

**New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission  
State Energy Sector Partnership (SESP) Council**

*PSE&G - Edison*

**February 29, 2012  
Meeting Minutes**

**I. Welcome & Introductions - Dennis M. Bone, Chairman, New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC)**

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 am. Chairman Bone welcomed everyone and thanked Sally Nadler and PSE&G for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made around the table. The draft minutes of the October 6, 2011 meeting were introduced. A motion was made by Robert Santare and seconded by Robert Loderstedt to approve the minutes. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

**II. Sustainable Career Paths – Gary Minkoff, Executive Director NJHEPS, Pam Sammarco, Green Training Associates, LLC, and Dr. Don Wheeler, Senior Advisor to NJHEPS**

Mr. Minkoff and his associates gave a presentation about sustainability career paths. Sustainable careers can be categorized as jobs that have always been sustainable or green, traditional jobs that have a “green layer” and new and emerging jobs that never existed. All sectors and all industries have sustainability careers. These careers will support economic development by improving connections between higher education institutions and employer networks. Fifty to Sixty percent of sustainability internships lead to job placement with the internship employer. The state and higher education should share a focus on renewable energy/energy efficiency sectors and environmental jobs. There are long term opportunities to expand new and emerging green jobs with a broader sustainability lens.

The 2013 Green Jobs Training Initiative has provided \$8 billion to community colleges. There are 54 million Americans with some college who need to be re-skilled. The Burning Glass Study shows that green jobs compensation on average is \$4,776 higher than non-green jobs. NJ community colleges are partnering with 4 year schools to smooth the education/career pathways. Faculties with “green” competencies are being hired. There is a need to build and expand these networks. We need to educate students for sustainability-related behavior change, lifestyle choices, education and careers. We should connect students to sustainability internships and career opportunities and monitor their progress. We need to foster collaboration of faculty, academic and career development staff and use education and communication to connect employers and graduates to sustainability internships and job opportunities.

These goals can be accomplished by bridging higher education to economic development by creating a partnership with key stakeholders, sharing resources, recognizing the unique roles of higher education participants to foster timely education/career links and network employers with higher education institutions.

The sustainability career paths blueprint for NJ Higher Education contains four goals. These are to educate and nurture students for sustainability internships and careers; to equip faculty to assist students toward sustainability careers; to assist career and academic counselors with sustainability career resources; and to connect employers with job opportunities to graduates with relevant education and training.

For incumbent workers and displaced workers interested in “re-skilling” toward a sustainable career path the presentation suggested the following: 1) identify competencies and marketplace demands 2) consider career choices, allowing for existing expertise 3) become immersed in the career choice 4) attain knowledge, skills and abilities to qualify for a new career 5) secure employment that applies new competencies and education. This was followed by a discussion of the specific career paths for students interested in either a two-year or four-year road map. Students do not necessarily think about a career and then back into a major. They tend to think about internal criteria before choosing a major. There are two year, four year and graduate degrees in sustainable science. There is an uprising of degrees that employers may not be aware of.

The goal of NJHEPS is to prepare and educate the workforce of tomorrow. Their focus is on building partnerships, sharing resources, using higher education’s unique capacity to link education and careers and strengthen links to employer networks. Additionally, NJHEPS is looking for ways to partner to fulfill rising student demand for green internships and for those scarce entry level green jobs.

Chairman Bone thanked Mr. Minkoff and his associates for their concise presentation. The Council commended the speakers on the quality and depth of the presentation. Green careers are often looked at as an add-on to traditional energy careers. The Council strives to be leaders in career energy development.

A comment was made indicating employers would appreciate the opportunity to hire people with traditional training and some green background.

An SESP member asked if NJHEPS has a business advisory group. Mr. Minkoff replied it was something they were currently exploring.

Are there other NJ institutions that might be further along in offering green degrees? Rowen, Stockton, Ramapo, NJIT and Rutgers are all involved in offering green curriculums.

### III. SESP Grant Updates

a) *USDOL Update, Extension Request - Michele Horst, Executive Director, New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission*

Michele Horst presented a high level update on the grant. She reported that we have received the official feed-back letter that is the result of the site visit where we were required to perform a number of modifications. One modification is the change to LWD as the administrator and grant manager for this particular grant. USDOL is pleased that we have complied and completed these modifications. We are still working on the sub-employer groups. We are positioned well and will be responding to that letter by March 21<sup>st</sup>. We have satisfied the data input requirements. We will be applying for a no-cost extension for this grant. Hopefully, we will be granted this no-cost six month extension that will take us through June of 2013. Ms. Horst will be working on this in conjunction with her partners at LWD. We have created a firm map that we can work through with our regional and employer partners. Ms. Horst indicated the need for additional time and is hopeful that the extension will be granted.

b) *Program Update – Maureen O’Brien Murphy, Supervising Business Representative, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development*

Maureen O’Brien Murphy presented an update on the USDOL audit from the grant operations standpoint. The second round of NGOs was released on January 7<sup>th</sup>. Two of the NGOs were for the unemployed and incumbent workers. On December 15, 2011 a new staff member was hired. She has been working on the data entry backlog for all the participants. As of January 20<sup>th</sup>, the data entry is up to date. Another issue we were cited for on the grant is the Selective Service Sign-Off. Ms. O’Brien Murphy reports she has created a document and incorporated it into both Cycle 6 NGOs to satisfy the USDOL moving forward. In existing contracts the Monitoring Unit of the New Jersey Department of Labor is verifying Selective Service. So we will be meeting that requirement as well. Individual employment plans were addressed by with assistance of Dante Rieti. He provided us with the document his group uses for this purpose the use as a template. We were able to tweak it and incorporate it into the Cycle 6 release of the NGOs. Additionally, Ms. O’Brien Murphy reported she created two excel spreadsheets for the purpose of tracking leverage resources.

The first grantee success story, RJ Walsh, was highlighted on the New Jersey Department of Labor website under Building Bridges. This is an amazing story of success for very minimal investment. At the request of Anthony Ferrero, Ms. O’Brien Murphy has created a one page SESP Grant Initiative Overview. A copy is available in the meeting information packet.

Ms. O'Brien Murphy reports that some marketing to potential applicants has begun. The result has been positive in that many have now applied for the grant in the sixth cycle.

A detailed breakdown of the status of the grant to date was provided by Ms. O'Brien Murphy as follows:

USDOL allocated \$5.4m to train 3412 individuals, of which 1944 were employed and 1468 were unemployed.

During the time period of October 2010 to September 2011, the SETC released five cycles of training grants. The awards totaled \$2.5m with a projection to train 1596 individuals of which 1194 were employed and 402 were unemployed.

As of February 27, 2012, operating under the five cycles of training grants, only \$641k has been invoiced, and only 593 individuals, 177 of which are unemployed, have been reported as trained.

The good news, as of February 2012, is that all three regional contracts were approved. These were awarded as follows:

North – Newark Alliance received \$560k for fifty unemployed with OJT contracts and sixty unemployed with Opportunity Trust Fund.

Central – Monmouth County WIB received \$543.8k for fifty unemployed with OJT contracts and sixty unemployed with Opportunity Trust Fund.

South – Cumberland/Salem WIB received \$560k for fifty unemployed with OJT contracts and sixty unemployed with Opportunity Trust Fund.

On January 6, 2012, the sixth cycles of NGOs were released. Of these two additional NGOs, one focuses on the unemployed and one focuses on the employed.

Forty-seven proposals were received. Historically we receive between six and ten. Ten were received focusing on the unemployed. One was eliminated for not meeting the tax clearance mandate. The nine remaining were projected to train 553 individuals for \$2.7m. Of the thirty-seven remaining, one was eliminated for not meeting the tax clearance mandate. The balance of thirty-six focused on the employed and projected to train approximately 289 individuals for \$1.1m.

Twenty-seven of the thirty-six applications were prepared by the same vendor. This vendor already represents between 10 and 12 of the existing grantees. None of their contracts are successfully completed. Their percentage of expenditures is under 30%. They have even received extensions on their contracts in the hope it would expedite their training and invoicing. The extensions have not worked. The new contracts will be reviewed on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

We have \$4,229,669 allocated to contracts as of February 27, 2012. With five hundred and fifty-two anticipated unemployed to be trained and 1,374 anticipated employed to be trained. The good news is the money has been allocated. The bad news is that it is not being invoiced at a rate to have all the dollars spent by the end of the contract period. We still have over nine hundred people in the unemployed classifications to train and approximately five hundred in the employed requirement of the NGO to be trained. So, we have little dollars left on paper and a lot of training that remains to take place.

Questions/Comments:

It was asked what guidelines there are for pulling the plug on a non-performing vendor?

There is a document to eliminate a vendor, but it relates more to a procurement process. Maureen O'Brien Murphy indicated she was not aware of a process for this purpose.

A member asked if there was a time frame for deobligating/eliminating the vendor.

Anthony Ferrera commented that he is taking a close look at this. His goal is to have a zero balance at the end of the grant. If a vendor is not performing the money will be taken back. The counties have been very supportive of this. There is low tolerance for this. Money will go to folks who can perform.

Another member asked if there was any stipulation in the contract regarding spending.

Ms. O'Brien Murphy responded that there is a stipulation indicating that 1/3 of the money should be spent in the first quarter of the contract.

**ACTION ITEM:**

It was asked if the list of grantees could be resent to the regions so they might be able to work with any vendors who are not in compliance with their contracts.

Do we know what the specific failures are?

Ms. O'Brien Murphy replied that feedback indicated classes being cancelled, no proctors for exams. Logistics is a problem. The Dean of this higher education institution has been made aware of the problems.

A member advises we have two problems with this grant, the vendor issue and the fact that we have 22% of the money left, but have only completed 44% of the training. These problems have only come to the forefront very recently. Many conversations ensued immediately and it was decided we would go back to the USDOL to ask for a renegotiation of the grant.

Members have offered to work with these employers to resolve the issues instead of pulling the money back when there are still employees to be trained. It is important, at this point, to focus on the unemployed for the balance of this grant.

In view of these issues, we are asking the Council to consider two policy statements in the meeting packet. Chairman Bone asked for a motion to approve a policy statement regarding the reprioritization of unobligated or de-obligated funds. A motion was made by Robert Loderstedt to approve the policy statement, seconded by Robert Santare. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. There was a discussion regarding the second policy statement indicating the focus will move toward the unemployed and that proposals must identify vendors with successful track records within the NJDLWD. A modification was requested as follows: "A successful track record is *generally* defined as ...". A motion was made by Robert Loderstedt and seconded by Florence Block to approve the statement with modifications. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

A member asked if current contract recipients have received the modifications from the last meeting. The response indicated some have received those modifications, but not all. Ms. O'Brien Murphy will notify all contract recipients of the modifications.

*c) School Consortium Training Initiative – Florence Block, USGBC*

Ms. Block gave a brief update on a recent development on her grant. They have almost completed the customer training grant, training close to 1,000 people. They have received a grant for training unemployed and veterans. They had a slow start, but are actually training forty-five people today. The USGBC has been approached by the Education Information Resource Center to help spearhead the education component of the NJ Green Sustainable Schools Consortium. The first project is to manage the green schools program within K-12 schools. They will be training 150 non-technical staff in green sustainability and work with teachers to make the school a green training school

d) **Questions/Comments** – Council Members

Several members commented that there was quite a bit of training happening, but it is not translating into green jobs. Outside of some solar panel work, there isn't much else currently available. There are some small pockets in construction.

There are two initiatives that may increase demand. One is a grant for green hospitality training in the hospitality industry, specifically hotels. The Sustainable Business Initiative will roll out in a year or so.

NJ Natural Gas has a project Save Green with about twenty-five jobs and Residential Solar.

The green economy is a sector for growth that will not only encourage, but require all agencies to review their plans and use their funding and resources to align with sustainability.

There is pending legislation for state agencies to give preference to green businesses and projects.

e) **Closing** – Dennis Bone, Chairman

Chairman Bone thanked the council members for their support. The next meeting is April 12, 2012. The meeting concluded at 10:20am.

### **Member Attendees – February 29, 2012**

Barry, Marie - NJ Department of Education (for Acting Commissioner Cerf)  
Beverly, Carla - First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens  
Block, Florence - US Green Building Council New Jersey  
Bone, Dennis - Verizon NJ  
Ehrlich, Kim - NJ Economic Development Authority (for Caren Franzini)  
Ewalt, Jaime - NJ Department of Environmental Protection (for Commissioner Martin)  
Garlatti, Betsy – State of NJ Higher Education  
Girikas, Mary - Petra Solar (for Mr. Kuran)  
Higgins, Eileen – Monmouth County WIB  
Ielmini, Pete – NJ Building Trades Apprenticeship Committee  
Loderstedt - Robert, NJ Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc.  
Nadler, Sally - PSE&G (for Mr. LaRossa)  
Provenzale, Natalie – Bergen One-Stop Career Center  
Rieti, Dante – Cumberland County Office of Workforce Development  
Santare, Robert - Champion Fasteners and Burlington WIB  
Schiff, Jill - Building Contractors Association of NJ (for Mr. Kocsis)  
Weaver, Kathy - Newark Alliance  
Zilai, Debbie – New Jersey Resources

### **Guests and Staff Attendees – February 29, 2012**

Ferrera, Anthony – NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Horst, Michele - NJ State Employment and Training Commission  
Minkoff, Gary - NJHEPS  
O'Brien Murphy - Maureen, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Sammarco, Pam - Green Training Associates, LLC  
Smith, Tiffany – NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Stoller, Jeff – NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Vetterl, Susan - NJ State Employment and Training Commission  
Wheeler, Don – NHEPS