

## Equity Advisory Group – Equity Lens Session

Meeting Date: March 18, 2022  
 Time: 7:30am – 9:00am  
 Location: Zoom Meeting

### Attendees:

<b>Facilitator:</b>	<b>EAG Members:</b>
Amber Lenhart	Rowena Pineda – Asian Pacific Islander Coalition
<b>Avista:</b>	Vanessa Strong – Spokane Public Libraries
Tamara Bradley	Tami Dillon – Skills'kin
Amanda Ghering	Margee Chambers- Spokane Regional Air Quality
Annette Brandon	Clair Trapp- Rural Resources
	Shauna Meharry - SNAP
	Will von Bracht – Othello School District
	Larry Mattson - Jacobs
	<b>Guests:</b>
	Shay Bauman – Public Counsel
	Molly Brewer – Washington Commission Staff

### Agenda

I.	Welcome & Introductions	Amber Lenhart
	– Overview of Meeting: Rules and Intent	Amber Lenhart
II.	EAG Value	Amber Lenhart
III.	EAG Structure	Amber Lenhart
IV.	CEIP Status Review	Tamara Bradley
V.	Customer Benefit Indicator Review	Tamara Bradley
VI.	Your Support Team and Next Meeting	Amber Lenhart

### Facilitator

### Meeting Notes

Today we want to have a frank discussion around the structure and value of the group, make sure you're really seeing the value in participating in this group. Avista, really value you and your commitment to this group, you've made a huge impact on our Clean Energy Implementation Plan and our Customer Benefit Indicators—we really value and appreciate you, and we hear you.

### EAG Value

*Generally, how do you feel about your role here in the EAG? Do you understand what your role is? What questions do you have about your role in the Equity Advisory Group?*

**Member:** when I first joined, I was asked to do so by SNAP and I was not sure what I was getting into. The language was hard to understand at first but now I get it and I am really enjoying my role and being here so thank you for having me.

**Member:** I think you are doing a great job facilitating the group and it appears to be a great group to share diverse ideas and everyone is very respectful of the ideas and opinions, If Avista could take this group to serve as more of a n advisory in the future and serve as advisors to programs you are looking to implement in the future for customers.

*Do you feel comfortable expressing your thoughts/insights in these meetings?*

**Member:** I have always felt comfortable expressing myself but one thing that might be helpful is to know who attended the other meetings.

**Member:** the email before that weeks meeting, we could have the topics and the list of folks who are expected to come to each meeting. Might be a way to help bring more voices in.

**Member:** I echo what a lot of people have said, I feel comfortable, but it would be more comfortable with the technical side, when it comes to energy, I do not feel comfortable. It would be nice to have prep materials before the meeting so I can know the topic and provide more information within the meetings. Provide an article that is relevant to what we are doing during the meeting. Slides Avista provides may be too technical at times so advanced reading would be good.

**Member:** Dedicate 5-10 minutes to a project related to clean energy, doesn't even need to be around what Avista is doing, could be another utility, but something to help the creativity.

**Member:** If different EAG members are working on Equity within their organizations it might be good to hear from them on what they are working on in their groups. Might help to bring the group together a little more.

*Where would it be helpful to hear from other EAG members?*

**Member:** Like Larry recommended, it is a 5-minute approach to hear from one member each meeting

**Member:** Folks may not have something to share each month, but if they do, take 5 minutes to share. When the central library opens this summer, they will have a social worker available so once they have that going there will be more ways to make connections with Avista and helping folks to get the resources they need.

**Member:** Curious if there has been an opportunity for explaining what equity means to each person. This is my first meeting, so I am not sure if this has taken place before. If we are not defining equity in the same way, we may not be on the same page.

*Yes, that conversation took place during one of the very first EAG meetings.*

*What value are you getting out of these meetings?*

**Member:** I feel like the communities I serve are getting a voice and making sure those named communities are not left behind.

**Member:** In a lot of my work I struggle with making sure everyone is hearing about resources so sharing what we are working on in the EAG is great.

*What about the monthly topics – are these valuable and interesting for you? These topics aren't always pre-set; Ecology example (we just saw what they were doing with air pollution and thought it would be useful to share; we'd really like you to express your interest in what you'd like to see talked about? This is ongoing, you can bring forward*

*ideas any time. You can bring in any subjects/questions, and if we don't have the answers, we'll get you someone who does. We are also very interested in you bringing your community to us—you all represent different groups and learning about them is valuable.*

**Member:** Updates on the CBIs would be great, and progress made with the plan. There are a lot of services and programs that were put on hold due to COVID, would like to hear about how those programs are working with COVID restrictions lifting and I know a lot of those programs would help underserved communities.

**Member:** I agree that sometimes it gets technical, so I step away and am just here to be a listener. I enjoy when you ask specific questions, and do you remember that time when we interreacted and used the post it notes. It would be good to review the post it notes again and see where we are at with each of those. Others have mentioned that it would be good to bring the past into the present. I really enjoyed the air quality conversation from last month and would like to know more about my community and what the air quality is like and is there going to be monitors in my neighborhood? How does this apply to my community?

**Member:** It would be helpful to move from the abstract to the concrete, from the planning realm to what's happening out there in the real world.

### EAG Structure

*Now about structure, we currently have Wed PM and Fri AM meetings each month—do you like having those two available days each month?*

**Member:** I like the structure where you offer morning and evening meeting times. I think the length depends on topics but an hour to an hour and half seems good. I always get busy during the holidays so may need to cancel around then if needed. In person would be great, but virtual is more accommodating especially for those who must travel. If Avista is having a hard time securing ideas for meetings, a consideration would be to meet quarterly.

**Member:** I agree with a lot of that. I like having two meeting options. An hour and half depending on you guys and if you feel rushed, feels like the time frame has been working well. In person meetings would be nice on occasion. I live an hour and half out so meeting in person all the time does not seem feasible. Maybe once or twice a year we have meetings in person. Might improve the virtual meetings if we have a couple meetings face to face since we have not all met since this group started during COVID.

*How about the current times, 4:30pm-6pm Wednesdays and 7:30am-9am Fridays? Are those times convenient for you?*

**Member:** The time works well for me since I am typically already at work. I am a sports taxi for my kids in the afternoon, so the afternoon meetings do not work for me.

**Member:** I have attended both meetings depending on my schedule, so I appreciate having both.

*Are there particular months that we shouldn't have equity lens sessions in 2022?*

**Member:** December off would be good

**Member:** A summer break would be good; and perhaps try out the idea of meeting every other month. It would be nice to have an in-person option once or twice a year.

## CEIP Status Review

CEIP timeline. Filed October 1, 2021, comments due January 28, 2022. We received comments from 8 parties and filed response comments quickly to address some of the common themes, clarifications, or issues we heard from those 8 groups. We are currently in conversations with those interested parties, March-possibly April. As part of our plan, Avista also committed to larger Public Participation Meetings—possibly each quarter—so we may end up with 3 this year. We're thinking through barriers—times, etc.—that people may encounter for these meetings, i.e. how do we get people to participate in a public meeting that Avista is having?

We did hear common themes in our Customer Benefit Indicators. Avista provided 13 CBIs in its CEIP. You (EAG) discussed many more, and after prioritization and a voting matrix, these are the ones that rose to the top. At Avista, we're committed to these 13—we think they're very significant in our plan, and these are the CBIs that we heard from you/our customers—and we are really just looking to improve these, and we're committed to continuously improving these CBIs. Dept. of Ecology, they came in and discussed how outdoor air quality impacts everyday life, focusing on overburdened communities. It's likely that these overburdened communities will overlap with our vulnerable populations or highly impacted communities. They have an aggressive timeline, trying to get some of these air quality monitors in place by the end of the year. So, this may be an opportunity to, again, improve upon our existing CBIs and maybe get some of these monitors placed in ways that benefit our VPs or HICs.

This is to provide an update that, as these CBI discussions continue, there may be new CBIs that the other 8 parties are suggesting that we need to discuss within this group—and to tie a bow on the reasons why we had the Dept. of Ecology come speak to this group and how it was relevant to our work here.

*Are there any questions for Avista or EAG members or final thoughts on what w discussed today?*

**Member:** I do have questions, but I do not need answers today. I am curious about how the comments from different stakeholders on the CEIP, what are the themes? How are we measuring the CBIs success? Is there a way that you can measure how one indicator layers onto another indicator? Multiple factors impact certain communities and do the indicators show those multiple layers?

**Member:** I missed last month's meeting and the Ecology topic sounds interesting. Do you have a slide deck or meeting notes from February you can send out?

*Yes, we will send you the slides. They are also available on the MyAvista/CETA website.*

## Wrap Up

*If you have additional thoughts after this meeting or have topics for future meetings, please feel free to send us an email or give us a call.*