Abstract

The Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN) needs tools to develop a system by which reliable data can be collected in order to assist in the regulation of public utilities in Nevada. Their particular emphasis is on low-income and elderly populations. The PUCN needs to have reliable data they can utilize to make decisions that are fact based. Part of their needs is to have a thorough understanding of the factors that affect both low-income and elderly populations. Like so many other organizations, the PUCN does not have a set system to investigate all issues and makes decisions on a per-case basis. The current methods being utilized are not consistent and can affect the PUCN’s ability to effectively perform essential functions of protecting consumers while providing opportunities to utilities to earn a fair return on investment. Analysis was conducted and recommendations were specified in order to develop a more sound system regarding decision making processes. Data collection using survey methods were recommended and outlined, with questions geared specifically towards the target population. Importance is given to educating the public on issues that concern the target population on topics such as rates and/or its increases in Nevada. A brochure consisting of energy conservation tips, consumer Bill of Rights as well as resources for assistance, among others is recommended. Lastly, defining a set procedure for PUCN staff to utilize when preparing for a hearing is recommended. The combination of these three efforts will streamline processes for the staff as well as increase the credibility and effectiveness of the commission.