MEETING MINUTES

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP Q4 MEETING

Date: November 10, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM

- Meeting called to order by: John Goyette, Manager of Customer Communications (Facilitator and Presenter)

IN ATTENDANCE

Avangrid

- John Goyette, Manager of Customer Communications (Facilitator and Presenter)
- Erin Drouin, Lead Analyst of Customer Research (Presenter)
- Amelia Perez, Program Manager/Customer Service Compliance
- Kathleen Wasilnak, Supervisor of Credit & Collections
- Hector Aguilar, Program Manager/Customer Service Compliance
- Lydia Santiago, Lead Analyst, Hardship Programs
- Jaime Soto, Lead Analyst, Hardship Programs
- Nicholas Daniels, Director of Billing & Revenue Recovery
- Stephanie Chasse, Manager of Revenue Recovery
- Samantha Subar, Director, Digital and CX
- Sarah Warren, Senior Manager of Customer Communications

Eversource

- Megan Bernardini, Director of Customer Communications
- Shamus O'Brien, Director of Voice of the Customer and Customer Experience Strategy
- Shannon Hughes-Brown, Manager of Customer Communications
- Farrah Garibaldi, Senior Communications Specialist (Presenter)
- Theresa Washington, Manager, Hardship Programs & Protections
- Chad Novak, Manager, Voice of the Customer and Analytics

- Vincent Pace, Assistant General Counsel
- Veronica Gomez-Hernandez, Senior Communications Specialist

Stakeholders

Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority

- Brittany Wyman, Staff Attorney

Office of Consumer Counsel

- Kim White, Staff Attorney

Generation Power CT

- Simpson Perkins, Chief Executive Officer
- Brittany Bergstrom, Chief Program Officer
- Courtney Said, Director of Communications
- D'Neja Sutherland, Energy Assistance Program Specialist

Welcome and Review of Agenda: John Goyette, Manager of Customer Communications (Facilitator and Presenter)

AGENDA

- **Eversource and Avangrid:**
  - Department of Social Services (DSS) signage update.
  - Follow-up review of the customer shutoff journey for each operating company.

- **Avangrid**
  - Avangrid customer survey results related to the shutoff journey.
  - Avangrid's Fall Assistance Communications.

- **Eversource**
  - Eversource customer shutoff journey and communications received.
  - Eversource Low-Income Discount Rate (LIDR) gas communications and timeline updates.

Meeting Notes:

DSS Signage Update (Farrah Garibaldi and John Goyette)

- Avangrid and Eversource partnered with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to finalize customer assistance signage for use in DSS resource centers.
- Final signage was delivered to DSS on September 18 and designed for display on monitors/screens throughout resource centers.
- Appreciation was expressed to Bonnie Roswig, J.D. of the Center for Children's Advocacy and DSS contacts for their collaboration on the project.
- To simplify customer access:
  - Eversource uses a single QR code directing customers to assistance resources.
  - Avangrid uses one QR code for its three operating companies, directing customers to a UI landing page with links to each company's bill assistance information.
- No questions were raised regarding the DSS signage update.

Avangrid's Customer Shutoff Journey Review (John Goyette)

- The shutoff journey discussion was a follow-up from the Q3 meeting.
- Avangrid reviewed the customer shutoff process using SCG examples, noting that the process is generally consistent across all three operating companies.
- Key customer communications in the shutoff journey include:
    - Regular billing notifications/alerts.
    - Optional payment reminds customers that customers can customize based on due or overdue dates.
    - A shutoff warning letter and text message (when a mobile number is available) in the final stages prior to potential service disconnection.
    - A payment reminder email during the final dunning stages.

Action:

- Continue testing the payment reminder email and evaluate adding payment options to the shutoff letter.

Customer Survey Results (Erin Drouin)

- Avangrid presented results from an October 2026 survey of 188 UI customers. Sixty-two percent of respondents were hardship customers, who were intentionally oversampled because they may be more affected by shutoff-related communications and resources.
- Seventy-six percent of respondents recalled receiving information from UI about programs that could help pay their energy bill. Recall was higher among hardship customers (84%) than non-hardship customers (60%). Thirty-one customers who did not recall receiving information opted to receive additional assistance information.
- Forty-six percent of respondents reported moderate or greater familiarity with UI-specific payment-assistance programs. Familiarity increased to 64% among hardship customers, although nearly 10% of hardship customers reported no familiarity.
- Email and physical mail were the most recalled communication channels. Hardship customers were more likely than non-hardship customers to cite mailed letters and customer service representatives as information sources.

- For future bill-assistance information, email was the leading preference at 71%, followed by physical mail at 34%.
- Sixty percent of respondents reported some clarity about what happens when a bill is not paid; this increased to 69% among hardship customers. Eighty-seven percent understood that nonpayment could lead to service disruption.
- Hardship customers reported greater confidence in what to do after receiving a disconnect notice. Fifty-four percent of hardship customers would call UI first, while non-hardship customers were more likely to use the UI website.
- Seventy-two percent of all respondents said a dedicated resource for avoiding or resolving disconnection would be at least moderately valuable. This increased to 86% among hardship customers.
- For a dedicated disconnection resource, email was the preferred channel (46%), followed by physical mail (21%), text message (14%), and phone call (13%).

Action:

- Avangrid to use the survey findings to inform clearer, centralized, action-oriented disconnection resources, with email as the primary channel and physical mail as an important supplemental channel.

Fall Assistance Communications (John Goyette)

- Avangrid distributed LIDR bill inserts to all residential customers. The inserts are printed in line with paper bills and included in the PDF for customers receiving digital bills.
- The inserts mirror key information from the LIDR fact sheets and direct customers to the applicable website or phone number for eligibility and enrollment information. Color was reduced to support bill-printing requirements and visual consistency.
- Avangrid is also sending energy-assistance and enrollment-event emails to keep assistance resources visible during the heating season. Communications direct customers to online resources for additional information.
- Selected CNG and SCG customers are receiving MPP emails explaining that monthly payment amounts will be calculated using the LIDR following the August implementation. The emails include links to LIDR information, CEAP applications, and Community Action Agency resources.

Actions:

- Continue sending planned energy-assistance, enrollment-event, MPP, and CEAP communications during the heating season.
- Send CEAP reminder emails in multiple batches through November and December. The primary call to action is enrollment, with secondary information on payment arrangements, assistance programs, and energy-efficiency opportunities

Eversource's Shutoff Journey Overview (Farrah Garibaldi)

- Presentation followed up on a Q3 Working Group discussion focused on customer concerns after receiving a shutoff notice.
- Eversource reviewed the customer shutoff journey and the communications customers receive throughout the process.
- Customers receive:
    - An initial shutoff notice and a final shutoff notice.
    - Three inserts with each notice:
        - **Shutoff Notice: What You Can Do** with payment and assistance options.
        - **Programs to Help** one-pager outlining available assistance programs.
        - **Locations to Pay** listing payment locations across the state.
- Digital alerts are also sent to customers enrolled in electronic notifications.

Bill Assistance Website Enhancements

- Eversource reviewed opportunities to make it easier for customers to take action after receiving a shutoff notice.
- A review of the Bill Help webpage identified the need for a more prominent shutoff assistance call-to-action.
- In August 2026, Eversource updated the main assistance page by adding a dedicated shutoff assistance web card.
- The shutoff assistance content is also available in Spanish to improve accessibility for customers.

Shutoff Notice Insert Review

- Eversource identified an opportunity to improve the **"Shutoff Notice: What You Can Do"** insert by:
    - Simplifying and tightening language where possible.
    - Making calls-to-action more prominent.
    - Improving visibility of next steps for customers seeking assistance.
- Most content within the insert is required by statute; proposed changes would focus on layout, clarity, and supplemental messaging rather than removing or altering required language.

Proposed Improvements & Customer Testing

- Potential enhancements under consideration include:
    - Stronger and more visible calls-to-action.
    - Clear direction to **eversource.com/billhelp** and customer service resources.
    - Improved organization of information and next-step guidance.
- Before implementation, Eversource plans to:
    - Test proposed changes through its online customer community.
    - Gather customer feedback to validate effectiveness.
    - Share findings and recommendations with the Working Group before finalizing updates.
- Participants agreed the top section of the insert may be the best location to highlight immediate customer actions and available assistance options.

LIDR Gas Communications Update (Farrah Garibaldi)

- Due to a recent PURA decision, Eversource is revising its planned approach to gas Low-Income Discount Rate (LIDR) communications.
- The team had prepared communications related to the previously proposed 10% discount structure but paused those efforts following the updated order issued on November 4 to implement a tiered rate structure.
- Meeting materials will be revised and redistributed to reflect the updated slides and new requirements.
- The latest PURA order requires:
    - Elimination of the standalone 10% discount tier.
    - Implementation of a five-tier discount structure.
- New discount levels will be: 4%, 10%, 29%, 37% or 71%
- Eversource is updating its communications plan and customer materials to align with the new five-tier structure.
- A revised communications timeline will be developed and shared as plans progress.

Meeting Wrap-Up (John Goyette)

- Participants were invited to ask questions regarding:
    - The shutoff process.
    - Customer survey results.
    - Fall assistance communications.
    - LIDR gas timeline updates.
- No additional questions or comments were raised.
- Attendees were informed that final meeting materials would be filed and made available through PURA.
- Participants were encouraged to contact the team with any follow-up questions.
- Meeting adjourned with thanks to attendees for their participation and time.