

# Office of the People's Counsel FY2021

Agency Office of the People's Counsel

Agency Code DJ0

Fiscal Year 2021

**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.

## Strategic Objectives

Objective Number	Strategic Objective
1	Provide consumer education, outreach and technical assistance to District ratepayers and consumers on matters relating to natural gas, electric and telephone utilities.
2	Ensure effective advocacy on behalf of consumers and ratepayers of natural gas, electric and telephone services in the District.
3	Enhance agency operational efficiency to improve agency efficiency and productivity, service delivery and cost reduction.
4	Create and maintain a highly efficient, transparent and responsive District government

## Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Directionality	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Target
<b>1 - Provide consumer education, outreach and technical assistance to District ratepayers and consumers on matters relating to natural gas, electric and telephone utilities. (2 Measures)</b>					
Percent of consumer complaints closed annually	Up is Better	84.8%	63.3%	81.7%	90%
Number of consumer outreach meetings	Up is Better	650	1031	1334	660
<b>2 - Ensure effective advocacy on behalf of consumers and ratepayers of natural gas, electric and telephone services in the District. (1 Measure)</b>					
Number of proceedings initiated by OPC	Up is Better	4	5	2	4

## Operations

Operations Header	Operations Title	Operations Description	Type of Operations
<b>1 - Provide consumer education, outreach and technical assistance to District ratepayers and consumers on matters relating to natural gas, electric and telephone utilities. (2 Activities)</b>			
CONSUMER EDUCATION	Daily Consumer Education Activities	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.	Daily Service
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Consumer assistance	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.	Daily Service
<b>2 - Ensure effective advocacy on behalf of consumers and ratepayers of natural gas, electric and telephone services in the District. (1 Activity)</b>			
CONSUMER ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION	OPC Consumer Advocacy	This operation describes the mission critical work OPC conducts in advocating for consumer regulatory issues.	Daily Service
<b>3 - Enhance agency operational efficiency to improve agency efficiency and productivity, service delivery and cost reduction. (1 Activity)</b>			
Daily Operations	Enhancing Agency Operational Efficiency	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.	Daily Service

## Workload Measures

Measure	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual
<b>1 - Consumer assistance (3 Measures)</b>			
Number of Consumer Complaints	1593	1252	1090
Number of Consumer Inquiries	1182	1150	1392
Number of NEP/LEP persons served by the agency	2871	3113	1077
<b>2 - OPC Consumer Advocacy (1 Measure)</b>			
Number of cases litigated before the Public Services Commission, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Federal Communications Commission and PJM	56	46	Not Available

## Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Proposed Completion Date
<b>Consumer assistance (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>		
Social Service Quarterly Discussions	OPC will hold Social Services Quarterly Discussions in throughout FY 21 to foster continued coordination of government and nonprofit service providers to assist DC consumers who have been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 state of emergency.	09-30-2021
<b>Daily Consumer Education Activities (3 Strategic initiatives)</b>		
Consumer Complaint Software	Roll out of a new consumer complaints software system and revised tracking measures, tied to our new standard operating procedures.	09-30-2021
Enhanced DC Water Customer Assistance Program	OPC will work with DC Water in the development and implementation of enhanced and/or additional DC Water customer assistance programs to assist consumers negatively impacted economically by the COVID-19 public health emergency.	09-30-2021
DC Water Customer Advocacy	OPC will advocate for and collaborate with stakeholders, such as DC Water, DC Council, and other entities, to address the challenges of sewer backups from flooding and explore proposals to assist affected consumers.	09-30-2021
<b>OPC Consumer Advocacy (7 Strategic initiatives)</b>		
COVID-19 Relief investigation	COVID Relief Investigation (Formal Case No. 1164): In 2020, OPC filed a Petition with the DC Public Service Commission to initiate a proceeding to explore the options to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 that may be available to DC utility consumers following the lifting of the current state of emergency and public health emergency. OPC will work in this proceeding to identify the magnitude of utility arrearages and develop solutions to enable consumers to maintain their utility service.	09-30-2021
Formal Case 1142 - Climate Business Plan	Climate Business Plan (Formal Case No. 1142) – OPC will continue examining a range of issues present in this proceeding to explore Washington Gas' efforts to develop a long-term business plan on how the Company can evolve its business model to support and serve the District's 2050 climate goals. OPC will file comments, attend Commission workshops in FY 2021 related to climate issues to advance and support the District's climate goals.	09-30-2021
Formal Case 1163 - Microgrids Notice of Inquiry (NOI)	Microgrids NOI (Formal Case No. 1163) – The Commission established a Notice of Inquiry to examine how microgrids can be incorporated into the District of Columbia's energy infrastructure. OPC will file comments and otherwise advocate for the promotion of policies supporting the District's climate goals and for related consumer protections in this proceeding.	09-30-2021
OPC Podcasts	OPC Podcasts: OPC will develop and broadcast Educational Podcasts on issues impacting District residents. The podcasts will utilize the OPC Energy Lab.	09-30-2021
Appeal of the Minimum Offer Price Rule (MOPR) before the 7th Circuit	Appeal of the Minimum Offer Price Rule (MOPR) before the 7th Circuit OPC will continue its federal advocacy in appealing FERC's Minimum Offer Price Rule (MOPR) before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, because this rule violates states' statutory right to choose the resource mix they prefer, significantly impedes the District's ability to meet its climate goals, and will cost ratepayers across the PJM region billions of dollars. OPC will conduct an educational forum to educate consumers on how this impacts all District residents.	09-30-2021
Appeal of PJM's Quadrennial Review before the DC Circuit	Appeal of PJM's Quadrennial Review before the DC Circuit OPC will appeal certain aspects of FERC's order approving PJM's Quadrennial Review at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit to address OPC's concern that PJM's use of an inefficient reference resource will lead to capacity over- procurement by PJM and cost ratepayers billions of dollars.	09-30-2021
Supporting Regional Transmission Planning	Supporting Regional Transmission Planning OPC will advocate on behalf of DC ratepayers by opposing a proposal at FERC which would have turn significant portions of transmission planning over to the transmission owners for self-approved projects and will seeking rehearing of that order. OPC supports a proposal currently before FERC which would require PJM to plan end-of-life transmission replacement projects.	09-30-2021