

# Office of the People's Counsel FY2019

**Agency** Office of the People's Counsel

**Agency Code** DJ0

**Fiscal Year** 2019

**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.

**Summary of 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.

## 2019 Accomplishments

Accomplishment	Impact on Agency	Impact on Residents
OPC's study on community solar/ ways to make solar available and affordable to all DC residents in furtherance of DC renewable energy/climate change goals.	The study furthers OPCs mandate to educate consumers and positions OPC to align with the District's climate change policy as it evolves.	The study addresses ways to make solar more affordable and accessible to consumers in the District.
The Office successfully championed the adoption of deep energy retrofits as a pilot program for low- to moderate-income multi-family dwellings.	OPC continues to demonstrate its commitment to affordability and accessible energy programs for all DC residents.	This pilot program impacts low to moderate income DC residents.
OPC developed its Water Services division and began representing DC Water consumers.	The newly created water services division has increased the size and the breadth of responsibility of the agency.	DC consumers now have a resource for assistance with water service issues and an advocate to ensure quality, affordable water utility service.

## 2019 Key Performance Indicators

Measure	Frequency	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Target	FY 2019 Q1	FY 2019 Q2	FY 2019 Q3	FY 2019 Q4	FY 2019 Actual	KPI Status	Explanation
<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	Quarterly	95%	84.8%	90%	71%	59.6%	67%	57%	63.3%	Unmet	The percentage of complaints brought to a final resolve are far higher (90%+) but not all the final closures have been logged into the database. Cases referred to the Public Service Commission remain open until a decision is rendered in a pre-hearing or the scheduling of a formal hearing. Construction complaints (i.e., installation of service lines, moving meters, etc.) require longer resolution periods until the restoration of service. Complex cases can take several months to resolve.
Number of consumer outreach meetings	Quarterly	510	650	175	264	202	284	281	1031	Met	

Measure	Frequency	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Target	FY 2019 Q1	FY 2019 Q2	FY 2019 Q3	FY 2019 Q4	FY 2019 Actual	KPI Status	Explanation
<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	Quarterly	2	4	4	1	1	1	2	5	Met	

## 2019 Workload Measures

Measure	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Q1	FY 2019 Q2	FY 2019 Q3	FY 2019 Q4	FY 2019 Actual
<b>1 - Consumer assistance (3 Measures)</b>							
Number of Consumer Complaints	2349	1593	286	337	306	323	1252
Number of Consumer Inquiries	924	1182	264	205	257	424	1150
Number of NEP/LEP persons served by the agency	5834	2871	751	1263	619	480	3113
<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	46	56	14	12	9	11	46

## 2019 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>			
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
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
<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 has invested in advanced technology to ensure that we are maximizing productivity and efficiency to provide consumers with superior customer service at the least cost. This helps OPC to work efficiently and effectively. OPC is working 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

## 2019 Strategic Initiatives

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Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Completion to Date	Status Update	Explanation for Incomplete Initiative
<b>Consumer assistance (2 Strategic initiatives)</b>				
Spanish Language Brochure	Develop a Spanish brochure in a cartoon format to expand outreach and education to the NEP/LEP Spanish-speaking community on utility services and OPC's work.	75-99%	The Spanish brochure will be completed by the end of this month. Because of modifications to make it more understandable in a variety of Spanish language dialects common to the District, we were not able to print it on time, delaying its deployment.	The Spanish brochure will be completed by November 30, 2019.
Infographic utility Pictographi	Develop an infographic pictorial as a useful tool in educating consumers on a variety of utility topics.	Complete	OPC's utility infographic is completed. Attached is a pdf for your review.	
<b>Daily Consumer Education Activities (4 Strategic initiatives)</b>				
OPC Town Hall	Town halls to be conducted throughout the city to address specific consumer utility issues.	50-74%	Due to time constraints, the agency was unable to hold all of the proposed town halls. We anticipate holding two additional town halls to meet this initiative.	the agency experienced time constraints which only allowed for two town halls in FY 19.
State of the Utilities	Meeting of consumer advocates, utilities and community members to discuss the current state of utility services.	0-24%	Due to time constraints, the agency did not hold a State of the Utilities event in FY 19.	Due to time constraints, the event did not occur.
Solar Education	Expand solar education to include teaching consumers about the differences between solar energy companies and third-party energy suppliers. Educate consumers on the existence, benefits and availability of solar, particularly community solar, as a sustainable energy resource for all DC residents.	Complete	OPC has continued to present information on the availability and benefits of solar to DC consumers at ANC and other community meetings.	
Energy Efficiency Lab	This is a continuation and completion of the work started on OPC's energy lab planning and implementation in FY 18.	Complete	The energy lab is completed and functional.	
<b>OPC Consumer Advocacy (8 Strategic initiatives)</b>				
Affordability	OPC will file a petition with the Public Service Commission requesting that a proceeding be initiated to examine the issue of affordability of utility service, specifically energy service, in the District of Columbia.	75-99%	Affordability -- OPC commissioned a study of energy affordability in the District of Columbia. Data is currently being collected and analyzed and the completed report will be delivered by December, 2019. The goal of the study is to define affordability as it relates to current and future utility consumers and propose recommendations to make the energy burden more affordable.	The process of obtaining a consultant to conduct the study took longer than anticipated. We expect that the study will be completed by December, 2019.
D.C. Power Line Undergrounding Project (DC PLUG)	OPC will advance the purpose of DC PLUG by participating in the Commission proceedings examining Pepco's construction proposals to underground sections of its infrastructure. OPC will also actively serve as a member of Mayor Bowser's Undergrounding Project Consumer Education Task Force (UPCE)	Complete	DC PLUG -- After a 3-year delay, D.C. PLUG's groundbreaking took place on June 14, 2019 in Ward 3. OPC was integral in the establishment of this initiative as well as its implementation. From serving on former Mayor Gray's Undergrounding Task Force, to zealously advocating on behalf of ratepayers/consumers before the Commission in its proceedings involving Pepco/DDOT's Triennial and Biennial Applications, to strenuously/successfully advocating on behalf of ratepayers/consumers during the year-long stakeholder process involving the amendment of the Undergrounding Law, OPC steadfastly worked to ensure that this initiative would provide ratepayers/consumers maximum resiliency benefits at a reasonable cost and to get D.C. PLUG underway as soon as possible.	

Strategic Initiative Title	Strategic Initiative Description	Completion to Date	Status Update	Explanation for Incomplete Initiative
Modernizing the Energy Delivery System (MEDSIS)	OPC will advance the goals of MEDSIS by advocating for policies and funding for pilot programs that lead to a modernized grid that serves the public interest.	Complete	Power Path DC (MEDSIS) – OPC continues to actively participate in the numerous Power Path DC (MEDSIS) working group meetings and review pilot programs.	
Third Party Suppliers Study and enhanced TPS consumer education	OPC will develop a comprehensive Third-Party Suppliers (TPS) education plan, which will include a study of the impacts of TPS on the District's energy market.	75-99%	OPC's study of the impact of third-party suppliers on the District of Columbia's energy market and consumers is currently underway, but not yet completed. It is expected to be completed the first half of FY20.	The study will be completed by December 31, 2019.
Active participation in related Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy - related District government sponsored working groups	OPC will attend and actively participate in any District Government agency city-wide energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives by being a contributing working group member(s) for any such proposed program development plans when appropriate.	Complete	OPC actively participated in the District's "Solar for All" renewable energy program, with a focus on the consumer education component.	
WGL's Compliance with the merger conditions	OPC will establish a process to monitor WGL's compliance with the numerous commitments detailed in the DC Public Service Commission's June 29, 2018 order approving the WGL/AltaGas merger.	Complete	WGL Compliance – LSD is compiling a memo summarizing WGL's compliance with all of the merger commitments. Additionally, LSD has filed comments with the Commission identifying areas of WGL's non-compliance. LSD will continue to monitor WGL's compliance as future compliance deadlines approach.	
Alternative Ratemaking	OPC will participate in the proceeding established by the Commission to determine the appropriate ratemaking process through advocating for the mechanism that best benefits and protects for consumers.	75-99%	Alternative Ratemaking – OPC participated and took a leadership role in the Commission's grid modernization stakeholder working groups in which the parties discussed alternative ratemaking mechanisms. OPC is also reviewing Pepco's request to modify ratemaking processes and is developing a position that will best serve the interests of District consumers. As part of the rate case, OPC advocated for the Commission to hold a two-day technical conference to explore the implementation of alternative ratemaking in other jurisdictions in the country and the frameworks that can be used to evaluate the development of alternative ratemaking in the District. OPC participated in the conference and is drafting comments to aid the Commission in its development of an evaluation framework. Testimony on Pepco's rate case is due in February 2020.	This is a legal proceeding. OPC's testimony will be filed in February 2020.
DC Water Consumer Education	Pending the passage of legislation, entitled The DC Water and Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Bill 22-0662), by the Council, OPC will begin educating consumers on water utility issues and concerns.	Complete	OPC has been active in the community educating consumers on their rights and responsibilities concerning their water utility service and related issues impacting the quality and cost of service. Specifically, OPC has briefed consumers on water issues at ANC and community events throughout the city, and have partnered with government and non-government agencies and institutions to raise awareness of water assistance and savings programs. OPC has also presented testimony on behalf of DC Water consumers at DC Water Board rate proceedings.	