Equity Advisory Group – Equity Lens June 2026 Sessions

Meeting Dates: June 17 and 19, 2026
Location: Zoom
Attendees:

Facilitator	Present	EAG Member	Member Organizations
Amber Lenhart	6/17/26	Clyde Abrahamson	Spokane Indian Housing Authority
Avista Team Members		Brook Beeler	Department of Ecology Eastern Region
Ana Matthews	6/19/26	Karen Boone	Community Advocate
Amanda Ghering	6/17/26	Margee Chambers	Spokane Clean Air
Kelly Dengel	6/17/26	George Dahl	Spokane County Housing and Community Development
Michelle McCollum		Tami Dillion	Providence Healthcare
Kelsey Solberg		Andrew Gardner	Spokane Public Schools
Marissa York		Carmen Groom	SNAP
	6/17/26	KJ January	Spectrum
	6/19/26	Cindy Kimmet	Takesa Village Homeowners Cooperative
6/17/26		Jean Kindem	Aging & Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington
Ariana Lake		Connie Kliewer	NEWESD101
Ashley McAndrew		Vladimir Kronin	Slavic Community
Jared Webley	6/19/26	Sue Lani Madsen	Washington Rural Environmental Network (WREN)
Kirstin Giampietri		Maliek Martin	Spokane Workforce Council
	6/17/26	Lynn Suksdorf, Phd	Rural Community Member
6/19/26		William von Bracht	Othello, school English as 2nd language
Annette Brandon		Latrice Williams	Community Member/ WA state board of Equity
Kristine Meyer		***Guests***	
	6/17/26	Stephe Tsoodle	Spokane Indian Housing Authority
	6/17/26	Paul Koening	Washington Utilities Transportation Commission
	6/17/26	Kia McGlone	Washington Utilities Transportation Commission
	6/19/26	Autumn Kern	Student

Agenda

EAG Equity Lens May Sessions Meeting Notes

Welcome & Partner Shares

The meeting facilitator opened the meeting by addressing current topics of interest including the Upriver Fire, wildfires – proactive service shutoffs, and large load customers while emphasizing Avista's commitment to intentional engagement on these topics.

The meetings followed a structured agenda covering introductions, shared expectations, and updates on the Named Communities Investment Fund prioritization criteria. Participants were informed about the meeting's level of public participation, which aimed to gather feedback and consider input in decision-making processes. The meeting also included a connection question about the experiences of awe, encouraging members to share personal stories.

The following community events were shared:

- Spectrum is conducting a community survey to design programs that are responsive to queer community will be shared with other organizations. https://www.spectrumcenterspokane.org/queeragenda
    - Juneteenth this weekend with celebrations downtown and MLK Community Center.
    - The following weekend is Pride in Perry.

Agenda Item I: EAG Comment & Action

Avista staff - Ana Matthews provided updates on EAG member guidance and questions from previous meetings.

She reviewed the equity considerations in the capital process framework that was presented at the May meeting along with feedback for demographic surveys for participants in the company’s distributed energy resources programs. And addressed questions about the company impacts of the North-South Freeway project and specific questions around the current rate case.

Some key notes from her review:

- The equity and capital process framework has been established, and implementation will begin this year; although actual engagement with Named Communities may take several years.
- Avista will consider EAG input regarding the DER survey that included: Avista incorporated feedback about making their customer demographics survey more accessible to non-English speakers and non-tech-savvy participants, including strategies for reaching people in rural communities and communities of color.

- Pole costs have risen from $811 in 2021 to $1,100 in 2025,
- Incremental costs from the CETA requirements will be in the first CEIP report that will be completed and with highlights presented to the group at the July meeting.

The following link was posted in the Chat during both June meetings:
https://www.myavista.com/about-us/data-centers-and-energy

June 17, 2026 Meeting

A guest posed the following question: "Referring to the Large Load Customers responsible for paying cost directly. What system is in place to make sure this cost they are to absorb directly is not passed to customers?"

Avista staff provided a response to the guest via email after the meeting and will share the information with the group at an upcoming meeting. **The response is noted at the end of these notes[1].**

Comments in the Chat:

- Friends in Utah are sending me a number of citizen and community concerns about their new data cent in Northern Utah that will require, when in full operation, as much electricity as is currently provided annually to the entire state of Utah. People there are deeply concerned about how the costs of this will be managed without individual customers price structure being increased.
- Our 2021 and 2025 CEIP documents can be found here: Clean Energy Implementation Plan, we will share a link to the Commission website once we file our four-year compliance report in July.
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June 19, 2026 Meeting

A member asked the following questions: Would a new customer such as an Amazon center in the community be considered large load? And when a new large load customer comes into the community, does Avista become involved in how that center affects the customers or is the primary care that the customer has what they need for electricity – how deep do you go? Do capital investments weigh impacts to community at large or just Named Communities?

Avista staff responded with an overview of the process for handling large load customers. That included an explanation that customers over 1.5 megawatts, including potential Amazon data centers, would be subject to the new large load process. Avista staff detailed how Avista works with community leaders and siting authorities to ensure rates are fair and provide net benefits to all customers while protecting reliability. And added that Avista has filed comments with the UTC regarding best practices for large load processes, which will help guide the approach and is expected to conclude by year-end.

Agenda Item II: Named Communities Investment Fund Prioritization

The group facilitator led a review of the existing Named Communities Investment Fund priorities, originally identified by group in 2023. The group considered new or revised suggestions, broadening to include libraries and senior centers, expanding energy efficiency for a focus on education, supporting community resilience, and preserving tree canopy.

<u>June 17, 2026 Meeting</u>
Comments in the Chat:

- Will the four (4) criteria have a 1 to 5 or similar point value to enter for each criteria with each strategic priority?
- Thank you for your monthly invitations. I am doing community engagement regularly and like to thank EAG members for being conduits for their communities. If any EAG member would like myself or my team to present to any community group please don't hesitate to contact me. A large part of my job is to help connect UTC to community members. Have a good rest of your week. I came from an "named community" and understand the barriers to getting essential information. Thank you again.
- I am not sure how NCIF can impact unhoused, unless they do EE work in a shelter or other community resource.

  Avista staff provided an example of how the fund has supported unhoused individuals through a partnership with Dignified Workday, demonstrating innovative approaches to addressing energy needs in communities with unstable housing.

<u>June 19, 2026 Meeting</u>
Member question: How does Avista reconcile NCIF recipients' differences in expectations and experience for a given project.
Avista response: braiding services, our funding must tie directly energy benefits, systemic and ecosystems to ensure that solutions do serve named communities in a meaningful way. Additionally, Avista staff acknowledged these challenges, emphasizing the need for ongoing technical assistance and community liaison support to ensure projects meet community needs effectively.

An EAG member commented that their community had considered solar but were not able to connect with Avista referral. Avista staff will follow up with the member to ensure they are connected to the source.

Member question: What is the ongoing relationship with recipients?
Avista response: Each project assessed on a case-by-case basis. It may be good to discuss in prioritization how to continue to provide technical assistance, so the project reaches its fullest potential.

Member Question: clarifying if the proposed prioritization is around resilience center in rural communities. **Avista staff confirmed that was correct.**

The group facilitator will send out a survey to all Equity Advisory Group members to rank the revised and new Named Communities Investment Fund (NCIF) strategic priorities using the criteria of leverage, feasibility, specificity, and values.

Closing: Next Meetings are noon on Wednesday, July 22, and at 7:30 am on Friday, July 24th.

#1. Avista Response via email to guest question regarding large loads:

Avista is committed to making sure that any agreement to serve a large load customer (1) protects existing customers, (2) prevents cost-shifting, and (3) reliability is a priority.

1. Protect customers and communities we serve today - As we evaluate data center and other large energy requests, our responsibility remains clear: protect and serve our existing customers safely, reliably, and affordably, while planning for future needs. Every step we take reflects this commitment. If we enter into an agreement with a data center or any other large energy customer:
That customer pays for the costs to serve them
Current customers will not pay those costs
Reliability for current customers will be maintained or enhanced
There must be a net benefit for current customers

We will not move forward unless we are confident an agreement meets these requirements, and the agreement would only be effective if it receives approval from the UTC, where such an order would validate the net benefit for all other customers.

2. Prevent cost-shifting - Data center and other large energy customers must pay all the costs associated with their request for energy service, including:
Studies and planning needed to review their project
Equipment and system improvements
New power supply
Transmission upgrades

This prevents these costs from being passed on to our current customers.

3. Reliability remains priority
We will only move forward with projects if our system can continue to provide safe, reliable service for our current customers. We will not take power away from homes or businesses to serve a data center or other large energy customers.

For additional information, Avista is also actively participating in UTC Docket No. UE-260162 opened by the Commission in Apri to develop principles and policies related to large loads that seek service from IOUs. Avista filed comments in this docket which can be found here: https://www.utc.wa.gov/casedocket/2026/260162/docsets.