

Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes

November 9, 2023

Attending from the council:

Oswaldo Bernal, OBL Media
Terrance Harris, Oregon State University
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX HIVE
Rhea Standing Rock, Sunlight Solar
Christopher Banks, Urban League of Portland
Dolores Martinez, EUVALCREE

Attending from Energy Trust:

Michael Colgrove
Emily Findley
Emily Brown
Elaine Dado
Elizabeth Fox
Danielle Rhodes
Emma Pelzner
Monica Williams
Patrick Urain
Jay Robinson
Greg Stokes
Alex Novie
Michael Hoch
Tiffany Hatteberg
Laura Schaefer

Kenji Spielman
Themba Mutepfa
Amanda Potter
Andi Nix
Hannah Cruz
Megan Greenauer
Kirstin Pinit
Adam Bartini
Alanna Hoyman-Browe
Amanda Thompson
Maddy Otto
Maddie Norman
Ben Thompson
Amber Cole
Amanda Zuniga

Others attending:

Ezell Watson, Oregon Public Utility
Commission
Ruchi Sadhir, Oregon Department of
Energy
Lauren Rosenstein, Oregon Department of
Energy

Jessica Dover, AlmaLuna Language
Services
Angel Swanson, Beira Consulting
Ivonne Saed, Saedgraphic
Janadale Bega, Burch Energy Solutions
Savannah Lee, Burch Energy Solutions
Tiffany Purn, Skill Demand

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Colgrove, executive director, convened the meeting at 1:35 p.m. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available on Energy Trust's website at <https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/diversity-advisory-council-meetings/>.

Mike reviewed the agenda and led a round of introductions among the council members and attendees representing Oregon Public Utility Commission and Oregon Department of Energy.

2. 2024 Diversity Advisory Council meeting dates

Topic summary

Mike Colgrove reviewed proposed dates for Diversity Advisory Council meetings to take place in 2024. The draft schedule includes nine meetings throughout the year, including joint advisory council engagements in January and October. The council will also be engaged to provide input for Energy Trust's work to develop its next strategic plan in 2024. This strategic plan will guide organizational strategy for six years, from 2025 to 2030, in alignment with utility decarbonization milestones. These engagements will occur jointly with other councils in January and March, both with options to attend in person.

Mike reviewed the steps Energy Trust will take to develop its strategic plan, which including scenario planning and identifying Energy Trust's strengths and capabilities, vision and purpose and unique role of value. Energy Trust will also shift to multi-year budgeting to allow for planning on a longer time horizon. Because the diversity advisory council is already being engaged for strategic planning input in 2024, Energy Trust will use that input to inform its budget and planning processes rather than hosting additional engagements.

Discussion

One council member had a conflict with the January engagement date, so Energy Trust will provide an option to contribute thoughts by email instead (Oswaldo Bernal).

Next steps

Mike Colgrove will work with staff to finalize and share the Diversity Advisory Council meeting schedule for 2024. Discussion questions for the January engagement will be provided by email to members in advance.

3. Workforce development

Topic summary

Communities and new initiatives program manager Megan Greenauer presented ongoing activities Energy Trust is engaging in to support workforce development in coming years.

A cross-functional working group at Energy Trust was formed to share information and develop a broader strategy around supporting Oregon's energy workforce. Energy Trust has identified the need for it to support the new clean energy economy, which differs from its role in the past.

Megan Greenauer explained some of the reasons why more support is needed to help grow a workforce that can handle the high volume of energy projects expected to materialize in the coming years. Currently, fewer young adults are choosing career paths in the trades—this could be because of the appeal of the gig economy, low youth engagement on energy jobs, low overall unemployment and new job opportunities to work from home. With more seasoned trade workers transitioning into retirement, it is critical to get younger workers into the trades and make them aware of opportunities in clean energy.

Since Energy Trust has not had a focus on workforce development historically, partnerships are a key strategy to support a clean energy economy through building business capacity with contractors, educating the next generation about opportunities in the trades and diversifying the workforce.

Megan Greenauer reviewed activities Energy Trust is currently engaged in to support the workforce, which mostly involves working directly with contractors and workforce organizations. Energy Trust will also continue to identify needs and gaps in 2024 to guide its longer-term strategy.

Highlights from planned activities to support workforce development in 2024 include working with statewide after-school programs to deliver energy conservation curriculum to elementary-school students; expanding the contractor development pathway offer to include residential contractors and

make other improvements, including a mentorship model; support installation training and pre-apprenticeship programs for solar installers in collaboration with Oregon Solar Energy Education Fund; supporting the Oregon Construction Career Hub job board; and exploring ways to develop culturally specific industry standard trainings.

Megan Greenauer shared information about her personal background, which includes direct experience in the construction trades. She is currently supporting Energy Trust's role in Portland General Electric's Smart Grid Test Bed collaboration, which will target efficiency and distributed energy resources in a neighborhood with high energy burden.

As part of this effort, an installer academy program will be created to train contractors on how to install heat pump water heater technology. The six-week paid program will provide on-the-job training and conclude with participants taking an exam to become licensed water heater installers and connect them with job opportunities.

Energy Trust is investigating opportunities to support new training centers in both metro and rural areas, where it could deliver technical trainings on installations and high-performance building design.

Megan Greenauer closed with sharing lessons and best practices around growing the workforce. For example, clean energy jobs must be competitive with other trade careers such as plumbing; workers cannot be replaced by technology even as it advances, and there will still be a need for workers willing to learn the more technical side of the trades; and soft skills and cultural competency will also be important to create equitable opportunities to participate in the workforce.

Discussion

A council member who has experience with pre-apprenticeship and training programs expressed enthusiasm for this work and a desire to get involved, stating Energy Trust's current approach is spot on and directed towards progress (Rhea Standing Rock).

Another council member also expressed appreciation for this work, saying it exemplified many conversations the council has been having over the years about the need for mentorship and training, especially culturally specific trainings (Oswaldo Bernal).

Megan Greenauer added that Energy Trust is working on a partnership with Ener City Collaborative, which is interested in creating industry standard trainings, such as Building Performance Institute and Sustainable Homes Professional certifications, with a culturally specific lens. Trainings for these certifications are currently not standardized, so there is opportunity to customize the content for different audiences.

The council asked if these trainings could potentially be delivered in Spanish to make the content easier to absorb for non-native English speakers, stating this can be an advantage even for native Spanish speakers who are bi-lingual (Oswaldo Bernal). Staff responded that Energy Trust has been exploring this idea with LatinoBuilt. Integrating diversity, equity and inclusion into workforce development boils down to knowing the audience and leveraging partnerships to customize resources to that audience. Another council member shared their willingness to participate in workforce efforts if needed (Indika Sugathadasa).

Next steps

Mike invited Diversity Advisory Council members to share workforce opportunities happening in their spheres on an ongoing basis.

4. Diversity Advisory Council recruitment: skills matrix and new members

Topic summary

Mike Colgrove led a discussion with council members about recruitment efforts to fill vacancies on the council. He shared a skills matrix that was recently revised based on council input, and each member also completed the matrix themselves to get a better sense of where gaps exist.

Mike shared a new application recently received, which will be reviewed along with Terrance Harris, a council member who volunteered to support recruitment. Mike also invited input on this application from the rest of the council and will follow up by email to provide that opportunity.

Discussion

No discussion.

Next steps

Energy Trust staff will follow up by email with council members to provide the opportunity to provide their recommendation on a new member application. Council members are also invited to volunteer on a sub-committee that would focus on council recruitment on an ongoing basis.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m. The next Diversity Advisory Council meeting will take place in 2024 and [details will be posted on Energy Trust's website](#) when the meeting schedule is finalized.