework policies and alternative work schedules, and make improvements that promote recruitment and retention while enhancing workflow processes.
- Foster and promote cross-bureau interaction and relationship building to improve communications across different program areas and generate a better sense of community and common purpose.
- Evaluate the PUC's current diversity complement and consider different tools to promote diversity and inclusivity in the PUC's work culture and recruitment strategies.



## Project Management Capability

**Objective:**

Establish a Process Excellence Framework for Project Execution

**Initiatives:**

1. Design and implement standardized formal project management methodologies, frameworks and tools into PUC's day-to-day operations so that projects can be appropriately scoped, designed and executed while managing resources appropriately and efficiently.
2. Support regular reporting on project milestones and resource estimates for transparency and prioritization.
3. Hire or designate and train lead personnel and provide operational support to bureaus to effectively manage projects without impeding regular workloads.

**Objective:**

Establish Project Portfolio Management Capabilities

**Initiatives:**

1. Establish a standardized process for project requests and intake while incorporating business justifications that include core elements such as benefit to the PUC's operations, cost, personnel needed, legal implications and anticipated time for completion.
2. Establish an evaluation process to score, prioritize and select projects that align with the PUC's mission.

**Objective:**

Establish Project Governance Capabilities

**Initiatives:**

1. Develop a quality assessment process to ensure that the PUC is using defined project methodologies and making improvements to project submissions through training and Process Quality Assurance processes.

2. Implement resource allocation monitoring and reporting to track project results and evaluate the efficacy of investments made.
3. Establish scorecards and reporting for the PUC's project portfolio.



## Process & Operational Excellence

### **Objective:**

Create an Innovation Engine That Drives Efficiency and Effectiveness

### **Initiatives:**

1. Design and implement an Innovation Engine methodology responsible for ideation, intake, and prioritization of efficiency and effectiveness projects submitted by PUC staff. The methodology should consider tools such as innovation awards, training lunch and learns, and innovation and stakeholder experience workshops.
2. Design and develop external sources of benchmarking and best practice information to monitor innovation trends that incorporate process improvements, technology, and compliance into workplace environments.

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### **Objective:**

Standardize and Evolve Operations for Common and Consistent Execution

### **Initiatives:**

1. Design, implement, and train on documented business unit processes by formalizing Methods of Procedures (MOPs) for bureau workflow management into a central source methodology.
2. Design, implement and train on a continuous improvement program or portfolio. This may leverage aspects of Lean, Six Sigma or other continuous business process improvement programs in addition to technology enabled improvement.
3. Design, implement and train on enterprise performance management and operational metrics.

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### **Objective:**

Formalize the PUC's Operating Model and Staff Roles and Responsibilities

### **Initiatives:**

1. Design, implement, and train on an overall PUC operating model incorporating defined and standardized roles, responsibilities, and transparent workflow processes for cross-agency visibility and collaboration, while utilizing resource management in conjunction with the process excellence framework to direct personnel in appropriate areas to address current and future needs.



# Technology Modernization

## Objective:

Ensure the PUC Has Modern Technology Applications and Office Productivity Solutions to Deliver PUC Services in the Most Efficient Manner

## Initiatives:

1. Assess, design, develop and execute a technology modernization roadmap. The roadmap should include:
  - Internal and external applications;
  - Data, analytics and reporting;
  - Knowledge sharing and research solutions;
  - Upgrades for current infrastructure including internal and external cyber solutions;
  - Needed investments to execute against the modernization roadmap;
  - Collaboration and office productivity solutions; and
  - Other technology innovation opportunities that provide a valuable return on investment, such as automation or AI.

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## Objective:

Ensure the PUC Has the Appropriate Level and Organization of IT Services and Support

## Initiatives:

1. Build out the skills and capacity of IT services and support to meet the current and future needs of the Commission.
2. Assess, design, develop and implement a future IT operating model for the PUC:
  - Focus will be on the individual bureau's role in driving the functional roles within an IT operating model to ensure appropriate prioritization and functional optimization; and
  - Reset IT governance groups while reconsidering appropriate bureau staff participation, cadence and duration of meetings, and developing a format that provides a better functional view of project statuses and concerns.
3. Assess, design, develop and execute on IT service delivery optimization focused on:
  - Ensuring appropriate skills, staffing, capacity and management are available to address PUC IT support needs;
  - Addressing the IT service delivery needs of internal PUC stakeholders and external PUC stakeholders;
  - Removing an existing gap in technical re-enforcement training and end-user efficiency training; and
  - Assess, select and implement a modern IT service delivery model framework that assists the PUC with improving its IT applications while mitigating cybersecurity concerns.



# Communication

**Objective:**

Strengthen Internal Credibility and Trust to Enhance Culture with Transparency and Consistency in Information Sharing with a Broader Communication Focus  
Incorporating the Voice of Bureau Leadership More Frequently

**Initiatives:**

1. Design, develop and implement internal central communication and collaboration sites to facilitate communication across the agency.
2. Design, develop and implement broad-based communication plans to address strategy execution and operational updates.
3. Design, develop and implement active listening and feedback mechanisms to capture ideas and input and to verify the team is receiving our communications as intended.

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**Objective:**

Enhance Consumer-Education Communications and Channels for Pennsylvania Ratepayers by Streamlining Outreach Opportunities between the Office of Communications and the Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS)

**Initiatives:**

1. Assess, design, develop and implement optimization opportunities for consumer education and overall engagement. Optimization opportunities exist between BCS and the Office of Communications, including but not limited to evaluating alignment of consumer education and outreach within BCS.
2. Formalize a standard “playbook” or standard operating procedures (SOPs) for consumer-education events.
3. Develop and enhance consumer-education engagement and outreach programs, including Be Wise and Be Utility Wise conferences, with a similar cadence and focus as pre-pandemic levels.

## You Can Make This Launch and This Mission Succeed

At its heart, our plan is designed for our greatest asset – our people. Your expertise, dedication and passion are what will make this launch – and our overall mission – a success.

Our objectives are ambitious but achievable. The new Strategic Plan lays out a powerful vision for our Commission and a dynamic roadmap to reach our goals. It's about moving our Commission forward for our future.



The success and well-being of our PUC employees were foremost on our minds as we created this plan. The Commission extends our deepest gratitude to all who participated in our quarterly surveys and contributed their valuable insights, which played a pivotal role in shaping this plan.

We will continue to seek your feedback as implementation moves forward. Through this process and beyond, the Commission will continue to conduct quarterly surveys. The input gained continues to be very important to this effort.

We will continue to communicate with you in a variety of ways and keep you involved every step of the way.

“PAPUC Forward” focuses on “Our Commission. Our Future.” We are committed to moving forward with purpose and optimism, not just for today, but for the bright future of our Commission, our Commonwealth, and the utilities and Pennsylvanians who depend on the services we provide.

This plan sets the PA PUC on a path to 21st century governance, all in the name of better serving Pennsylvania.







**PAPUC**  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION