

PUD FAST FACTS

Public power is hometown power

Public utility districts are governed by locally elected, boards of commissioners who are accountable to the voters. Commissioners are nonpartisan and meet at least monthly in open meetings where members of the public can observe and participate in the decision-making process.

PUDs are also nonprofit utilities – owned by the community, not by stockholders. They are in business to provide a service, not to make a profit.

A PUD's first and only purpose is to provide reliable service at the lowest possible cost. As a result, PUD rates for electricity are generally lower – and their service values higher – than investor-owned utilities that are focused on making money for their stockholders.

Combined PUD Data (Based on 2006 operating year)	
TOTAL CUSTOMERS	
Electricity	908,485
Water	117,992
Sewer	2,812
LINES INSTALLED (miles)	
Electricity	40,228
Water	3,033
Telecommunications	3,220
SALES	
Electricity	29.02 million megawatt hours
Water	19.6 billion gallons
REVENUE FROM SALES	
Electricity	\$1.6 billion
Water	\$51.4 million
Telecommunications	\$8.75 million
ANNUAL SALES PER CUSTOMER	
Electricity	31,942 kilowatt hours
Water	166,000 gallons

Forming a public utility district

Public utility districts are formed by a vote of the people.

There are two ways to place the question of whether to form a new PUD on the ballot. A county commission may place the question on the ballot of any general election in an even-numbered year, or the people can submit a petition signed by qualified electors totaling 10 percent of the votes cast in the last general election.

The procedure for establishing a new PUD is spelled out in RCW 54.



Power and water

Public utility districts can be formed to provide both power and water services.

The majority of the 28 operating PUDs in Washington provide both power and water services.

Newly formed PUDs also would have authority to provide both types of utility services.

However, PUDs that have not become electric utilities within 10 years of being formed lose power authority without a new vote of the people.

There are currently six PUDs in Washington that provide only water, or water and wastewater, services, and do not have authority to provide electricity.



Telecommunications

In 2000, the Legislature authorized all PUDs then in existence to provide wholesale telecommunication services. Since then, several PUDs have begun installing fiber optics to encourage retail providers in their communities to offer high-speed broadband communications.