

# Racial Equity Progress & Accountability Report

October 2021 – June 2022

Regional Housing  
Legal Services &  
Pennsylvania  
Utility Law Project

## Transparency & Accountability in Housing and Utility Policy

- RHLS released a tenant manual for current residents in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties as well as those who are seeking them. This manual demystifies the rules and protections of housing built using the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.
- RHLS submitted comments on the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) proposed regulations that, among other things, advocated for the inclusion of language to require analyses of banking activities for individuals and communities of color. While CRA was enacted to combat redlining, the regulations have only focused on low / moderate income people and individuals, not racial / ethnic groups. RHLS pointed out that there is ample precedent and significant need for evaluation analyses along racial lines.
- PULP, through targeted litigation, helped advance consumer protections designed to prevent predatory pricing and contract terms from competitive electric and gas suppliers. PULP uncovered evidence that shopping customers have paid over \$1.5 billion dollars more than the price to compare since 2015 – and analyzed extensive data revealing that high price offers are often targeted in low income communities and communities of color.
- PULP advocated with the second largest electric provider in PA to ensure that their telephone system recognized and understood Spanish-speaking customers, improving access to their consumer services.
- PULP won improvements to language access policies at two large, private water companies.
- PULP drafted and submitted a set of comments on environmental justice recommendations, which were signed onto by thirty-seven frontline, environmental, consumer, business, social service, and faith-based organizations.
- PULP is engaged in national strategic planning work for a national energy efficiency coalition to ensure that their restructured mission, membership, and funding decision-making processes are rooted in racial justice and community-based leadership.

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## Outreach, Engagement, Listening, and Learning

- All RHLS and PULP staff members completed a 4-week training series on LGBTQ+ and transgender terminology and affirming language, pronoun usage, and allyship within and outside of the workplace.
- Some RHLS and PULP staff members are engaged in Freedom School, a year-long series of monthly social justice trainings rooted in Black feminist teachings.
- RHLS and PULP are in the process of planning a series of trainings on disability.
- The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Education subcommittee hosted staff-optional screenings of *13th* and *My Name is Pauli Murray*.
- The DEI Education subcommittee began sending out monthly emails to all staff on the first Friday of each month with recommendations of DEI-related articles, books, podcasts, movies, and more.
- RHLS and PULP employees are actively engaged in newly formed PLAN Affinity Groups.
- PULP continued its Utility Justice Project work to improve access to safe and affordable utility services through targeted outreach in historically underserved and disinvested communities in the northeast region.
- All of PULP's one-pagers and infographics are now available in both English and Spanish and have been downloaded by hundreds of advocates and community members across the state.

## Resources & Internal Programs

- RHLS and PULP staff have continued to build and grow their DEI work through the staff DEI committee and its three subcommittees: Education, External Work, and Internal Policy.
  - The work of the DEI Education Subcommittee is detailed under "Outreach, Engagement, Listening, and Learning."
  - The External Work subcommittee collaborated to put together a mission for the subcommittee and four priorities for the work of the group. They drafted a set of working recommendations currently being considered by the DEI Committee and Leadership Team.
  - The Internal Policy subcommittee have been diligently reviewing and editing a list of internal policies to make the language better centered on DEI priorities. They have also finished drafting a set of hiring recommendations and begun drafting internship and fellowship hiring and program recommendations.