

STATEWIDE PEF – DOL LM
Wednesday, August 7, 2024, 1pm-3pm

PEF -planned attendees	MANAGEMENT – planned attendees
Scarlett Ahmed, Co-chair	Suzanne Piccirillo, Co-chair
Bill Clingersmith	Jane Thompson
Kevin Jones	Sean Hennessy
Robert Wright – PEF Staff	Lars Thompson
Scott Hektor	Christopher White
	Vicki Mockler
	Leigh Brown
	Mark Cutturini
	Karen Ronca
	Paul Milanovich
	Jennifer Williamson
	Allison Konderwich
	Gregory Felter

I. Welcome/Introductions (Roll Call)

II. Approve prior minutes- from May 8 2024

Minutes approved.

PEF requests receipt of minutes within two weeks after LM meetings, with both PEF and DOL notations.

Management update on increasing UI customers seeking claims assistance in career centers. Issue raised by PEF in DEWS and UI.
Executive staff actively working variety of angles. Not one easy solution to this, requires collaboration among divisions. Career centers mandated to provide service to all customers including UI customers. Must continue to provide support to unemployed but not make UI determinations. Continue facilitating in person identification verification – combating fraudulent practices. Staff are DOL's most valuable resource, we agree for the need of safe/effective work environment. Multiple solutions being considered. Conducting risk-benefit assessments on each solution to not worsen situation. PEF previously raised solutions, including placing UI staff at career centers to address the claims issue, not feasible right now due to fiscal concerns and concern that it will increase traffic. Leadership has looked into setting up a check in queueing system. Benefits – customers don't have to wait in the lobby, helping congestion and key data can be collected.

Management requests to work collectively with PEF and form a work group to further explore.

PEF supported idea. Collaborators can be stewards, not just E-board members.

III. Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (DEWS)

A. General Division Update

Teacher ambassador program. 30 teachers paid as DOL employees for 1 month in summer, 60 ambassadors this year. Helps with outreach so people know what we do here and helps ambassadors at the same time.

PEF advised ambassadors in Rochester were ecstatic about program.

Management advised there is a lot of talk at the executive level, they are very supportive of program.

Management New initiative - Business jumpstart. New businesses coming to/expanding in state. Would have access to specialty services, inviting them in to show them what we can do for them.

Soon to launch pilots for scheduling tool for career centers.

PEF asked if this would involve using staff calendars.

Management advised it'll be a tool for building efficiency, free up time for employees to do more of the work they want to do.

PEF noted centers are having a hard time keeping schedulers, any help is welcome.

1) Update on the Asylum Seeker project.

Management advised work continues, not taking our foot off the accelerator, it has become normal business. Team is incredible and focus is on doing work done all along. Tracking it as a stream of work.

Over 10,000 appts with asylum seekers,

13,000 follow-up appointments.

Not losing ground on RESEA, confident we will hit goal.

Credit to LM conversation,

Updated regulations regarding apprenticeship – working toward implementing apprenticeship program.

First registered DOL S&H inspector and industrial hygienist apprenticeships posted.

Shows possibilities of advancing in NYS and will provide a model for other agencies.

2) Update on Jails to Jobs program

Management still working with NYS OER who is handling with PEF, no updates.

B. Staffing update.

PEF: Follow-up discussion on posting UI staff at Career Centers to help with UI customers.

Covered by management after minutes approval. Collaboration meeting on this topic to be held with PEF and Management

New position marketing programs – details to be determine, hired a management person to tackle these programs and technicalities but no decisions made regarding staffing. Step 1 – determine partnerships and initiatives.

PEF advised concerns about language – similar to private sector. Concerned jobs will be contracted in rather than internal. Management advised intent is to hire people into DOL to do these jobs, not contract outside companies in

IV. Unemployment Insurance

A. General Division Update

Management advised working through seasonal peak, busy as usual.

UI rates haven't increased in NY like they have federally.

Staff doing great job handling surge in claims.
UAT going strong.
50-80 staff testing systems as part of their day-to-day.
Working to prepare staff for influx of customers and maximize the resources we have access to.

B. Staffing update

Management advised always making sure we are allocated and staffed as much as funding allows. Always watching and monitoring any potential increase in workload (national news on state of economy, nothing dramatic in NY but daily monitoring). Reality is when, not if we get a surge. No issues now.

Capped with federal funds, working closely with Personnel/Finance to get staffing, and making strategic hires, balance of front line and promotional for managers to run the business.

C. Update on UI modernization

PEF: Discussion of causes and impact of UI case backlog.

V. Research and Statistics

A. Division Update

Management advised nothing notable to report.

B. Staffing update

Management advised 4 new hires and 1 promotion, all PEF members. Bringing new people on.

VI. UI Appeal Board

A. General Division Update

Management advised striving to modernize so staff can work remote.

All paper files to be 100% electronic rolling out 10/28.

Haven't done sooner because UISIM was happening but now moving forward.

Working with DOL Change Management Team to survey staff about concerns, some staff concerned regarding retraining.

EDGE assisting with training with admin and judges accordingly.

Bigger monitors allow for larger fonts - Looking into accommodations for trainings.

Very positive overall response. Excited about planning, hoping to increase remote access, and will be a lot easier to pivot in cases of emergency.

B. Update on staffing.

Management advised 103 employees, excluding board members.

81 PEF members.

4 ALJ finishing new hire training.

New hire class of 7, starting in September, largest group we've had in a decade due to NYHELPS.

Two retirements, SALJ, ALJ, one replacement able to promote within. More to retire in fall, looking into a new hire class in January.

Administrative team looking good, had a retirement, able to promote CSEA member into PEF position due to NYHELPS.

LSR starting on 15th in white plains, Brooklyn, and Syracuse. Interview for another LSR in Menands and Legal Assistant in Brooklyn.

C. Update on the UI hearing platform.

Virtual hearings going well, no issues to report.

PEF: Discussion of backlog

Management advised we receive files from ASO, meet weekly, utilizing statewide distribution ensures fairness. ALJs - Four hearings per day, 2 on Friday mornings. Can use Friday afternoon to catch up on decisions or complete trainings. New hires will make huge impact.

VII. Worker Protection

A. General Division Update

Management advised no update.

B. Update on Staffing

- 1) PESH
- 2) Public Work
- 3) Labor Standards
- 4) Special Investigations Paul and Karen
- 5) Division of Compliance and Education (DOCE, formerly "DIPA")

87 appointments made across divisions, 20 promotions, 34 separations, staffing up and doing well.

PEF: Discussion of data ports and internet access concerns

Management advised new wireless access point was installed and working well. Some drops that still need to be connected, working to resolve.

VIII. Division of Administration and Finance –

A. Division Update

- 1) List of lease expiration dates

Management advised fully functional at Washington Ave. Norwich, and Newark. Auburn, Messina, Peekskill work-in-progress. Approval for new modular furniture for Peekskill.

- a) PEF requests an update on renovations at the Elmira Career Center and the Albany Career Center, and the status of new furniture at Newburgh.

Clarification – Newark not Newburgh.

Management advised holding on paperwork for execution of agreement for new furniture at Newark.

PEF compliments renovations in Newark.

Management advised moving forward all new stations will get electric sit/stand desks.

PEF asked about resolving issues at Elmhurst building.

Management met with director of janitorial services and put pressure on landlords to get things done.

2) Federal update

Management advised nearing end of federal year, end of September. UI funding was down 5% from previous year. Unsure what funding will be 10/1/24.

Applied for 3 grants, total \$24M to cover UI modernization and integrity costs. For technology to mitigate fraud, not positions. Federal government hasn't allocated money previously for this. Did receive funds to maintain staffing.

PEF requested whether decreases were natural based on lower unemployment numbers. Management advised the decreases were natural, if unemployment is down, funding is down.

PEF asked if congress doesn't act, will it have an impact on staffing/layoffs.

Management advised we have never had to do layoffs; we have always found a way to maintain staffing until federal funding comes through. We are aware of it and monitor but no worry for this year.

3) State update

Management advised same appropriation as last year. NYHELPS really helping WP staffing.

4) UI Trust Fund Status

PEF: Update on repayment

Management advised as of August 2nd - \$5.7 Billion, anticipating pay off in 2027, despite any increases in UI rate.

PEF inquired how often payments made. Management advised loan impacted daily. Overall trending downward.

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:

Management advised up again almost 60 positions since February. UI actively filling positions. DEWS large increase of new hires. DOSH and Special Investigations - room to grow. Apprenticeships for S&H units, actively looking to fill – should help DOSH.

PEF inquired if most new hires through NYHELPS. Management advised both, an increase overall.

B. Personnel-

1) Unit update.

a) Discussion of NY HELPS program.

b) Discussion of recruitment and retention efforts

Management advised we continue to be very busy.

659 appointments made.

24,735 applications received.

265 active recruitments – 161 of them are PEF recruits, 146 no nominations, 15 have nominations but no start date.

312 NYHELPS appointments – 188 of 312 are PEF NYHELPS appointments and 59 of 188 hourly to perm recruitments.

PEF inquired if most recruitments through NYHELPS. Management advised 174 of 265 are NYHELPS recruits.

PEF suggests working group/sub-committee with PEF team and Agency regarding staffing. Management responded not explored previously but not an issue now. If we get to a point where it is, let's have a conversation about it.

PEF inquired do you have a map of anticipated retirements over time.

Management indicated it could be pulled from reports, they won't be 100% accurate but we are not opposed to looking into that and preparing reports. PEF requested data like that by first meeting of 2025. Management advised let us do some research see what trends we can notice, a good idea to explore.

PEF inquired if DOL does exit interview for people leaving DOL. Management advised Allison K. brought us over the finish line to update and utilize exit surveys/interviews. We notify staff if they would like an exit interview to contact HR team. Mark and Allison have conducted interviews, able to get a good understanding of those separations.

PEF inquired if leaders are notified of exit interview. Management advised absolutely. We want to make sure we identify strengths and weakness in units so we can hopefully improve areas of weakness.

PEF: Update on Labor Standards reallocation efforts.

Management advised moving along smoothing with DOB, haven't received any push back. Information provided for desk audit: Civil service completed desk audit, only supporting information we provided was organization chart and roster.

PEF: Update on potential reallocation for Boiler Inspectors

Management advised in the middle of review, actively working on this. DOL took lead, personnel is meeting with boiler inspectors and program leadership to get information. actively looking to take next steps.

PEF asked any timeline on meeting or gathering?

Management advised it's towards top of our priority list but haven't scheduled anything yet. Looking to schedule within next several weeks.

PEF: Update on DOL's efforts in reviewing other WP titles.

Have spoken to civil service regarding review of other investigative titles. CS requested hold on further review until precedent set with LS effort. Gives more time to focus on boiler inspectors right now.

PEF inquired if UI auditor on the list of reallocations. Management advised no, but are open to the conversation.

PEF inquired if DOCE positions will be filled in Rochester. Management will investigate and see if we can hire more. PEF advised can be discussed at local meeting.

PEF: Discussion of vacant items in UI, SH, DEWs, OSI, Tech and Innovation, Research and Statistics and DOCE

PEF: Update on Employment Counselor exam

Management requested update from civil service on employment counselor exam. Pending answer. If an update is received, we will share.

- 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?

Management advised we are looking at program areas to see that employees have the structure they need. WP professional engineers grade 24, program advocated for interns. We are developing a career ladder for that area – Intern to career at DOL.

Exploring creation of policy unit with Research and Statistics. Looking to hire a payroll examiner, requested CS change bargaining unit from M/C to PEF.

PEF asked if policy unit only based in Albany.

Management still very preliminary but we can keep you updated.

IX. EAP

A. General Update

PEF: Discussion of EAP project coordinator vacancies in Albany, NYC, and Buffalo.

Management advised Albany vacancy filled 8/15. NYC vacancy pending. Buffalo held interviews, committee confirming their selections to share back.

PEF asked if they are M/C positions being filled. Management advised Albany and NYC are, Buffalo unsure until position is filled.

PEF concerned about M/C status and employees being comfortable with them.

Management advised EAP/Coordinator are inherently neutral. Confidential is the most important part of that. It is a labor management supported position. We have the blessing from OER and are giving these positions a chance. Please keep us updated if your staff has concerns, we have chosen good candidates to provide the best support.

PEF it is important that our staff knows who they are talking to and it should be known by callers that the person answering is M/C

Management advised M/C is unrepresented. EAP committee should be represented equally between M/C, PEF, CSEA.

X. Old Business

A. LM Committee Operations

PEF: Discussion of separate LM committee activity for PEF Divisions 281, 359 (both Southern Tier) and PEF Divisions 286 and 410 (both Hudson Valley)

PEF advised historically had their own LM committees, is the agency's position that they combine.

Management advised agency's position we are offering 4 quarterly meetings for Southern Tier region total. If not together, each division can alternate meetings.

PEF asked can we have a health & safety committee in these areas.

Management advised speaking with Amber Nebolini to set that up.

PEF requested clarification – they can meet separately, but each division gets two (2) meetings. Four (4) a year total for Southern Tier.

Management confirmed clarification, what we offered as compromise is in line with the contract.

PEF requested Bill and Scott to work with Robert and council leaders to finalize this.

PEF: Discussion of in-person statewide LM meetings

PEF advised in person meetings are more productive. Rochester does in-person meetings quarterly and are very productive. We want to get back to it.

Management advised let's resolve EOL issue and then we can discuss in-person meetings.

PEF's position is noted. We found benefits of meeting both in person and virtually, seems more productive to have virtually and the agency's position is to remain virtual.

PEF advised it is not the state's position, other agencies are meeting in person.

Management advised it is DOL's position. Please reach out offline with what agencies are meeting in person so we can investigate.

B. Telecommuting agreement

PEF: Requests general discussion/update.

PEF inquired about any expected changes of telecommuting days.

Management advised no expected changes right now. If something comes up, lets meet and discuss.

PEF advised we have similar titles in other agencies with more days of telecommuting than the same jobs in DOL, can we match these amounts of times for telecommuting.

Management advised send us examples and we will investigate.

PEF Does everyone need a telecommuting plan even if they aren't telecommuting on a regular basis? Regarding emergencies.

Management advised employees can pivot whether telecommuting regularly or not. We generally keep a telecommuting plan on file in our office, so employees are remote ready.

PEF requests to discuss and confirm contract agreement.

Management advised get in touch offline, we can discuss and come to agreement.

PEF asked can we revert to old version in the meantime.

Management declined indicating there aren't substantial changes.

PEF advised our (Southern Tier) meetings on telecommuting keep getting canceled. Why are we not seeing as much telecommuting in UI as other agencies.

Management advised we haven't canceled anything, please send examples of other divisions/agencies and reach out if there is an issue.

PEF advised with respect to the meetings that is what we are told by managers.

Management advised that this could be in reference to your regions LM meetings. Looking to get Southern Tier meetings back on the calendar.

PEF offered a special thank you to Akira Rowell and Karen Ronca for making the QWL grant nice and easy. Everything went great, very simple. Employees are happy to have new appliances.

XI. Confirm dates/times for 2024 LM meetings and agenda building meetings.

PEF Agenda-building: 10/30/24 10am-1pm

LM: 11/13/24 1-3pm RESCHEDULED for 11/20

NOTE: Agenda-building meetings are for both Health and Safety and Labor-Management

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

