

Exhibit:
Issues: Customer Service
Witness: Katie R. McDonald
Type of Exhibit: Direct Testimony
Sponsoring Party: Evergy Missouri Metro
Case No. ER-2026-0143
Date Testimony Prepared: February 6, 2026

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: ER-2026-0143

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

KATIE R. MCDONALD

ON BEHALF OF

EVERGY MISSOURI METRO

**Kansas City, Missouri
February 2026**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. SERVING LOW INCOME AND MEDICALLY VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS	2
III. EVERGY'S CRITICAL MEDICAL NEEDS AND REHOUSING PILOT PROGRAMS	8
IV. DIGITAL CUSTOMER SERVICE	11
A. DIGITAL SELF-SERVICE TOOLS	12
B. HIGH-TOUCH CONTACT CENTER	21
V. CONCLUSION.....	24

**DIRECT TESTIMONY
OF**

KATIE R. MCDONALD

CASE NO. ER-2026-0143

I. INTRODUCTION

2 Q: Please state your name and business address.

3 A: My name is Katie McDonald. My business address is 1200 Main, Kansas City, Missouri
4 64105.

5 Q: By whom and in what capacity are you employed?

6 A: I am employed by Evergy Metro, Inc. I serve as Vice President, Public Affairs for Evergy,
7 Inc., Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a as Evergy Missouri Metro (“Evergy Missouri Metro,”
8 “EMM,” or the “Company”), Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri West
9 (“EMW”), Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Kansas Metro (“EKM”), and Evergy Kansas
10 Central, Inc. and Evergy South, Inc., collectively d/b/a as Evergy Kansas Central (“EKC”)
11 the operating utilities of Evergy, Inc. (“Evergy”).

12 Q: On whose behalf are you testifying?

13 A: I am testifying on behalf of EMM.

14 Q: What are your responsibilities?

15 A: I lead the Public Affairs division and have responsibility for the strategy and execution of
16 Corporate Communications, Marketing, Digital Strategy and all digital tools (including the
17 website, customer portals and app), and Social Impact functions which include Customer
18 Affairs, Community Relations, Connect Centers and Community-based Sustainability.

1 **Q:** **Please describe your education, experience and employment history.**

2 A: I earned a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia and
3 an MBA from the Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.
4 I am also a graduate of the University of Idaho's Utility Executive Program. I have worked
5 in various positions in the Public Affairs division at Evergy since I joined the company in
6 2007. Prior to joining KCP&L (now Evergy), I worked in marketing and public affairs
7 roles at two integrated marketing communications agencies in Kansas City.

8 **Q:** **Have you previously testified in a proceeding before the Missouri Public Service
9 Commission (“Commission” or “MPSC”) or before any other utility regulatory
10 agency?**

11 A: No.

12 **Q:** **What is the purpose of your testimony?**

13 A: My testimony will discuss Evergy's approach and specific programs supporting its low
14 income and medically vulnerable customers. I will also discuss Evergy's approach to
15 customer service in Missouri.

16 **II. SERVING LOW INCOME AND MEDICALLY VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS**

17 **Q:** **How does Evergy support its low-moderate income and vulnerable customers?**

18 A: Evergy has low-income assistance programs to assist customers with household incomes
19 at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), which is consistent with eligibility
20 thresholds used by major federal and state assistance programs, including the Low-Income
21 Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Weatherization Assistance Program. For
22 a family of two, this is an income maximum of \$43,280 and below.

1 This approach ensures that program funding is targeted to customers who are most
2 vulnerable to energy insecurity and bill non-payment risk.

3 In addition, Evergy classifies medically vulnerable customers as those experiencing
4 a medical or cognitive crisis or are dependent on electrical life support equipment.
5 Evergy has a portfolio of programs designed to address different aspects of affordability,
6 including bill payment assistance, arrearage relief, flexible payment arrangements,
7 payment and outreach support to medically vulnerable and energy efficiency and
8 weatherization partnerships delivered through community agencies. These programs are
9 designed to complement existing public assistance, allowing utility resources to be
10 leveraged alongside federal and state funding streams. As discussed further by Company
11 witnesses Darrin Ives (Senior Vice President – Government and Regulatory Affairs) and
12 Kevin Gunn (Vice President- Government and Regulatory Affairs), Evergy aims to
13 combine affordability with tools that promote financial stability, energy efficiency and
14 long-term resilience.

15 By integrating programs that allow for proactive enrollment, personalized and face-
16 to-face support, and community partnerships, Evergy seeks to ensure that customers have
17 the time to understand and access the many resources in which they may be eligible.
18 Additionally, Evergy targets mobile outreach to zip codes experiencing the lowest income
19 levels in the EMM service area. This support provides increased awareness of programs,
20 with a goal of helping customers avoid disconnections and arrearages, effectively manage
21 their payments and reduce the likelihood of future crisis situations.

1 Q: **What programs are offered to support EMM low income and medically vulnerable**
2 **customers?**

3 A: Everygy offers a suite of programs designed to support low income and medically vulnerable
4 customers in Missouri including:

- 5 ■ **Economic Relief Pilot Program**, which provides monthly bill credits, up
6 to \$65, to eligible households for 12 months;
- 7 ■ **Dollar Aide** is supported by voluntary donations, which Everygy matches,
8 to assist income-eligible households with bill payments;
- 9 ■ **Rehousing Pilot Program** assists customers with arrearages as they
10 transition into or maintain stable housing;
- 11 ■ **Critical Medical Needs Program** helps to link customers facing a medical
12 or cognitive crisis to payment resources, stop disconnections, and layer
13 additional programs;
- 14 ■ **Medical Program** offers additional outreach and assistance to customers
15 dependent on life-saving medical equipment;
- 16 ■ **Cold Weather Registered Program** allows eligible customers to receive
17 extra notice before disconnecting.
- 18 ■ **Medical Extension** postpones a disconnection for 21 days if losing power
19 may aggravate the medical condition of a customer.
- 20 ■ **Income-Eligible Weatherization** programs deliver energy-efficiency
21 upgrades and other tools to reduce ongoing energy costs.
- 22 ■ **Weatherization Ready/KC-Low Income Leadership Collaborative**
23 (**KC-LILAC**) provides necessary home repairs for customers to allow for

1 Weatherization upgrades. This program will also provide home repairs for
2 customers who have already participated in Weatherization and are in need
3 of repairs to maintain the efficiency/benefits of the prior Weatherization
4 work.

5

- 6 **Income-eligible Multi-family Program** offers energy upgrades and other
energy efficiency improvements for homes.

7 **Q: What other services and outreach does Evergy use to reach and serve these
8 customers?**

9 A: Evergy utilizes in-person and mobile community-based outreach to ensure accessibility
10 and engagement as well as marketing and communications.

11

- 12 **Customized, Face-to-Face Support** - Evergy Connect (“Connect”), the
Company’s walk-in facility in Kansas City, Missouri, provides customers
13 with a dedicated space to receive personalized support, payment options and
14 application assistance, energy efficiency tools and education and
15 information about available programs. At Connect, Evergy also conducts
16 wrap-around resource customer events in which other community partners
17 are present to offer Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
18 (“LIHEAP”) assistance, food and nutrition resources, housing options,
19 employment services, other utility resources (gas, water), and other social
20 services. In 2025, Evergy provided customized support to approximately
21 27,600 EMM and EMW customers at its Kansas City Connect facility.

22

- 23 **Mobile Outreach** - Evergy deploys mobile outreach teams at agency and
community events, bringing resources directly to communities and

1 customers. This outreach, which also allows us to reach our non-urban and
2 rural areas, provides trained specialists to provide customized support and
3 resources to income eligible customers.

4 ▪ **Agency Training** - Additionally, Evergy conducts agency trainings to
5 equip social service organizations with the knowledge and tools needed to
6 assist clients in navigating energy assistance options. These efforts reflect
7 Evergy's commitment to proactive, community-centered engagement that
8 strengthens partnerships and expands access for customers in need.

9 ▪ **Marketing and Communications** - Evergy implements a multi-channel
10 customer communication strategy to ensure that all customers—particularly
11 those facing financial hardship—are aware of the energy assistance
12 programs, payment options, and support services available to them. These
13 efforts are grounded in our commitment to proactively reach customers
14 where they are, using both digital and traditional communication tools to
15 increase awareness, improve understanding, and remove barriers to
16 accessing assistance. Through coordinated outreach across media, direct
17 customer communications, community engagement, and online platforms,
18 Evergy has worked to provide timely, clear, and accessible information to
19 increase awareness and help customers manage their energy needs.

20 ▪ **Earned Media and Media Relations** - Evergy leverages earned media
21 opportunities and works closely with news outlets to build public awareness

and understanding of available energy assistance programs and customer support offerings.

- **Email Outreach** - Evergy utilizes multiple forms of email communication, including personalized emails based on a customer’s past participation in programs, seasonal “high-usage” journey emails, and broad awareness campaigns to highlight assistance options and available resources.
- **Bill Messages and Bill Inserts** - To reach customers who prefer print or do not regularly use digital channels, Evergy includes bill messages and bill inserts that provide information about assistance programs throughout the year.
- **Educational Videos** - Evergy has developed a series of educational videos that explain available programs and outline how customers can apply. These videos are highlighted and distributed through multiple channels, including the Evergy website, social media channels, and email campaigns.
- **Website and Online Resources** - Evergy provides extensive program details on evergy.com, including a recently launched Energy Assistance landing page. This page consolidates information on assistance programs, payment plans, medical programs, and energy-saving tips to streamline customer access.
- **Paid Search** - The Company uses paid search to help customers more easily locate Evergy’s energy assistance resources and program information when searching online for support.

1 ■ **Printed Handouts and Flyers** - Evergy develops printed materials that are
2 distributed at community events and mailed to customers upon request,
3 helping expand outreach beyond digital channels.

4 ■ **Weekly Energy Reports** - In addition to sharing weekly usage information,
5 Evergy includes promotional messages in these reports to highlight
6 available programs, financial assistance options, and energy-savings
7 opportunities.

8 ■ **Social Media Outreach** - Evergy uses social media platforms, such as
9 Facebook, to share informational videos, provide step-by-step guidance on
10 completing applications, highlight assistance programs and events, and
11 direct customers to partner agencies that can offer additional support.

12 **III. EVERGY'S CRITICAL MEDICAL NEEDS AND REHOUSING PILOT PROGRAMS**

13 **Q: Please describe Evergy's Critical Medical Needs Program.**

14 A: The Critical Medical Needs Program is a three-year pilot program designed to support
15 medically and cognitively vulnerable customers through a community-based information
16 resource network that coordinates services and help customers through:

17 ■ Cancel or avoid disconnection

18 ■ Connect with state and federal bill assistance programs, such as LIHEAP

19 ■ Connect with other state and utility programs to address energy burden (e.g.
20 weatherization), as well as other social service resources with a more
21 streamlined process

22 ■ Leverage other utility assistance funds

23 ■ Avoid negative impacts on residents with serious medical conditions

1 ▪ Address build-up of utility arrearages

2 **Q: How is Evergy making customers aware of this program?**

3 A: Evergy is partnering with the United Way of Greater Kansas City (“UWGKC”). UWGKC
4 is providing the platform in which medically and cognitively vulnerable customers are
5 referred to by their physicians and are linked with additional services to meet the program
6 goals. UWGKC coordinates with area medical facilities to inform of the program and is
7 also coordinating with other United Ways to provide the service to EMM and EMW service
8 areas. Additionally, information about the program is distributed at the Connect facility
9 and customer outreach events and on Evergy’s and the partner’s websites.

10 **Q: What is the status of the roll-out of the Critical Needs Program?**

11 A: Evergy worked with UWGKC to establish the program, processes, and metrics. It was
12 officially launched in May of 2024. In 2025, the program provided assistance to 607 EMM
13 and EMW customers. By the end of 2025, 91% of all program participants remained
14 connected to service. The program is currently being evaluated by Applied Public Policy
15 Research Institute for Study and Evaluation (APPRISE) with evaluation results due in
16 April of 2026. Evergy recommends continuing the Critical Medical Needs Program at the
17 same funding levels. Please refer to the testimony of Company Witness Darcie Kramer for
18 details.

19 **Q: Please describe the Rehousing Pilot Program.**

20 A: The Rehousing Low-Income Pilot Program is designed to help income-eligible residents
21 enter into or remain in stable housing by providing additional resources to those unable to
22 secure or remain in affordable housing because of an arrearage. Eligible customers are

provided with up to \$1,000 to use toward their electric payment arrearage. If the arrearage is below \$1,000, the remainder may be used toward future electric payments.

The program helps customers by:

- Taking away arrearage as a barrier to entering or remaining in stable housing
- Leveraging other utility assistance funds
- Maintaining utility services
- Avoiding negative impacts on residents who struggle securing housing
- Helping to minimize the build-up of utility arrearages

Does Evergy partner with other entities to deliver this program?

Yes. Everygy is partnering with the Housing Authority of Kansas City (“HAKC”). HAKC coordinates with other housing authorities to offer the program throughout Every Missouri Metro and Everygy Missouri West service territories. Additionally, in December 2025, Everygy finalized plans to expand its partners to domestic violence shelters and offer the same arrearage payment support for victims of domestic violence. Hope House, located in Kansas City, Missouri, is the administrative partner and works with the other local shelters in Everygy’s Missouri territory to create awareness of the program and apply the arrearage payment support.

What is the status of the roll-out of the Rehousing Pilot Program?

Evergy has worked with the HAKC to build out the program, processes, and metrics. The program was launched in May of 2024. In 2025 the Rehousing program has assisted 26 customers with \$26,000 in arrearage payments. By the end of 2025, 100% of program participants remained connected to service. Evergy recommends continuing the Rehousing

1 Program at the same funding levels. Please refer to the testimony of Company Witness
2 Kramer for details.

3 **Q: What is the status of Evergy's 2025 customer outreach, bill assistance and program
4 support?**

5 A: In 2025, Evergy provided customized, face-to-face support to 35,850 EMM and EMW
6 customers through Kansas City Connect and mobile outreach events. In 2025, Evergy
7 linked EMM customers to \$5,783,000 in bill payment support. This work, along with
8 other customer outreach channels, helped link EMM and EMW customers to a total of
9 \$10,900,000 in bill payment assistance.

10 **Q: How else does Evergy support income eligible customers?**

11 A: Annually Evergy provides approximately \$3,500,000 in community donations in its EMM
12 and EMW service areas. Evergy employees dedicate approximately 15,000 hours in
13 volunteerism and donate more than \$600,000 of their own money to important community
14 groups providing vital services for our customers.

15 **IV. DIGITAL CUSTOMER SERVICE**

16 **Q: Please summarize Evergy's digital customer service approach.**

17 A: Customers in all aspects of their daily interactions with companies are utilizing tools that
18 allow them to transact business and communicate based on their preference. Those
19 preferences are no different when it comes to transacting business with Evergy. Therefore,
20 Evergy has worked over the years to provide its customers with the ability to utilize digital
21 self-service tools, which is the primary way customers interact with Evergy, while still
22 having the option of the more traditional contact centers to assist them with complex and
23 in-depth interactions.

1 **Q:** **How has Evergy met the demand for digital self-service tools?**

2 A: Evergy provides several ways in which customers can digitally interact. Evergy's website

3 provides important information on general company information, electric rates, energy

4 efficiency programs, account information, energy usage information, payments, outage

5 reporting and notifications, start and stop service requests, etc. Evergy's mobile app allows

6 customers to stay updated on their account information, provides outage reporting and

7 notifications, payment and usage information, and changes in their rate. Evergy's

8 Intelligent Voice Assistant ("IVA") provides customers several interactive choices as

9 discussed in more detail later in this testimony.

10 **Q:** **What happens when a customer does not want to use the digital self-service tools or**

11 **the customer wants to transact their business with a human?**

12 A: Evergy's Raytown Missouri contact center is staffed with highly qualified employees to

13 assist customers with their needs. With the increase in customers primarily utilizing digital

14 self-service tools for their interactions, the contact center has evolved to a high-touch

15 customer service facility that focuses on a personalized customer interaction approach.

A. DIGITAL SELF-SERVICE TOOLS

17 **Q:** **Evergy has made a number of investments to improve self-service tools since the**

18 **merger. Explain the rationale behind these investments.**

19 A: Evergy has made consistent investments to improve our self-service tools, and we should

20 continue to make additional investments to meet the changing expectations of customers

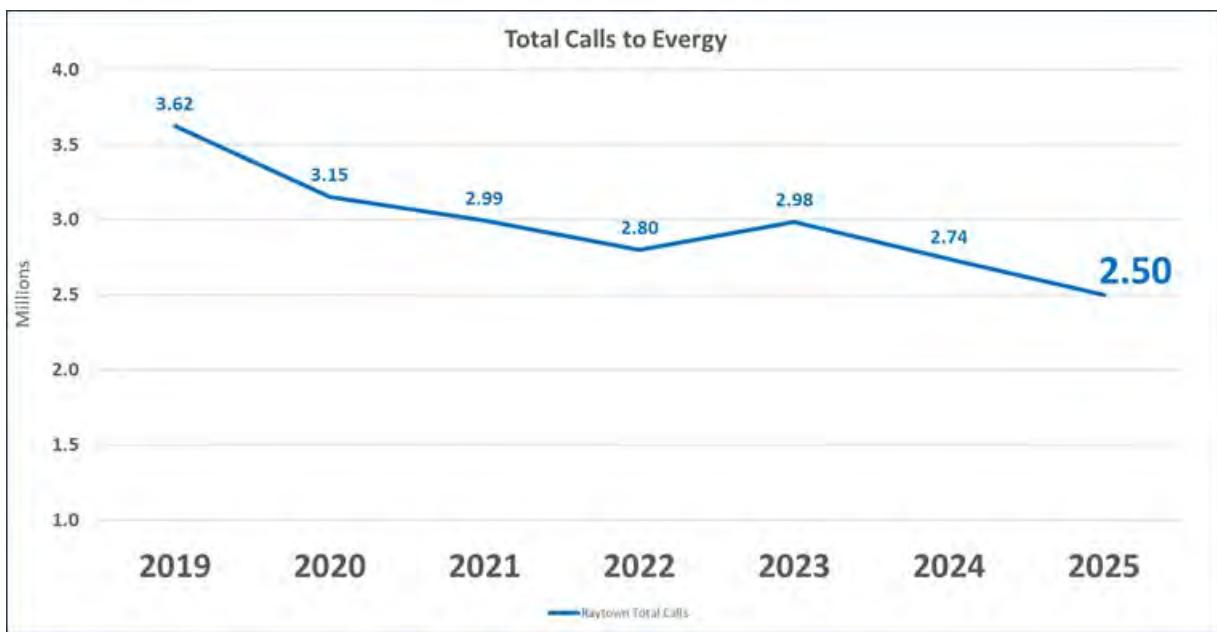
21 and to manage service costs that could impact rates. We have focused our efforts to improve

22 the self-service capabilities on our web site, mobile app and interactive voice assistant

23 (IVA). These projects help to remove technical debt (i.e., the natural accumulation of work

1 or change that arises as technology, needs and priorities evolve), decrease friction in
2 transactions, and provide new and innovative ways for customers to conveniently and
3 easily meet their own needs through our tools.

4 We are adapting to keep pace with the evolving behaviors of our customers. Customers
5 expect to be able to do most of their business through self-service; they tend to want to call
6 us when they have an emergency or a more difficult issue to resolve. The data bears this
7 out. As the chart below shows, since 2019, our Raytown call center has seen a 1.1M
8 reduction in overall call volume. This is a 31% reduction in total calls over that period.

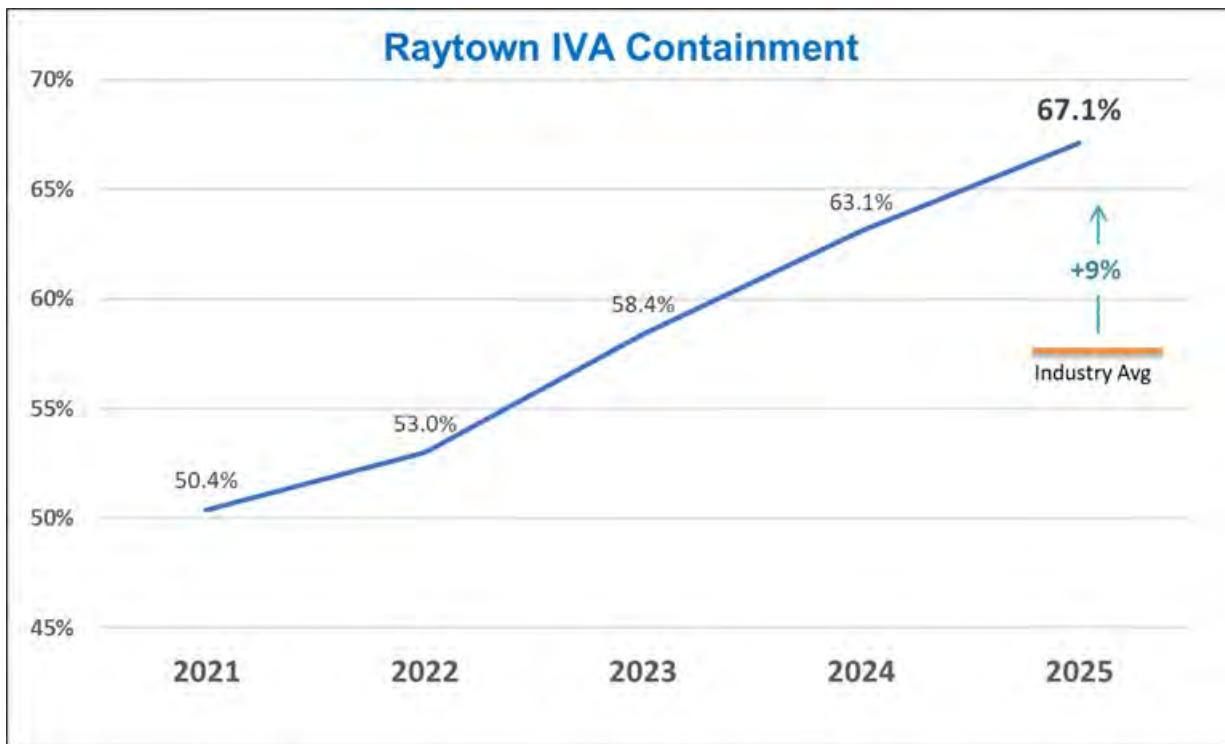


9
10 The overall reduction in call volume reflects a broader, long-term shift in how customers
11 prefer to engage with us. More customers are choosing self-service options over calling,
12 driven by several factors. While improvements to our self-service tools have been a major
13 contributor, customer behavior during COVID—specifically the shift toward and
14 continued preference for digital self-service—also played a significant role. Our
15 investments in self-service have enabled and accelerated this transition.

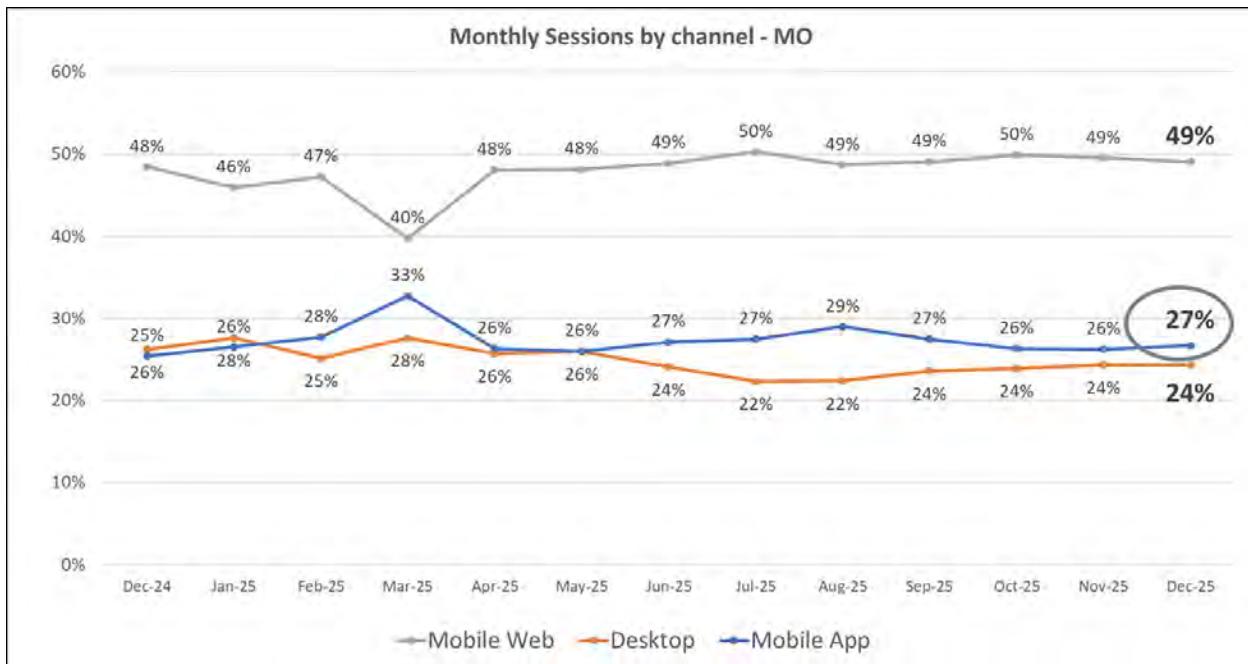
1 Our initial investments in 2021 focused on bringing all of Evergy onto a unified
2 meter-to-cash system and a single IVA platform. Establishing this common framework
3 allowed us to streamline future investments and focus for the next two years on
4 high-volume transactions that created the most friction in self-service. More recently, our
5 efforts have shifted to lower-volume transactions and targeted reductions in technology
6 debt. Throughout this period, we have consistently invested in enhancements that make it
7 easier for customers to do business with us through self-service.

8 We work to balance smart, customer-focused technology investments with the need
9 to provide affordable energy. To achieve this, we prioritize small to mid-sized projects that
10 deliver strong customer impact and drive operational efficiencies. Our focus is on tools and
11 platforms that simplify interactions, minimize friction, strengthen security, and improve
12 the overall customer experience. We choose solutions that scale efficiently and offer quick,
13 meaningful wins for both customers and our teams.

14 The results of our investments have been excellent. An example of this is our IVA.
15 Our IVA contains 67% of all calls to Evergy. According to Chartwells 2025 IVA study,
16 this is 9% higher than the industry average. Prior to getting onto a single IVA system,
17 containment for Raytown was 53%. Had these investments not been made, it would have
18 led to higher volume of calls in the call center which would require more call center staffing
19 and therefore increased costs to customers.



1
2 Another investment is the mobile app which was launched in 2022. The chart below shows
3 our monthly digital sessions by channel for 2025. On average for the year, 27% of all digital
4 sessions in Missouri occurred through the mobile app. Also in 2025, mobile app usage
5 surpassed desktop usage for the first time.



2 The app was intentionally designed to support the most common customer transactions
 3 while maintaining a cost-conscious approach. We focused on delivering a reliable,
 4 streamlined experience without overbuilding and adding unnecessary expenses.

5 **Q: How have customers responded to the self-service tools?**

6 A: The strong containment rates in our self-service tools—and the growing adoption of those
 7 tools—demonstrate that customers are responding positively. Today, 80% of our Missouri
 8 customers have an active web account and use the web, the mobile app, or both. In 2025,
 9 85% of all payments, 85% of all pay arrangements, and 86% of all rate changes were
 10 completed through self-service. This high level of usage demonstrates that customers
 11 prefer these channels over calling us for these types of transactions. In addition, our
 12 consistently strong JD Power results for digital channels confirm that these investments are
 13 meeting customer expectations and delivering a satisfying experience. Our 2025 digital
 14 channel JD Power results are reflected in the table below.

2025 JD Power Residential Electric Study - Digital Channels

	1Q25	2Q25	3Q25	4Q25	2025
Evergy Ranking (Midwest Large)	1st	8th	11th	1st	5th
Evergy Score	559	530	512	527	532
Evergy Customer Rating	"Great"	"Great"	"Great"	"Great"	"Great"
Midwest Large Avg	534	530	523	504	522

1
2 **Q: Why does Evergy plan to keep investing in your self-service tools if they are working
3 well today?**

4 A: While Evergy has made significant progress in enhancing our self-service offerings, we
5 must continue making prudent, customer-focused investments in our tools and channels.
6 We actively listen to customers through surveys, feedback, and user testing. Customers
7 consistently tell us that keeping costs and rates low is essential, yet they also expect fast,
8 intuitive, secure, and informative technologies—as well as new channels like chat and
9 AI-driven experiences. To meet these expectations, we must continue reducing technical
10 debt across our systems and strengthen the core architectures that ensure speed, security,
11 and reliability. We must also add new capabilities in a deliberate, cost-efficient way that
12 delivers meaningful value without introducing unnecessary expense.

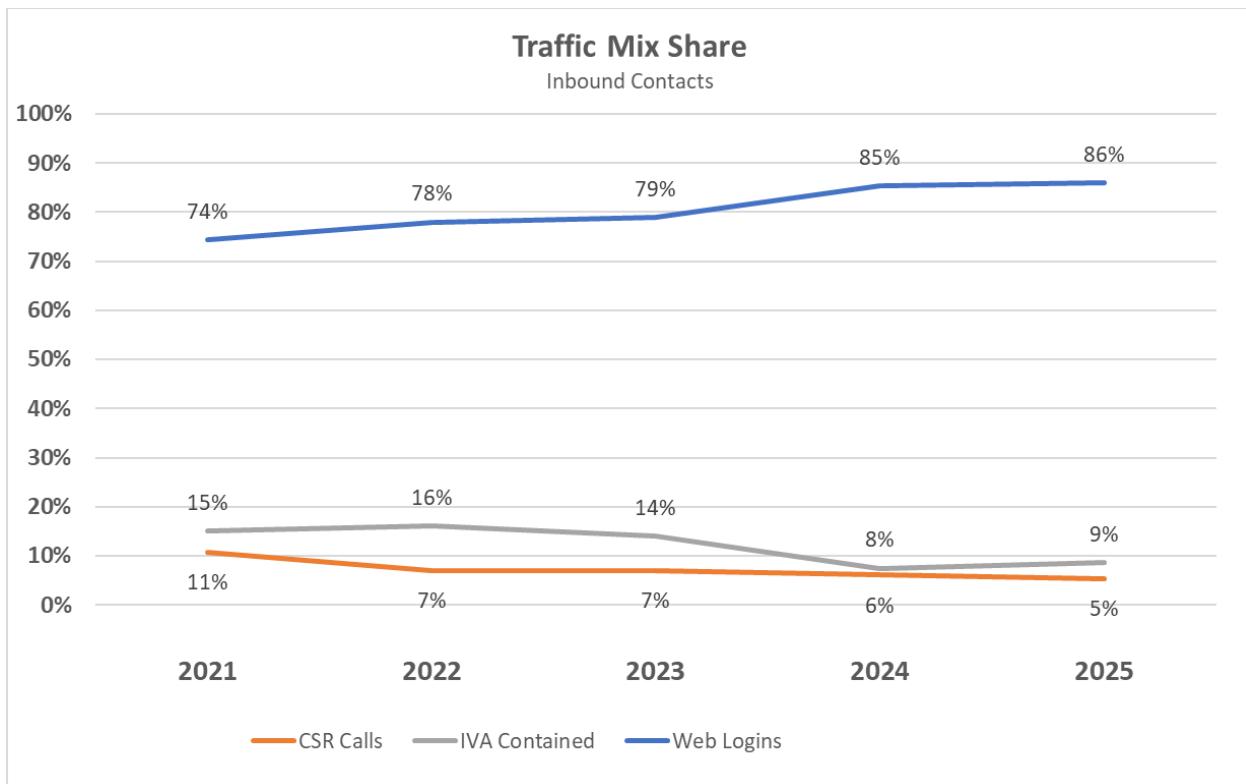
13 Our systems perform well today, but technologies age and customer expectations
14 continue to rise. If our tools stop meeting those expectations, customers will shift away
15 from self-service and return to calling us—driving down satisfaction and increasing our
16 cost to serve. Our customers have already shown, through their behavior, that they prefer
17 self-service when it is reliable, fast, and easy to use. These tools offer the convenience and
18 immediacy they expect. To sustain that Evergy must continue investing in experiences that

1 are efficient, dependable, and cost-effective, ensuring we deliver strong value while
2 keeping service affordable.

3 **Q: You stated that Evergy customers are transacting business primarily through digital
4 self-service tools. Please provide more information on that topic.**

5 A: In 2025, customers transacted business with Evergy through digital self-service tools 95%
6 of the time. This is achieved through our IVA system and web logins (Evergy.com and the
7 Evergy mobile app). Figure 1 below shows the relative mix of how customers interact
8 with Evergy. As shown, digital self-service interactions have increased over the last five
9 years while calls to Evergy's Customer Service Representatives ("CSR") have decreased.

10 Figure 1: Customer Digital Interaction by Type



1 **Q: Provide some examples of how customers utilize the IVA system.**

2 A: Evergy's IVA system provides several options for customers. Customers can easily
3 accomplish their most common transactional tasks in the IVA. Additionally, Evergy adds
4 new features or capabilities each year to facilitate common tasks. In 2025, Evergy added
5 the ability to pay by credit card within the IVA rather than being transferred to a payment
6 vendor. The result is an improved experience for customers and greater transparency for
7 Evergy. Figure 2 demonstrates other ways customers utilize the IVA system. As noted
8 above, the last five years reflect a trend of customers calling less and transacting more by
9 self-service channels, especially the web and mobile app.

1

Figure 2: Evergy's Intelligent Voice Assistant Uses

Evergy's IVA Use Cases

Payments	Outages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a payment (ACH/Debit)• Update bank account information• Make a payment (credit card)• Enroll in short/long-term pay agreements• Next bill due date• Payment and billing history• Autopay enrollment information• Receive copy of bill• Request letter of credit• Receive average bill amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report an outage• Hear outage updates and ERT• Enroll in outage notifications
General	Account Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update or verify email• Contact center holiday messaging• System outage messaging• Request account number• FAQs• Spanish• Request live agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ID & authentication• Capture intent• Verification• Start service• Transfer service• Stop service• Reschedule start or stop service• Find account by phone number• Multiple account handling• Enroll/cancel paperless billing• Send SMS message

2

3 **Q: Has the utilization of the IVA system increased?**

4 A: Yes. The IVA utilization by Evergy's Missouri customers was at an all-time high in 2025.

5 In 2021 the IVA was able to successfully contain or handle 58% of the customer calls. In
6 2025, 67% of all calls to our Raytown call center were successfully contained by the IVA.

7 The utilization of IVA has grown year-over-year ("YoY") during this timeframe.

1 Q: How are customers utilizing Everyg.com for customer service needs?

2 A: Everygy has seen growth in the number of customers that have online accounts. In 2025,
3 80% of Everygy Missouri customers have online accounts which is a significant increase
4 from 62% in 2021. In September 2022, Everygy's mobile application was launched and
5 currently has over 400,000 total downloads. In 2025, we saw for the first time that our
6 mobile app was used more by Missouri customers than desktop usage on the web. Two
7 thirds of these customers are mobile device users, as compared to a desktop. This is another
8 clear indicator of customer preference regarding use of their mobile device.

9 Q: How do your digital self-service tools assist with customer payments?

10 A: In 2025, almost 87% of customer payments are transacted through digital self-service tools.
11 Everyg has also seen YoY declines in the number of mailed payments (2021 – 20.6% to
12 2025 – 12.3%) along with payments that a CSR receives in the contact center (2021 – 0.9%
13 to 2025 0.5%).

B. HIGH-TOUCH CONTACT CENTER

15 Q: Please define what a high-touch contact center is?

16 A: A High-Touch Call Center is a customer service call center that delivers a hands-on,
17 personalized approach to every customer interaction. This role emphasizes human
18 connection and empathy, ensuring that customers feel heard, valued, and supported
19 throughout their experience. High-touch call takers go beyond transactional service by
20 actively listening, anticipating needs, and providing tailored solutions that foster trust and
21 satisfaction. Their goal is to create meaningful interactions that strengthen customer
22 relationships.

Key Characteristics of Every's High-Touch Call Center include:

- Personalized Service: Every interaction is customized to meet the unique needs of the customer
- Human-Centered Approach: Prioritizes empathy, understanding, and clear communication
- Proactive Engagement: Anticipates customer needs and offers solutions before issues escalate
- Relationship Building: Focuses on creating positive, lasting impressions that drive loyalty
- Consistency in Care: Ensures every initiative reflects the organization's commitment to exceptional service

Q: Please explain why Evergy evolved to this high-touch customer service approach.

13 A: Digital self-service tools focus on assisting customers with transactions that are typical of
14 customer's needs, such as payments, starting/stopping/and transferring service, general
15 information requests, outage information and account management. With the proliferation
16 in the utilization of these digital self-service tools, the contact center representatives are
17 now able to focus on the more complex customer requests. These interactions are also
18 longer in duration, and it is important to help customers resolve their questions fully and
19 on the first call.

1 **Q:** **What adjustments were required for call takers to develop the skills needed for a high**
2 **touch call center?**

3 A: To meet the necessary expectations, Evergy refocused its Customer Service
4 Representative (CSR) training program to better serve customers who prefer speaking
5 with a live agent. Key enhancements to the program include:

- 6 ▪ Extended training period for new hires to ensure deeper understanding and
7 confidence
- 8 ▪ Comprehensive billing and rates module to strengthen foundational
9 knowledge
- 10 ▪ Enhanced analytical techniques module with additional practice exercises
11 for investigating complex calls
- 12 ▪ New self-service options module to help representatives guide customers
13 effectively
- 14 ▪ Improved knowledge checks across all modules to boost retention and
15 application of learning

16 **Q:** **During high call volume times, how can customers interact with Evergy?**

17 A: As discussed, digital self-service tools are always available, providing customers with
18 quick and convenient solutions. Outages can be reported online, or via the IVA, and many
19 of our simple transactions as noted above are available via our online tools and the IVA.
20 For those who choose to speak with a CSR, Evergy offers a callback option twice during
21 the call flow. This feature holds the customer's place in line and ensures that as soon as a
22 Customer Service Representative becomes available, the system automatically calls the
23 customer back, eliminating the need to wait on hold and improving the overall experience.

1 Q: How does Everygy monitor customer satisfaction and experience within the contact
2 center?

3 A: Everygy utilizes a third party to survey customers that completed a customer service
4 interaction, including phone and digital interactions. For all surveys, customers answer
5 questions around ease of use and satisfaction, and specifically for the contact center team,
6 first call resolution and satisfaction with the CSR. Everygy consistently scores well in
7 customer satisfaction results in overall experience, CSR satisfaction and first call
8 resolution. While Everygy has seen growth in customer utilization of digital self-service
9 tools, the contact center still plays a key role in meeting customers' needs and maintains
10 its focus on delivering a high-quality customer experience.

V. CONCLUSION

12 Q: Please summarize your testimony.

13 A: In summary, Energy aims to address affordability, in part, with tools that promote financial
14 stability, energy efficiency and long-term resilience. As I described above, EMM offers
15 numerous programs to support its low income and vulnerable customers, and these
16 programs have been integral to the provision of meaningful assistance to eligible low
17 income and vulnerable customers to use our electric services efficiently and manage their
18 electric bills. EMM has also focused on high-touch service to assist customers with more
19 complicated customer requests. While these high-touch interactions are also longer in
20 duration, EMM believes it is time well spent to help customers resolve their questions fully
21 and hopefully on the first call. In addition, EMM has utilized call-back options to increase
22 the convenience of our customers in communicating directly with our customer service
23 representatives.

1 Q: Does this conclude your testimony?

2 A: Yes.

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

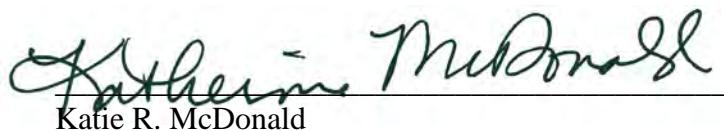
In the Matter of Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy)
Missouri Metro's Request for Authority to) Case No. ER-2026-0143
Implement A General Rate Increase for Electric)
Service)

AFFIDAVIT OF KATIE MCDONALD

STATE OF MISSOURI)
) ss
COUNTY OF JACKSON)

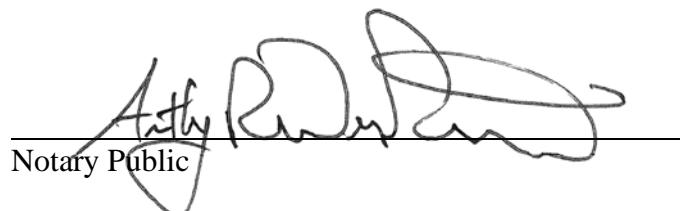
Katie McDonald, being first duly sworn on his oath, states:

1. My name is Katie McDonald. I work in Kansas City, Missouri and I am employed by Evergy Metro, Inc. as Vice President, Public Affairs.
2. Attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes is my Direct Testimony on behalf of Evergy Missouri Metro consisting of twenty-five (25) pages, having been prepared in written form for introduction into evidence in the above-captioned docket.
3. I have knowledge of the matters set forth therein. I hereby swear and affirm that my answers contained in the attached testimony to the questions therein propounded, including any attachments thereto, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.



Katie R. McDonald

Subscribed and sworn before me this 6th day of February 2026.



Notary Public

My commission expires: April 26, 2029

