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| PUC logo | *COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**BUREAU OF CONSUMER SERVICES**P.O. BOX 3265, HARRISBURG, PA 17105-3265* |

March 28, 2018

**Docket No:** M-2017-2596907

To: All Parties to M-2017-2596907

Re: Release of Universal Service Staff Report and Establishing a Universal Service Workgroup

On May 10, 2017, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) entered an Opinion and Order, initiating a comprehensive review of the Universal Service and Energy Conservation model at this docket.

On July 14, 2017, pursuant to the May 10 Order, the Commission published a report developed by the Law Bureau with the assistance of the Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) on the statutory, regulatory, and policy frameworks of existing Universal Service and Energy Conservation Programs. The July 14 Report also outlined the processes required to initiate any proposed changes to the existing Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan (USECP) and Low-Income Usage Reduction Plan (LIURP) frameworks.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The May 10 Order invited interested parties to provide input on their priorities, concerns, and suggestions for amending and improving any or all aspects of universal service programs. Written comments were due by August 8, 2017.

BCS coordinated a stakeholder meeting on September 23-24, 2017, to gather feedback on the previously submitted comments and any other priorities, concerns, or suggested changes pertaining to the USECPs. Interested parties submitted reply comments on October 16, 2017.

BCS, in consultation with the Law Bureau, has prepared a Staff Report summarizing the parties’ comments, feedback, and suggestions.

With this Secretarial Letter, the Commission publishes and serves the Staff Report at this docket. This Staff Report will also be available on the Commission’s website and published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. The Staff Report reflects many instances where utilities, advocates, and community-based organizations recommend similar changes to universal service policies and procedures. The Commission encourages parties to continue to explore these areas of general consensus to determine if immediate standardizations and enhancements can be identified.

Additionally, the Commission tasks BCS with establishing a Universal Service Workgroup to further discuss and provide recommendations on various policies and practices regarding universal service and energy conservation programs. We shall start the process with the following topics:

* Standardizing the forms used to certify a household has no income when applying for Customer Assistance Programs (*i.e.*, zero income forms)
* Revising the USECP review and universal service evaluation schedules
* Developing a common application form for all Pennsylvania utility universal service programs

The Commission invites your participation in the Universal Service Workgroup, the first meeting of which will be held on Monday, May 7, 2018, from 1pm to 3pm in the Keystone Building, Executive Chambers, in Harrisburg. Please email ra-pc-uswg@pa.gov to inform the Commission of your intent to participate by April  6, 2018. While in-person attendance is strongly encouraged, conference call details will be provided for those who choose to participate remotely.

This meeting will focus on standardizing zero-income forms and planning for future sessions. Prior to the meeting, BCS will provide information about current utility zero-income forms to workgroup participants.

Stakeholders are also encouraged to send an email to ra-pc-uswg@pa.gov to be placed on a mailing list for updates on Workgroup progress and information about future meetings.

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 Sincerely,

 Rosemary Chiavetta

 Secretary

cc: Lori Mohr, BCS, laumohr@pa.gov

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 Cert. of Service via email

1. The July 14 Report is posted at http://www.puc.pa.gov/pcdocs/1528448.docx. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)