

EEAC Equity Working Group Summary to EEAC on Workforce Development Recommendations

Background

On May 20, 2020, the [EEAC created the Equity Working Group \(EWG\)](#) to identify and recommend priority actions, plans, and partnerships to increase participation among moderate-income customers, renters and landlords, customers with limited English proficiency, and small businesses as identified in the non-participant studies published earlier this year. The EWG strives to develop just and equitable solutions that center the communities which have been underserved by the existing programs.

This document will focus on providing a summary report of the work undertaken by the EWG to develop workforce development recommendations for the 2022-2024 Statewide Energy Efficiency Plan. In addition to recommendations on workforce development, the EWG is finalizing recommendations for moderate-income customers, renters and landlords, customers with limited English proficiency, small businesses, and community partnerships. The EWG will provide a summary document describing these efforts in advance of the January workshop #5.

Equity Working Group Goals

A full list of EWG members can be found attached to this document. The EWG meets every other week and meetings are structured around a specific topic selected by EWG members. Before each topic specific meeting, the EWG co-chairs along with the DOER and the EEAC consultant team meet to prepare for the upcoming working group meeting. During this planning meeting the co-chairs will begin to outline a meeting agenda. Meeting agendas are based on accomplishing the goals identified by the EWG in its Framework document. These goals include identifying recommendations that accomplish the following:

- Support in identifying institutional barriers, practices and policies to increase lower to moderate income customers program participation rates.
- Increase participation and savings from renters, moderate-income customers, customers with limited English proficiency, and small businesses;
- Increase the racial/ethnic, gender, and language diversity of the energy efficiency workforce via workforce development efforts;
- Increase participation and savings in municipalities identified through the residential and commercial non-participant studies; and
- Improve coordination and communication between external stakeholders, EEAC members, and the Program Administrators with regard to equity.

Stakeholder Engagement on Workforce Development

In an effort to include stakeholders throughout the process, EWG meetings have been structured to include topic based stakeholder sessions. These sessions have been structured as facilitated feedback sessions where stakeholders respond to various open-ended questions about the selected topic. During the workforce development discussion 14 stakeholders representing the following groups were invited to attend: governmental agencies, vocational high schools, technical community colleges, non-profit organizations, chambers of commerce, and energy efficiency contractors and support organizations.

Name	Role	Organization
Greg King	Director	TSK Energy Solutions
Daryl Wright	Local Director	Emerald Cities Boston
Adam Parker	Local Director	Emerald Cities Boston
Matt Rusteika	Senior Policy Analyst	Acadia Center
Tamika Jacques	Director of Workforce Development	MassCEC
Elizabeth Youngblood	Senior Program Manager, Workforce Development	MassCEC
Elizabeth Kennedy Cleveland	Senior Program Director	MassCEC
Josh Kriesberg	Project Manager, Workforce Development	MassCEC
Emily Jones	Senior Program Officer	LISC
Latrelle Pinkney-Chase	Co-op Coordinator	Madison Park Vocational Technical High School
Kevin McCaskill	Executive Director	Madison Park Vocational Technical High School
Fahad Khan	Assistant Professor of Building Automation	Springfield Technical Community College
Jessica Bergman	New England Programs and Engagement Director	Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy
Vin Graziano	President	RISE Engineering

The following open ended questions were used to guide the facilitated discussion:

- What is working well with current workforce development initiatives within Mass Save (or other programs in Massachusetts)? Which programs and initiatives are the most important and impactful to continue or expand?
- What new areas of investment should be considered to increase diversity of the energy efficiency workforce in Massachusetts?
- How can Mass Save provide workforce development training opportunities (such as HERS, HVAC+R Tech, BOC, BAS, Passive House Builders' Training, etc.) for communities of color and other disinvested communities?
- How can Mass Save better support professional development opportunities for the existing workforce?
- What are the unique barriers that small businesses, MBEs, WBEs, VBEs, LGBTBEs, and DOBEs encounter face when participating in Mass Save opportunities?

During the discussion, stakeholders noted the following with regards to what is currently going well with workforce development efforts:

- Regular and ongoing Mass Save program sponsor participation on curricula advisory boards helps educators understand what knowledge and skills are needed in the job market.
- Partnerships between industry professionals and schools help young professionals understand the opportunities that are available to them especially in emerging fields.

- Internship programs, like the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center’s internship program, provide access to careers in clean energy by providing young professionals and employers with the tools to connect. In addition MassCEC reimburses eligible employers for intern stipends, which allows for students from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds to work in clean energy.

Stakeholders noted the following areas of improvement:

- Reliable data on workforce demographics needs to be made easily available to develop benchmarks for workforce diversity. Following that, tracking and reporting mechanisms need to be established to ensure that progress is made on the goals.
- The lack of clearly identified goals for increasing workforce diversity has resulted in a lack of motivation for employers to proactively increase diversity within their firms.
- Older workers are retiring from the workforce. Viable career pathways need to be clearly outlined in order to recruit and retain a young and diverse energy efficiency workforce.
- Careers in energy efficiency are not being promoted early and broadly enough in high school and community college classrooms. Without strategic promotion of available career opportunities we will continue to struggle to recruit a diverse energy efficiency workforce.
- Geographic isolation of training opportunities hampers the ability to continue to upskill the existing workforce.

Overview of EWG Workforce Development Recommendations

In effort to capture more detailed feedback from EWG members and stakeholders on the provisional recommendations, the EWG developed two surveys to collect additional feedback. These surveys also provided an opportunity for EWG members and stakeholders to identify their priority ranking for recommendation implementation. Based on this feedback, the EWG priorities are:

1. Increase tracking and reporting
2. Increase the diversity of the workforce supporting Mass Save
3. Attract and train young and diverse persons for participation in the energy efficiency workforce

To address the first priority, “Increase tracking and reporting”, the EWG developed the following recommendations:

- ◇ **Establish goals and benchmarks to increase diversity of workforce in 2022-2024.**
 - Set numerical targets to increase the following: MBE and WBE participation in the trade ally network, number of projects completed by MBEs and WBEs, and number of contracts executed with MBEs and WBEs.
 - Set goals for the numbers of women and BIPOCs employed by PAs and other firms directly contracted with Mass Save.
- ◇ **Track and regularly report key indicators of workforce diversity.**
 - Disadvantaged Business Enterprise vendor participation (in # and in \$).
 - # of women and BIPOCs employed by PAs and other firms providing services to Mass Save.

To address the second priority, “Increase the diversity of the workforce supporting Mass Save”, the EWG developed the following recommendations:

- ◇ **Assess and revise vendor solicitation processes.**
 - Minimize use of invite-only procurements.
 - Include certified MBEs and WBEs in all RFP, RFQ, and RFI distribution lists.
 - Require bidders to make measurable financial commitments to do business with one or more diverse businesses on all procurement opportunities with a value greater than \$150,000.
 - Require lead vendors to partner with DBEs on all Mass Save contracts.
 - Make selection criteria objective and transparent to avoid implicit bias.
 - Host webinars and trainings, and provide technical assistance to help vendors navigate the procurement process.
- ◇ **Identify and remove barriers to increase Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation.**
 - Identify new MBE and WBE firms; support eligible vendors to pursue diversity certification or small business certification.
- ◇ **Set minimum standards for formal diversity, equity, and inclusion policies for all Mass Save contracted vendors.**
 - Provide detailed technical assistance to vendors as they develop formal diversity, equity, and inclusion policies.
- ◇ **Create a detailed list of all training opportunities available through or supported by Mass Save and make that list easily available to stakeholders and on the Mass Save website.**
 - Make a concerted effort to identify key upskilling opportunities for the incumbent workforce and develop new training opportunities where there are gaps.
 - Coordinate with the trade ally network and training providers to ensure that graduates of training programs have direct access to job opportunities with Mass Save contracted vendors.
 - Expand geographic access to training opportunities by providing virtual and in-person trainings throughout the Commonwealth.
- ◇ **Create targeted support for workforce and contractor development efforts in Environmental Justice communities with historically low participation in Mass Save.**
 - Engage with community-based organizations and industry groups/associations that focus on diverse businesses.

To address the third priority, “Attract and train young and diverse persons for participations in the energy efficiency workforce”, the EWG developed the following recommendations:

- ◇ **Expand outreach & education about career opportunities to include stronger partnerships with vocational and technical high schools and community colleges.**
 - Create multiple viable career pathways to illustrate career opportunities available to new entrants in the workforce.
 - Establish energy efficiency career days where students can learn firsthand from energy efficiency workers.
 - Make direct connections between careers in energy efficiency and climate and the environment.
- ◇ **Fund internships, apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and externships.**
 - Partner with employers to offer partial wage subsidies for a limited time for new entrants into the energy efficiency workforce.

- Include mentorship and networking opportunities as a component of all internship, apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and externship opportunities.
- Track and report the number of internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and externships that translate into full-time job offers.

Appendix A – List of Equity Working Group Members

Name	Position
Maggie McCarey	DOER
Alexis Washburn	DOER
Cindy Arcate	Representing Massachusetts Non-Profits
Charlie Harak	Representing Organized Labor
Cammy Peterson (Chair)	Representing Commonwealth Cities/Towns
Mary Wambui (Chair)	Representing Residential Consumers
Jo Ann Bodemer	AGO
Amanda Formica	National Grid
Ruth Georges	Eversource
Stephanie Terach	Liberty Utilities
Margaret Downey	Cape Light Compact
Brian Beote	Action Inc.
James Collins	ABCD
Elizabeth Chant	EEAC Consultant
Margie Lynch	EEAC Consultant
Eugenia Gibbons	Healthcare Without Harm/Green Justice Coalition
Caitlin Peale Sloan	Conservation Law Foundation
Cindy Luppi	Clean Water Action/GJC

Appendix B – List of Commonly Used Acronyms

Acronym	Term
EWG	Equity Working Group
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
MBE	Minority Business Enterprise
WBE	Women Business Enterprise
VBE	Veteran Business Enterprise
LGBTE	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprises
DOBE	Disability-Owned Business Enterprise
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, & People of Color
RFI	Request for Information
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Quotation
HERS	Home Energy Rating System
HVAC + R	Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration
BOC	Building Operator Certification
BAS	Building Automation Systems