

Summary Minutes of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s
21st Century Energy Workforce Advisory Board (EWAB)
Public Meeting

December 11, 2023 – 12:00pm to 1:30pm ET

The 21st Century Energy Workforce Advisory Board (EWAB) was convened for its 4th meeting, via WebEx Live, at 12:00pm ET on December 11, 2023. In accordance with Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 12:00pm ET to 1:30pm ET.

EWAB members present:

- Amanda Cage, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Becky Ervin, United Auto Workers
- Dr. Daniel (Dan) Marshall, Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University
- Ann McMonigle, Los Angeles Apprenticeship Readiness Fund
- Dr. Girard Melancon, National Council for Workforce Education
- Melissa (Missy) Henriksen, Center for Energy Workforce Development*
- Dr. Thomas (Tom) Kriger, North America's Building Trades Unions
- Kay Seven, Co-Chair, Nez Perce Tribe
- Dr. Jermaine Whirl, Augusta Technical College
- Allison Ziogas, Orsted

* EWAB Chairperson

DOE staff presenting and/or supporting the meeting:

- Katy Clarke, Deputy Director, Office of Energy Jobs
- Maya Goodwin, Senior Advisor, Workforce and Economic Opportunity Policy, Office of Energy Jobs
- Piper O'Keefe, Policy Analyst and EWAB Designated Federal Official (DFO), Office of Energy Jobs
- Natalie Williams, Executive Assistant, Office of Policy
- Francisco Arzu, Contractor Support, U.C. Berkeley's Labor Center
- Pam Egan, Contractor Support, U.C. Berkeley's Labor Center
- Irem Inal, Contractor Support, U.C. Berkeley's Labor Center
- Jennifer Miller, Contractor Support, Evoke Consulting

Other attendees present for all or a portion of the meeting:

- Ed Monachino
- Jack Karsten
- Lindsey Homan
- Monica Brummer
- Christine Irish
- Thomas Philips
- Matthew Kopfer
- Ruda Pollard
- Marget Zientek
- Jett Hawk

Meeting Summary

Subcommittee Report-Outs and Discussion

Piper O'Keefe, DFO, opened the meeting, noting the Webex was being recorded and would be posted to the EWAB's public website. Ms. O'Keefe then took roll call to ascertain a quorum of Advisory Board members in

attendance, noting 11 EWAB members present. Upon completion of the roll call, she turned the meeting over to Melissa Henriksen, EWAB Chairperson, for a brief welcome and overview of the meeting agenda.

Ms. Henriksen recapped the EWAB’s mission focus – to develop a strategy for DOE to support and develop a skilled energy workforce to meet the changing needs of the U.S. energy system. She noted the EWAB has been tasked to ensure the strategy will further DOE’s current efforts to create jobs, ensure job quality, and equitable access to energy-related jobs. The EWAB identified four (4) core areas to focus their efforts on – 1) Combatting Barriers to Energy Employment; 2) Measuring and Addressing Job Quality; 3) Scope Prioritization and Industry Targeting; and 4) Effectiveness of Existing DOE Programs – and developed subcommittees to address each.

The purpose of today’s meeting was to shift focus from the research and information gathering phase of the Board’s work to putting together actionable recommendations. Ms. Henriksen asked the subcommittees to present their current findings/progress and asked the Board to identify outstanding research or data/information still required to enable drafting the individual subcommittee reports by January 8th, 2024. She also noted the floor would open for Board members’ comments, after the subcommittees’ presentations, to encourage collaboration amongst the subcommittees.

Combatting Barriers to Energy Employment: The objective of this subcommittee is to examine the systemic barriers that prevent access to energy-related employment opportunities, such as – transportation, childcare, and paid training programs. It was noted that there is some overlap with the *Scope Prioritization and Industry Targeting Needs* subcommittee, as their scope includes identifying the specific type(s) of support required to ensure individuals are able to focus on training without distraction. It was also noted that oftentimes, individuals require support to continue to sustain them and their families during the early stages of their employment.

The *Combatting Barriers* subcommittee members noted questions regarding inter-agency cooperation in providing basic life services and the mechanics of those types of programs. They noted questions specifically regarding communities with unique needs – like American Indian and Alaska native workers – in ensuring that their needs as it pertains to the wraparound services or policy proposals are taken into consideration. The subcommittee noted concerns regarding the organizations that receive government funding/subsidies to provide those services and the processes which they are governed/held accountable to the communities they serve.

The *Combatting Barriers* subcommittee noted that their scope also required them to consider the barriers that not only prevented an individual’s ability to enter the energy workforce but also to retain long-term employment within the industry. Identified barriers included mental health support, career counseling and mentoring and peer support groups, ensuring workers have basic equipment – whether it be work clothing, tools and equipment, internet access – and how to promote those kinds of support services.

The *Combatting Barriers* subcommittee also noted a major focus of their research was targeted on childcare and the associated gender disparity. They explored the Department of Commerce and their childcare provisions, along with the CHIPS and Science Act and the Department of Transportation’s increased efforts to ensure the contractors engaged in their infrastructure projects are providing these types of wraparound support services, supported by federal funding.

Entry into the energy-workforce was cited as a barrier, as the jobs that are noted as “entry-level” require some sort of training or coursework, thus making them more difficult to attain. It was suggested that the subcommittee could investigate and propose universal training on some fundamental analytical or technical skills to introduce a layman to the different occupational paths and a pathway to obtain those occupations.

Effectiveness of Existing DOE Programs: This subcommittee met with staff from six (6) DOE departments and identified three main themes – 1) departments with relatively new staff, focused on creating new workforce development programs; 2) departments with a large contractor presence, recently beginning to shift their focus toward workforce development to in-source their work back to their federal civilian personnel; and 3) departments deeply engaged in workforce development over an extended period of time.

The *Effectiveness* subcommittee noted their intent is to provide a roadmap for DOE to be able to develop a “scorecard” to 1) ensure their workforce development programs are keeping their workforce at the forefront of energy-industry advancements; and 2) provide key performance indicators (KPI)s for new and existing workforce development programs to determine – a. how many new jobs are anticipated to be created; b. how many individuals are estimated to be trained; and c. the economic impact to the surrounding or affected communities.

Measuring and Addressing Job Quality: This subcommittee identified wages, benefits, scheduling, legal rights, equity, and inclusion as a sample of metrics to use in determining the quality of energy jobs. The subcommittee made a recommendation the *Job Quality*, *Combatting Barriers*, and *Effectiveness* subcommittees to collaborate to determine the specific KPIs that are currently being captured by the DOE departments that each subcommittee met with to identify common practices and develop recommendations for advancement or improvement.

It was suggested that the *Job Quality* subcommittee should provide a recommendation to include specific standards for job quality within DOE’s contractual clauses. One potential concern, however, is the inherent requirement to capture and report on the associated KPIs.

A subcommittee member noted the overlap between the *Combatting Barriers* and *Job Quality* subcommittees in the area of accountability. They noted an effort to include a recommendation to use a community benefits agreement/acknowledgement for environmental standards as a means to hold employers and support service organizations accountable for their impact on the environment and surrounding communities.

Scope Prioritization and Industry Targeting Needs: This subcommittee detailed four (4) levels of specific requirements for an individual to be eligible to obtain employment in the 21st century’s energy workforce – 1) Creating training pathways for legacy skill trades and crafts workers to support future needs, as the U.S. moves further toward a clean energy economy. Examples given were electrical workers currently in diesel and compressed natural gas jobs to obtain electric vehicle (EV) training for high-voltage equipment, internal combustion hydrogen engines, or the hydrogen fuel cell technology. 2) Continuous upskilling technicians currently occupying high-quality energy jobs to encourage professional growth. 3) Leverage partnerships to bridge local community-based organizations, and federal funding grants, with energy employers to develop a more progressive workforce to meet the needs of their own communities. 4) Address equity challenges with a stronger focus on building a pipeline of apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented communities and re-entry citizens candidates. The *Targeting* subcommittee also noted that ensuring these four (4) initiatives are supported by adequate wraparound services is critical to attract, train, and retain energy workers.

As an example of the inequity of access to apprenticeship opportunities, a subcommittee member recounted a recent apprenticeship opportunity, at Augusta Technical College, that garnered over 695 applications for only 20 apprenticeship slots. They requested the *Targeting* subcommittee also consider recommendations to scale an apprenticeship program across the country, as the demand for energy-sector jobs is clearly evident.

Another subcommittee member noted their own experience as an apprentice, at the early stages of their own career. Now, approaching retirement, they expressed a continued desire to train the next generation of skilled laborers.

One member offered their own experience in the joint labor management sector of construction, noting their use of collective bargaining agreements, ratios, and ratio requirements is the key to address one-to-one apprenticeships as a means to maintain the mentoring relationship. They also cited a training program called MentorShip Matters and their mission in training workers to be effective mentors.

A member also appealed to all of the subcommittees to engage with the American School Counselors Association, as the gatekeepers for the next generation of workers. They noted that it is imperative to educate the school counselors on available training resources and apprenticeships as they provide career advice to students preparing to enter college or the workforce. The subcommittee member noted that local school boards also be targeted as local superintendents often focus on standard academic measures versus workforce development/readiness. Another member noted that effective apprenticeships help bring awareness and community engagement, laying the foundation for the pipeline to energy job opportunities.

There were common themes of focus amongst the subcommittees' included training for new workers and upskilling skilled tradesman and engineers, capture and reporting of KPIs to evaluate and measure outcomes, and enabling job equity to extend energy job opportunities to underrepresented groups to drive economic development within their communities.

Next Steps

The Berkeley Team discussed the initial draft of the EWAB's report, providing an overview of the outline. The report will begin with a two (2) to three (3) paragraph introduction to the subcommittees and members, and a brief summary of the documents and data used by the subcommittees to develop their recommendations. The next section will contain the subcommittees' recommendations. The subcommittees were asked to include a background statement explaining each subcommittee's focus area that their recommendations are aiming to address, along with a summary of main findings based upon their reviews of the existing workforce programs. The report will then list three (3) to five (5) recommendations, each with a detailed explanation of the specific issue, and examples of how DOE can apply the recommendations. Finally, the report will also include citing existing examples of similar, successful implementations of the subcommittees' recommendations as appendices.

The U.C. Berkeley team requested drafts of each subcommittee report to be submitted by January 8, 2024. The U.C. Berkeley team will release the initial draft of the report by the next EWAB meeting on January 22, 2024, so the Board members will be able to discuss the initial draft during that meeting. The first full draft of the final report is expected to be released to the EWAB between February 1 and February 8, 2024. After the January EWAB meeting, the U.C. Berkeley team will take the Board's comments from that meeting and prepare the final full draft of the report to be released prior to the February EWAB meeting allowing Board members the opportunity to make final comments/recommendations at that time. The full final report will be prior to the March EWAB meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 20, 2024, to ensure the Board members have ample time to review and absorb the report prior to presenting the report to the Secretary at that meeting.

DOE noted that the Office of Energy Jobs team would be coordinating meetings between various DOE offices and the subcommittees. The subcommittees were also offered administrative support to coordinate meeting scheduling and meeting notetaking to help facilitate their research. They asked to consider recommendations for programs that support workforce development in both their deployment and research and development projects, as this encompasses the vast majority of DOE's funding. DOE also offered the following, as a

foundation to craft the cogent, comprehensive recommendations – How are we creating and supporting a workforce development ecosystem through our deployment dollars?; What are we specifically asking stakeholders that receive that funding to do?; and How are we supporting and accelerating workforce development through our workforce development dollars?

DOE noted that, in developing their recommendations, the subcommittees should also consider whether there is a theory of changes DOE may need to include in the implementation plan(s) of the Board’s recommendations, to ensure that the implemented solutions maintain long-term funding. DOE asked the Board if they discovered during their research projects that are applying for DOE funding that should be incorporated into their future annual budgets. As an example, they also noted that there are deployment and research and development projects, which require community benefit plans to provide wraparound service support, as part of their funding agreements.

Public Comment Section

DOE noted that there were no public commentors and concluded the meeting.

The Meeting Adjourned at approximately 1:27pm ET

Respectfully submitted.

Maya Goodwin
Designated Federal Officer

I hereby certify that these meeting minutes of the December 11, 2023 EWAB meeting are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Missy Henriksen

Melissa (Missy) Henriksen
Chair, EWAB