

# Office of the People's Counsel FY2020

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

**Agency Code** DJ0

**Fiscal Year** 2020

**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 2017 Actual | FY 2018 Actual | FY 2019 Actual | FY 2020 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   | 95%            | 84.8%          | 63.3%          | 90%            |
| Number of consumer outreach meetings   | Up is Better   | 510            | 650            | 1031           | 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   | 2              | 4              | 5              | 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> |                                     |  |                    |
| 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      |

| Operations Header   | Operations Title                        | Operations Description   | Type of Operations |
|---|---|--|--------------------|
| <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 2017 Actual | FY 2018 Actual | FY 2019 Actual |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>1 - Consumer assistance (3 Measures)</b>    |                |                |                |
| Number of Consumer Complaints                  | 2349           | 1593           | 1252           |
| Number of Consumer Inquiries                   | 924            | 1182           | 1150           |
| Number of NEP/LEP persons served by the agency | 5834           | 2871           | 3113           |

## Strategic Initiatives

| Strategic Initiative Title   | Strategic Initiative Description  | Proposed Completion Date |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Consumer assistance (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>  |   |                          |
| Community forum featuring representatives from Pepco, Washington Gas, Verizon and DC Water. The utilities will provide an update on issues affecting their industry. | Community forum featuring representatives from Pepco, Washington Gas, Verizon and DC Water. The utilities will provide an update on issues affecting their industry.  | 09-30-2020               |
| <b>Daily Consumer Education Activities (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>  |   |                          |
| Commissioned Consumer Studies  | OPC has commissioned four consumer-focused studies that will provide empirical data on topical issues directly impacting utility consumers to facilitate our ability to provide tangible solutions to reoccurring problems, including the following: 1.) Affordability study; 2.) Pre-paid Electric study; 3.) Third-Party Supplier study and 4.) Clean Energy study. | 09-30-2020               |
| <b>Enhancing Agency Operational Efficiency (1 Strategic Initiative)</b>  |   |                          |
| Utility Regulatory Attorney Mentor Program   | Develop a mentor protegee program for attorneys to encourage CBE participation within the utility regulatory arena.   | 09-30-2020               |
| <b>OPC Consumer Advocacy (5 Strategic initiatives)</b>   |   |                          |
| Pepco Rate Case, Multi-Year Rate Plan  | On May 30, 2019, Pepco filed its rate case including a proposal for a multi-year rate plan. OPC will actively litigate every phase of this proceeding to ensure the new ratemaking model produces just and reasonable rates and provides other benefits for DC consumers.   | 09-30-2020               |

| Strategic Initiative Title            | Strategic Initiative Description  | Proposed Completion Date |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Mercury Service Regulator Replacement | Washington Gas Light has been mandated by the National Transportation Safety Board and the DC Public Service Commission to replace all mercury service regulators, a device mounted on the natural gas meters, in the District of Columbia, and to its plan with the Commission by August 30, 2020. OPC will carefully analyze the plan and advocate for a project implementation plan, consumer education plan and project costs that are reasonable and provide the benefit of enhanced safety to DC consumers.     | 09-30-2020               |
| Project Pipes 2                       | Washington Gas Light has completed its first five-year phase of replacing underground natural gas pipes in various areas of the city and the second phase is before the Commission for approval. OPC will review the results of the first phase of the program and provide recommendations to the Commission that ensure the second phase of pipe replacements will be performed in a manner that enhances safety and holds Washington Gas accountable for adhering to the annual budgets approved by the Commission. | 09-30-2020               |
| Washington Gas Rate Case              | In the first quarter of 2020, Washington Gas Light will file a rate case which is likely to include a multi-year rate plan. OPC will actively analyze and litigate this rate proceeding to advocate on behalf of DC consumers for rates that are just, reasonable, and affordable and the rate proposal is consistent with and promotes recently enacted clean energy laws.   | 09-30-2020               |
| DC Water Audit                        | OPC shall conduct a comprehensive audit of DC Water's billing practices, meter reading accuracy and customer service operations, and make recommendations for improvement of DC Water's operations based on the findings and conclusions of the audit.  | 09-30-2020               |