



## DEI Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday November 12, 2025

**Meeting Time:** 2:00pm to 3:30pm

### Attendees:

- Kate Clifford
- Tanvi Shah
- Ella Johnson-McGowan
- Catherine O'Carroll
- Julie Pascoe
- Emily Asbury
- KC Doyle
- Esther Kim
- Lesley McCain
- Shon Harris
- Brady Briska
- Jessica Wagner
- Ky Ajayi
- Denise Moore
- Chynna Hampton
- Marcus Jordan

### Welcome

- Housekeeping
- Working Agreements
- Review Agenda

### Introductions

- Reflection Prompt:
  - ***What are the most pressing needs in your communities right now?***
    - Wraparound and supportive services. Transportation to work sites.
    - Social justice and equity must stay at the top of the priority. Unity is key. We're in this together. And true power comes from the people and if we unify, we can advocate for all. This is a test to see who we

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are and if we can leave no one behind. Stay connected like we are today.

- How can we assist in implementing the positive benefits of the EEC category in IL Shines.
- Connection from policies to action to get people connected to jobs where they can prosper. Work with CEJA training hubs and the communities that need the workforce. Transportation is a challenge.
- Work with CEJA workforce grantees. Pressing need is to make the synergistic connections between the programs happen. Take advantage of the way CEJA is designed. Grateful to be doing this work in IL but need to huddle and get creative.
- I work with communities across the state. Synergy is important. If there's not enough seats in training programs or enough graduates to hire to meet the MES, there's a problem.
- Saw data that female-led businesses are on the lower end of participation in the IL Shines program. How can we double up our efforts of outreach and strategy?
- Responsibility to move intentions into impact. Motivates us to be driven by the things that matter. How we do our work is important and that people feel valued for their contributions.

### **LTP Disclaimer**

### **Updates from Bureau Chief**

- Racial Disparity Study Update
  - Informational Meeting on Nov. 19 at 6pm
- DEI Data Dashboard
  - MES Year End Report Summary to be published this month

### **Equity Learning Series Discussion**

- Review of the Learning Series Objective
- Review of the Learning Series Outline
- Discussion with Energy Solutions
  - Questions:
    - Who is the intended audience? Business owners?
      - Yes

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- Given the guidance coming from the Federal Government, you need to be prepared to discuss why this is important? Why we need to do this? The anti-DEI sentiment needs to be addressed upfront. We think we are right because... What is the benefit to businesses?
  - Start with the 30,000-foot view. Why the work is critical and proven effective.
- It's important to find and provide examples of how DEI has improved the bottom line, company culture, etc.
- Does the EP section introduce the portal or contain a walk through?
  - A walkthrough of the portal may happen later in the training series.
- You will lose people in the background section. Minimize language on the screen and in the presentation and send it as pre-reading if needed. Boil it down to the 5 most important items to know.
- The industry is feeling tension between “DEI hires” and labor use requirements. You should be prepared to address or at least acknowledge that.
- It might be helpful to have some CEJA success stories ready in your pocket to share. The union/non-union issue may come up. Using tax dollars to train individuals but if they don't get into a union what are the options.
- Present in a way that CEJA was designed to provide workforce for projects and projects for workforce. Important to bottom line the information.
- Speak to the good paying jobs unions provide.
- We need to ensure we are building an immediately implementable strategies. Maybe a one-pager they can walk away with and share with their colleagues.
- I think it makes sense to move the business case to the top of the agenda to hook attendees' attention and have buy in for the rest of the training.
- The business case needs to be front and center. Need hard number examples (examples of business case provided in the chat for the team to explore)
- Planning a presentation with DCEO on their new website and programs in the next month. Might have info to share about hubs and contact points at each. When is this training planned?
  - Early next year, expected in February
- Look at the stage we just set. We made a business case for DEI. Next, you may want to ask them if we've done enough to convince you to implement this not just for the compliance but because of your bottom line? Are you convinced? What rings true? Is this difficult to do? If so, why?
  - Those questions could be included in a survey we intend to share with participants as well as the breakout rooms.

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- Are we asking about their commitment to recruiting and retaining EEPs?
  - What we're trying to get at is the strategies
- Address the challenges that these businesses have faced.
- Drill down into the responses to understand the why at the root.
- Is the goal to have solutions to those challenges?
  - Goal is that they walk away with best practice strategies to address those recruitment and retention challenges.
- Using a strengths-based approach might help too if we broach the challenge of meeting the MES: "How have you overcome some challenges in recruitment and retention of EEPs? What worked?" I find employers realize they have some diversity in their hiring and so calling out how that's already existed, perhaps some challenges they overcame, can address challenges, solutions, next steps.
- Shrinkage in the workforce is anticipated. Need to acknowledge that tension.
- A bit of a tangent but in the MES YER, vendors could register EEPs in the portal or complete self-attestations in the YER. Might be helpful to have that data in this presentation to show the scope of EEP universe.
- Have we considered a conversation on the pathway to working with the trades? Understand the pathway and process to working with union halls. Explaining the PLA and working with communities to pipeline individuals into the trades.
- I'm a fan of recordings but be mindful of the participants being exposed in any way during a recording. Especially if they are being upfront and honest about their experiences.

### Future Meeting Topic Generation

- How can we make it easier for companies to recruit/EEPs to get hired? There is a list of EEPs but how can we pre-vet the list and ensure that the hires will be ready and trained? In my experience on community solar sites, there is a gap in knowledge or trust that the GM/EPC's then have to bridge. How could wrap around services help place into jobs and transport recent grads. Something like on-the-job training or shadowing. GM's say that there is a lack of training with the individuals coming out of the training programs.
  - Tool handling, construction basics, etc.
- It would be great if we had a separate solar apprenticeship. Local 138 has a training to see what it is like to be at a site and how to work at a site. Keeps them learning on the project but limits the amount of work they can be assigned.
- Building a training program to support new job seekers. Feedback like this is very useful would like to connect offline.



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- Will share Jessica's feedback with DCEO as they are planning to update their training curricula this year.
- Would love to continue this conversation with the table CJC hosts.
- It would be great to also talk about what is working. Hear about the positive results or success stories. We're all putting everything into this work. Good to hear about the progress even if incremental.

### **Closing**

**Next Steps: Agenda, attendee list, and meeting notes posted on the website**