



OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

FY 2023 PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

JANUARY 16, 2024

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1 OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

Mission: The mission of the Office of the People's Counsel ("OPC" or "Office") is to advocate for the provision of safe and reliable quality utility service and equitable treatment at rates that are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory.

Services: OPC is a party to all utility-related proceedings before the DC Public Service Commission and represents the interests of DC ratepayers before local and federal regulatory agencies and courts. The Office assists individual consumers in disputes with utility companies about billing or services and provides consumer education and outreach to community groups and associations on emerging issues impacting the quality, reliability and affordability of their utility services and associated environmental issues. The Office provides technical assistance to consumers, the Consumer Utility Board (CUB), as well as other D.C. community groups. OPC also provides legislative analysis for, assistance to and testimony before the D.C. Council on utility matters.

2 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishment	Impact on Agency	Impact on Residents
<p>OPC wins the Benning Road appeal at the DC Court of Appeals</p>	<p>OPC prevailed in its appeal of a rate case issue in which Pepco tried to recover costs for clean-up at the Benning Road power plant. This outcome reinforces the significance of adhering to settlement agreements, holding utilities accountable for their obligations, and the crucial role OPC always stands ready to play to protect DC consumers in the face of complex legal battles.</p>	<p>This accomplishment impacted DC residents directly because they do not have to pay the \$1.9 million cost of the environmental clean-up at the Benning Road site. The case impacted OPC as it stands as a strong precedent for future cases requiring the DC Public Service Commission to ensure utility companies adhere to settlement agreements.</p>
<p>Net Energy Metering Petition</p>	<p>OPC filed the Net Energy Metering Petition on May 1, 2023 - this is an important investigation because it examines the issues inherent in the interconnection of solar arrays on residential homes. These interconnection issues are a huge impediment to the District of Columbia meeting its solar energy goals. This filing is the first step in solving these issues.</p>	<p>This is currently being considered by the Public Service Commission.</p>

3 2023 OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective

Provide consumer education, outreach and technical assistance to District ratepayers and consumers on matters relating to natural gas, electric, telephone and water services.

Ensure effective advocacy on behalf of consumers and ratepayers of natural gas, electric, telephone and water services in the District.

Enhance agency operational efficiency to improve agency efficiency and productivity, service delivery and cost reduction.

Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive District government.

4 2023 OPERATIONS

Operation Title	Operation Description
Provide consumer education, outreach and technical assistance to District ratepayers and consumers on matters relating to natural gas, electric, telephone and water services.	
Daily Consumer Education Activities: Daily Service	OPC's consumer services division provides daily consumer education and outreach activity by attending and conducting various community meetings on a weekly and monthly basis.
Consumer assistance: Daily Service	On a daily basis, OPC provides consumers with pertinent information for city services, not provided by OPC. The agency receives many misdirected calls, and strives to ensure that residents needing assistance are referred to the correct city agency for service.
Ensure effective advocacy on behalf of consumers and ratepayers of natural gas, electric, telephone and water services in the District.	
OPC Consumer Advocacy: Daily Service	This operation describes the mission critical work OPC conducts in advocating for consumer regulatory issues.
Enhance agency operational efficiency to improve agency efficiency and productivity, service delivery and cost reduction.	
Enhancing Agency Operational Efficiency: Daily Service	OPC is working efficiently and effectively to assist District consumers with individual inquiries and complaints regarding their utility services and billing on both an informal and formal basis. OPC staff is continuing its comprehensive consumer education program, which includes outreach to non-English speaking and senior consumers. OPC has a robust seniors outreach and education program that is a vital component of its consumer education and outreach program. OPC has enhanced its partnerships with AARP, the Office on Aging and Commission on Aging. OPC staff educates seniors through presentations at community and mini-commission on aging meetings and at senior centers throughout the District. OPC staff also regularly updates the "Seniors Resource Guide" about home energy efficiency tips and changes in the District's utility markets. OPC's seniors outreach and education program is designed to assist seniors in managing their utility services costs.

5 2023 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In FY 2023, Office of the People’s Counsel had 4 Strategic Initiatives and completed 25%.

Title	Description	Update
Litigation of Pepco Rate Case	OPC will litigate the Pepco rate case, where it will advocate for (1) review and evaluation of multi-year rate plan pilot for cost-effectiveness and impact on residential ratepayers, (2) appropriate review and approval of climate change program costs for only those programs that have been vetted by stakeholders and approved by the PSC regarding benefits to ratepayers and DC Government, (3) adequate reliability and resiliency measures, and (4) ultimately, affordability.	Completed to date: 0-24% OPC filed a pleading to adjust the procedural schedule. The Commission adjusted the schedule. OPC will file testimony on December 11, 2023.
Litigation of Washington Gas Rate Case	OPC will litigate the Washington Gas rate case, advocating for (1) denial of any decoupling mechanism, (2) costs recovery for only climate change programs that have been vetted by stakeholders and approved by the PSC as advancing DC’s climate goals and beneficial to ratepayers, (3) PSC consideration of the future of natural gas in DC, (4) accountability for leak remediation performance, (5) fundamentally, affordability.	Completed to date: 75-99% OPC participated in the legislative hearing on September 11, 2023. We will file our final brief in mid October.
Citywide Climate Change Conference	OPC will develop and hold a community wide climate change conference that will further educate DC residents on the actions and accomplishments of the DC Government and other organizations to halt climate change with a focus on environmental justice, socio-economic and racial equity implications of environmental policies and actions.	Completed to date: Complete Completed in Q3

Environmental
Justice
Community
Education
Program

OPC will develop an interactive/participatory community education program on the meaning of Environmental Justice. Determine the impact on low-income and minority communities, efforts to eliminate and remediate environmental injustices and meaningful engagement in the development and decision-making process of regulatory and legislative actions on environmental matters that is inclusive, effective, and accessible to all DC residents.

Completed to date: 75-99%
Created consumer-friendly informational videos introducing the public to the issues of climate change and environmental justice, and developed training program for OPC community outreach staff on the presentation and messaging to DC communities on climate change and environmental justice.

6 2023 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND WORKLOAD MEASURES

Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Directionality	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023 Q1	FY 2023 Q2	FY 2023 Q3	FY 2023 Q4	FY 2023	FY 2023 Target	Was 2023 KPI Met?
Provide consumer education, outreach and technical assistance to District ratepayers and consumers on matters relating to natural gas, electric, telephone and water services.										
Percent of consumer complaints for electric, gas, telephone and water utilities closed annually.	Up is Better	76%	Not Available	Annual Measure	Annual Measure	No data available	Annual Measure	75%	80%	Nearly Met
Number of consumer outreach meetings	Up is Better	1,422	1,632	366	165	44	989	1564	400	Met

Workload Measures

Measure	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023 Q1	FY 2023 Q2	FY 2023 Q3	FY 2023 Q4	FY 2023
Consumer assistance							
Number of consumer complaints received regarding electric, gas, or telephone services	1,970	2,512	601	783	763	814	2961
Number of general consumer inquiries regarding, programs, assistance or services	1,258	3,626	967	945	1,222	1,029	4163
Number of NEP/LEP persons served by the agency	848	3,228	460	572	480	290	1802
Number of consumer complaints received regarding water services	483	827	242	263	353	314	1172
Daily Consumer Education Activities							
Number of consumer outreach meetings for Water Services Division (WSD)	New in 2022	24	17	11	18	10	56
Number of consumer outreach meetings for Consumer Services Division (CSD)	New in 2022	400	57	21	26	61	165
OPC Consumer Advocacy							
Number of cases litigated before the Public Services Commission, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Federal Communications Commission and PJM	57	70	12	12	21	13	58
Number of cases litigated before a DC Water Hearing Officer	New in 2022	2	Annual Measure	Annual Measure	Annual Measure	Annual Measure	3