

# **Income Qualified EE Advisory Committee North: Workforce Development Meeting #2**

Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

10:00am – 12:00pm

## **Attendee List and Meeting Notes Webinar Conference Call**

### **Attendees (By-Phone)**

Theo Okiro, Facilitator  
Celia Johnson, Facilitation Team  
Annette Beitel, Facilitation Team  
Marsha Belcher, CAP Lake County  
Tisha Burnside, Resource Innovations  
James Carlton, People for Community Recovery  
Devin Day, SEDAC U of I  
Nick Dreher, MEEA  
Omayra Garcia, Peoples Gas – North Shore Gas  
Courtney Hanson, People for Community Recovery  
Sandra Henry, Walker-Miller Services  
Kristen Pratt-Kalaman, Resource Innovations  
Monique Leonard, Ameren IL  
Samarth Medakkar, MEEA  
Jennifer Morris, ICC Staff  
Angela Morrison, Chicago Jobs Council  
Melvin Nicks, ComEd  
Jeanine Otte, Elevate Energy  
Briana Parker, Elevate Energy  
Ashley Palladino, Resource Innovations  
Michelle Pulce-Flynn, IACAA  
Mark Szczygiel, Nicor Gas  
Dan Westin, Franklin Energy  
Jean Ascoli, ComEd  
Catherine Mrase, ComEd  
Cheryl Johnson, People for Community Recovery

### **Presentation on Supporting Job Development in Economically Disadvantaged Communities (Jeanine Otte, Elevate Energy)**

- **Elevate Workforce Development Programs and Initiatives:** These are programs funded through FEJA (Solar). We feel that the work is particularly important to ensure equity as our energy grid is in transition.

- As clean energy resources become more abundant on energy grid, we would like to make sure clean energy jobs available to disadvantaged communities i.e. Returning citizens, foster children alumni, diverse vendors.
- Students get base in solar, but also base of other jobs in clean energy.
  - **CBO Partnerships:** The programs have partnership with other entities, including Safer Foundation, Sustainable Options for Urban Living, Blacks in Green, LVEJO to do recruitment, and others. Millennium Solar Electric is core training provider.
  - In Southern IL, there is training in Marion, IL. We do training with three cohorts, including Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). Grid Alternatives provides technical training on Solar Installation.
- **Barriers:** For returning citizens, jobs have been rescinded when backgrounds are uncovered.
  - Transportation is also a barrier. Not so much in Chicago due to the CTA. However, in Southern IL, folks must have transportation to get to job sites. Many of job sites are not near transportation.
  - Childcare can be a barrier.
  - We need to build pathways with industries and leaders.
- **Question from Theo Okiro, Facilitator:** How have Little Village and Blacks in Green helped in the program implementation?
  - **Response:** They help with recruitment and selection of the cohort. Millennium weighs in heavily on selection. We all stay in touch as program continues.
- **Question from Sandra Henry, Walker Miller Services:** Where are the recruits being placed + where are the jobs?
  - **Response:** Millennium Solar Electric is the most popular placement site.
  - **Placements:** List of companies who have hired graduates from Elevate's FEJA Solar Job Training Program:

Bright Light, Sunrun, Blacks in Green, Millennium Solar Electric
WindFree, Chicago Urban League
Energy CX, SRS
Installer, Site Surveyors, Solar Advisor, Independent Contractor, Energy Broker, Instructor, and Solar Technician

- **Question from Annette Beitel, Facilitation Team:** How are returning citizens selected?
  - **Response:** Background in trades or other related skills (sales) preferred but not required. We have them go through Solar boot camp – one week of job readiness + solar bootcamp and go on mock roof. The goal of this is to get a flavor of what it is like to work in solar, some will self-select out of that process.
- **Question from Annette:** Background check: How many returning citizens are rejected?
  - **Response:** We are tracking, but I can think of 2 – 3 that were rejected. One of the challenges we do encounter is that sometimes we don't get the most recent updates on what they are experiencing. We've heard of a handful from partners but not to say there have not been more. Another challenge is we lose track of folks after the program.

- **Question from Annette:** Is work project-based or steady work? Are the projects temporary or final?
  - **Response:** It is project-based. Work may not be back-to-back. There are times between jobs where folks may not be back-to-back.
- **Question from Theo:** How is the energy efficiency/FEJA Solar knowledge gap navigated when during recruits for the programs?
  - **Response:** The education component is on-going. Since the funding is focused on FEJA, they only do solar related education. Overall, Elevate Energy puts out information about FEJA and on-going opportunities to IQ communities for engagement with the industry.

**Presentation on Current Metrics and Tracking of Workforce Development Efforts in Illinois (Angela Morrison, Chicago Jobs Council - CJC)**

- CJC is a 38-year old member-based organization. CJC’s mission is to move people out of poverty. We have a membership of over 70 organizations (wide ranging). We work on people who are excluded from job market.
  - Need to have ongoing dialogue with diverse range of people.
  - We also share best practices plus trends in workforce development. Find more information on the [CJC website](#).
- **Types of workforce development models:**
  1. Work-based learning
    - a. Time-bound and pay a wage.
  2. Apprenticeships
    - a. Lots happening from federal level to local level. Federal government has poured a lot of resources (money) into apprentices. “Earn and learn level.” As people are gaining more skills,
    - b. Employment Prep and Placement
    - c. Industry-specific training – example – Solar for All – can be led by community-based organizations or community colleges.
    - d. Industry partnerships – different. Group of employers have an identified need and they might form a collaboration on how they might meet their needs. They have many jobs they need to fill but can’t fill those positions.
    - e. WIOA – Initiative of federal government to support workforce development in all for the states. Administered by Department of Labor. Goes down to local level. Geared towards out-of-work or underemployed. Adults and dislocated workers. Helps provide structured services for them. Intended to be well-coordinated at local level.
    - f. Metrics – under WIOA, job retention could be two-years out.
  3. IL unemployment rate: black – 9%, white % 4%.
  4. In skilled trades, racial disparity and gender disparity.
    - a. IL gender disparity in construction/trades (the highest in the country) - 95% of trades men.
    - b. Employers’ application processes can unintentionally screen out diverse populations:

- c. Using credit scores can screen out people who come from economic and environmental justice communities.
  - d. Quality education/Degree requirements can also screen out diverse candidates.
  - e. Unnecessary credentials – does job really require the expected credentials, or can they be gone?
    - i. Systemic barriers vs. internal miscommunication
  - f. Driver's license – state suspends license for ticket debt. Suspending license for non-driving violations creates cycles of debt and can lead to unemployment. In IL, driver's license can be suspended for non-moving violations.
    - i. **“License to Work” Act.** CJC sponsoring – The Act eliminates driver's license suspension as a penalty for most non-moving violations.
  - g. Wealth Disparities between white, black, Hispanics
- 5. Question to the utilities: Can you require diversity goals? Within IL, there are many infrastructure projects such as the IL Toll Road that have included
- 6. One of first things Governor Pritzker did when he took office was sign *Executive Order 3*. The Executive Order mandated that all state-level departments to DCEO to college board must incorporate equity and inclusion efforts into their decision making. They must think about the following policy issues:
  - a. Rural
  - b. Environmental justice
  - c. Economic justice
- **Question from Annette:** There might be limits to setting diversity goals without violating constitutional allowances.
  - **Response:** Definitely! But even on the State level, public contracts can get points for diversity in vendors procured. This is one way to achieve such goals. Can utilities weave that into their bids?
  - **Follow-up:** Angela will share more examples on construction projects that include equity measures.
- **Question:** What are best affinity groups to recruit from?
  - **Follow-up:** CJC will provide Literature on why diversity matters
- **Question from Annette:** Promoting the “License to Work Act” is impressive and much needed. Are there other barriers that can be addressed via regulatory/statutory change? What other policy changes can be enacted to make sure people are not excluded unnecessarily?
  - **Response:** Criminal justice movements to increase the rights of returning citizens is another regulatory movement some of CJC's partners are working on. The goal is to ensure that people are not screened out. One of the main things their member organizations struggle with is employer practices and how they may align with systemic barriers.
- **Question:** What metrics are being tracked? What should be tracked? Examples of what could be tracked:
  - How steady is job?
  - Feedback from trainees and their post-training experience.

- **Question from Theo:** As far as energy efficiency and workforce diversity. Can you suggest any potential metrics that could be applied to measure increased diversity within the EE workforce?
  - **Response:**
    1. Look to see who is currently represented. Start with getting baseline.
    2. Partnership with organizations who see the targeted populations.
    3. Then set up goals.
- **Question from Devin Day, SEDAC:** I'm curious about the nature of communication and coordination between employee supplier organizations (like trainers, CBOs) and employee demand organizations (employers), especially within the promising industry partnerships model. How do they address this challenge/disconnect?
  - **Response:** Supply side should vet competency and skills to see if what they are training for is needed. Apprenticeships are employer-driven strategies. Employer has an identified need. In partnership with college or training institution set up training. Apprenticeship are not easy to design and not fix for everything. Communication link is essential. While you may have training providers, link to employer needs.

### **Follow-up Items & Key Next Steps**

1. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting date will be announced soon. A meeting invite will be sent soon.
2. **Summary of Existing Workforce Development Initiatives in IL:** The facilitator will compile a matrix of training initiatives offered by government agencies, CBOs and CAAs across northern Illinois.