



ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY BOARD

Recruitment, Development and Retention of Employees

Charge

- ▶ *The future of work will continue to be full of opportunities and challenges. Based on the diverse and extensive backgrounds of the EMAB members, EM is requesting actionable recommendations on how the program can demonstrate modern human capital practices that make EM an employer of choice.*
- ▶ *1. Recruitment and Retention*
 - a. How can EM increase its participation in STEM partnerships that prepare students for a career in EM?*
 - b. What innovative recruitment practices could be adopted for the federal workforce and contractor partners that align with DOE's Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) goals?*
 - c. How should EM recruit top non-STEM (i.e. HR, Budget, Project Management) professionals and students?*
 - d. What retention practices make the largest impact for EM federal employees and contractors?*



Subcommittee Members and DOE Staff

▶ **PARTICIPATING EMAB MEMBERS:**

- ▶ Jack Craig
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- ▶ Amy Fitzgerald
- ▶ Brent Gerry
- ▶ Kim Kearfott
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Subcommittee Topic and Recommendation

- ▶ **Recommendations on Recruitment:**
- ▶ 1. EM should consider establishment of a program similar to the prior EMPDC. This would include establishment of target positions at the target level (whether it be a GS-13 or similar EK (“Excepted Service”) pay level), at specific locations in specific career areas. This should include both STEM positions, and non-STEM positions as required at each site (field site, or HQ).
- ▶ 2. As part of this program, a dedicated team of recruiters, preferably from professional fields being similar to those being recruited (i.e. not necessarily human resources professionals) should be formed. This would be the EM team that would identify recruitment opportunities at universities, including minority-serving universities, and universities who graduate appropriate specialties suitable for hire into the EM program.

Subcommittee Topic and Recommendation

- ▶ **Recommendations on Recruitment:**
- ▶ 3. Recruits should be offered a career track in either the appropriate GS series (i.e. career field) or the suitable EK designation, as applicable.
- ▶ 4. There should be a well-planned, central orientation program of significant duration, such as the four-week orientation that was used in the past; this should be conducted at HQ in the Forrestal Building and include sessions on the mission of EM as well as the role of specific professional fields within the EM program.
- ▶ 5. A mentor, preferably in the same, or similar GS series, or EK professional / technical field, should be assigned. Mentors ideally would be volunteers who are motivated to actively assist and guide the new employees and continue on as a mentor.

Subcommittee Topic and Recommendation

- ▶ **Recommendations on Employee Development:**
- ▶ 1. In consultation with the mentor for each new employee, as well as with the employee themselves, and potential developmental rotation positions at various sites, a rotational development plan should be implemented. The objective would be to provide each employee with a solid foundation in both the site level, and HQ level functions that a person in their career field would attain as they progress.
- ▶ 2. The mentor, in consultation with the employee's supervisor at the target location (and ultimate employment location) should establish a development plan to include course work to be engaged, both within DOE as well as from other professional developmental sources. Within DOE, for example, courses are offered during work hours in the Project Management Career Development Program, and these courses would be suitable not only for potential project managers, but also other target positions that would involve interaction with contractors at the site level.

Subcommittee Topic and Recommendation

- ▶ **Recommendations on Employee Development:**
- ▶ 3. Establish a leadership development program, similar to the very competitive development program for potential SES candidates. Recognizing the value of the framework of that SES development program, EM could have a similar program wherein potential leaders are identified and offered a planned two or three year program involving courses in leadership, EM-specific technical challenges, and project/contract management. Such a program could be available not only to EMPDC - recruited employees, but to the full range of EM Federal employees.

Subcommittee Topic and Recommendation

- ▶ **Recommendations on Employee Retention:**
- ▶ 1. EM should perform a survey of all employees currently still in DOE (not just EM) who were accessed through the original EMPDC. It would be important to identify both the positive attributes that should be incorporated, as well as the negative aspects that could cause employees to leave DOE and look for other opportunities either in, or outside, government.
- ▶ 2. The recommendations above regarding employee development are incentives for retention as well. By providing both STEM and non-STEM employees the vision of what could be attained in their career, this would serve as a positive retention incentive.
- ▶ 3. Additionally, all EM employees should be provided periodic updates on the benefits of Federal employment, such as full portability of their leave and benefits, to include health plans, vacation accrual, training and developmental opportunities, and opportunities to advance both within EM and DOE, but also in other Federal agencies.

Subcommittee Topic and Recommendation

- ▶ **The EM Charge Includes Contractor Employees:**
- ▶ What innovative recruitment practices could be adopted for contractor partners that align with DOE's Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) goals?
- ▶ To address the aspect regarding contractor partners, the subcommittee recommends that the contractor community evaluate the recommendations on recruitment shown above, consider them and modify them as appropriate for their particular use. It is recognized that larger contractors likely already have sophisticated recruitment, development, and retention programs in place; however, the list of recommendations may be useful for consideration by those contractors who are considering such initiatives.

Subcommittee Topic and Recommendation

▶ **Additional Recommendations:**

- ▶ 1. EM should seek appropriate management level employees to volunteer to actively engage in the National Academies' Federal Facilities Council activities and standing subcommittees. The FFC current activities include all the aspects discussed above, including initiatives various Federal agencies are taking in the areas of recruitment, retention, and development of employees. There is great potential for gleaning the best practices of other Federal agencies, as well as contributing to the overall improvement of Federal agency methods involving employee recruitment, development, retention, and working arrangements. This will assist EM to attain a competitive position regarding development and retention, given the importance of retaining a work force of highly performing employees.
- ▶ 2. Once engaged with the FFC and its activities, EM should explore additional methods previously and currently used by other agencies to enhance its position as an employer of choice in the Federal government.

Discussion