

**Illinois EE Stakeholder Advisory Group
Equity Subcommittee Meeting:
Joint with Income Qualified (IQ) North EE Committee**

**Monday, August 19, 2024
10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Attendees and Meeting Notes

Meeting Materials 1
Attendees 1
Meeting Notes 2
Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas Market Development Initiative (MDI) Update 2
ComEd Market Development Initiative (MDI) Update..... 9

Meeting Materials

Posted on the [August 19 Equity Subcommittee meeting page](#):

- [Agenda](#)
- [Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas Presentation: Market Development Initiative Update](#)
- [ComEd Presentation: Market Development Initiative Update](#)

Attendees

Name	Company or Organization
Celia Johnson	SAG Facilitator (Celia Johnson Consulting)
Jane Anderson	SAG Meeting Support (Inova Energy Group)
Alan Elliott	Opinion Dynamics
Alex Deeb	Ameren Illinois
Allison Gregoire	Nicor Gas
Barbara Stapleton	The JPI Group
Briana Moore	Will County Land Use Dept.
Bryan Haney	Erthe Energy Solutions
Cam Seeley	Walker-Miller Energy Services
Chris Vaughn	Nicor Gas
Christina Frank	Peoples Gas & North Shore Gas
Dan Moring	Slipstream
Elder Calderon	ComEd
Elizabeth Horne	ICC Staff
Erin Stitz	Applied Energy Group
Gregory Norris	Aces 4 Youth
Hannah Howard	Opinion Dynamics
Jeffrey Carroll	DNV
John Mansfield	Nicor Gas
Julia Friedman	Opower
Kelly Lena	Nicor Gas

Name	Company or Organization
Kari Ross	NRDC
Keely Hughes	The JPI Group
Keyla Ward	Ameren Illinois
Kim Swan	ComEd
Mark Milby	Elevate
Matt Armstrong	Ameren Illinois
Michele McSwain	Sustainable Environmental and Economic Development Solutions
Nelson May	Future Energy Enterprises (IQ South Facilitation Team)
Nick Bafaloukos	ComEd
Nick Lovier	Ameren Illinois
Nordhus, Jarred	Peoples Gas & North Shore Gas
Omayra Garcia	Peoples Gas & North Shore Gas
Philip Mosenthal	Optimal Energy, representing NCLC
Sam Stahl	Ameren Illinois
Selena Worster Walde	Erthe Energy Solutions
Susan Buck	ComEd
Tamika J. Cole	Walker-Miller Energy Services
Ted Weaver	First Tracks Consulting, representing Nicor Gas
Tim Dickison	Ameren Illinois
Tina Grebner	Ameren Illinois
Valencia Roner	Energy Infrastructure Partners
Wade Morehead	Morehead Energy

Meeting Notes

See **red text** for follow-up items.

Opening and Introductions

Purpose of the August 19th meeting:

1. For Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas to present a Market Development Initiative update; and
2. For ComEd to present a Market Development Initiative update.

Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas Market Development Initiative (MDI) Update

Omy Garcia, Peoples Gas & North Shore Gas; Bryan Haney, Erthe Energy Solutions

Agenda

- MDI Overview: Objectives, Priorities, and Progress
 - An initiative to grow the energy efficiency market
- Discussing two pathways
 - Workforce Development
 - Diverse Supplier

Presenter Introductions

- Peoples Gas (PGL) and North Shore Gas (NSG) Managers and Market Development Initiative Implementation Team Representatives
 - Omy Garcia – Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas. Manager of EE programs, focused on residential and income eligible programs
 - Bryan Haney – EARTH Energy Solutions – principal lead, implementing contractor

MDI Delivery Team

- EARTH Energy Solutions – Prime Implementing contractor and a DBE. Additional groups involved in the program who report to EARTH
 - MULDER Consulting
 - Rise Kit – recruitment software and job placement
 - Evergreen Energy Partners – tutorials and education piece
 - CADMUS – data analytics
 - Paco Collective – digital media advertising and campaign management
 - L3 Agency – direct community engagement and outreach for recruitment

Market Development Initiative (MDI) Objectives

- Improve the diversity and inclusiveness of the Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas energy efficiency portfolio supplier workforce.
- Strengthen the partnership and support for local and diverse business enterprises.
- Increase contracting opportunities for diverse contractors, subcontractors, distributors, and other suppliers and community-based organizations at all contractual levels and assist them in developing the necessary capabilities to participate in the delivery of the Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas energy efficiency portfolio.
 - Not trying to re-invent the wheel—rather guide underrepresented job seekers and diverse businesses to grow
- Increase the transparency of and equity in the energy efficiency procurement process.

MDI Priorities

- Seeking to maximize the use of MDI funds to pursue a goal to build a diverse and thriving workforce
- Territories focus on City of Chicago and the suburbs. Acknowledged that there is a robust and proficient network already working in training and development area. Strong existing resources and training.
 - Goal is to be additive and complementary to existing eco-system and supplement existing training programs.
- Two main goals:
 - Recruit and prepare overlooked job seekers and match them with job opportunities
 - Recruit, train, certify and grow more diverse suppliers for EE programs.
- Wraparound Services and Support
 - CBO's, CCA's, DFSS
- Candidate recruitment and coaching
 - RiseKit
- Workforce training
 - CBO's, educators, training programs
- Diverse suppliers
 - Trade allies, contractors
- Clean energy jobs

- Trade allies, contractors

Advocate Council

- Convened to comment and inform design and implementation efforts. Early on, screened what type of services to include
- Why: Ensure we are developing a solution that will result in positive community economic impacts and long-term results
- Purpose: Engage and provide feedback on elements of the MDI planned approach
- Advocate Council members:
 - 5 CBOs
 - 3 Community Action Agencies
 - 2 Educators
 - 1 Implementer
 - 15 Trade Allies
- Meetings held as needed; had back-channel communications and discussions.
 - October 2023
 - March 2024
 - August 2024
- Priorities: 5 core elements established prior to launch the program
 - 1. Goal to conduct broad marketing and outreach to recruit job seekers.
 - 2. Provide single point of contact for career coaching.
 - 3. Be in a role of routing job seekers to existing training and support.
 - 4. Develop more job opportunities and help job seekers understand the roles and opportunities within EE industry.
 - 5. For Diverse Suppliers, want to expand number and size that participate in the program.

Initiative Progress

- 2022-2023
 - Nov 2022: MDI research and reporting complete
 - June 2023: Kickoff
 - Q3-Q4 2023: Planning & design, Workforce Development soft launch, host first Advocates Council meeting
- 2024 Q1-Q2
 - January 18th - Workforce Development Track official launch
 - Actively continue CBO and employer recruitment
 - Jobseeker recruitment videos and career stories
 - Energy Efficiency online training courses
 - Diverse Supplier Track design
- 2024 Q3-Q4
 - Jobseeker recruitment: community job fairs, CBOs, digital ads
 - Candidate training and placement
 - Current priority: Expand quantity of employers and jobs
 - Current priority: Diverse Supplier Track launch and recruitment
- 2025
 - Expand jobseeker opportunities with employer-supported internships
 - Expand Diverse Supplier Academies
 - Continue jobseeker and diverse supplier recruitment

Workforce Development Updates

- Recruitment and Application
 - Job seekers recruitment – targeted social and digital media campaigns based on demographic and economic data. Targeted certain areas of the city
 - Website is central to the initiative—designed for job seekers to connect with a career coach—receive advice and support to appropriate job training resource
- Skills Training
- Energy Efficiency Training
- Placement and Mentorship
 - Worked to expand and create a network of employers with available job opportunities for candidates coming through the process

Job Seeker Recruitment: Fuel Your Future Website

- Website to recruit job candidates
- English and Spanish language pages, videos, and training
- Connect with a Coach: Candidates sign up and get connected to a career coach
- Career Stories: Hear directly from professionals in the industry about their career journeys and experience. Videos and interviews with the following companies focused on: residential weatherization, HVAC installation and repairs, distribution of EE products and services, marketing and community engagement for EE programs
- What is Energy Efficiency: Hear directly from professionals about what Energy Efficiency is and the benefits of a career in the industry
- Call to action on website is to help job seekers to connect and register with a career coach for jobs and training opportunities and careers

Job Seeker Recruitment: Community and Educational Partners

- Developed materials for partners
- Resources to help community partners explain and share training and job opportunities
- Partners use these resources alongside their existing platforms and promotions, for example: member newsletters, websites, events, career fairs and in-person meetings. All equipped with QR codes
 - Have been distributed across 15 CBOs in greater Chicago area

Job Seeker Recruitment: Community Events

- Work specifically to talk about initiative at community events. Targeting community events focused on jobs and WD.
 - Example: Chicago Urban League events; events targeted towards high school juniors and seniors
- Findings: people looking for a job opportunity; lots of people who have friends, neighbors or family looking for a job – take info home with them to share with others
- Events are very productive when targeted on job training and WD

Job Seeker Recruitment: Library Partnerships

- Leverage community focus that Chicago Public Libraries have. Over 80 libraries across PGL and NSG territory. Have materials prominently posted at libraries

Job Seeker Recruitment: Targeted Digital Campaign

- Purpose: to hone in and identify where job seekers are searching for information on the internet. Most significant recruitment initiative to date. Focused on putting specific

messages to specific audiences on website and locations frequented by those looking for jobs. Targeting down to zip code level.

- Target Audience
 - Job Seekers
- Territory and Language
 - Co-branded for both territories, in both English and Spanish
- Ad Type (Platform)
 - Social Media Ads (META: Facebook and Instagram)
 - Banner Display Ads (MobileFuse)
 - Social Display Ads (Nexxen)
- Schedule and Results
 - Campaign started June 17, running through Sept. 21, 2024
 - 25,000 website visits to MDI webpage. 46% have been to the Spanish version

RiseKit Services and Support

- Partner with workforce org called RiseKit who provide career coaches.
- Video introduction to services.
- RiseKit is connected to 184 programs in Chicago area. Can guide the candidate to options catered towards their preferences, area they live in, schedule, and barriers to employment. PGL and NSG are aware we may recruit candidates who have skills in other areas (not EE), but the candidate can work with RiseKit to pursue different opportunities
 - For every conversation that a candidate has with RiseKit career coach, there are two or more possible paths for the candidate to pursue
- Broad range of programs means they have a job path for anyone
 - 59 support Returning Citizens
 - 28% of candidates indicated they have a criminal background. RiseKit help connect returning citizens with specific orgs that help that population
 - 10 specifically serve ESL individuals
 - 130+ serve Cook County
 - 14 are fully remote / online
- Wide variety of local skills training for employment in many industries
 - Healthcare
 - Retail
 - Media/Marketing
 - Construction
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Facilities
 - Administrative
 - Customer Service
- Key roles of PGL and NSG are to help to expand opportunities in the EE sector, and provide trainings to build skills in EE
 - RiseKit has active role in EE industry

Energy Efficiency Training

- PGL and NS help address a barrier need to help understand skills needed in the EE field.
 - Developed training resources
 - Courses launched beginning of this year
 - Takes 4-5 hours to complete

- Available in English and Spanish
- Three mandatory Energy Efficiency career training:
 - Your Future in Energy Efficiency
 - Growing Your Skills
 - Practicing Your Skills
- Upon completion, can apply for and receive financial assistance while looking for a job
- Four optional trainings for additional learning

Employers and Community Partners: Fuel Your Future Website

- Have created a connected ecosystem between community partners and employers hiring. Goal is for all parties to see benefits.
- Employers
 - Register to access MDI resources and post your open jobs
 - Find and get connected to local talent
 - Hire and retain
- Community Partners
 - Register to access MDI resources
 - Connect your jobseekers to MDI opportunities
 - Get candidate referrals, provide support and training

Workforce Development Results

- What we've seen to date in the program so far
- Recruitment and Application
 - Successful digital media campaign
 - 5.8 million Digital Ad Impressions
 - 24,750 Website Visits (46% Spanish Page)
 - 438 Candidate Registrations and asked to meet with a career coach
 - 15+ local organizations with flyers / info cards
 - 2 Community Events – more on the horizon
- Skills Training
 - 350+ Career Coach engagements
 - Resulted in a 150+ External Training /Resource Referrals
 - 68 EE Track Candidates referred
- Energy Efficiency Training
 - 6 EE Training Series completed to date and starting the process of looking for a job
- Placement and Mentorship
 - 15 New Energy Efficiency Employers Registered in the system
 - 16 Jobs posted (cumulatively)
 - 3 Job Placements of MDI Candidates in clean energy related field. Early in process of recruitment and placement

Job Seeker: Fuel Your Future

- Career Pathway
 - Coaching: begin your journey with a free career coach
 - Training: access resources and EE training
 - Resources: connect to local organizations and other support services
 - Assistance: after training is complete. Receive a one-time payment
 - Employment: one year mentorship

- As move into latter half of 2024, focus is moving towards expanding the number of employers and job seekers in the system
 - More engagement with job fairs
 - Starting to work with educators to understand their pipeline of talent
 - Actively looking for partners and employers who are willing to hire job seekers coming out of the process

Diverse Supplier Value Proposition

- Focus on helping businesses grow for diverse ownership.
- Goals: 1) accelerated upward mobility and businesses growth. 2) facilitate diverse supplier opportunity and awareness – connect them to PG and NG and other resources.
- Key objective: enable diverse supplier to move from entry-level to a place where they can support implementors in a program.
- Looking to recruit diverse firms for a training academy
- PGL and NSG Vision: Increase diverse supplier awareness and participation in Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas Energy Efficiency Program
- Diverse supplier value proposition
 - Get support
 - Get certified with different diverse certifications
 - Get noticed by giving diverse suppliers more visibility among the customer base procuring EE services
 - Get connected with other resources part of the eco-system supporting small business
 - Grow business – key goal and outcome. Become a larger part of the EE portfolio that PGL and NSG

Diverse Supplier Development

- Diverse supplier directory (2024 focus)
 - Opportunity to showcase diverse suppliers that are part of EE programs and for customers to view and filter diverse suppliers to hire
- Diverse contractor academy (2024 focus)
 - Launch in early September. Focused on helping diverse owner businesses: 1) get certification; and 2) expand their work in EE sector
- Diverse trade ally academy (2024 focus)
 - End of this year: help existing trade allies grow. Develop series of partnerships or training opportunities for existing trade allies to understand their strengths and how they can grow to serve more customers
- Diverse implementor academy (2025 focus)
 - Help diverse suppliers understand how to participate in procurements and PGL and NSG opportunities
- Procurement optimization (2025 focus)

Diverse Supplier Academy Journey

- Complete Diverse Supplier Academy application online to identify business structure and needs
- Get placed in one or more academies based upon your business qualifications and goals
 - Goal is to make sure diverse business get certified, become an ally and grow business in the area
- Complete academy(s), graduate, and start growing your business

Keely Hughes: How are you tracking all services tied to the job seeker?

- *Bryan Haney: At a high level, the career coach is part of the digital jobs and training platform that's hosted by RiseKit. Each interaction is being tracked and connections and referrals to job training programs and opportunities are being recorded. We are early in the process of collecting the data, so not many conclusions yet.*

Keely Hughes: How long does the career coach stay with the job seeker? Is it at the beginning phase of employment? What is the percentage of job seekers reached to date?

- *Bryan Haney: The career coach is engaged from initial inquiry through 90 days after job placement. Coaches actively work with each candidate to provide resources and other support they may need, including recommending jobs specific to skillsets, resume assistance, and connecting on monthly basis to understand how they are doing in the job.*

Valencia Roner: Are you able to share the placement rate?

- *Bryan Haney: Three (3) placements so far. We are early in the process of the remainder of the candidates. Actively tracking it though.*

Keely Hughes: Are you looking to expand the languages?

- *Bryan Haney Started with English and Spanish based on Census data and other data on the City of Chicago. We ask about other language preferences in process of working with candidates. So far, English and Spanish have covered 99% of inquires that have come in. For community events, having bilingual English Spanish speaker is essential. Haven't encountered a real need for other languages as of now.*

Tim Dickinson: Did you say that the directory is customer-facing? Could you expand on that a bit?

- *Bryan Haney: It will be customer facing—it's in the last stages of development. Will offer opportunities for customers to screen and filter diverse certified firms. Scheduled to come out in Q3.*

Michele McSwain: Where do prospective suppliers reach out for more information?

- *Bryan Haney: If know any specifically, refer to Omy or Bryan. Encourage everyone to go to MDI website – it has connections and links to get connected with anyone in the program.*

ComEd Market Development Initiative (MDI) Update

Susan Buck, ComEd

Agenda

- Program overview and design
- Successes to-date
- Upcoming events

ComEd's Energy Efficiency Market Development Initiative

- The objectives of MDI are part of ComEd's Revised Plan 6 Energy Efficiency Stipulation Agreement. This initiative offers local businesses, entrepreneurs, and individuals with opportunities to obtain the skills and certifications needed to implement energy efficiency projects throughout their communities.
- Two main Objectives

- Increase contracting opportunities for diverse business enterprises and CBOs and assist them in developing the necessary capabilities to participate in the delivery of the EE Portfolio
- Improve the diversity and inclusiveness of the ComEd EE Department's supplier and supplier workforce
- ComEd's MDI program is centered around four main areas of focus:
 - Training and Development Resources for Service Providers: Provides training and certification opportunities for new and experienced energy efficiency professionals
 - Focus on workforce development
 - Opportunities for Business Development: Aims to increase diversity within the EE industry by developing an equitable and inclusive pipeline of local suppliers from which to procure products and services
 - Resources for Service Providers: Aims to grow the pool of diverse EE service providers in our network, as well as bolster engagement of those already involved
 - Community Collaboration: Aims to collaborate with CBOs, faith-based organizations, and other non-profits to promote awareness and facilitate outreach among local communities
 - CBOs are Critical because they are the megaphone of the program. Important resource to provide wraparound services in training and business support

Training and Development

- Training is offered to participants at no cost and is designed to provide the skills and certifications needed to perform work in the energy efficiency space. Enrollees new to EE may participate in the Newcomer Cohort and those already working in EE may participate in the Skilled Cohort.
- Newcomer Cohort (8 weeks | 5 days per week)
 - Designed for those new to energy efficiency
 - Designed to remove barriers of participation. Participants Receive:
 - Weekly \$17/hour stipend
 - Meals (during training)
 - Gas card (up to \$25/week)
 - Access to wraparound services (upon request)
 - Complete the course and then are tested to receive up to three certifications Earned Upon Completion:
 - Healthy Housing Principles
 - Building Science Principles
 - Air Leakage Controller Installer
 - Program Requirements:
 - 18 years or older
 - Residency within the ComEd service area
 - Possession of a high school diploma or GED
 - Successful Completion of a background check
 - Clearance of a drug test
 - Note: Available to returning citizens who meet all qualifications
- Skilled Cohort (5 weeks | 3 days per week)
 - Designed for those with some experience working in energy efficiency

- Allow participants to work 2 days a week in current job. Critical for those who are employed
- Participants Receive:
 - Weekly \$500 stipend
 - Meals (during training)
 - Gas card (up to \$25/week)
 - Access to wraparound services (upon request)
- Certifications Earned Upon Completion:
 - Healthy Housing Principles
 - Building Science Principles
 - Building Analyst Technician
 - Program Requirements:
 - 18 years or older
 - Current employment within the EE, HVAC, or weatherization field
 - Residency within the ComEd service area
 - Possession of a high school diploma or GED
 - Successful Completion of a background check
 - Clearance of a drug test

Opportunities for Business Development

- Supports the procurement process and provides tools and resources for diverse vendors to overcome barriers in connecting businesses to energy efficiency opportunities.
- Several ways MDI support business development. Business Resources & Expansion Opportunities:
 - Provides support with diverse business certification application processes
 - For diverse businesses but who aren't certified
 - Added to a searchable database that helps foster business development
 - Provides referrals to business development resources
 - Provides access to EE related procurement opportunities
 - Provides information and connections about available financing options for small businesses
 - Opportunities provided to network with industry experts
 - Provides networking opportunities to help foster future partnerships
- Criteria for Participation:
 - 51% owned, operated, and controlled by an individual who falls in one or more of the following categories:
 - Ethnic minority
 - Woman
 - Veteran
 - An individual with a different ability
 - Member of the LGBTQIA+ community
 - Registered and in good standing with the Illinois Department of Revenue
 - Insured and bonded, as applicable and in accordance with State reqs.

Resources for Service Providers

- Remove barriers to participation in the growing energy efficiency space by providing the tools and resources needed for diverse service providers to meaningfully engage in ComEd's Energy Efficiency Service Provider (EESP) network.
- Prospective EESPs | Service providers:
 - Assists with navigating the application process to join the ComEd network

- Assists with developing plans to grow EE businesses
- Educates on all offering within the ComEd EE Portfolio of programs
- Provides opportunity to list business in the ComEd EESP directory
- Provides training and webinars on the programs other EE specific training
- Criteria for Participation:
 - Candidates perform in one or more of the following trades:
 - Compressed air
 - Electrical
 - General contracting
 - HVAC
 - Refrigeration
 - Weatherization (insulation, air sealing)
 - Candidates are registered and in good standing with the state of Illinois and are insured in accordance with minimal state requirements
- Existing EESPs in the EESP Network:
 - Assists with business growth in the EE space
 - Provided needed tools to help businesses grow and run effectively
 - Supports business development by proving:
 - Certification support
 - Business planning
 - Introductions to program offerings
 - Marketing assistance
 - Access to a mentorship program
 - Financial support
 - Accounting/tax support
 - Administrative (back-office) support

Community Collaboration

- ComEd values the role played by community-based, faith-based, and other non-profit organizations in raising awareness among and building individuals to grow their businesses through the program.
- CBOs support the program efforts by:
 - Facilitating outreach efforts to raise awareness about the training opportunities among their network of community members
 - Organizing informational sessions and workshops to educate individuals about the benefits of participating in the training programs
 - Assisting in recruitment efforts, including identifying potential candidates and encouraging application to the program
 - Offer support services such as transportation assistance or childcare to help individuals overcome barriers to participation
 - Highlighting the importance of diversity within the energy-efficiency space, and how utilizing local, diverse-owned businesses creates stronger communities
 - Sharing testimonials from those that have benefited from participating
- CBOs support EE service professionals by:
 - Utilizing existing channels and platforms to promote the EESP Network and its benefits to prospective businesses
 - Hosting networking events where interested business owners can connect with EESP program representatives
 - Sharing success stories from EESP program participants to inspire others to join the network

- ComEd provides CBOs with marketing materials for use at events

Success To-Date

- Completed first CBO Roundtable (held on 3/21)
 - Introduced CBOs to program team
 - Reviewed MDI objectives
 - Discussed how CBOs can support
 - Focused on increased engagement with implementation contractors
- Completed second CBO Roundtable (5/30)
- Launched the program website (4/24)
 - Visit at ComEd.com/MDI
 - Provides details for each area of focus
 - Includes link for CBOs with marketing materials
 - Had over 1,000 unique users since launch
- Graduated first Skilled Cohort (6/27)
 - Planned for 10 participants, enrolled 13, with 12 graduated
 - All participants earned 3 Building Proficiency Institute (BPI) certifications
 - Graduates: 31% from Chicago, 69% from surrounding suburbs

Skilled Cohort #1 Graduation

- Graduated 12 participants
- Achieved 3 Building Professional Institute (BPI) certifications:
 - Healthy Housing Principles (HHP)
 - Building Science Principles (BSP)
 - Building Analyst Technician (BAT)

Upcoming Events

- Newcomer Cohort (began this morning)
 - Intended for those new to energy efficiency
 - August 19 thru October 11
 - Planned for 18 participants
 - Held on Chicago's west side
 - Had over 200 applicants; looking to start second cohort in 2025
- Skilled Cohort #2
 - Intended for those already in the space to increase skills
 - October 14 thru November 15
 - Planned for 24 participants
 - Currently accepting applications
- CBO/Community Activities
 - August 22: Westside Black Business Summit (*Austin African American Business Networking Assoc.*)
 - September 4: CBO Roundtable #3
 - September 18th: Added a small business networking mixer

Closing and Next Steps

- No remaining Equity Subcommittee meetings in 2024. The Equity Subcommittee is anticipated to meet again in 2025.