Equity Advisory Group – Equity Lens September 2026 Session

September 23, 2026,12:00 to 1:30 pm
September 25, 2026, 7:30-9:00 am
Location: Zoom meeting

Attendees:

Facilitator	*Present*	*EAG Member*	*Member Organizations*
Amber Lenhart	9/23	Clyde Abrahamson	Spokane Indian Housing Authority
Avista Team Members	9/23	Stephanie May	Department of Ecology Eastern Region
Jaime St. Peter	9/23	Karen Boone	Community Advocate
Ana Matthews	9/23	Margee Chambers	Spokane Clean Air
Kelsey Solberg	9/25	George Dahl	Spokane County Housing & Community Development
Kelly Dengel		Tami Dillion	Providence Healthcare
Amanda Ghering	9/23	Andrew Gardner	Spokane Public Schools
Marissa York		Carmen Groom	SNAP
Carryn Van Griend	9/25	KJ January	Spectrum
Ashley McAndrew	9/25	Autumn Kern	Student and Community Advocate
	9/23	Cindy Kimmet	Takesa Village
	9/23	Jean Kindem	Aging & Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington
		Connie Kliewer	NEWESD101
‘	9/23	Vladimir Kronin	Slavic Community
	9/25	Sue Lani Madsen	Washington Rural Environmental Network (WREN)
		Vanessa Strange	Spokane Public Library
		Maliek Martin	Spokane Workforce Council
	9/23	Lynn Suksdorf, Phd	Rural Community Member
	9/23	Tawana Swanson	Rural Community Advocate
	9/23	William von Bracht	Othello, school English as 2nd language
	9/25	Latrice Williams	Community Member/ WA state board of Equity
	9/25	Lisa Puett	Living Holistic Wellness
	9/23	Stephen Tsoodle	Spokane Indian Housing Authority
		Lyra Maidhoff	SNAP
		Guests	
	9/23	Paule Koenig	Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
	9/23	Joshua Dennis	Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
	9/23	Hassan Shaban	Empower Dataworks

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EAG Equity Lens Session Meeting Notes

I. Welcome & Introductions

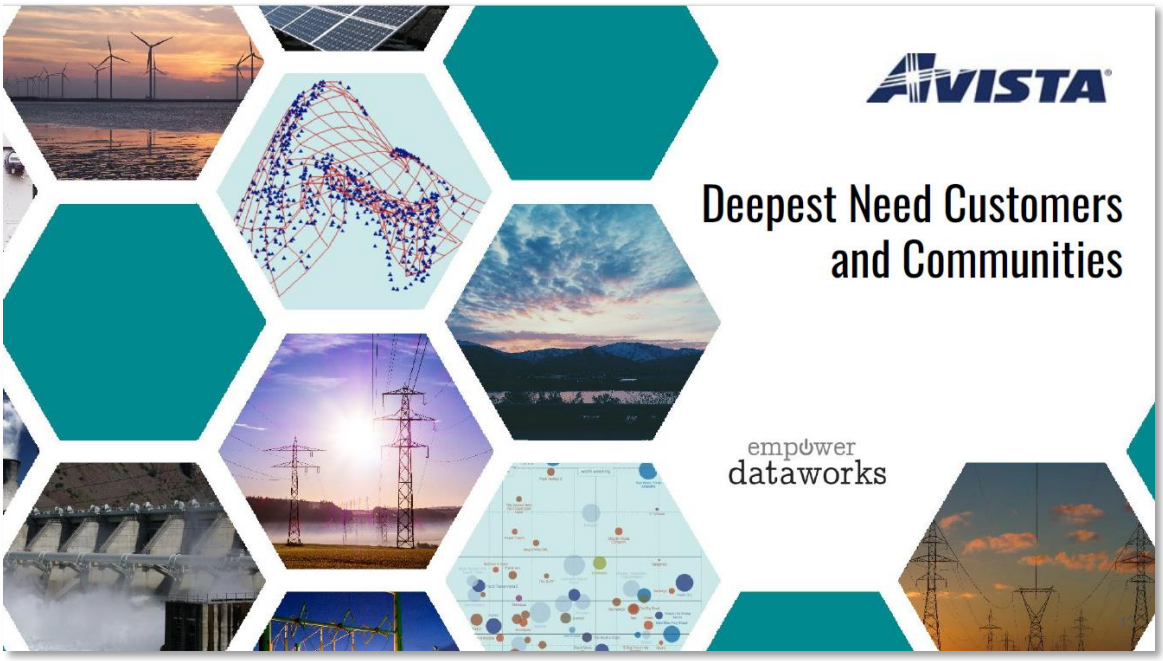
II. Partner Shares

Member: Spectrum Center is hosting a Drag Brunch on October 11th from 11 am – 3 pm to commemorate National Coming Out Day.

Member: The Braver Angels are hosting a statewide debate on October 15th on Zoom with the goal of a better informed electorate ahead of elections.

Member: Workshop on Re-Envisioning Generational Wealth Through Homeownership is Saturday, September 26th (flyer posted in chat).

III. Agenda Item I: Deepest Need Customers and Communities



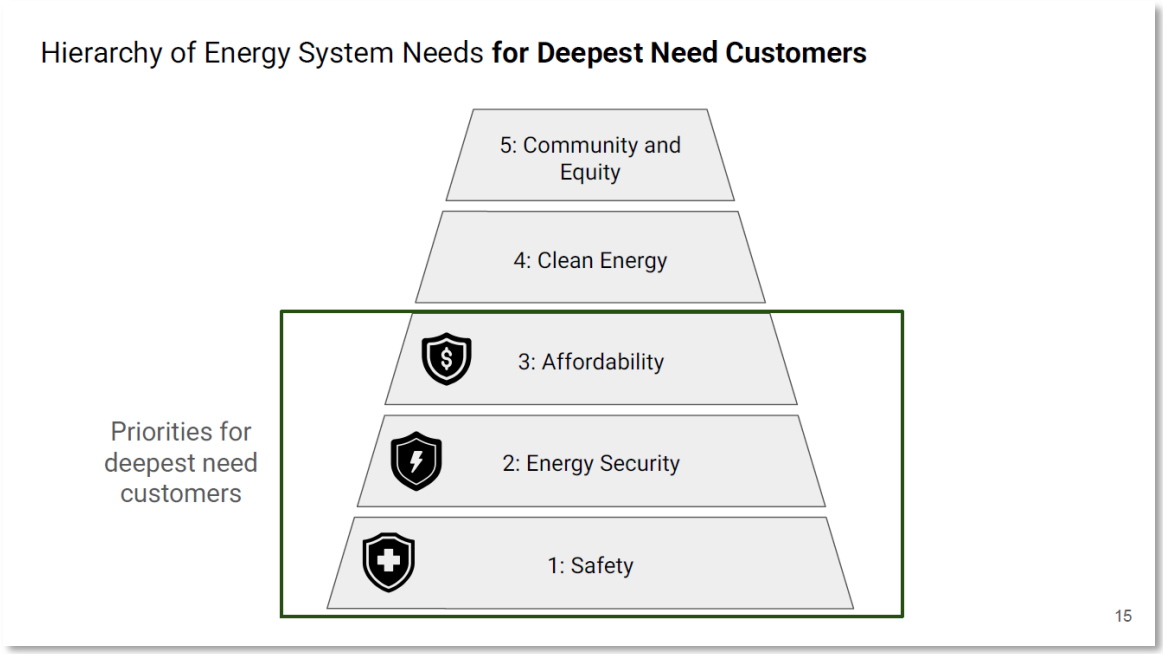
Guest Presenter: Hassan Shaban, Empower Dataworks

The **Principles**

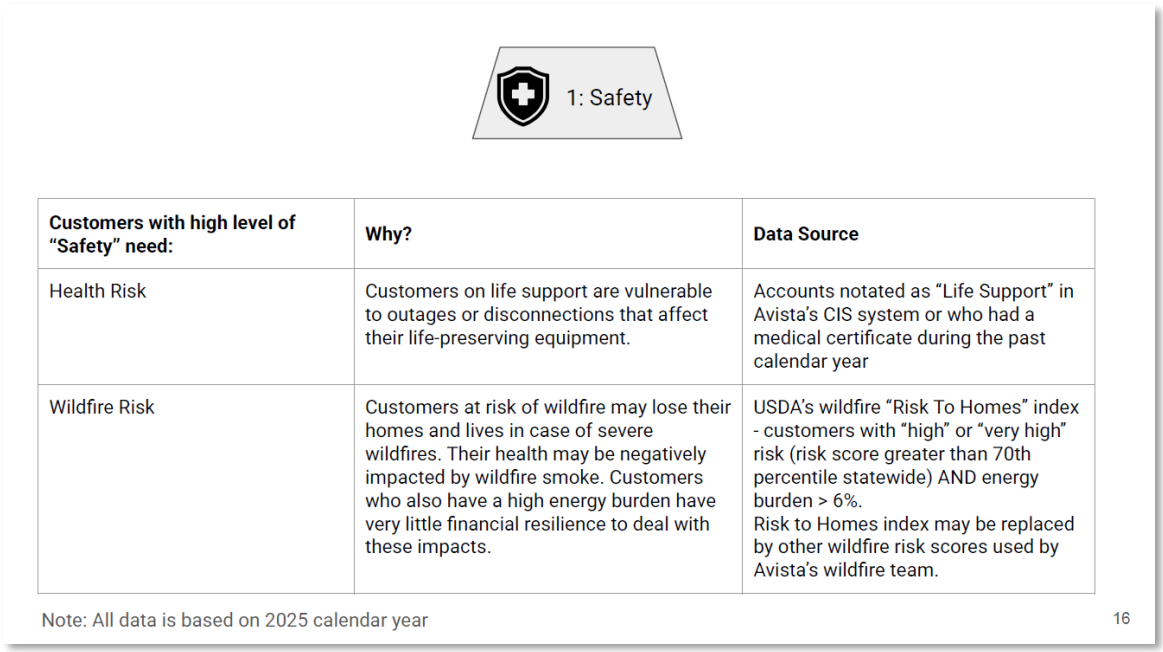
Proposed principles for the Deepest Need methodology:

1. **Addresses the Problem.** Makes it possible to direct program efforts at customers in deepest need. Solves the issue or perception of dilution. Ability to prioritize among customers in need.
2. **Clear and Logical.** Easy to explain and justify - accepted by stakeholders.
3. **Relevant.** When we say “deepest need”, it must be tied to the energy system - “need” that Avista can have an impact on.
4. **Useful.** The methodology must generate actionable data for the programs that will need to use these definitions
5. **Reproducible.** The methodology and the calculation must be easily replicated by Avista

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Hassan: When we think about the energy system from a household's perspective, the first question is: what do people need most? Our survey identified five priorities, with three rising to the top: safety, energy security, and affordability. From there, we asked how we could translate those priorities into something practical—what we should measure, why those measures matter, and where the data would come from. Over the next several slides, I'll walk through how we broke each priority into specific indicators and used those indicators to understand how many Avista customers are affected and where they are located.



Customers with high level of "Safety" need:	Why?	Data Source
Health Risk	Customers on life support are vulnerable to outages or disconnections that affect their life-preserving equipment.	Accounts notated as "Life Support" in Avista's CIS system or who had a medical certificate during the past calendar year
Wildfire Risk	Customers at risk of wildfire may lose their homes and lives in case of severe wildfires. Their health may be negatively impacted by wildfire smoke. Customers who also have a high energy burden have very little financial resilience to deal with these impacts.	USDA's wildfire "Risk To Homes" index - customers with "high" or "very high" risk (risk score greater than 70th percentile statewide) AND energy burden > 6%. Risk to Homes index may be replaced by other wildfire risk scores used by Avista's wildfire team.

Note: All data is based on 2025 calendar year

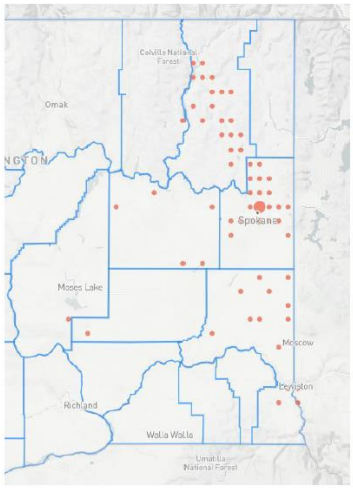
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Health Risk

1: Safety

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

317



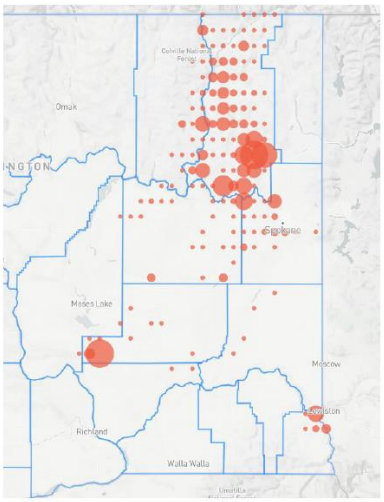
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Wildfire Risk

1: Safety

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

3,236



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2: Energy Security

Customers with high level of "Energy Security" need:	Why?	Data Source
Disconnection for Non-Payment	Customers who have been previously disconnected are more likely to suffer from financial instability and fall into arrears in the future.	Avista's CIS system: Customers disconnected at least once in last calendar year
Outage Risk	Frequent outages have negative secondary impacts on customers - financial, work and education, health and safety.	Avista outage data: Customers with 5+ outages in last calendar year AND with at least one long duration (8 hr+) outage.

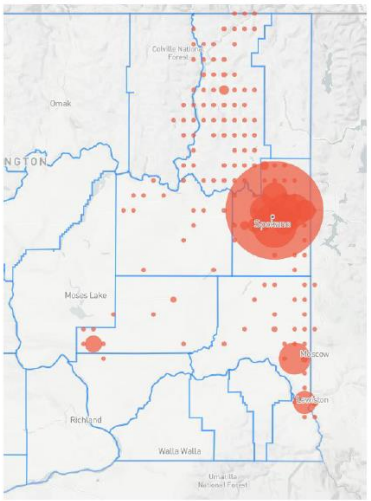
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Disconnections

2: Energy Security

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

8,178



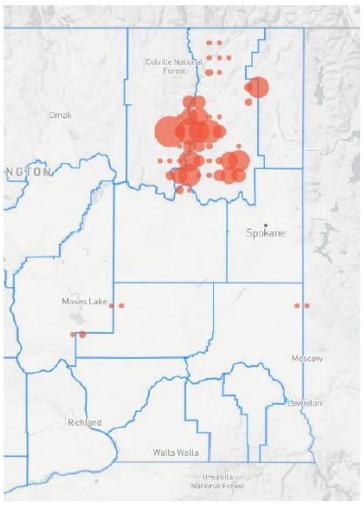
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Outage Risk

2: Energy Security

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

4,081



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3: Affordability

Customers with high level of "Affordability" need:	Why?	Data Source
Severe Energy Burden	Customers with a very high energy burden devote a large portion of their incomes to their utility bill.	Avista's PBR data: Customers with energy burden exceeding 10%.
High Energy Use	Customers with a high energy efficiency potential use more energy per square foot and can benefit from long-term bill savings through energy efficiency upgrades.	Avista CIS and PBR data: Customers with energy burden exceeding 6% AND energy use intensity exceeding 20 kWh/sq.ft.
Arrearage Risk	Customers who accumulate arrearages more than once are likely having difficulty keeping up with their bills	Avista CIS: Customers with 90+ day arrearage balances two or more times in past calendar year

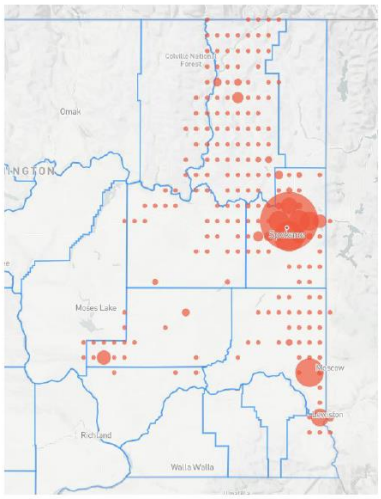
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Severe Energy Burden

3: Affordability

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

16,563



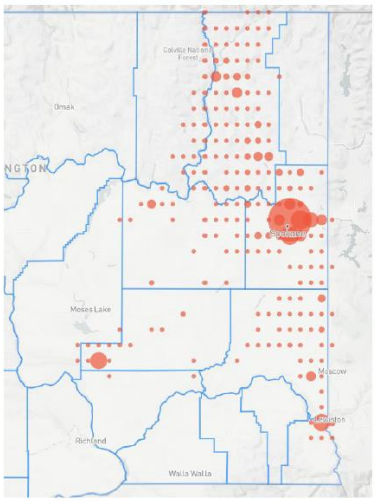
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High Energy Use

3: Affordability

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

4,838



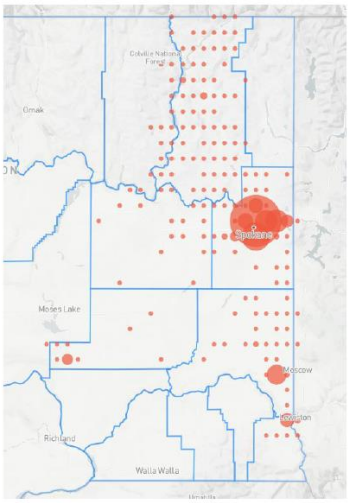
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Arrearage Risk

3: Affordability

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

11,753



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Deepest Need Customers

3: Affordability

2: Energy Security

1: Safety

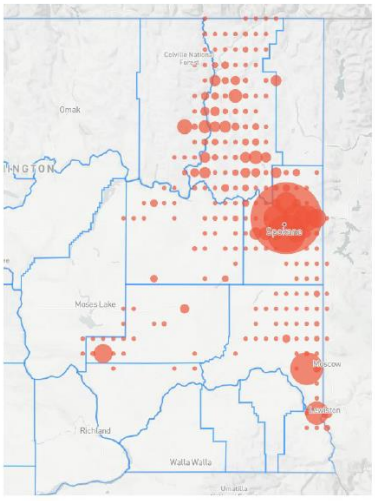
Deepest Need Customers are those who meet any one of the criteria for Safety, Energy Security or Affordability.

Number of Avista electric customers (2025):

38,894

Percent of Avista electric service area (2025):

16%



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Hassan: Any customer who has *any one* of these risks is considered a deepest need customer. In total, there are 38,894 Avista Washington electric customers that meet the Deepest Need designation, which is 16% of the service territory.

Deepest Need Customers - Summary

Metric	# Customers (2025)
#1 - Health Risk	317
#2 - Wildfire Risk	3,236
#3 - Disconnection Risk	8,178
#4 - Outage Risk	4,081
#5 - Severe Energy Burden	16,563
#6 - High Energy Use	4,838
#7 - Arrearage Risk	11,753
Total Number of Deepest Need Customers	38,894 (16% of service area)

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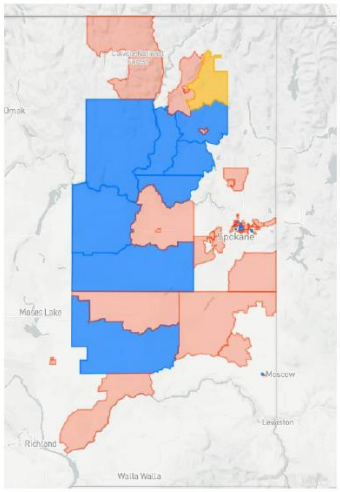
Hassan: One of the benefits of this process is that we know who these customers are. It's not a geographical assumption or generalization, but a surgical approach.

Deepest Need Communities

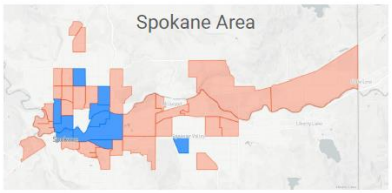
Deepest Need Communities are defined as the 29 census tracts where the percent of deepest need customers **exceeds 20%**.

This designation only affects community-wide programs.

Deepest Need Community	Named Community: Yes	Named Community: No
Yes	28	1
No	56	53



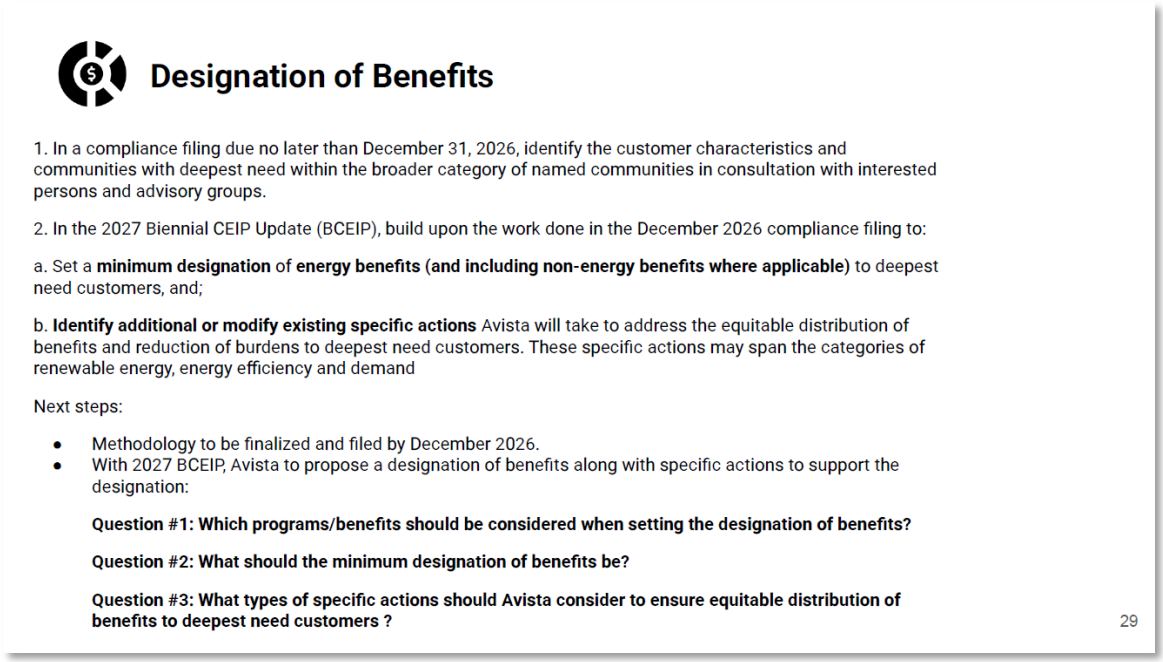




Category:
Deepest Need + Named Community
Named Community Only (not Deepest Need)
Deepest Need Community Only (not Named Community)

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Hassan: In addition to identifying individual deepest need customers, we also wanted to understand which communities have a high concentration of these customers. We decided to focus on communities where at least 20% of households meet the deepest need criteria. When a census tract reaches that threshold, we consider the entire tract a deepest need community. Using this definition, we identified about 29 census tracts, and all but one had previously been recognized as a named community.



Hassan: Now that we've identified who may be experiencing the greatest challenges, the next question is how we use that information. Here is a summary of the regulatory requirements that impact next steps, as well as some questions for this group to consider.

Avista: An important piece of this process was the engagement of a subcommittee, which EAG members were invited to participate in. An email was sent to this subcommittee recently with a written update on what Hassan presented on today, and an opportunity for additional feedback.

Member: You define Avista as a utility - is it the same in the rural areas as it is in the City where Avista provides electric and gas? The broad term utility might be confusing for folks because it can often include other things like water, sewer, garbage, etc.

Avista: Great observation. Avista is considered a power utility (electric and natural gas), which might help to clarify this. When we discuss energy burden, we are calculating that amount customers pay towards Avista as a utility, only.

Member: My concern is for the families or individuals who may not be eligible for energy assistance with SNAP. This is a group that is a step above economically, but just barely. They're not making enough to be independent, but they don't qualify for energy assistance. I want to make sure that attention goes to that community, as they're often working, maybe just making hourly wages, but they might not get the messages that Avista is sending out or being connected to a community center. We want to make sure they get the message because they are the ones that call Avista right before their service is turned off having already exhausted all other avenues. They're working all the time and might not have time or space for awareness to learn about these.

Hassan: That's a great point, especially because programs like My Energy Discount have high thresholds for income. The types of customers you're referring to might qualify, but don't know about it, and if they're not connected to a community center, then how would they find out? So that's definitely something to keep in mind.

Member: I was recently in a conversation about concerns with data centers. I don't fully understand it, but I know they use a massive amount of energy.

Avista: Data centers are a concern in our community. In general, Avista has taken a pause in data centers to see how things land with state, federal, and local government approaches. Avista has an obligation to assess whether we can serve a customer, but we can't independently make the choice to connect a data center.

Member: I was more curious in how it relates to the Deepest Need work, and how Avista could meet those energy demands. Would it be Avista having to lay new lines, or would the data center have to do that themselves? How would it impact the communities that they end up in?

Avista: These are important questions. I think the best course of action here would be to dedicate a future meeting to this topic where we can provide some education on the role Avista plays in serving large load customers, including data centers.

Member: The conversation has cued me into resiliency. Individualized resiliency. I live in a very rural community and the folks out here meet a lot of those indicators. We've seen great steps being taken out here in terms of individual resiliency (getting back up power for wells/pumps, solar with battery, etc.). It would be really great for folks who had that lifestyle to be able to afford those upgrades for themselves – rebates for generators, incentives for solar, etc. I would love to see some opportunities like that for the individual customers who are Deepest Need and doing a lot to stay resilient to wildfires, outage risks, etc.

Hassan: Avista does have a life support battery back-up program for life support customers (Medical Equipment), but love the idea to expand this!

Member: Reference to slide 27 – you mention high use customers. Are these residential customers or does it include commercial?

Hassan: All residential customers.

Amber: If someone comes up with a question or ideas in the meantime, what's the best way to share that information?

Avista: You can email Kelly (Kelly.dengel@avistacorp.com) or Kelsey (Kelsey.solberg@avistacorp.com) directly, as well as the general CETA inbox (CETA@avistacorp.com). We will also be sending out a follow-up email inviting feedback ahead of our 12/31 deadline with the UTC.

Facilitator: Appreciate when we can close the loop on things like this, where when the group provides feedback they can see the impact of that. My question is around cumulative or compounding needs – so if someone has more than one of these needs, is there an increased prioritization?

Hassan: Because this data is so granular, we can actually see households that experience multiple of these indicators. With that, we can take action sooner and more thoughtfully.

Member: How mobile are these customers? And how current is this data? Low-income customers, for example, might move more frequently, and in general, a household's situation might change frequently. How do we account for that?

Hassan: We will ideally update these once annually so that we can have as up to date as possible information.

Member: Will these numbers be shared?

Hassan: Yes, we will share this out with the rest of the slides.

IV. Agenda Item II: Community Partnership Program Update

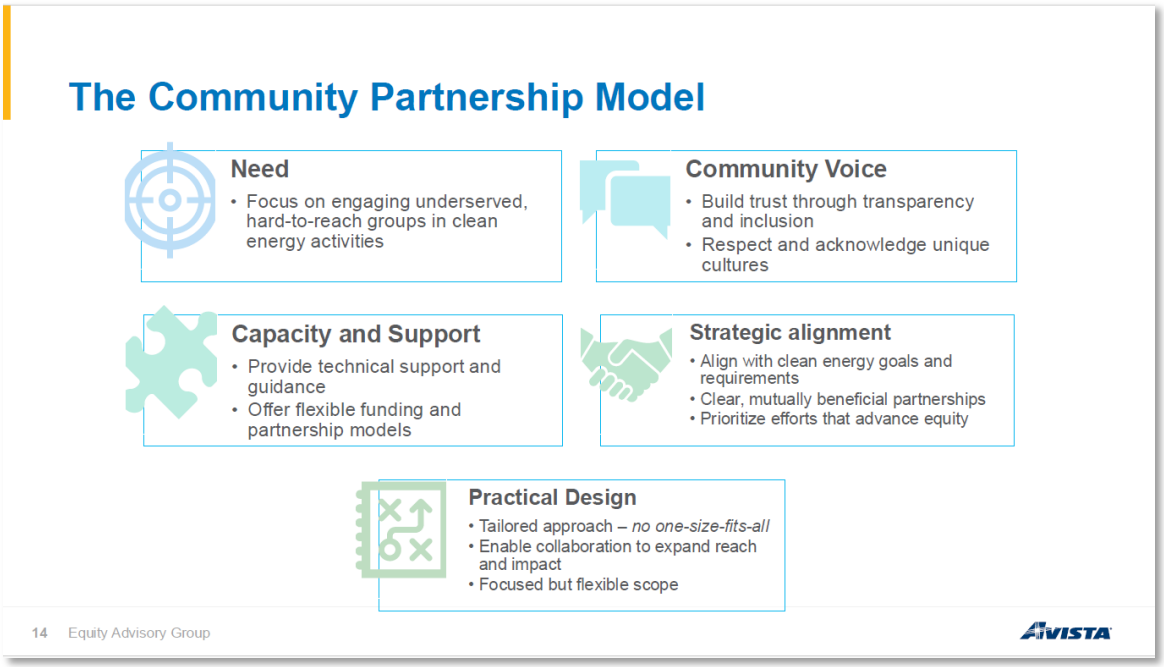


Avista: This is a follow-up to our EAG meetings in July where we introduced the concept of a Community Partnership Program. Since then, we've experienced some changes in staffing and as a result, the timeline for the launch of this program has shifted. The purpose of this update is both to (1) share that updated timeline with you and (2) to refresh

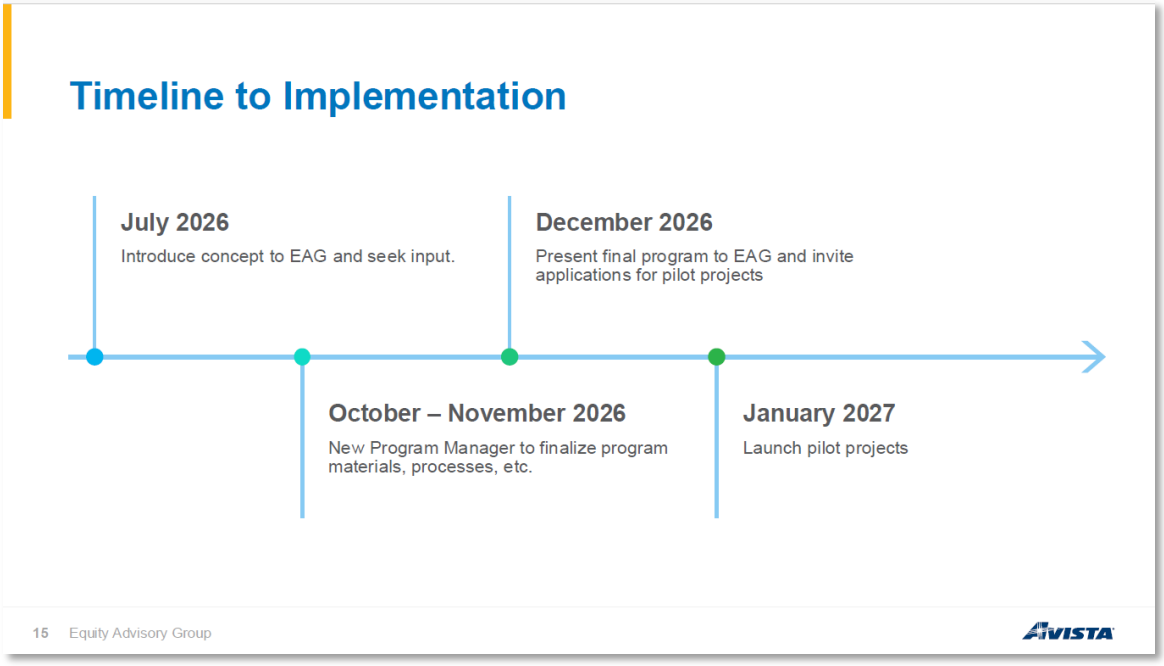
your memories on what the vision is for the Community Partnership Program so you can continue to consider potential projects in the communities you serve.



Avista: CETA has created an opportunity for us to further engage the communities we serve in a unique way. The goal of the Community Partnership Program is to seize that opportunity and provide a pathway for communities to tell us what clean energy projects would benefit them.



Avista: The Community Partnership Model consists of the elements you see on the slide here. We are seeking to turn the standard approach of utility-driven projects upside down to prioritize and engage in projects that are community-informed. These projects should meet an existing need, increase the capacity for community-based organizations, create mutually beneficial opportunities, and be practical and flexible.



Avista: We are adjusting our timeline slightly to accommodate the staffing transition we're currently under. We anticipate having a new Program Manager in place in October, who will build on the work Ana has already done to formally launch the Community Partnership Program. We will come back to the EAG in December with a formal update that includes program materials, applications, etc.

Member: Will the slides be available? When?

Avista: Yes. We will post the recordings from both meetings and the notes by next Wednesday.

Member: In terms of applications, is the community able to submit applications throughout the year or will it be once a year?

Avista: While applications will open in January, they will be on a rolling basis and can be submitted anytime.

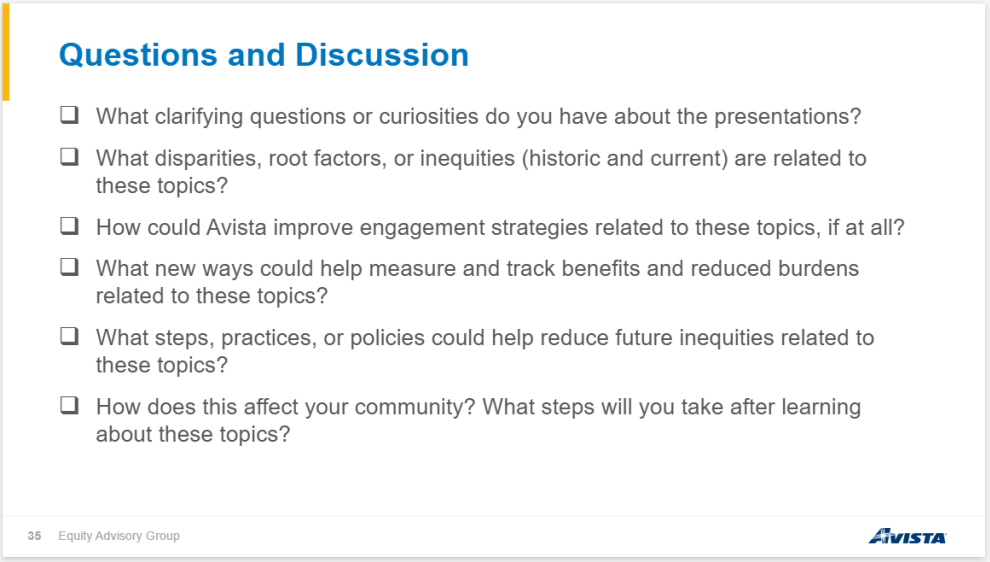
Member: On the topic of youth projects – is that concept incorporated into any of the written projects that you have? I spoke to the Innovation HS Principal and they're really interested! Should I connect them with you directly?

Avista: That's exciting! Please feel free to connect them with me (Kelsey.solberg@avistacorp.com) and as we onboard the new Program Manager, I can bring them into the conversation.
Member: Clean energy isn't one of the top 3 priorities for customers in my community. Is there an expectation that communities will ask for help with clean energy, or will they just rationalize their request for money?

Avista: This is a great consideration for us to make as build our program guidelines, application, etc.; Perhaps we can connect directly to learn more about any specific situations you have in mind so you can help us better anticipate.

Member: I am open to a follow up chat.

V. Questions and Discussion



No additional member comments

VI. Your Support Team and Next Meeting

- Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 28 and Friday October 30.
- Please sign up for our quarterly newsletter at myavista.com/CETA 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