

What is the OUCC?

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is the state agency that represents the interests of all Indiana utility consumers in regulatory matters regarding:

- Electricity
- Natural gas
- Telephone services
- Water and wastewater disposal services

Created by the Indiana General Assembly in 1933, the OUCC is the oldest state agency of its type in the United States. The agency's director, the Utility Consumer Counselor, is appointed by the Governor and serves a four-year term.

The agency's 49-member staff includes:

- Attorneys
- Accountants
- Economists
- Engineers
- Financial analysts
- External affairs & consumer services representatives
- Administrative personnel



What Does the OUCC Do?

State Regulatory Proceedings

Under state law, the OUCC represents the interests of all Indiana residential, commercial and industrial utility customers in matters before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC). An IURC proceeding may cover a utility's rates, service quality, service territory or other issues.

The OUCC and IURC are separate state agencies with different roles. The OUCC is the consumer advocate while the IURC is the "judge and jury." The IURC regulates most utilities operating in Indiana. Notable exceptions include wireless phone companies, municipal sewer utilities and most rural electric membership cooperatives. (Indiana law exempts certain types of utilities from most aspects of IURC regulation while giving others the ability to withdraw.)

The utility regulatory process is a legal process, in which the IURC makes its ruling in any given case guided by applicable law and based on evidence presented by the utility, the OUCC and, in some cases, other parties that formally intervene.

In representing consumer interests before the IURC, the OUCC's attorneys and technical experts:

- Review rate requests
- Examine utility accounting and financial records
- Prepare financial studies
- Conduct engineering and legal analysis
- Inspect facilities

The information gathered from this work is filed as formal testimony, as the OUCC makes its recommendations on behalf of all residential and business consumer interests.

Federal Regulatory Proceedings

The OUCC represents Indiana utility consumer interests in relevant cases before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Trial and Appellate Courts

OUCC attorneys participate in specific appellate and trial court proceedings involving utility law issues.

Public Policy

The OUCC provides assistance to legislators, local government officials, federal agencies and other state agencies when issues are raised that affect utility consumer interests.

Energy Policy

The OUCC's new Division of Energy Planning and Development is proactively monitoring electric and natural gas trends at the federal level and in other states, and working to address issues that may or may not be pending in specific regulatory cases.

Consumer Education

Consumer education is especially important as the telecommunications, natural gas and electric industries continue to evolve. The OUCC is committed to providing consumers with useful and practical information, and offers free publications on natural gas prices, telephone fraud and many other utility issues.

The OUCC can assist you.

Source of Information

All OUCC publications are available on the agency's Website and can also be provided upon request to consumers and organizations throughout Indiana, free of charge.

Our staff is available to speak to businesses, service clubs and other organizations throughout the state at no charge. The OUCC offers presentations on such topics as understanding and reducing your utility bills, protecting yourself from telephone fraud, and our role in representing utility consumers. We also participate in various outreach events throughout the year.

Consumer Services Staff

If you have questions or need general information about your utility services, we encourage you to contact the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC). Our consumer services representatives are available to assist you.

In addition, the OUCC invites written consumer comments on all pending cases before the IURC. Written comments from the public are reviewed by our consumer services staff and the legal and technical staff who are assigned to specific cases. The OUCC can be reached toll-free at 1-888-441-2494 or www.IN.gov/oucc.

Individual complaints against regulated utility service providers should be directed to the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC). The IURC consumer affairs division can investigate your complaint and determine whether or not the utility has acted in compliance with applicable rules and regulations. You can contact the IURC at www.IN.gov/iurc or 1-800-851-4268.

Before contacting the IURC with a complaint, you must first contact the utility and give it the opportunity to resolve the problem. When discussing a particular issue with a utility, please keep notes on all phone calls (including date, time, contact name and summary of discussion) and copies of all correspondence related to the problem and your attempts to resolve it.



A Message from Indiana's Utility Consumer Counselor

All Indiana consumers – residential and business consumers alike – expect and deserve safe, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices. As Indiana's 22nd Utility Consumer Counselor since 1933, I pledge to uphold the strong tradition of my agency's commitment to fairly represent consumer interests in matters related to public utilities.

The ways we use some utilities, like electric and water, have changed little over the years. Others, like the telephone industry, have experienced enormous change because of rapid advances in technology. As a result, some utilities may have moved more rapidly than others to a more competitive environment that requires less regulation.

Different times may require different rules. The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) works hard to ensure that as regulations may change, your interests, as a business or residential utility customer, are heard and protected. From heating and cooling your home or workplace to paying fair rates for water and ensuring dependable telecommunications services, the OUCC is your consumer advocate.

I invite you to contact us with your comments, questions and concerns.

Sincerely,
Susan L. Macey
Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor

Our Mission

To represent all Indiana consumers with integrity and professionalism in ensuring quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education and creative problem solving.

For more information...

Additional OUCC consumer publications may help you reduce your utility bills and better understand your utility services. All of our publications are available on our Website or by calling our consumer services staff toll-free.

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INTRODUCING YOUR OUCC

Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

