

Meeting Notes

Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing (SOMAH) Job Training Organization (JTO) Task Force

March 22, 2024, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Meeting Held Virtually

Meeting Attendees

SOMAH Program Administrators

Brittany Chenier | SOMAH Sr. ME&O Manager, GRID Alternatives
Ingrid Murillo | SOMAH Sr. Workforce Manager, GRID Alternatives
Mina Defee | SOMAH Sr. Program Manager, GRID Alternatives
Stacey Lee | SOMAH Program Coordinator, GRID Alternatives

SOMAH JTO Task Force Members

Jon Caffery | Saddleback College/College of The Desert (Orange County)
Senait Forthal | OC Go Solar (Los Angeles)
Wshana Moss | The Niles Foundation
Wes Olson | Center for Employment Training - Oxnard (Central Coast)
Wanda Rogers | Founder of SoCal Pre Apprenticeship Program
Mitchell Smith | Young Community Developers (Bay Area)
Hattie Wyatt | Young Community Developers

Not in attendance: *Janie Hodge, Jeff Trirogoff*

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Apprenticeship Working Group Update
3. SOMAH/JTO Task Force Overview & Updates
4. Visioning Exercise & Goal Setting
5. Next Steps, Questions, Closing

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mina Defee, Sr. Program Manager, SOMAH PA
Stacey Lee, Program Coordinator, SOMAH PA

Mina Defee led a round of introductions for the meeting attendees and reviewed the meeting agreements, goals and agenda.

Stacey Lee shared general updates regarding SOMAH's advisory groups, including the new members of the SOMAH Advisory Council.

2. Apprenticeship Working Group Update

Mina Defee, Sr. Program Manager, SOMAH PA

Mina provided an update on the efforts of the JTO Task Force's apprenticeship working group. This working group was created to address the need and opportunity for an apprenticeship program focused on solar installations in a landscape where many other existing apprenticeship programs focus on other areas such as electrical training and construction.

The working group began exploring existing apprenticeship programs in 2023. The chair and vice chair of the JTO Task Force (JTO TF) sent out letters of interest that received responses from 14 contractors and subcontractors and 40 JTOs. Mina highlighted the research and outreach roles that Task Force members and the SOMAH PA each played to explore the potential of this apprenticeship program. Mina also shared learnings from informational meetings with the advisory organizations IREC (Interstate Renewable Energy Council) and Solar Energy Industry Associations (SEIA) regarding apprenticeship programs.

Mina highlighted Sustineo's application last year for a new apprenticeship program focusing on specifically the mechanical installation of solar. The JTO TF had submitted a Letter of Support for this contractor's application. The application was denied with opposition from numerous industry groups and associations.

Discussion

JTO TF Member: My team has successfully navigated coordinating with SEIA on multiple apprenticeship programs. There's still an opportunity here.

JTO TF Member: I believe it is still doable. We're missing out on a huge opportunity for start-ups and individuals that are socially and economically disadvantaged that could do the work, such as solar panel maintenance – which is an untapped labor market right now.

JTO TF Member: I agree that it could work if the application were resubmitted in a different way.

JTO TF Member: If we are careful enough to craft a new apprenticeship program, it could go a long way and provide a healthy income for our target groups. I do not think we should give up. I am happy to participate if a working group is set up.

JTO TF Member: I agree that it is worth another try. Anything we can do to support lower-income folks starting their own business cleaning panels. It would allow them to learn about solar and construction at the same time. It might be worth assessing if solar contractors offer their own maintenance services and who does that work. Pitching sales roles would be a good idea too. Anyone that can have solar will have it eventually, so it is a good market to focus on.

JTO TF Member: I agree that it is worth another try.

JTO TF Member: I agree as well. Anyone that has solar in the area I serve has found the importance of maintenance.

JTO TF Member: I am also in support and am thinking about the best way to move forward. I am interested in attending an informational session with IREC and SEIA.

Next Steps for the SOMAH PA

- Survey the JTO TF to see who wants to be part of a working group.
- Schedule an informational session with SEIA and/or IREC for interested JTO TF members.
- Share this opportunity with the Advisory Council to see if any members want to be involved.

3. SOMAH/JTO Task Force Overview & Updates

Mina Defee, Sr. Program Manager, SOMAH PA

Mina shared the latest program stats and regulatory updates that were presented at the most recent SOMAH Public Forum. Notes on these updates can be accessed [here](#).

Mina provided an overview of the JTO Task Force purpose, mission and roles, including the roles of the task force's chair and vice chair. JTO TF members were asked to consider whether they would like to run for either chair position. Chair elections will take place in a future JTO TF meeting.

4. Visioning Exercise & Goal Setting

Mina Defee, Sr. Program Manager, SOMAH PA

Mina facilitated a visioning and goal-setting exercise to determine the group's priorities for the upcoming term, keeping in mind that the program's annual administrative funding will be decreasing significantly starting in 2024.

JTO TF members discussed the following questions in breakout groups:

Envisioning a Future with SOMAH

- What about SOMAH's potential impact matters to you? Let's look into the future – SOMAH was successful in achieving its greatest aspirations, and California has made incredible strides in building a resilient and just future for all, particularly the communities SOMAH is intended to serve.
- What do these communities look like? What does their environment look like?
- Are there tools or technology that didn't exist before that do now?
- Are there any feelings, scents or sounds that you notice?

Working Toward the Future We Want

- Considering program goals and budget limitations, what do we need to prioritize to achieve the future we've envisioned?
- Where do you see yourself having the most interest/impact in the program?
- What would you like to get from your participation on the Advisory Council?
- How can we work together to reach our goals?
- What WFD webinar topics would you like SOMAH to host?

Group 1 Report Out

- Vision
 - Move folks into better situations but continue to help those that move into affordable housing.
 - Create more opportunities.
 - Sustainability.
 - Opportunities for disadvantaged individuals.
- Working Toward the Future
 - Prioritize the potential apprenticeship program.
 - Sustainability is everything.
 - Focus on ownership - entrepreneurship.

Group 2 Report Out

- Vision
 - Priority for mobile parks.
- Working Toward the Future
 - Mobile homes = ownership – big for rural areas.

- Increase outreach efforts, including in rural communities.
- Hiring practices for contractors.

5. Next Steps

Mina reviewed administrative action items for JTO TF members. The Q2 JTO TF meeting will take place on June 21, 2024, from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Crossover meetings with the SOMAH Advisory Council will begin in Q3.