

STATEWIDE PEF – DOL LM**Minutes****Wednesday, June 25, 2025**

PEF -planned attendees	MANAGEMENT – planned attendees
Scarlett Ahmed, PEF Co-chair	Jennifer Williamson
Bill Clingersmith,	Jane Thompson
Kevin Jones	Sean Hennessy
Scott Hektor	Michelle Daly
Robert Wright – PEF Field Rep	Lars Thompson
Joshua Kemp (PEF S&H Coordinator)	Leighann Brown
	Paul Milanovich
	Mark Cutturini
	Allison Konderwich
	Vicki Mockler
	Jacqueline Kagan Dupiche
	Eric Frimpong
	Gregory Felter

1. Welcome/Introductions (Roll Call)**2. Approve prior minutes****PEF asked if the previous minutes were approved pre-meeting and if they are posted.**

Management advised the previous minutes were approved and posted. PEF requested to post as soon as possible after approval.

Confirm meeting minute process.

Parties agreed a 30-day timeframe to draft minutes for review is appropriate. Once received, PEF would review and advise of approval.

3. Discussion of Work Group related to UI Career Centers**A. PEF requests update on the Working Group relating to UI and Career Centers, asking when enhancements will be made**

Management advised the group is designed to find innovative approaches to decrease the impact of UI customers in the Career centers. The meeting is comprised of representation from PEF, CSEA, UI, and DEWS. In the previous meeting, things that were addressed included a tracker to make the customer and staff aware of where they are at in the process, UI automation, UI increase staffing to address calls at Career Centers, an increase in communications between UI and DEWS leadership to provide insight of day-to-day issues that impact career center staff. Some issues that were brought up by labor included priority services for Veterans, realistic wait times for clients, realignment of TCC and Unemployment services, customers having issues getting through to the TCC from home, and Ny.gov account issues, and how modernization systems improve customer notification. These conversations tend to be free flowing and include those most knowledgeable about the areas.

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PEF suggested at the last meeting that wait times were on a downward trend on the TCC call line but wait times have since increased. Issues with ny.gov account access were discussed.

B. Confirmation of next meeting date July 18, 2025, 9:30-10:30am
Management confirmed.

4. Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (DEWS)

A. General Division Update

Management advised there is a new Bureau Director for Employment and Workforce Opportunities, Pamela Miller. Management also noted that an employee recognition program has officially launched. There will be a division level employee recognition program that will repeat in each region. Lastly, they have launched the internal agency level application for the apprenticeship team. It is only available to DOL staff as of June 9, 2025. Toward the end of July, hope to launch the apprenticeship agreement. Applications will be submitted virtually and will significantly reduce reliance on paper and improve timeliness of review/approval.

1) Update on the Asylum Seeker project.

PEF requests guidance from DOL or the State for staff should ICE demand entry and access to records. (At the March meeting, PEF had requested that this be added to the agenda in June and that a subject matter expert be invited to address the concern)

Management advised they are continuing to move forward with providing services to all customers. These are services they would provide any customer. Recruitment Wednesdays are still occurring as is. Regarding ICE demanding entrance, if this is to happen, it should be immediately escalated to Pamela Miller/Vicki Mockler so they can provide guidance.

PEF advised that other agencies have a guidance posted, PEF asked if there are any issues that are preventing DOL from creating one sooner.

Management advised Counsel's Office will have something in the near future.

PEF asked if Management could follow up in 2 weeks to provide an update.

Management agreed.

PEF requests documentation of the funding streams for DVOP/LVERs, and information on any restrictions on clerical assignments.

Management advised finance will address this. From a DEWS perspective regarding restrictions on clerical assignments, management is not aware of any DVOPs/LVERs, being asked to take on clerical assignments.

PEF advised there were a couple scenarios, where this allegedly happened but wanted to know if there were specifics that could be offered regarding whether this is covered under the funding.

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Management advised the funding for these was appropriated in the president's budget. This was not a program that was proposed to be consolidated into the block grant.

PEF asked if the Veteran's program is a grant or if it is a different funding stream.

Management advised it is a grant appropriated at the national level and it was included in FY 26.

PEF asked if the RESEA grant, and Veteran's program grant application can be provided to PEF

Management advised this is an application prepared annually and is submitted to the federal government to receive the funds. Management advised they could provide a copy of the FY 25 grant application.

PEF advised local council leaders are getting questions from DVOPs and LVERs regarding the perimeters of the grant and a concern of job security.

Management advised the job classification standards from Civil Service would be helpful to review.

PEF advised they would forward more information.

2) Update on Jails to Jobs program

Management advised the intention is still to provide all services virtually and work will be voluntary.

PEF asked how many volunteers are needed.

Management advised this is being assessed as this program may be small to start.

PEF asked what would occur if more volunteers were needed.

Management advised the program will be small to start but this will be assessed at that time and management will determine next steps.

3) Update on WFS rollout

No update was provided.

4) Discussion of Future in Focus event

PEF thanks DOL Apprenticeship Unit for participating in this NYC Central Labor Council event that helped youth explore unionized job opportunities. Could this kind of event be duplicated in Career Centers?

Management advised this was an event held in Harlem and attended by two DEWS staff. The team tabled at the event where they were able to engage with various stakeholders. This is something we do across the state and expect to continue doing moving forward. The Teacher Ambassador program is also planned to expand and works with the apprenticeship program. Management advised it may be a challenge

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to hold these in Career Centers but if there are suggestions, they are happy to take them into consideration.

PEF advised in the city there are multiple SUNY Educational Opportunity Centers that have space available for these kinds of events. PEF would be happy to see events like this occur again. They also advised to focus on areas around the state that don't have similar events if DOL is considering hosting. PEF asked if other labor unions participate in these events.

Management advised they agree the events are of value and would like to see them continue if challenges can be overcome. Regarding labor unions participating, they advised there are other stakeholders that participate as well like local businesses.

B. Staffing update.

Management advised DEWS is currently being cautious with hiring as they are at their allocations. They are trying to maintain staffing levels currently while staffing levels are evaluated.

PEF requests discussion of Workforce Program Specialist 2 vacancies in the Apprenticeship Unit.

Management advised there are 2 vacancies. There were losses at the ATR level which creates challenges with monitoring the program. They would like to recruit 3 ATR positions in the near future to help manage the program. This is the priority for the program. They have additional supervisors that can support and assist these WPS2 staff and are frequently in discussion with them regarding their work. Management advised that things change rapidly and trying to get these positions filled are critical. Management noted WPS1 for ATRs is also a promotional position in Career Centers.

5. Unemployment Insurance

A. General Division Update

Management advised modernization is in progress. Regarding funding streams, they were able to switch other to other streams of funding and there was little to no impact. Staff continue to do a great job with the resources they have.

B. Staffing update

Management advised they are nearing their allocations but there are over 87 recruitments at the moment. Another 15 will be submitted to reach current fill level.

PEF asked if there are any promotions within the division.

Management advised within the 87 recruitments, there are promotional positions being taken. They advised the PEF recruitments report that was provided will have more extensive details.

PEF requests confirmation that the UI Hourly LSR discussed at the March meeting has been approved for permanency. If yes, thank you!

Management confirmed permanency.

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PEF has heard concerns about possible understaffing of UI Employer Services grade 18 staff. Has this contributed to a significant backlog? Does DOL have a recruitment/retention strategy?

Management advised there are 8-10 auditor 1 positions they are trying to recruit. They are trying to recruit and have current recruitments, but the position is hard to fill due to competition with the private sector. Recruitments are done early and often for this position.

PEF asked if more telecommuting opportunities would help to fill these positions and retain staff.

Management advised to send examples of other agency's telecommuting policies that were noted.

C. Update on UI modernization

Management advised modernization is in progress. The hope was to have modernization fully in place by the end of the year but may need to be pushed back to 2026 due to data migration and needed to ensure the system works.

6. Research and Statistics

A. Division Update

PEF respectfully requests the Bureau Chief's attendance to provide the report.

Management advised the programs collecting labor market data is proceeding as usual. There is a new office, Office of Workforce Data and Research. Office is fully functioning, evaluating all workforce programs across the state. They have 3 staff and hope to recruit 2 more. They advised they applied for a workforce quality initiative grant from the Federal government, mentioned by Governor Hochul in her state of the state address. They are looking to find what is successful across the state and devise an evaluation program to audit workforce programs. Another new unit is a Survey Unit, which they hope to find leadership for soon. Also, the bureau chief of Research and Evaluation unit is retiring but are hoping to promote internally.

B. Staffing update

They hired 2 grade 18s for the Survey unit. They are approved for 3 staff, but they are hoping to expand to 5-7 and find a grade 27 to oversee the unit.

PEF asked if the opportunities are mostly in Albany. Management confirmed they are.

7. UI Appeal Board

A. General Division Update

Management advised the CLE library was launched at the end of January. Classes are available to attorneys at DOL but are open to other employees with a ny.gov email due to it being a SharePoint. There have been 6 UIAB people take classes, 3 DOL staff, 1 from the Attorney General's office (previous UIAB employee), and 2 non attorneys have taken trainings. Things are going well. Their final initiative with the electronic case files for hearings went forward January 21st. This will help with training for UISIM. They advised there is a staff member that is preparing training for UISIM. He has experience with walking into an organization fresh and training on new platforms at other state agencies outside of NY. The same staff member that is working with UISIM created the CLE Library, a UIAB shared drive, and a SharePoint for UIAB. This ensures everyone remains up to date. Recognition is also given on the hub.

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B. Update on staffing.

Management advised they have 110 employees excluding board members, 91 are PEF. On July 3rd, a new ALJ class of 6 starts. The current ALJ class will be on calendar as of July 14th. A lot of recognition from other states have been given regarding the ALJ training program. Since last March, there a senior ALJ in Brooklyn, Rochester, and Garden City and 1 Admin in Hauppauge retired. The recruitment program helps keep pace with the rate of retirements. More retirements are expected, as 25% of the team is eligible for retirement.

C. Update on the UI hearing platform.

The virtual hearings are going well. The hearing platform is accessible for 16 different languages.

8. Worker Protection

A. General Division Update

Management advised they have gotten through significant backlogs in Labor Standards and DOSH.

B. Update on Staffing

Management advised reports were provided.

1) PESH/DOSH

PEF has heard that the caseload of PESH complaints has doubled. If true, what accounts for the increase? Is there adequate staffing to handle the increase?

Management advised the case load has increased but have developed a better system of intake for complaints which has helped manage complaints. Increase can in part be contributed to the acceptance of anonymous complaints and the new system which allows for electronic submission of complaints. Management noted to keep in mind that not all complaints turn into a case.

PEF requests discussion about PESH complaints filed from DOCCs facilities

Management advised complaints were taken seriously and investigated. A meeting was held with President Spence, our Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner and it was decided that this was not an appropriate topic to discuss in DOL LM meetings and Management advised PEF to continue looking to their PEF leadership to receive updates on this matter.

PEF advised President Spence raised this issue at the recent Executive Board meeting and advised that DOL would circle back with further information. As of the Executive Board meeting, PEF has not received any information and wanted to raise it to your attention. PEF advised that DOL had agreed to continuously meet regarding the ongoing issues.

Management advised they would follow up with the commissioner.

2) Public Work

Management advised the Bureau of Public Work and Prevailing Wage Enforcement they have begun the process of how staff approach non-public construction that is within their jurisdiction.

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3) Labor Standards

PEF asked about complaints being assigned to Labor Standards staff regarding work at DOCCS.

Management advised they can't address hypothetical but if specifics are raised, they can look into it.

PEF requests an update on the Strikeforce team and its impact on staffing.

Management advised the Strikeforce team in labor standards has staff coming on board. This is modeled after the Strikeforce in Public Work and Prevailing Wage Enforcement. They will have folks in Albany, downstate, and Western, NY.

PEF would like to discuss AWS for Labor Standards Investigators

Management advised they have realized they need more people in the office and more people that are able to be in the field. Every office has a sizeable number of walk-ins and in order to meet operational goals, they need staff in office at least 3 days a week. Across the board, telecommuting will be restricted for staff with a pass day so that they can still be in the office or field 3 days a week and will go into effect in September. Staff will have an alternative work schedule working 9 out of 10 days rather than 8 out of 10 with a compressed work schedule. It impacts about 17 staff.

4) Special Investigations

No update was provided.

5) Division of Compliance and Education (DOCE, formerly "DIPA")

No update was provided.

9. Division of Administration and Finance –

A. Division Update

1) List of lease expiration dates

Attached lease dates.

Management advised there were 3 potential leases that proceeded to next steps. This included Patchogue, Monticello, and Poughkeepsie.

PEF requests an update on any potential moves, such as Amsterdam office and 290 Main Street Buffalo.

Management advised they are continuing to make a push for the state to pick up the lease in Amsterdam. In Buffalo, the drawings have been approved by the programs and are with the potential landlord for their approval and pricing.

PEF advised parking is very important for staff in Buffalo and asked if this is an option.

Management advised that numbers weren't provided, and it is hard to say at this time.

PEF addressed concerns with Amsterdam location.

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Management advised it is a partner location and it is a challenge working with the landlord. They continue to work with the landlord to improve conditions. Management advised they are doing everything in their means to expedite this process.

PEF noted concern about safety for staff in this office.

Management noted staff are sent immediately to the location when concerns are raised so that the concerns can be addressed.

Tracking devices on state vehicles.

PEF requests information being collected from the trackers and how it will be used

Management advised information being collected includes vehicle make, model, vin number, plate number, DOL division vehicle is assigned to, driver of the vehicle, dates and times of use, starting location and ending location, starting and ending of odometer reading, if it is a commuter trip; vehicle diagnostics like fuel capacity, fuel remaining, battery charge, battery voltage, engine hours, coolant temp; any purchases made on state issued fuel card; harsh driving events like hard breaking, acceleration, sharp/drastic turns; use of a seatbelt and vehicle speed. That information would be used to ensure proper utilization and distribution of the vehicles in an attempt to improve driver safety, proactively track vehicle maintenance, will aid in the investigation of accidents, reduce some of the paperwork with mileage use, and to ensure authorized users are driving state vehicles.

PEF asked if this information could be used in a disciplinary proceeding.

Management deferred to ERO. ERO clarified they would need to seek guidance with NYS OER but is normally used for health and safety and for financial purposes.

Management informed PEF that this was required by the governor's office and implemented through OGS for state agencies.

2) Federal update

PEF requests discussion of potential impacts of Big Beautiful Bill.

Management advised they don't have a lot of information at this time. The president's bill proposed to consolidate grants into a type of block grant but there isn't a dollar amount that correspond with that at this time. Management will do a formal analysis once they have more information. Management clarified that the bill doesn't eliminate grants, rather it folds the grants into one big grant.

3) State update

No update was provided.

4) UI Trust Fund Status

Management advised the current balance is around 4.6 billion dollars. They are currently working toward paying off the loan. There was funding appropriated in the NYS budget to pay off the loan and they are working with the Comptroller's Office and Division of Budget to see how they can effectuate that transfer to pay off the trust fund loan.

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

- a) Current Staffing by Division, including hourlies.
- b) Monthly Position Allocation vs. Spending by Division, including if applicable:

B. Personnel-

1) Unit update.

a) Update NY HELPS program.

Management advised it was extended through June 2026 per Department of Civil Service. At the June 11th Civil Service meeting, they approved cover-in employees which allows staff who were hired under helps (through June 11th) to convert from non-competitive to competitive. Over 400 of the 600 employees that this affects are PEF. DOL and CS are running reports to ensure these changes are made to all impacted staff. Management hopes to notify staff of changes at the end of next month.

PEF advised concern of inappropriate use of HELPS for promotional hires and positions. They stated that they support promotion based on merit and fit.

Management advised that HELPS hires that become competitive have the same rights as competitive employees appointed from a list. They have the same opportunities for promotion. Programs pick the best candidates, and they use CS resources to help meet Program needs.

b) Update on recruitment and retention efforts across the divisions

Management advised recruitment continues to be busy. They are fluctuating between 170 and 190 recruitments at any given time. They have made over 400 appointments for 2025 and have reviewed over 20,000 applications.

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 that DOL submit a reallocation review request for Boiler Inspectors, so that it may be expedited at the completion of the compensation study.

Management advised that all reallocations are on hold until the completion of the Civil Service total comp study. Civil Service indicated it may be done by October. This request has been drafted and will be reviewed and worked on until completion of the study.

PEF requests update on any other reallocation efforts.

Management advised there are no other requests, but they have been working on classification requests. There are no major reorganizations, but they have been able to get approval on one-off requests to meet the specific needs of divisions.

3) Other

a) Discussion of Interrogations and Notices of Discipline.

PEF: There appears to be an uptick in interrogations and notices of discipline, and the majority seem to target older workers.

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Management advised age is not something that is reviewed when approaching these cases. If there are specifics, PEF can reach out to ERO or refer to ADID.

PEF noted there is potentially a technological barrier for older staff and noted possibility to address with training.

Management advised they haven't noticed this but if PEF notices any specifics with certain titles, they should reach out to ERO.

b) PEF requests clarification on longevity payment information for former long-term hourlies

Management advised staff should contact the Business Services Center (BSC) for any salary questions. If an employee needs assistance escalating, contact ERO and they will be glad to assist.

10. PEF requests an update on traineeship fast tracking.

PEF wants to know how to implement this.

Management advised this is something that has always been in effect. A noontime knowledge is coming up on fast tracking and PMU has launched a page on DOLi. Within that page is information regarding fast tracking. Management advised they support this initiative and continue to work toward getting this information disseminated to programs.

11. PEF requests that DOL exercise its own discretion with respect to probation extension implementation.

Management advised they have exercised their discretion. The other option is to extend by total absences, but we are only extending for the difference of absences from the allotted time based on their probation length.

PEF advised they would like to exercise their discretion for specific employees.

Management advised this program needs to be fair and consistent across the board. This is the most fair and consistent way that we can implement this.

12. EAP

A. General Update

Management advised a position was posted for Mid-Hudson (White Plains office) and there is a pilot Wellness Fair being reviewed as an annual event, potentially to include unions.

13. Misc.

A. PEF requests discussion on counseling

Management had indicated that sometimes a third party is brought into the counseling. In such cases, PEF asserts that members have the right to have a union representative present.

Management advised newer supervisors who have not counseled an employee before may request a manager attend to assist if needed. Counseling is not discipline and does not entitle the employee to representation. The employee may file a grievance if they wish.

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PEF advised that one-on-one counselings are not happening even for long term supervisors.

Management advised that it may be the case that the supervisor may have never had to perform a counseling. Conversations with supervisors should not make employees feel attacked. They clarified the difference between informal counseling and the formal counseling. Their interpretation of the Hartnett memo is that this isn't a violation of the Hartnett memo, and that counseling doesn't require representation.

B. Update on smoking shelter outside Building 12 (East side)

Management advised at building 12, a new roof is being installed. Protections around the building are being put in place, as well as safety areas for construction equipment. The smoking shack on the east side of the building is being removed due to this and will not be reinstalled.

Local PEF leadership objects to the permanent removal of the shelter.

C. PEF once again requests to convene an in-person LM meeting with an open invitation to the Commissioner.

Management advised they have been pushing this with the team and they are open to it. They are looking for dates that can work for their schedule.

D. PEF requests to meet and confer on telecommuting program.

PEF requests that a date to confer be set during this meeting.

Management advised they have drafted a policy and hope to get it to PEF early next week so they have a chance to look at it and then a meeting can be setup.

PEF requested to set a date now.

Management advised they will look at July 17th and 18th and send PEF a proposed date and time.

Meeting closed at 11:50AM.

14. Reminder of dates for upcoming LM meetings.

PEF's agenda building: August 20, 2025, 10am-1pm

Statewide LM meeting: September 11, 2025, 1-3pm

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. Summary on Leases

UI Section:

6. Initial Claims