EQUITY WORKING GROUP (EWG)
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 8, 2025
Virtual Meeting: Zoom

Equity Working Group Members Present: Jo Ann Bodemer for Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony, Brooks Winner, Kim Dragoo, Sonakshi Saxena, William Rose, Doug Quattrochi, Jhenny Saint-Surin, Kyle Murray, Alexis Washburn, Adrian Caesar, Mary Wambui, Charles Harak, Lucy Fox for James Collins, Cindy Carroll, Kyle Murray, Kate Peters, Margie Lynch

Equity Working Group Members Absent: Cindy Luppi, Maggie Downey

Other Attendees: Jordan Galluzzo, Ina Dasso, Alissa Whiteman, Courtney Brown, Alisha Harrington, Angela Parnay, Bernetta Morton, Chris McClellan, Coral Lin, Elischia Fludd, Elizabeth Youngblood, Jennifer Applebaum, Jocelyn Lee, Joe Nunley, Kim Dragoo, Kimberly Cullinane, Leah Cohen, Marisa Sotolongo, Mea Johnson, Nora Bloch, Sam Nigro, Sheila Kelly, Sherry Riva, Sierra Moll, Stephanie Terach, Taylor Buck, Weezy Waldstein, Zack Lippert

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1. Call to Order

Bodemer, acting on behalf of the Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM.

Virtual Meeting Procedure
Bodemer reviewed the virtual EEAC meeting procedure:

1. The Council meeting would be recorded, for administrative purposes only.
2. All attendees except for Councilors and presenters would remain muted for the duration of the meeting.
3. Councilors should hold comments until the end of presentations, but Councilors and other participants should speak instead of using any chat function.
4. Councilors who disconnect from meetings need to announce when they rejoin.
5. All Council votes would be taken by roll call.

2. Public Comment

Weezy Waldstein (Action for Equity)

Waldstein thanked all parties involved in advancing equitable opportunities for returning citizens, and she stated that she was advocating for fair chance hiring, a principle that aligns work situations to the offense that was committed. Waldstein said that there also needs to be a process established for implementing fair chance hiring and she was hoping that the principle and process would be finalized by January.

3. EWG Business and Updates

November 3, 2025, EWG meeting minutes
Bodemer asked if the EWG had any revisions to the November EWG Meeting Minutes. No EWG members proposed edits. DOER, as Chair of the EWG, approved the November EWG Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Lynch joined the virtual meeting at 11:10.

4. EWG Election

Bodemer said that the EWG had received five letters of interest for the three EWG seats that were up for election. Bodemer asked the voting councilors to state the three candidates they would like to vote for. Andrea Nyamekye, Charlie Harak, and Doug Quattrochi were elected to the EWG by majority.

5. 2025-2027 Plan: Updates

Designated Equity Community (DEC) Implementation
McClellan, on behalf of the PAs, provided updates on the DEC program implementation including customer reception, vendor experiences so far, and implementation challenges.

Mass Save Statewide Solution Center
Courtney Brown, on behalf of the PAs, presented an update on the Mass Save Statewide Solution Center, including call volume so far, top call reasons, and ongoing improvements.

EWG Discussion
Quattrochi asked if the PAs could not work with a failing gas system because of a carbon monoxide test issue. McClellan confirmed that it is a combustion safety test issue and said that the PAs can provide guidance to customers on who to contact to resolve the problem, but many customers do not want to invest in fixing a system that is near end of life and failing.

Lynch suggested that the PAs omit descriptions of DEC selection during customer interactions given the apparent volume and complexity of information that is provided. Lynch said that communicating that a customer lives in a town that is eligible for particular offers or enhanced incentives is sufficiently informational and removes a layer of complexity.

Wambui asked to see the summary that the PAs described, and she echoed Lynch's comments regarding reducing administrative complexities. Wambui emphasized that customers do not need

to know what a DEC is, they just need to understand that the PAs are delivering a service that increases equity. Wambui appealed to the PAs to simplify administration and implementation.

Winner seconded Lynch and Wambui's comments and added that he worked with the PAs to strip out as much complexity as possible during the development of the DEC offers, noting that the PAs could simplify the offer itself or the manner in which it is communicated to customers. Winner asked when the DEC offers became available. McClellan said that the weatherization offer was live in June, and the rental electrification agreement was finalized in October. Winner said that the PAs are still in the preliminary stages of rolling out offers, and he suggested a priority for tracking DEC offer progress and adjusting as needed to be included in the 2026 EEAC Priorities. Winner stated that it may take time for this approach to bear fruit as the PAs refine messaging and delivery, and he looks forward to seeing how it unfolds and evolving it within the next plan.

Wambui said that there was an issue with the characterization of DECs on the Mass Save website, clarifying that distributive justice is not captured in the definition. Wambui said that the DECs need to benefit from distributive justice because they were historically left behind by Mass Save in addition to being disproportionately impacted by economic and environmental challenges. Bodemer agreed but added that the DECs were selected because they had a high proportion of Moderate-Income customers and renters. Wambui said that the DEC program is depicted as something that is solely for environmental justice communities, but the genesis of the Council's equity work was to address inequities within Mass Save program delivery. Peters thanked Wambui for raising this issue and said that sentence immediately before the one that Wambui was referencing captured distributive justice, but the PAs would review the flagged sentence to better reflect the goal of the DECs program.

Lynch said that the language capability in the Statewide Solutions Center was exciting, and she asked how the PAs will make communities aware that they have staff available to converse with them in their preferred language. Brown said that this was a great comment and noted it for future updates.

Nunley asked about the difference between the characterization of rebates and incentives. Brown replied that there is likely some crossover because the call center agents are new and not yet confident on how to classify all of the incoming calls.

Lynch asked why 30% of customers did not resolve their issue during the initial call. Brown responded that the majority of these customers were transferred to a lead vendor to resolve their issue. Lynch asked if the PAs planned to develop the capability of AnswerNet agents to resolve this gap. Brown confirmed.

Quattrochi asked if multifamily buildings could not schedule on the online platform, and they must call their lead vendor. Brown confirmed and said that the lead vendors require additional information beyond what is collected on the online platform, and the discovery of this issue was an unexpected benefit of establishing the Statewide Solutions Center. Lynch asked if this statement applied to both Income Eligible and Market Rate customers. Brown said that Income Eligible customers are referred to the Statewide Client Services Center.

6. 2025-2027 Plan: Returning Citizens

PA Presentation
Peters, on behalf of the PAs, provided an update on equitable employment access for returning citizens, including key themes of stakeholder engagement, current background check requirements, and draft principles.

Lucy Fox joined the virtual meeting at 12:00.

EWG Discussion
Winner said that he would follow up with an email about Boston's policies for hiring returning citizens. Winner said that he was happy that the PAs were looking for ways to integrate returning citizens into the Clean Energy Pathways program, and he asked how the PAs are using MassCEC as a partner in this effort. Saxena replied that the PAs have been focused on learning from other organizations so far, but they will work on establishing MassCEC as a partner once there is more alignment on principles and policy. Applebaum said that MassCEC provides grants focused on supporting returning citizens, so there is opportunity to bring grantees together to learn from each other.

Harak said that he would like the work to extend beyond people who have been incarcerated because there are many people who have a CORI but were not convicted or incarcerated. Harak asked who reviews the background checks that uncover felonies in the past seven years. Saxena said that, for National Grid, there is a process for the contractor who is hiring the person to request a review, and it is a case-by-case approach. Saxena said that the process includes understanding what the felony was for and whether it will impact the job they will perform. Harak asked if the utility or the contractor makes the ultimate hiring decision. Saxena said that the review process is decided by the utility, and every person who works on a Mass Save job must be cleared via background check. Peters said that there are some differences among the PAs, especially for felony conviction review, so the PAs are working on aligning their processes.

Wambui said that organizations who have begun supporting returning citizens are equipped to help the PAs clarify some of these definitions.

Quattrochi said that employers can only consider the convictions that appear on the CORI, and he said that the stability of the income source can influence the level of risk in the hire.

Winner seconded Wambui's observation that stakeholders who are already engaged in the process are better equipped to weigh in on who should be included under the umbrella of returning citizens. Winner said that the Council and the PAs should pursue the fair chance hiring principle, and he asked what the review process looks like in practice. Winner said that case-by-case reviews create inconvenience to employers, and companies are risk averse by nature. Winner continued that establishing a matrix of non-violent offenses that will not preclude someone from working in the Mass Save program would send a clear message to employers and eliminate the need for the PAs to make case-by-case decisions, and it would remove some implicit biases that may exist within the programs.

7. 2026 Equity Priorities

Bodemer said that DOER solicited feedback from the Council in November on a draft set of 2026 EEAC Priorities, and DOER will present a revised draft at the December EEAC meeting to be voted on at the January EEAC meeting. Bodemer explained that the goal of the EWG discussion is to receive feedback on the equity components of the priorities and clarified that EWG members can also submit feedback via email. Bodemer said that DOER received feedback that the draft priorities did not contain transparency with regards to the Income Eligible pipeline and data reporting, but there was another section in the full set of EEAC priorities that addresses this. Bodemer presented the draft 2026 Equity Priorities and asked the EWG for feedback.

Quattrochi said that it would be helpful to include something justifying the EWG's existence and emphasizing the importance of equity to ensure that the EEAC and the public understand why the EWG is important. Bodemer said that there is an area in the full priorities list that speaks to this, but DOER would double check that it specifically references equity.

Harak said that there was a 2025 Priority for monitoring energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions in the Residential and Income Eligible sector, and it is important for the EWG to have reporting on customer savings in terms of kWh and bill reductions. Bodemer said that DOER would check to ensure that this was reflected in another section of the draft 2026 Priorities.

Collins rejoined the virtual meeting at 12:34.

Murray said that he has been trying to calculate customer energy savings, statewide financial savings, and individual customer bill savings. Murray requested that similar information be displayed on customer bills, so they become aware of program benefits. Bodemer said that Boston University recently posted a report that visualized the benefits and bill savings of home weatherization with the intention of making understanding energy efficiency benefits more accessible.

Wambui said that she would love to see the Boston University report and emphasized Murray's comments about publicizing the benefits of Mass Save, not just the costs. Wambui said that she was hoping that the PAs would help the Council better communicate program benefits during the next Plan. Bodemer said that the communication of program benefits is reflected in the full set of draft priorities.

Winner agreed with Murray and Wambui about a priority for benefits communication, specifically equity improvements. Winner suggested including language about providing feedback or tracking process improvements, and more specifically in relation to the returning citizens framework development and implementation. Winner echoed Harak's comments about tracking budget and savings improvements for Income Eligible customers, and he said that he would like to see a priority about helping the PAs make changes to strengthen their work with the CFPs and meet equity goals.

Bodemer asked if there are any equity related topics that EWG would like to see flagged for discussion as part of the 2028-2030 planning process.

Winner suggested three areas to be included in the 2026 EEAC Priorities, including: 1. Addressing weatherization and heat pump inequities between the Income Eligible and Market Rate segments, 2. Uplifting distributive justice, particularly the impact of the DEC offer in the current term and the evolution of it going forward, and 3. Continuing to evolve the CFPs as a key equity initiative to help the PAs improve equity targets.

Murray seconded Winner's comments and stated that he would like the PAs to investigate the disparities between Income Eligible heat pump jobs among the different utilities and what can be done to resolve them.

Quattrochi said that his prior comment fit better under the umbrella of topics for 2028-2030 Plan development and clarified that he wanted to explore what actions can be taken to boost community awareness of program successes.

Wambui said that there was a push for on-bill financing for energy upgrades, but she wanted clarification on whether savings can be underwritten in the upgrades. Wambui said that she needed to think this through more, but she had concerns. Bodemer said that the on-bill financing proposal could be a good topic for a future meeting.

Winner said that storytelling and celebrating program successes matters, and the Council cannot solely rely on the PAs for it. Winner said that he has made it a personal responsibility to spread the message defending the value of Mass Save, and he is working through the Boston Energy Save program to find success stories to share. Winner encouraged the EWG members to do the same. Bodemer said that some of this is reflected in the full set of draft priorities.

Lynch said that program information is primarily presented within the context of large-scale impacts and suggested promoting individual-level benefits instead. Lynch suggested that putting things in personal terms would better reach the legislature and other concerned parties than aggregate numerical data.

Bodemer said that the consensus of the EWG was that the program needs to strengthen its communication of the benefits of energy efficiency in a clear, effective manner.

Murray agreed with Lynch, stating that individual customer bill savings are impactful statistics, and total program benefits have become so vast and abstract that people no longer believe in their value.

Bodemer encouraged the EWG to send additional feedback on the 2026 Priorities via email.

Quattrochi said that sometimes buildings are in such bad shape, that their residents would be better off being relocated so that the building could be torn down and redone. Quattrochi said that the EWG should consider incorporating this in 2028-2030 planning. Bodemer said that

DOER meets regularly with MassHousing, and they recently discussed deep energy renovations. Quattrochi emphasized that this is a significant challenge because of the relocation issue.

8. Adjournment

Bodemer, acting on behalf of the Chair, adjourned the meeting at 12:55 PM.

Meeting Materials:

- Official Meeting Notice
- Meeting Link
- Agenda
- November 3, 2025 EEAC Equity Working Group Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
- Summary of Equity Metrics Presentations to Equity Working Group, November 3
- Andrea Nyamekye – EWG Letter of Interest
- Charlie Harak – EWG Letter of Interest
- Douglas Quattrochi – EWG Letter of Interest
- Kiera Alventosa – EWG Letter of Interest
- Tasha Espendez – EWG Letter of Interest
- December PA Updates: Mass Save Solutions Center Update
- Returning Citizens Update