



Equity Advisory Group – Equity Lens July 2026 Session

Meeting Dates and Times:

July 22nd at noon and July 24th at 7:30 am

Location: Zoom meeting

Attendees:

<i>Facilitator</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>EAG Member</i>	<i>Member Organizations</i>
<i>Amber Lenhart</i>	☒	Clyde Abrahamson	Spokane Indian Housing Authority
<i>Avista Team Members</i>	☒	<i>Stephen Sykora</i>	<i>Volunteers of America</i>
<i>Kelsey Solberg</i>	☒	Karen Boone	Community Advocate
<i>Kelly Dengel</i>	☐	Margee Chambers	Spokane Clean Air
<i>Marissa York</i>	☒	George Dahl	Spokane County Housing and Community Development
	☐	Tami Dillion	Providence Healthcare
	☒	Andrew Gardner	Spokane Public Schools
	☐	Carmen Groom	SNAP
	☒	KJ January	Spectrum
	☒	Autumn Kern	Student and Community Advocate
	☒	Cindy Kimmet	Takesa Village
	☒	Jean Kindem	Aging & Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington
	☒	Connie Kliewer	NEWESD101
	☒	Vladimir Kronin	Slavic Community
	☒	Sue Lani Madsen	Washington Rural Environmental Network (WREN)
	☐	Vanessa Strange	Spokane Public Library
	☒	Stephanie May	Department of Ecology Eastern Region
	☐	Maliek Martin	Spokane Workforce Council
	☒	Lynn Suksdorf, PhD	Rural Community Member
	☒	Tawana Swanson	Rural Community Advocate
	☒	Stephen Tsoodle	Spokane Indian Housing Authority
	☒	William von Bracht	Othello, school English as 2 nd language
	☒	Latrice Williams	Community Member/ WA state board of Equity
		<i>Guests</i>	
		<i>Byron Harmon</i>	<i>WUTC</i>
		<i>Joshua Dennis</i>	<i>WUTC</i>

Agenda

- I. Welcome & Introductions.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- II. 2026 CEIP Compliance Report:**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

III.	Community Partnership Program:	5
IV.	Questions and Discussion	Error! Bookmark not defined.
V.	Your Support Team and Next Meeting	Error! Bookmark not defined.

EAG Equity Lens May Sessions Meeting Notes

Welcome & Partner Shares

The meeting facilitator welcomed attendees and reviewed meeting expectations, engagement opportunities, and the purpose of the Equity Advisory Group.

Members shared upcoming events and community updates, including:

- Spokane Family Day at Franklin Park (August 1)
- Splash Bash community swim event in Hillyard
- Village of Care event at Liberty Park (August 22-23)
- Aging & Long-Term Care Advisory Council meetings remain open to the public
- Community fundraiser and firefighter breakfast in Edwall supporting installation of a community messaging sign
- Spokane tribal housing authority fair this September

During this session, members also discussed increasing community interest in the impacts of large data centers, including electricity demand, water consumption requirements, and potential impacts on rural communities and local resources.

A member made the following comment in the chat: An increasing issue being heard in Stevens County related to the actions of Spokane County and Spokane City related to Data Centers is the increasing awareness of water use/needs of these centers along with the need for electricity.

Avista responded by directing the EAG member to myavista.com/datacenters for information and noted that while we will not be addressing this specific topic at the meeting, we value their concern and will continue to update this group as the topic evolves.

2026 CEIP Compliance Report Update

Presented by Kelly Dengel, Clean Energy Policy & Implementation Manager

Kelly provided an overview of Avista's 2026 Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP) Compliance Report, which evaluates progress toward commitments made in Avista's 2021 CEIP.

Key Updates

- Avista met renewable energy targets established through Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA).
- New renewable energy resources have been added through:
 - Chelan PUD power purchase agreements
 - Columbia Basin hydro power purchase agreements
 - Wind power purchase agreement
- Planned upgrades to the Kettle Falls and Post Falls hydro facilities were not completed during this reporting period.

Renewable Energy

- Retire Renewable Energy Certificates to prove the clean energy provided to customers
- **Member Question:** Is there adequate transmission capacity to bring power from eastern Montana wind power? I was told that was a barrier.
- **Company Response:** As part of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, Avista evaluates transmission availability in relationship to the submitted resource proposals. Those transmission costs to move the energy from the generation source to Avista's system are included in the evaluation and in the incremental cost calculation.

Energy Efficiency

- Initial energy efficiency targets were impacted by COVID-related disruptions.
- Avista received regulatory approval recognizing those impacts.
- Energy savings during the second compliance period exceeded targets.
- **UTC Question:** Did Avista conduct an analysis on the downstream impacts of not meeting energy efficiency in the 2022-2023 on the present conservation landscape?
- **Company Response:** If this was done it would have been evaluated outside of the CEIP process and would have been included in the Annual or Biennial Conservation reporting efforts.

Demand Response

- Avista secured approximately 30 MW of demand response capacity through customer participation programs.
- This allows participating customers to temporarily reduce electricity usage during periods of peak demand.
- Discussion

- **Member Comment** Kelly, it might be helpful to give an example of how much 30 MW is in number of homes or community size for understanding. Just a thought.
- **Company Response:** That's a good idea and we can provide that information in a follow-up during the August EAG meeting.
- **UTC Comment:** What were the results of the Demand Response Pilot?
- **Company Response:** DR pilot is no longer open for enrollment but will provide a report to the UTC before the end of the year, results are not yet known.

Customer Benefit Indicators (CBIs)

Kelly reviewed progress on Customer Benefit Indicators used to measure equitable outcomes of the clean energy transition. Overall:

- Most indicators showed improvement during the reporting period.
- Some environmental metrics remain challenging and are influenced by generation resource availability and system operations.

Public Participation & Community Engagement

Avista reported continued progress on:

- Community outreach efforts
- Educational materials
- Social media engagement
- Website improvements
- Development of community partnerships

Discussion

- **Member Comment:** Does the report acknowledge displacement without net reduction (i.e. substituting wind for hydro) and Avista's multi-state accounting (i.e. book the green energy to WA instead of Idaho)?
- **Action - Company Response:** No, the report does not reflect that. Resource dispatch decisions are based on system economics and operational requirements while ensuring compliance with state regulations. Although Avista operates as one system, Avista does attribute clean energy and CETA related to costs to Washington customers. Avista will provide additional follow-up in the August EAG meeting.
- **UTC Question:** Incremental costs, NCIF were not originally included in the estimate: what are the downstream impacts?
- **Company Response:** There are two components, Energy Efficiency (EE) and community, EE is not included, only the \$3 million community.¹ Avista will provide a follow up in the August EAG meeting.

¹ Although this information was shared during the meeting, the \$5 million NCIF costs were not included the incremental cost estimates as the NCIF was not an approved action at the time of estimating the costs.

- **UTC Question:** Regarding the impact of avoided REC sales on incremental cost: how much is that number?
- **Action - Company Response:** Please see the compliance report which reflects 16.4million of the 49 million. This slide was presented with outdated data which has been updated to reflect 45.7 million versus the 49 million. The NCIF was not included in the original estimated incremental cost because the NCIF was a proposed action and had not yet been approved.

Public Comment Opportunity

Community members may submit comments regarding the CEIP Compliance Report to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) through September 22, 2026.

Community Partnership Program

Presented by Marissa York, NCIF Program Manager

Marissa introduced the new Community Partnership Program, which is being developed to support meaningful collaboration between Avista and community organizations in support of clean energy objectives.

Program's Purpose

The program is intended to:

- Strengthen relationships with trusted community partners
- Support projects designed by and for communities
- Increase participation in clean energy programs
- Advance energy equity objectives identified in the CEIP

Program Design Principles

The proposed framework is centered on:

- Community voice and leadership
- Relationship building and trust
- Flexible funding opportunities
- Technical assistance and project support
- Alignment with clean energy and equity goals
- Community-specific approaches rather than one-size-fits-all solutions

UTC Question: Where do the results of the community partner survey live?

Company Response: We do not have it publicly available, but we will work on getting that posted to our website or determine the best place for that.²

Member Question: In rural areas, where the push is to cancel CETA, you will get applications for funds, where I may apply for funds and write things I don't mean. Does that bother anyone?

Company Response: There has to be clear deliverables that support clean energy work and energy equity. So as long as the objective of the funding meets that goal and desired outcomes – maybe we can even help change peoples' minds.

UTC Question: Does Avista set the boundaries of the scope of the Community Partnership model under RCW or WAC?

Company Response: There are no RCW or WAC boundaries that Avista is aware of.

Member Comment: Share perspective, HEAR gave 29 furnaces in homes with homes through commerce grant, but spoke to the fact that projects in rural areas were selected and we found that out of the 30 families, they were happy to see that dollars were actually being used in their area and not in the main city.

Member Question: Do you have a timeline in trying to roll this out?

Company Response: We will get to that in a minute; our internal timeline is a little more flexible than anticipated due to personnel issues.

Potential Project Types

Examples discussed included:

- Clean energy education initiatives
- Youth engagement and leadership projects
- Community outreach and enrollment assistance
- Awareness campaigns for Avista programs
- Energy efficiency and clean energy demonstration projects
- Community-based environmental education

Input & Discussion

A discussion question posed to the group: Which types of energy concerns matter most to your community right now?

- **Member comment:** Cost, customer pockets are not endlessly deep, and outage response time in rural areas compared to urban areas.
- Several other members mentioned cost as a primary concern.
- Other concerns/focus areas that surfaced included energy efficiency, customer education, the future of energy, reliability and outage response in rural communities and environmental impacts
- **Member comment:** Data centers are often put in lower socio-economic communities and that's a concern

² Although the detailed survey results are not publicly available, the questions/results at a summary level were provided at the September 2025 EAG meeting. You can access the slides, notes and meeting recording at <https://www.myavista.com/about-us/washingtons-clean-energy-future/equity-advisory-group>

- **Member Question:** Identified opportunities pertaining to clean energy programs, are you going to look for those applications to plug into existing programs or something more unique to each group?
- **Company Response:** Both possibilities exist. These are shorter term projects, not long term so they do not need to become a program on their own or fit into an existing program.
- **Member Question:** What kind of funding are you looking at? Is there a minimum or maximum?
- **Company Response:** Not a minimum or maximum, it just needs to be an appropriate cost, and the amount needs to be aligned with the scope of the project.
- **Member Question:** What is the scope of the ask? Are you hoping to do something within a specific region, or rolling out to see what sticks?
- **Company Response:** These projects should be in Named Communities, but hoping the projects vary to meet if there are various needs, not a one size fits all, smaller one-off projects that are specialized to the community they serve.
- **Member Question:** Are the old-fashioned energy efficiency projects still considered eligible in this setting? Windows, new furnaces, that sort of thing?
- **Company Response:** Yes, they would be eligible through the EE bucket of funds,
- **Member Question:** One of the barriers to electrification is panel capacity. Their electric panels don't allow that because of their age, even a community building not just a personal residence which turns into a large chunk of money.
- **Company Response:** Those upgrades can happen through traditional NCIF applications, maybe we partner with our innovation lab to bring those larger projects to life.
- **Member Comment:** This would be great to braid with HEAR funds etc., to help the projects go further.
- **Company Response:** We value braiding funding and we will continue to invest in.

Members generated several ideas for engaging young people, including:

- Collaboration with Innovation High School, where an EAG member serves on the board and sees an opportunity to build pathways for students to engage in project-based learning, increase their education on clean energy, and build a long-term partnership with Avista
- Connections with local Skill Centers and workforce development programs, particularly those in schools
- Asians for Collective Liberation and PJALS have summer camps that they're running, and that might be a venue for a project
- Participants noted that community-designed projects may help create awareness of clean energy careers and increase long-term engagement.

In discussing process for participating in the Community Partnership Program, members expressed the following:

- **Member Comment:** Will there be guidelines and an application form available related to the Proposals?
- **Avista response:** Yes, we are actively working on these elements
- **Member Comment:** Some barriers include assumptions about customers, especially low income and fixed income individuals, can access information about programs and potential relief opportunities. e.g. cell phones, smart phones, internet access, technology of other types.
- Recommendation to develop a clear step-by-step for what needs to happen if a member has a project idea
 - Marissa advises that while Ana is out and the application is still incomplete, to reach out to her directly if you have ideas and she can help work through what's possible. Her email is Marissa.york@avistacorp.com.
- Members expressed concerns about the timeline being condensed – one slide notes that Avista is asking for projects to be proposed in September and yet there are no application materials or program guidelines available
 - Avista acknowledged that program materials are still under development due to staffing transitions and indicated that timelines may be adjusted.
 - In the interim, members are encouraged to begin exploring project ideas. Marissa York is available to discuss concepts and provide technical assistance. Additional program guidance and next steps will be shared with EAG members through a follow-up communication.

Closing

- Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday August 19 and Friday August 21.
- Please sign up for our quarterly newsletter if you have not already and we hope to see you all next month.
- Provide any additional comments or feedback to us at ceta@avistacorp.com