



**Equity Advisory Group –
Equity Lens Session**

Meeting Date:	November 20, 2024
Time:	12:00 PM
Location:	Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

Facilitator	Present	EAG Member	Member Organizations
Amber Lenhart	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clyde Abrahamson	Spokane Indian Housing Authority
Avista Team Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Margee Chambers	Spokane Clean Air
Dan Blazquez	<input type="checkbox"/>	Connie Kliewer	NEWESD101
Tamara Bradley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clair Trapp	Rural Resources
Steve Cutter	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Tietz	Salem Arms Community Housing
Amanda Ghering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	KJ January	Spectrum
Ariana Barrey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	William von Bracht	Othello, school English as 2nd language
Kelly Dengel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michele Bennington	Community member at large
Annette Brandon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brook Beeler	Department of Ecology Eastern Region
Ariana Barrey	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jupiter McGee	Sunrise Spokane Affiliation (youth led) (Facebook)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vanessa Strong	Spokane Public Library
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tami Dillion	Skills'kin
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cindy Kimmet	Takesa Village
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carmen Groom	SNAP
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rowena Pineda	Reimagine Spokane & Asian Pacific Islander Coalition
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jean Kindem	Aging & Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Karen Boone	Community Advocate
		Guests	
		Jean Marie Dryer	Public Council
		Lynn Suksdorf, PhD	Member of the public interested in joining EAG.
		Alex. Evans	DH
		Ruben Escobedo	DH

Agenda

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EAG Equity Lens Session Meeting Notes

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Overview of Meeting: Rules and Intent

III. Partner Share

Partner Shares

- Upcoming relevant community events or opportunities
- Pressing issues facing our community or a need someone might be able to address
- Challenges your organization is facing (especially around equity)



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- None

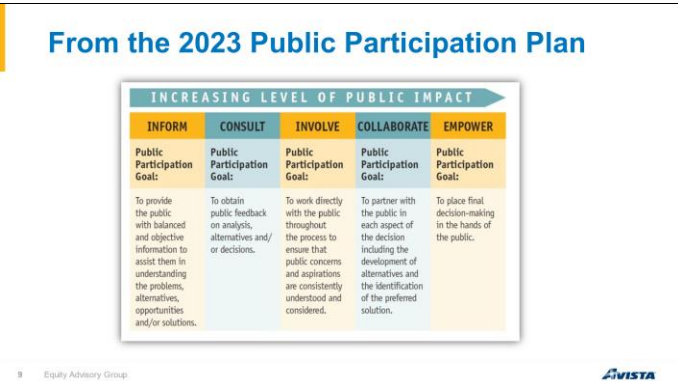
IV. Agenda Item 1



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INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

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2025 PPP Attributes

- Due May 1, 2025
- Includes update regarding public participation from the past 2 years.
- Includes activities and actions for the next 2 years.
- Will integrate input from DH
- Will be reviewed with EAG and other advisory groups prior to filing



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Avista PPP Timeline

2024 Timeline as Proposed in 2023 PPP Filing



Activities	Completed	In Progress
Educational Videos		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Popup Events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Virtual Public Meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CEIP Newsletter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Public Comment Form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Web Site Update	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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DH Communications

- Alex. Evans (she/her)
 - Associate Vice President
- Ruben Escobedo (he/him)
 - Account Manager



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- DH stands for “Desautel Hege” with offices in Spokane and Seattle.
- Work is primarily focused in social change and equity-informed engagement, which is why Avista sought out their expertise for this work
- DH had done a great deal of work in health campaigns. “Spread kindness not Covid” as an example.
- Recommendations for Avista’s 2025 Public Participation Plan (PPP) come from months of research and engagement with Avista teams and external stakeholders.

2025 PPP Strategy Considerations



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AVISTA

Research

GOALS:

- Gain a better understanding of existing community engagement programs through the lens of priority audiences and stakeholders.
- Help identify strengths and opportunities for expansion based on community engagement best practices within and outside the energy industry.
- Build more subject matter expertise and understanding to create a more cogent action plan.
- Ensure focus is on areas of the plan with potential for greatest impact to audiences and customers.

ACTIVITIES :

- Held two strategy sessions with Avista's social impact, communications, regulatory, leadership teams and NCIF.
- Conducted insight interviews with Avista team members and key community leaders/stakeholders.
- Engaged the EAG through a partner survey to understand their experience with Avista's community engagement efforts.
- Completed landscape research of other equity-centered, community engagement clean energy programs of similar/peer organizations.
- Reviewed existing community engagement, outreach and communications materials.

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- This slide details the goals and activities the led to DH's research

1. Maximize impact of existing efforts

• Need:

- Refine and complete the highest -leverage tactics outlined in the 2023 PPP to ensure we reach all named communities in culturally responsive and accessible ways.

• Solution:

- Continue regular cadence of ongoing efforts, improve usability and design of Avista's CETA webpage, prioritize creating educational videos and support language access across all communications.

• How:

- Avista will continue to convene community meetings and provide communications in priority languages, when possible, as well as develop a series of informational videos on a range of topics.

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AVISTA

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- This would create a consistent perspective for the public.
- These would be intended to create meaningful ways to engage CETA content assessable by the public along with increasing usage.
- **DH asked:** Is there any input?
- **Participant:** The word engagement. I would like to spend some time talking about that word. Avista should consider those coming from a third world country who may not speak English. I would like for Avista to become a friend of the public.
- **DH:** Videos and web sites are tools in the toolbox for public engagement. We need to meet people where they are. The website is a great place to point people to for information, but many in Named Communities may not know to go to the website, which is why some of the other recommendations help to fill the gaps.

2. Center community expertise and wisdom

- **Need:**
 - Relationships with community – particularly named communities – that build trust and foster meaningful engagement with Avista
- **Solution:**
 - Grow and deepen relationships with five community –based organizations serving named communities in Avista’s Washington service area throughout 2025.
- **How:**
 - Avista will work with the EAG to define priority organizations, then reach out to organization leadership to discuss partnership and invite participation on the EAG. Avista will listen and respond to the needs and desires of community organizations, planning communication and engagements that are most meaningful.

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- **DH:** This is an essential component of the recommendation of the 2025 PPP. The recommendation is to foster relationships with 5 community organizations. They could be a start to deeper partnership work. Avista would work with EAG to identify priority organizations, then potentially invite them to join the EAG. Avista should focus more on listening to what types of engagements are most meaningful to the public. This also allows for the opportunity to co-create messaging that would best resonate with the community. Example: working with local artists to create posters. This could also be events or articles created by people in the community.
- **DH:** This will lead to greater engagement between Avista and the public. A true partnership is not just one-way communication, but letting partners become involved in the communications.
- **DH:** Are there any thoughts for #2.
- **Participant:** The idea of partnership is really cool. How do we help the public understand what Avista has to offer. The difficult thing would be to get people’s engagement.
- **Participant:** Allowing the community to take ownership of caring for the community. It would be great for the organizations to be able to take the technical words and turn them into language that the communities can understand. This will allow them to go beyond engagement into more than just paying their bills.
- **Participant:** Avista will be able to highlight their partnership in terms of action and not just words.
- **Participant:** Named Communities should be able to lead the conversation and answer from an educated stance. Avista should be able to support community leaders with their expertise. When Avista leaves the community then the community can then build strength to solve their own problems but reaching out to Avista for support.
- **DH:** Avista is the expert on energy and can help get ahead of challenges faced by the community by listening. Avista can also humanize stories.

3. Enhance customer education about green energy

- **Need:**
 - Community members currently have a limited understanding of the significance of green energy, demand generation and how it personally impacts them.
- **Solution:**
 - Enhance customer education about green energy with a focus on reaching named communities.
- **How:**
 - Through community feedback, Avista will identify gaps in existing communication materials and initiatives related to clean energy and develop materials that are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate for named communities.

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- **DH:** This deals with the most equitable ways to address these subjects. This approach gives opportunities to the public to better understand great energy. This would involve going to trusted spaced of communities.
- **DH:** Any input?
- **Participant:** I like the community conversation. Many non-white communities may feel more safe speaking to a subject in a location they feel safe. My hope is that this would be more than a one-time opportunity. Individuals in communities should have multiple opportunities to consider a subject and have multiple opportunities to provide feedback.

4. Empower customers with information they need

- **Need:**
 - Community conversations showed that named communities have low awareness of both future programs changes and current program offerings from Avista.
- **Solution:**
 - Develop a customer impact plan that proactively identifies programs and services likely to affect customers that educates, informs and engages through preferred communications channels.
- **How:**
 - Define customer impact milestones, identify programs and services to mitigate changes and impacts, and ensure the plan is accessible and relevant to diverse communities.

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- **DH:** Now that we've highlighted the importance of education, to achieve successful results would be to help empower customers with that information. #4 came from direct feedback from community leaders.
- **DH:** In-person conversations to collect feedback on how best to engage the communities. This could result in improved transactions between customers and Avista.
- **DH:** What suggestions or feedback do you have?
- **Participants:** I really like this one, it's super important. But it should be paired with understanding language needs and access points to the information.
- **DH:** Research and interviews revealed that much of this work has to be done in person for people who speak languages other than English.

5. Organize internal workflow

- **Need:**
 - A strong internal structure to improve teamwork and communication across departments involved in community engagement.
- **Solution:**
 - Implement an internal framework that supports community engagement by clarifying roles, establishing a regular meeting schedule and providing ongoing training.
- **How:**
 - Enhance departmental collaboration by streamlining meetings, implementing new tools and tracking systems, and allocate staff resources effectively to support community engagement efforts.

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- **DH:** #5 would be what Avista would have to do internally to help execute this recommendation. Avista would clarify roles, teams, and responsibilities both internally and to external partners. This would result in stronger and more meaningful engagement with communities.
- **DH:** Questions?
- **Participant:** I would like to see a cultural lens of people who represent Named Communities or who represent people who have lived experience and can speak through a cultural lens who will be involved in the planning process. They can redirect the larger group who have great

intentions but who lack cultural knowledge. This means bringing the voices of people who have lived experiences into the planning process.

- **DH:** This would have to do with recommendation #2.
- **Participant:** Avista should have cultural voices sitting at the table and not just be the benefactors of the plan.
- **Avista:** In other words: “Nothing for you without you”
- **Participant:** This has been tried many times but many of the ideas that are brought to the community do not fit the needs of the community. I’ve seen communities pull out because the work was too hard.

Q&A

2025 PPP Strategy Considerations

- Maximize impact of existing efforts
- Center community expertise and solutions
- Generate demand for energy efficient products and programs
- Engage customers with education they need
- Organize internal workflow to streamline communication

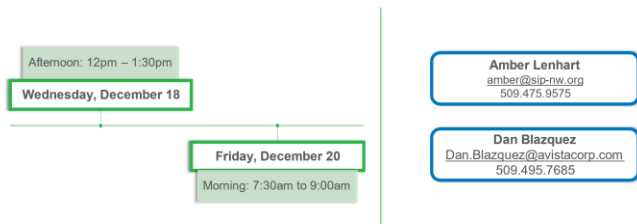
- What do you want to see in a Public Participation Plan?
- What are your Public Participation priorities?

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- **Participant:** I applaud Avista for their efforts but would add is there some way to move in or have cultural voices at the table in the development of the PPP and people who will walk with you in the implementation of the plan. There are hidden populations of people that this activity will not fit, so revisions may need to be made. Avista should try to find the hidden segments of the population.
- **Avista:** Avista needs to figure out how to come to insights.
- **Participant:** Avista needs to reach out to the populations.
- **Participant:** Spectrum center is looking to create partnership.
- **Facilitator:** Avista should consider creating an environment where people feel safe, like making events fun.
- **Participants:** United We Stand holds many smaller cultural events. This could be an example of how Avista could gain a cultural lens.

V. Your Support Team and Next Meeting

Next EAG Equity Lens Session Meetings



VI. Wrap Up

Avista: Thank you for your participation. Anyone is encouraged to reach out directly to Dan.Blazquez@avistacorp.com or Amber@sip-nw.org with additional feedback or input.

VII. Additional Resources

<i>Resource Link</i>	<i>Description</i>
Washington's Clean Energy Future	Avista page for CETA related activities
Clean Energy Transformation Act	Clean Energy Transformation Act - Washington State Department of Commerce
Chapter 19.405 RCW	Laws and Regulations: Revised Code of Washington Investor-owned utilities
Chapter 480-100 WAC	Laws and Regulations: Washington Administrative Code Investor-owned utilities
WA Energy Strategy	Washington State Energy Strategy
CETA Overview	CETA overview and interim assessment