



Improving Public Access to Rates Fairness Board Meetings

Rate Fairness Board
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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

