

Panel 6: Utilities and the Future

The business model of the current utility was invented over 100 years ago and has remained essentially unchanged since then. However, the pace and depth of change that is expected over the next decade will transform the way the energy system is planned, operated, and managed. The transformation requires new and innovative partnerships with customers and trade allies, the deployment of emerging technologies, products, and solutions, and working with stakeholders in a more collaborative manner than ever before. Additionally, there is a heightened focus on affordability, reliability, and resource adequacy across the country. Utilities face a challenging future as they strive to balance the need to maintain the affordability and reliability of the energy system with investments in longer-term solutions to support future energy goals.

These changes bring about a running discussion on what the utility of the future will look like. This panel will explore the building blocks of future utilities through industry advancements in building technologies, lessons learned from utility demonstrations and pilots, and innovative program models. The intended outcome is to facilitate discussions that yield results and best practices on how utilities can plan, operate, and manage an energy system that supports overall energy system innovation. Panelists will provide insights on:

- Qualitative lessons learned and quantitative results on advanced technology performance in demonstrations, deployments, and pilots
- Insights on how utilities can best serve dynamic customer and occupant needs obtained through results from utility pilots and programs
- Innovative approaches that address hard-to-reach market segments
- Breakthrough technologies, programs, and approaches that help “cross the chasm” and enable market adoption and development to improve affordability and reliable advanced energy buildings and communities
- Plans to successfully leverage new sources of public and private funding while avoiding major disruptions to programs that are performing well
- How the themes of affordability, reliability, and resource adequacy may be influencing their goals, objectives, and/or program design