



N A R U C
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

**2018 Innovation Award
Promoting Innovation among Utility Regulatory Policy and Utilities**

Background Information

Organized by the NARUC Task Force on Innovation

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1. Foreword

In 2017, NARUC President Robert F. Powelson and the Executive Committee established a Presidential Task Force on Innovation. The task force unveiled a new recognition program, “*Innovation Awards: Promoting Innovation among Utility Regulatory Policy and Utilities*,” which promotes and recognizes the work of NARUC members and utility innovators for innovative solutions to regulatory issues.

In an era of fast and profound change to technology and regulatory approaches in all utility sectors, NARUC and its members must be adaptable and resilient to spot new trends and opportunities.

The technology and structures of the telecommunications, transportation, water, and energy sectors have been at the center of a maelstrom of systemic changes in regard to what NARUC members do and how we do it. NARUC members have always had to deal with such changes.

Given the vast spectrum of technologies in development today—from increased data analytics and cloud-based computing software to new forms of energy storage—NARUC is the ideal forum to examine these trends and find ways to leverage technology to increase value for society. These trends have resulted in innovative regulatory and policy initiatives, including accounting treatment of cloud computing, distributed generation, and new network transportation companies. Customers too want to be involved in their energy usage in a way that the energy sector has never seen before. This task force provides the gateway for NARUC members to embrace innovation and encourage other stakeholders to find ways to leverage new technologies emerging in each sector.

2. Purpose of the Award

NARUC is a non-profit organization dedicated to representing state public service commissioners who regulate utilities companies that provide essential services such as energy, telecommunications, water, and transportation. NARUC is an invaluable resource for its members and the regulatory community, providing a venue to set and influence public policy, share best practices, and foster innovative solutions to improve regulation.

In 2017, NARUC established the Innovation Awards to recognize those propelling the energy industry into the future. The Awards recognize energy-industry innovators in the various utility sectors, such as water and sewer, electricity, gas, and telecom.

The Awards reflect NARUC’s commitment to promoting the exchange of knowledge and information that will mutually benefit innovation in regulatory issues.

The awardees will be presented with a certificate at the 2018 NARUC Annual Meeting. An Announcement about the recipients will be made in NARUC’s newsletter and on its website (<https://www.naruc.org/committees/innovation/>).

3. *Nomination Process*

The selection of the Innovation Awards winners will commence with a Call for Nominations from the entire NARUC membership and media channels. The Call for Nominations can also be accessed on the NARUC website here: <https://www.naruc.org/committees/innovation/>.

Anyone may submit his/her nominations directly to NARUC emailing InnovationAwards@naruc.org. There are no restrictions on who can submit a nomination. The nominations are separated by both industry and type. Each industry: Electricity, Gas, Telecommunications and Water will each recognize two types of innovation: Regulatory and Policy Innovation and Technical Innovation. Each submission must fall under one of the designated industry and type.

The winners will be selected by the Task Force on Innovation and will be presented a certificate in the 2018 NARUC Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. The winners may turn down the award. Information about the award winners will be published on the NARUC website and may be released to other media outlets.

Nominations must be submitted to InnovationAwards@naruc.org by **September 28, 2018**.

4. *Eligibility*

The 2018 Innovation Awards covers the period from March 28, 2017 through September 28, 2018. Nominees from previous award cycles are encouraged to apply.

Eligible nominees for the Regulatory and Policy Innovation Award include any state employee or office from an organization (for example, a Commissioner, State Energy Office, who has been employed in that capacity at any time during an 18-month period prior to the nomination closing. The nominee remains eligible if their term concluded within the 18-month period.

Eligibility for the Technical Innovation Awards is limited to innovations that have been developed and/or deployed within the 18-month period before the nomination deadline. Utilities, load serving entities trade organizations, third parties, service providers, public power utilities, startups, and others as they see fit are encouraged to nominate and be nominated in the Technical Innovation category. The Technical Innovation Awards will have three subcategories: Electricity, Water, and Gas.

5. *Criteria*

The nominated Innovation is advised to demonstrate:

- A. The benefit to ratepayers.
- B. The magnitude of current and/or potential impact of the innovation.
- C. The project's trajectory in the immediate and far future.
- D. How and why the project is successful.
- E. Potential barriers to future success and how NARUC and public utility commissioners can help overcome those barriers.

6. *Guidance for Nomination*

Nominating a regulatory/policy or technical innovation for the Innovation Awards is straightforward. The required information for nominations is attached in Appendix B. Anyone is able to nominate.

Before you begin please read this document carefully and the Selection Criteria and the Nomination process, timeline and the selection process.

Please ensure that you complete all the contact details accurately so the Awards team can contact the nominator or nominee if needed. It is strongly recommended that the nominee or entity knows that you have nominated them for the Award and that they have consented to the nomination being made. Self-nominations are eligible.

Please keep in mind that the Innovation Awards Selection Committee will evaluate and rate the candidates based only on the information supplied in the nomination form, and therefore any statements made about the nominee are supported with specific examples.

Remember that this information may be used in publications and promotional materials related to this event.

Please submit your Nomination Form for the Award (via email) to InnovationAwards@naruc.org.

If you have any questions about the submission procedure or completing the paperwork for your entry, or require further details, please contact Mr. Brien Sheahan, Chair of the Task Force on Innovation (Brien.Sheahan@illinois.gov) or Ms. Kerry Worthington, Senior Manager (kworthington@naruc.org).

The closing date for submitting the nomination is September 28, 2018 at 5:00 PM Central Time. The selected candidate would be notified a few weeks before the Awards Ceremony but will receive the Award at a Ceremony during the NARUC Annual Meeting.

Award recipients will be honored at the 2018 NARUC Annual Meeting.

Appendix A) Award Categories

At the NARUC Annual Meeting 2018 in Orlando, Florida, four awards will be announced – one for Regulatory and Policy Innovation and three for Technical Innovation. Please see the *Eligibility* section for more information.

Category A: Regulatory and Policy Innovation

Category B: Technical Innovation

Subcategory A: Electricity Industry

Subcategory B: Water Industry

Subcategory C: Gas Industry

Appendix B) Nomination Form

- 1) Applicant Name, Title and Company
- 2) Applicant Contact Information
- 3) Award Category
- 4) Describe the Project and why it was Innovative (1000 words maximum). Relevant attachments, website links, pictures, and other media are welcome but not required.
- 5) The nominator is advised to address the following points in their answer:
 - a. The benefit to ratepayers
 - b. The magnitude of current and/or potential impact of the innovation
 - c. The project's trajectory in the immediate and far future
 - d. How and why the project is successful
 - e. Potential barriers to future success and how NARUC and public utility commissioners can help to overcome those barriers