



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
COMMONWEALTH KEYSTONE BUILDING
400 NORTH STREET
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120
August 22, 2023

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO OUR FILE

To: All Jurisdictional Fixed Public Utilities:

**Re: 2023 Review of All Jurisdictional Fixed Utilities' Universal Service Programs
Docket Number M-2023-3038944**

On March 16, 2023, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) adopted the Joint Motion of Vice Chairman Stephen M. DeFrank and Commissioner Kathryn L. Zerfuss requesting comments, review and potential revisions to the Commission’s universal service policies for electric distribution companies, natural gas distribution companies, jurisdictional water and wastewater utilities and local exchange telecommunications companies. This was followed by a Secretarial Letter dated March 27, 2023 that specifically requested comments from interested parties regarding how the Commission’s regulations, policies and procedures could be revised with a particular focus on 1) increasing program coordination among all utilities, 2) streamlining the eligibility and enrollment process, and 3) reducing the number of otherwise eligible consumers from losing low-income benefits due to the verification or re-enrollment process. The Commission articulated fourteen (14) questions on which comment was sought and noted that a review of these comments may help inform the Commission’s consideration of improvements to the existing programs, including improvements that may be considered in the context of a future rulemaking proceeding.

The Secretarial Letter was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on April 8, 2023 setting a sixty (60) day period in which to file comments.¹ By June 7, 2023, comments were received by multiple interested stakeholders.

The Commission has reviewed the filed comments and has determined that a working group should be formed involving the Commission’s Law Bureau and Bureau of Consumer Services, as well as all interested parties, to address the issues raised in the comments and related matters. The objectives of this working group would be specifically to:

1. Develop a common application that could be used by all jurisdictional fixed public utilities statewide to facilitate the enrollment of eligible customers into their utilities’ universal service programs.
2. Discuss the potential development of a website dedicated to facilitating the enrollment of customers into utilities’ universal service programs using, among other tools, the common application developed in #1 above.
3. Discuss the requirements of a statewide administrator, or some other agency, bureau or entity, to administer universal service enrollment statewide, including the potential website identified in #2 above.
4. Prepare for the data sharing by the Department of Human Services anticipated on or about the summer of 2024.
5. Any other actions required to advance the goals set forth in the Secretarial Letter at this docket dated March 27, 2023.

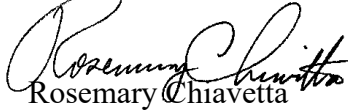
¹ 53 Pa.Bull 2022 (April 8, 2023).

The first meeting of this working group will occur on September 21, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be conducted in-person in Hearing Room 1 of the Commonwealth Keystone Building, 400 North Street, 2nd Floor, Harrisburg, PA, 17120, and will also allow for remote participation via Microsoft Teams. Please advise if you would need an accommodation in order to participate in the proceeding.

The working group shall meet from time to time as determined by consensus of the working group and shall file with the Commission a comprehensive report at this docket on the above identified five (5) items with the goal of completing the report within six (6) months of the date of the first meeting, or by March 21, 2024.

For additional information, or to indicate your intent to participate in the working group, please email Nathan Froehlich, of the Commission's Bureau of Consumer Services, at nfroehlich@pa.gov.

Sincerely,


Rosemary Chiavetta
Secretary

Cc: Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, Chairman
Stephen M. DeFrank, Vice Chairman
Ralph V. Yanora, Commissioner
Kathryn L. Zerfuss, Commissioner
John F. Coleman, Commissioner
David Screven, Acting Executive Deputy Chief Counsel
Alexis Bechtel, Director, Bureau of Consumer Services
Tom Charles, Director, Office of Communications
Legislative Reference Bureau
Brian Whorl, Director of Federal Programs and Program Management, Department of Human Services
Carl Feldman, Director of Policy, Department of Human Services