Improving Public Access to Rates
Fairness Board Meetings

Rate Fairness Board
July 30, 2021

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Agenda

• Overview of current outreach strategies
• Review of industry best practices
  • Findings
  • Recommendations
• Discussion
Current Outreach Strategies

• Next meeting posted when scheduled on PUC website

• Agenda shared 72 hours beforehand

• Stakeholders can request to be added to a notification list to receive emails when meetings are scheduled

• RFB meetings are mentioned during any public rates meeting
Industry Standards/Outside Feedback

• Reached out to local/state agencies and member associations with public boards asking for input
  • Citizens’ Advisory Committee
  • California Association of Sanitation Agencies
  • California Community Choice Association
  • California Municipal Utilities Association
  • Association of California Water Agencies

• Received total of 10 responses

• Will follow up with agencies and provide summaries of the feedback received
Summary of Findings

• Many utilities with public boards experience the same issue of low turnout and poor participation

• Three main areas of improvement:
  • Notifying the public
  • Increasing attendance
  • Encouraging participation
Notifying the Public

• Increase/expand meeting publicization
  • Ads on public transportation (Bart, Muni, etc.)
  • Social media
  • Bill stuffers
  • Community events (booths, posters, etc.)
  • Local news stations

• Improve collaboration between RFB and Citizens’ Advisory Committee
  • Cross promotional opportunity
  • Hold rates workshops for CAC members

• Customized outreach to stakeholder groups as needed for agenda topics of particular interest
Increasing Attendance

• Meeting accessibility
  • Evening meetings
  • Regular schedule and notification
  • Providing food, childcare, etc.
  • Online streaming

• Provide various options for submitting comment
  • Written
  • Conference call number
  • In person
Encouraging Participation

• Prepare and share out educational materials on topics such as
  • The RFB's purpose
  • The rate-setting process
  • Primary components of the budget

• Break-out sessions to encourage attendees to provide input in smaller groups

• When asking for public input, provide different scenarios rather than open-ended questions
Main Recommendations

• Expand communications and outreach methods
• More regular meeting schedule
• Improve accessibility (outside work hours, childcare, food, etc.)
• Provide options for over the phone, written, and in-person comment
• Educate public on rates related topics to encourage meaningful participation
Discussion