

PEF DOL Statewide Labor Management Meeting
December 1, 2025
Minutes

PEF – planned attendees	MANAGEMENT – planned attendees	
Scarlett Ahmed, PEF Co-Chair	Jennifer Williamson Mgmt. Co-Chair	Eric Frimpong
Bill Clingersmith	Jane Thompson	Paul Milonovich
Scott Hektor	Sean Hennessy	Mark Cutturini
Robert Wright	Jeanette Lazelle	Vicki Mockler
Laurie Kail	Justin Smi	Vivian (Yasmin) Cope
	Allison Konderwich	Patty Cahill
	Michelle Daly	Ayesha Nazir

1. Welcome/Introductions

2. Approved prior minutes

Minutes from 09/11/25 meeting were previously approved and posted on DOLi.

3. Discussion of Work Group related to UI Career Centers

A. Uptick in cases at Career Centers.

Historically there is an increase in UI claims during the summer months. Since that time, there has been a decrease in disruptive customers in the centers. Staff maintain consistent training, enabling them to catch account issues before the customers files their claim.

PEF expressed concern over potential increase in visitors to the Career Center after the modernization launch in March. Much of the functions can be completed via computer and some customers may not have access to a computer, or internet which could result in increased visitors to the resource rooms.

B. Request for training/FAQ sheets for DEWS staff on common UI navigation issues.

A DEWS/UI collaborative page has been created which includes helpful resources.

C. Federal layoffs effect on UI caseloads

The UI claims associated with the DOGE permanent federal layoffs were handled in the spring.

D. UI Modernization

The launch is tentatively scheduled for March/April 2026.

E. Confirmation of next meeting date

The date for the next meeting has to be determined.

4. Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (DEWS)

A. General Division Update

Charles McGinnis is the new Associate Commissioner for Workforce Development.

PEF asked for update on hiring status

DEWS is hiring on a case-by-case basis, to address critical needs without going over allocations. DEWS can hire based on operational needs, but no wide scale hiring.

1) Update on the Asylum Seeker project.

No new updates on the Asylum Seeker project since the last meeting.

DOL provides services to customers, including asylum seekers. DOL recently received an updated the “Know Your Rights” flyer and poster and distributed to all Career Centers.

2) Update on Jails to Jobs program

The goal of the program is to assist with participants’ integration back into the community, providing information on resources available after their release.

- Three correctional facilities were selected to participate in the pilot program: Wyoming, Hale Creek and Taconic.
- 15 DOL employees volunteered to work in the program. The majority of the volunteers are Employment Counselors but also include DVOP and LSR. The volunteers received initial training at DOCCS in November, and a second training is scheduled for December 4th.
- The training provides an overview of the program’s goal, and emphasized participation is voluntary. Participants must be within 4 months of their release date.
- All services will be provided virtually for inmates within four months of release.

PEF questioned why DOL staff are involved rather than DOCCS staff. If DOCCS staff providing similar duties are at a higher level, will DOL staff get an increase?
DOL staff are participating as they can provide more connections to the local community than DOCCS staff.

DOL cannot speak to grades/duties of DOCCS staff. Because DOL staff will be performing the same services they would provide to the participants at the Career Center upon their release, this is not out of title work.

3) Update on WFS rollout

Workforce Scheduler was rolled out February 2025, and program is continuing to make enhancements based on feedback. Positive feedback has been received from both staff and customers on ease of navigation. A DOLi page has been created containing resources for staff, including update on enhancements. DEWS continues to do outreach to customers to educate them on the tools available if they receive new notifications.

B. PEF concerns

1) Discussion about printing out determinations for customers.

PEF: In 2026 there will be an online UI function available to customers and staff for printing out UI determinations. How will DOL address a possible uptick in claimants using Career Center Resource Room computers to do this?

Management understands the concern but feels it is important to continue increasing the self-service options for customers as that provides them with the ability to get

documents more quickly and efficiently than via physical mail.

Customers will receive an email notifying them a new document is available for viewing and is mobile friendly. It is DEWS' expectation this expanded access will not cause an increase in resource room visitors but will monitor and adjust as necessary.

PEF expressed concern over limited printers/computers in smaller centers.

Resource Rooms will remain available for customers. The size of the room is based on usage and volume. Smaller centers have shown they can handle the volume with the equipment available. DEWS is in the process of replacing many of those computers.

2) Discussion of RESEA audit/corrective action plans

PEF: Could staff have more time as part of corrective action, per the RESEA Grant State plan, which indicated that 120 minutes are needed for RESEA1, and 95 minutes for RESEA follow-up appointments.

The timeframes are estimates and some tasks are done concurrently. DEWS has been reviewing appointment times statewide.

- 1st appointments are scheduled for 75 minutes, but average takes 51 minutes
- Secondary appointments – currently scheduled for 60 minutes but the average completion time is 35 minutes. Management understands some may run longer; staff should address issues with their supervisors.

DEWS will revisit those estimates if they see appointment times increasing. Management understands there is follow up work involved as well. The expected goal is to complete 4-5 scheduled appointments per day.

3) PEF requests a resume builder for the Virtual Career Center

The resume builder portion of Job Zone is a stand-alone feature and can continue to be used until management determines if a better option is available. Through this, staff and customers have the ability to create a profile with limited resume-building capabilities.

4) Discussion of Career Center email

PEF: Staff are concerned about customers having access to their full names and work email addresses. Is there a way to use encrypted email or Career Center office email for all customer correspondence?

Services provided in-person and virtually necessitate the need for direct email communication. Using a shared office email account by all staff would not be feasible. Under that circumstance, all correspondence from every customer would come into one mailbox making it difficult to manage and provide services effectively. Individual problematic cases should be addressed with their supervisor.

PEF suggested using RACF ID email and using a signature of first name and last initial only.

ERO shared suggestion with Counsel and Executive Offices.

Follow-up: Management brought this issue to Executives.

The Public Employees Federation (PEF) has raised a concern regarding the privacy of staff members' full names and work email addresses in correspondence with

customers, suggesting the use of encrypted emails or a Career Center office email for all customer interactions. We have discussed this with Executive and the Department of Labor (DOL) appreciates and shares the commitment to protecting the privacy of both staff and customer information. While the Department acknowledges the importance of maintaining privacy, direct and personalized communication, where employees are identifiable by name, contributes to a sense of individual accountability and builds trust, reinforcing the professional and courteous interactions expected of DOL employees.

5. Unemployment Insurance

A. General Division Update

- The division is actively working towards launching modernization in March 2026. Staff began end user training in October and have provided feedback through post training surveys.
- Overtime began in November for UI staff to assist with modernization efforts and day to day activities. Staff continue working to address the backlog.

B. Staffing update

PEF: At the last 09/11/25 LM, DOL reported that program continues recruiting for vacancies and works to fill based on a budgetary perspective, noting that these positions can be difficult to fill due to competing with the private sector. What improvements in recruitment/retention have been implemented since our last meeting?

UI continues to fill vacancies on a case-by-case basis per operational need.

Special Investigations

PEF requests an update for this bureau as none was given at the 09/11/25 meeting.
Deputy Director Michael Golden has left the agency. OSI moved from the Worker Protection Division to Unemployment Insurance. Management will provide staffing update as a follow up.

Allocations for OSI will change in 2026. Current grants end in December, reducing the funding available. OSI has been moved to combine with UI in order to maintain staffing.

C. Update on UI modernization

PEF questions:

- 1) **When will customers begin certifying job search as part of the weekly claim?**
Searching for work is a state and federal requirement, and NYS customers currently certify via attestation. With the launch of Modernization, customers will be asked to provide specific details of their work search activities.
- 2) **As many retirements expected with the roll-out of UISIM, how will DOL address the uptick in UI claims and backlog?**
DOL does not anticipate an increase but will always work with Finance to maximize staffing based on funding.

D. Discussion of Non-Monetary Determinations

PEF Questions:

- 1) **Is the expectation of 1.75 NMDs per hour a goal or a quota? Is it included as part of tasks and standards?**
Management confirmed this is a goal, not a quota. It is not currently included in tasks and standards but is a goal they are supporting.

2) **Are there opportunities for OT to reduce the backlog?**
2025. It has not been determined if OT will continue into 2026.

3) **Production is only measured during production hours, which excludes meetings. Furthermore, LSRs working on more complex cases tend to have lower NMD production. How can the goal or expectation be implemented more fairly?**

Management confirmed 1.75 is a goal; all staff activity and the complexity of the case are taken into consideration. Supervisors should identify areas for improvement and highlight successes. Management seeks input from staff exceeding the goal and offers assistance to those falling behind.

Management monitors production trends, both positive and negative, with the goal of being supportive and assisting where needed.

PEF Question: Will UI return to normal fact-finding?

Yes, as individuals get through the modernization training, they are returning to full fact-finding.

6. Policy, Strategy and Research (R&S)

A. Division Update

1) **Is the division continuing to work on UI Modernization testing?**

The division continues working with the vendor and staff to ensure all reports are developed in the new system and requested the scripts to map out programs.

2) **What is the status of the 2 job seeker surveys for DEWS which were scheduled to be launched in October?**

The surveys were released on November 13th. Since that time:

- 300 businesses attempted to complete the business survey; 150 completed.
- 400 job seekers attempted the job-seeker survey.

The surveys are ongoing but may be affected by the timing of the holidays. The surveys may be redone in the spring.

3) **What is the status of the dashboard for Worker Protection?**

Work on the dashboard is ongoing. Revisions from program have been addressed. Program plans to hold a webinar to demonstrate.

B. Staffing update

PEF Questions:

- **Have the vacancies for three Research Scientist positions been filled?**

- Research Scientist 4 and 5 converted from M/C to PEF in August.
- Research Scientist 2 hired in September.
- Staff member promoted to Associate Economist in October.
- Research Scientist 4 – three positions. One hired in November. Recruitment in process for the second. Approval to hire a third is under review.
- Data Analyst 1 promoted to Data Analyst 2.

- **When will the Grade 23 Associate Economist vacancy in Rochester, created by a recent retirement, be filled?**

The goal is to promote a grade 18 to the grade 23. This is in process; no time frame is currently available.

7. UI Appeal Board

A. General Division Update – written response provided.

PEF requests an update regarding the on-site vendor evaluation of technology systems, process and workflows between NYSDOL and UIAB.

Earlier this year, we awarded a contract to a vendor to conduct an on-site evaluation of the technology systems, processes, and workflows between the New York State Department of Labor's Adjudication Services Office and UIAB. The work was completed from September 2nd through 12th. The goal was to identify bottle necks, inefficiencies, slow processing times, and missing or incomplete functionality that hinder the effective processing of unemployment claim appeals between the two units. The vendor's evaluation validated the efficiency of several initiatives we had already begun, including the centralization of administrative functions, issuance of new laptops to all staff, and increased judicial staffing. The vendor also suggested upgraded laptops for all Board employees and ways we could leverage judicial calendars and unassigned pool cases to increase hearing throughput. We immediately began to implement both.

On September 22nd the UIAB launched JIRA, which is an internal employee technical support ticketing system to track/organize issues and collect longitudinal data to improve work, personnel development, and identify potential systemic issues. The benefits we have seen from the system are better service to staff by reducing confusion, preventing forgotten issues, reducing duplicative issues, faster response time, better quality responses, enhance collaboration with ability to add other staff to existing tickets, better follow up to ensure issues are truly being resolved rather than being set aside, enhanced staff visibility and control over their reported issues, and the prevention forgotten or lost emails due to other competing priorities which was more prevalent with the shared mailbox process.

Lastly, I'd like to share the success of our BSA Team. They have been recognized on a monthly basis from the fall of 2024 and throughout 2025 by ITS for having the highest Quality Assurance score for our website of all ITS's agencies and Boards. ITS's original goal was to move all state agencies and Boards above 90. I'd like to recognize our team on the remarkable quality of work they continue to do, which directly impacts the quality of customer service our customers receive through the information on our website.

B. Update on staffing.

Currently, excluding Board members, UIAB has 106 employees, 88 of whom are PEF members. The 5 ALJs from July new hire class have been on full calendar as of 11/3/25.

Since the last meeting, 2 Senior ALJs and 1 ALJ have retired. UIAB continues to prepare for potential judicial retirements in 2026. The next judicial recruitment will be held in April 2026, to fully support UISIM going live. Recruitment, training and retention are key areas of focus for UIAB.

PEF promotions since September meeting:

- 2 ALJs promoted to Senior ALJ (one higher authority, one lower)
- 1 LSR promoted to SLSR (SL)
- 1 CSEA SESC promoted to LSR.

PEF Question: PEF requests a discussion of hiring process for Senior ALJs. Concern expressed over lack of diversity.

All Senior ALJ positions are posted pursuant to normal state procedure, and all judicial staff are encouraged to apply. Selections are made after assessment of all candidates' skills, including performance, production, communication skills, and demonstrated leadership ability.

C. Update on the UI hearing platform.

Virtual hearings continue to go well, no new updates.

8. Worker Protection

A. General Division Update

B. Update on Staffing

1) PESH/DOSH

New Hires:

- Safety & Health Inspector (2)
- Sr. Industrial Hygienist (1)
- Boiler Inspector (1)

Promotions:

- Sr. Safety & Health Inspector (2)

Recruitment in Process:

- Safety & Health Inspector (10)
- Asst. Engineer (2)
- Boiler Inspector (6)
- Sr. Safety & Health Inspector (1)
- Associate Safety & Health Inspector (1)
- Supervising Safety & Health Inspector (1)

Separations:

- Associate Industrial Hygienist (1)
- Associate Safety & Health Inspector (1)
- Sr. Industrial Hygienist (1)
- Supervising Safety & Health Inspector (3)
- Sr. Boiler Inspector (2)
- Boiler Inspector (1)
- Safety & Health Inspector (3)

PEF noted DOSH has lost 10% of titles since May. Are exit interviews being conducted to determine why staff are leaving?

Management stated it can be difficult to recruit for an Industrial Hygienist as a science background is required, even for a trainee. The work is difficult and pay may be a factor. The concentration of work is in NYC. To assist, an apprenticeship for Industrial Hygienists is being developed. Program hopes to develop their own staff through the apprenticeship program.

PEF suggested loss of staff may be due to strict telecommuting policies, as well as counseling and interrogations of staff.

Management emphasized the need for accountability and adherence to rules. Interrogations and counseling are meant to coach staff, to locate and resolve issues.

The Division is working to train supervisors and foster a culture of well-trained and self-disciplined staff.

Worker Protection follows the agency telecommuting policy. Staff are allowed to telecommute 2 days per week provided no work-related issues exist.

The agency's telecommuting policy is currently under review. New FAQs and forms are being reviewed, with revised version expected by end of 2025.

2) Public Work

New Hires:

- Investigative Officer 1 (6)

Promotions:

- Investigative Officer 3 (1)

Recruitment in Process:

- Investigative Officer 1 (3)
- Investigative Officer 2 (1)

Separations:

- Investigative Officer 1 (1)

3) Labor Standards

New Hires:

- Investigative Specialist 1 (8)
- Investigative Specialist 1 CL (1 – Strikeforce)

Promotions:

- Investigative Specialist 2 (1)
- Investigative Specialist 4 (1)

Recruitment in Process:

- Investigative Specialist 1 (2)
- Investigative Specialist 1 SL (1)
- Investigative Specialist 2 (1 – Strikeforce)

Separations:

- Investigative Specialist 1 (3)
- Investigative Specialist 1 SL (1)
- Investigative Specialist 2 (2)

PEF Questions:

- **PEF requests an update about the Strikeforce team**

The Strikeforce team continues their education and enforcement training. Recent initiative in NYC and Long Island area focused on unregistered apparel employers. This involves providing education and visits for compliance.

150-200 letters were distributed to employers that should be registered but

were not. As a result, many employers did register and pay the required fee. For the remaining approximate 100 employers Strikeforce staff conducted visits in small teams.

Strikeforce is preparing for a winter child labor enforcement initiative.

- 4) **Division of Compliance and Education (DOCE, formerly “DIPA”)**
PEF requests an update for this bureau as none was given at the 09/11/25 meeting.

Recruitment in Process:

- IWS1 (1)

9. Division of Administration and Finance

A. Division Update

- 1) **List of lease expiration dates**

List was provided.

Patchogue lease was executed.

PEF requests an update on 290 Main Street Buffalo and Amsterdam.

290 Main Street, Buffalo:

Property recently conducted a site visit. Drawings for the space have been provided to the programs that will be located at this site for review. The tentative drawings have been submitted to the landlord for pricing. Designated parking spaces for the agency will be included. There will be a significant increase in parking included, but not enough for all staff.

Amsterdam:

RFI is under development with OGS.

- 2) **Federal update**

PEF Questions:

- **When did the RESEA grant expire?**
The grant is still active through June 30, 2027

- **Will the RESEA grant be renewed?**
Yes.

- **How much will be requested?**

The 2025 grant amount is \$29,500,000. The application to renew will be submitted in the summer of 2026, and the agency will request the maximum amount allowed.

- 3) **State update**

Report provided. Continuing resolution expires January 31, 2026.

- 4) **UI Trust Fund Status**

The final interest payment was made September 30th.

5) Excel Spreadsheet shows all current PS&T members at DOL.

1. Current Staffing by Division, including hourlies.

Report provided.

2. Monthly Position Allocation vs. Spending by Division

Report provided. Allocations refer to the number of staff the funding can support.

6) DVOP/LVER Grant materials/Funding Streams

These programs are funded via a federal grant called Jobs for Veterans State Grants. The agency applies to receive the grant annually per fiscal year. A portion of the funding for fiscal year 2026 has been received.

PEF requests to review the grant.

Finance will review the request.

PEF wants to know the number of staff this grant funds.

Finance will provide the information as a follow up.

B. Personnel

1) Unit update.

a) Update NY HELPS program.

- What is the expiration date of NY Helps?**
NYS Helps is currently scheduled through June 2026. Management will share updated information as it becomes available.
- Is NY HELPS being used for promotional opportunities rather than an active eligible list?**
Civil Service has strict parameters regarding promotional titles, and the agency must use the active list for promotions first if available.

b) Update on recruitment and retention efforts across the divisions

PEF Question:

PEF learned through Career Mobility Office that there should be 855 non-parenthetical LSRs. However, there are currently about 567. Are we recruiting to fill the gap?

Civil Services provides a pool of eligible titles that are appropriate for the job duties provided at the agency. These positions are considered classified. DOL currently has 6000 job titles classified as appropriate, but only 3300 are filled. The agency will never have all classified positions filled as there are more positions than funding to support them. This is determined by DOB.

Civil Service may need to lower the 6000 total in the future because the funding isn't available to support that number. They do not want the agency to create new positions. When needed, DOL can utilize a classified title, such as OA1, and reclassify it to an appropriate title.

DOL is currently recruiting for several non-parenthetical LSR positions.

PEF noted the high turnover in Worker Protection. Asked if there are active lists for recruitment.

Management stated many of the WP lists are low or depleted, but canvass all, including NYS Helps which is open to the public. The WPS1 position is an entry level position and canvassed via open-competitive.

All avenues are provided to program (PCO, NYS Helps, lists) across the agency. If one method is mandatory, personnel will notify program and only provide that information.

Civil Service is starting their next cycle of exam planning, which includes WP titles.

2) Discussion of any other plans for new titles, reclassification or earmarking of existing titles, redefining job descriptions/duties, or other changes to a title?

PEF Requests:

- **PEF requests an update on the civil service compensation study and DOL's reallocation efforts which includes Boiler Inspectors**
Civil Services' goal is to have the compensation study complete by the end of 2025. No update has been provided. Civil Service will not accept any reallocation requests while the compensation study is in process.
- **PEF requests a discussion of the two new apprenticeship programs for Safety and Health Inspector and Industrial Hygienist.**
This is a new pilot program being tested by Civil Service. PEF sent the information regarding this program through their chain of command and will follow up if PEF has an official response. Comments from PEF are due to Chris Pinheiro by December 18th.

PEF concern:

PEF was not consulted to approve the union-covered apprenticeship programs, which they feel deviates from the apprenticeship process. PEF feels they should have been involved in the process.

Management feels this is not a deviation. This is a small pilot program being tested by Civil Service. It includes 6 positions and is currently approved only for the duration of NYS Helps. DOL must report back to Civil Service by the end of NYS Helps on the success of the program, and potential to expand.

PEF stated they should have been involved from the inception and want to be involved in this process going forward. Management confirmed if the program expands, they will consult with PEF.

3) Telecommuting Update

PEF Questions:

- **Are the telecommuting FAQs posted on DOLi current?**
The FAQs posted on DOLi are current, and DOL is actively working on more updates.
- **Is there any update on PEFs requested changes to the Telecommuting Agreement?**

PEF's suggestions were reviewed. The Policy Unit is currently making updates to the document taking PEF's suggestions into consideration.

The goal is to have the updated policy document, FAQs and Division Operational Protocols live on DOLi within the month.

PEF question: PEF states the current policy does not allow staff to switch telecommuting days when needed. They feel this is too restrictive for both staff and customers. Will more flexibility regarding the specific days an employee is allowed to telecommute be included?

The percentage will remain the same at 40%, 2 days per week. Each program/office is different. The division operational protocols will be posted on DOLi. Management recommends PEF review the protocols when posted and discuss any concerns with DOL.

4) PEF requests a list of M/C employees with the same information as provided regarding PEF staff. Current staffing by Division, including hourlies.

Management is unable to provide that information. PEF stated it would be easier if a list was provided rather than looking it up individually on DOLi; they will submit a FOIL request to obtain the information.

10. EAP

A. General Update

PEF Questions:

1) How did the Capital District Wellness Fair at Building 12 go? Will it be used as a pilot for other regional locations?

Management is pending the official summary of the event from the Capital Region EAP Coordinator. The event was well organized and positive feedback was received. The wellness fair can be used as a pilot when considering approval of similar events in other regions.

B. Staffing Update

PEF Questions

1) How many employees are needed for the Region 9 (Hudson Valley) to qualify for a part-time EAP coordinator?

NYS OER stated the region did not qualify for an EAP Coordinator based on the number of staff in the region. If the staffing numbers increase in the region, this can be discussed with OER for reconsideration.

2) The EAP coordinator for the Finger Lakes region currently has just 10% release time and no private office space or phone. How can this be addressed?

The percentage of release time allowed is determined by the number of staff in the region, and current need.

Office space and a phone have been provided to the employee. The local EAP Coordinator should address concerns with the EAP Regional Coordinator.

PEF question: Can EAP Regional Coordinators attend local labor management meetings?

The local EAP coordinator can discuss this request with the Regional EAP Coordinator.

PEF expressed concern over OER branding on EAP promotional items.

Management clarified the branding is from the NYS Office of Employee Relations, not the DOL Employee Relations Office.

11. Miscellaneous

A. Confirm in-person meeting dates for March 2026

PEF Question

- **Will the Commissioner be in attendance?**

DOL cannot confirm the Commissioner's availability at this point.

B. AED/CPR Training: When will this be available in Hudson Valley region?

PEF noted DOL cancelled the statewide Safety & Health meeting and were unable to discuss it.

Management confirmed the Statewide S&H meeting was rescheduled to February 9, 2026. This item was included with the agenda submitted.

C. PEF requests consistent Training for LEAP team members, as per the Emergency Action Plan requirements under OSHA that all participants understand their roles

PEF noted DOL cancelled the statewide Safety & Health meeting and were unable to discuss it.

Management confirmed the Statewide S&H meeting was rescheduled to February 9, 2026. This item was included with the agenda submitted.

D. DOL's proposed LM Agreement.

The agreement is under review with PEF.

12. Dates for upcoming in-person LM meetings

3/3/2026 10am-1pm PEF's Agenda build meeting for both HS and LM

3/23/2026 Half-day travel for PEF team members who are eligible

3/24/2026 PEF HQ. AVERT in the morning, with LM meeting in afternoon, time TBD

3/25/2026 HS meeting – Time/Location TBD (Bldg. 12 or PEF HQ)

2026 meeting dates are under review.

HANDOUTS

Budget Section:

1. Federal, State Budget, UI Trust Fund Status Update
2. Monthly Summary Position Allocation & Spending by Major Division
3. PEF Count of Employees by Division
4. PEF Permanent and Hourly Employees
5. Current PEF Recruitments
6. Summary on Leases

UI Section:

7. Initial Claims