

OTDA PEF Labor Management Meeting

Date: August 19, 2025

Location: OTDA, 40 North Pearl Street, 3rd Floor, Albany, NY

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Introductions

Agenda Items

1. Agenda Item – Non-Mandatory Training Opportunities

☐ New Business ☒ Old Business

Description: Previously, the Division of Disability Determinations (DDD) implemented a moratorium on non-mandatory training. Labor requested that when the moratorium was lifted, those members who were disenrolled receive priority placement. On July 11th, DDD sent an email that the moratorium has been lifted. Since then, members in Endicott have had difficulties in registering.

Labor recognizes the barriers that this chain of command can create and believe this is a communication issue in management that needs more clarity.

How can we (LM) improve communication regarding directives from Central Office?

Response: This particular item has been resolved. OTDA Management will discuss the need to resolve questions regarding available trainings promptly.

2. Agenda Item – Civil Service Exams

☐ New Business ☒ Old Business

Description: It was agreed at the last Labor Management meeting that Management would report as to what exam requests were submitted to Civil Service for this year.

Labor requests the current list of examinations in order of priority requested through Civil Service for the current Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Response: Four promotional exams put forward:

1. Fair Hearing Specialist 3, Grade 23
2. Hearing officer 3, M3
3. Supervising Accountant, Grade 25
4. Chief of Disability Determinations Program, Policy and Planning, Grade 27

PEF Response: Management and Labor agree it is important that entry-level examinations are held timely to avoid any gaps if/when the NY HELPS Program ends.

3. Agenda Item – DDD Request to Remove Personally Identifiable Information (PII) From All Forms

☐ New Business ☒ Old Business

Description: Discussed at the February and July Statewide DDD Labor/Management meeting, Labor requested that all PII be removed from forms and replaced with a 6-digit PIN number. In February, Management agreed to investigate with SSA.

There has been ongoing discussion between Labor and Management since February.

What is the current status?

Response: Management has agreed to make some changes – all decisions are on hold until a final determination comes from SSA.

4. Agenda Item – Employee of the Month

☒ New Business ☐ Old Business

Description: Employee of the Month is a positive way to increase morale. Recently there seems to be fewer nominations.

What can we do to encourage supervisors to give praise?

How can we make the nomination process easier to encourage and increase nominations?

Response: Management will take a look at the language posted on the intranet and will develop an all-staff notice of the program.

5. Agenda Item – Cultural Interpretation Specialists (CIS)

☒ New Business ☐ Old Business

Description: For a very long time, the Cultural Interpretation Specialists at OTDA have been trying to get a Salary Grade change or promotional opportunities for what they do. Some have been in the same position for over 20 years with no real career path.

They brought their concern to supervisors prior to 2020. When the pandemic hit, these concerns were largely ignored, and the supervisor who held these concerns may not have raised this to a higher level. During Covid, the Governor's Executive Order #26, changed the duties of the positions significantly.

This title is only housed at OTDA but the CIS employees now interpret and translate for the chamber as well as other agencies.

Members brought this issue to PEF where it was raised to OTDA Human Resources over a year ago. Both program area Management and Human Resources did not see where the supporting documentation warranted an upgrade but shared a draft with Civil Service for feedback.

Labor respectfully asks that OTDA push the item with Civil Service to address this issue as soon as possible.

Response: Management disagrees that during COVID the Governors Executive Order # 26 changed the duties of the position significantly. The volume of the work related to COVID increased, but the duties did not significantly change.

Management also notes that translation work for the chamber has been ongoing for 10 years.

In March 2025, NYS contracted with Deloitte and initiated the total compensation analysis of the state's compensation package. Civil Service has not published any results at this time and has paused reviewing requests in the interim.

Action Item: Labor and Management will continue this discussion.

6. Agenda Item – Incident Reports

☒ New Business ☐ Old Business

Description: PEF asks OTDA to re-commit to the confidentiality of the nature of the complaint on all incident reports. PEF would like to meet with Management to discuss the established process to improve its intended purpose.

Response: Management has always remained committed to confidentiality to the extent practical of incident reports. Moving forward, incident reports involving workplace violence will be referred exclusively to Human Resources.

7. Agenda Item – Performance Communication

☒ New Business ☐ Old Business

Description: PEF members have reported receiving evaluations with minimal feedback. Some employees do the same tasks without understanding how they can improve.

Labor asks how Management is working to support success for all employees?

Labor continues to encourage supervisors to increase specific feedback for members at a minimum of annually.

Response: Management continues to encourage supervisors to provide constructive feedback to their staff. Management also encourages staff to seek feedback from their supervisor.

Management is hopeful that the mandatory training for new supervisors will positively impact these conversations. Current supervisors are also encouraged to take advantage of these supervisory trainings.

All staff are encouraged to communicate with their supervisors regarding their professional development and promotional path.

PEF Response: Labor encourages staff to be open to constructive feedback to promote career growth. Labor also encourages all staff to seek additional training opportunities.

8. Agenda Item – Business Service Center (BSC) Issues

☒ New Business ☐ Old Business

Description: PEF has seen issues with agencies not giving complete or accurate information to members. This leaves workers having to take time out of their day to communicate between BSC and their local Management to clear up any confusion when present.

OTDA is one of the agencies that depends on the BSC for accurate and timely information.

PEF has created a mailbox BSCissues@PEF.org to report problems. Labor asks that OTDA commit to ensuring information it provides to the BSC about payroll, leave matters, etc. are done timely and accurately.

We further ask that OTDA continues to help facilitate resolutions to problems between members and the BSC going forward.

Response: OTDA Human Resources has routinely helped facilitate resolutions to problems between members and the BSC and will continue to do so where they can. Management welcomes any data that can be pulled from the PEF mailbox related to OTDA where we are not giving complete or accurate information to PEF members.

Informational Items/ Accomplishments

- Labor appreciates Management being flexible with dates and shifting dates for LM meetings in order to address DDD items at the DDD Labor/Management meeting.
- Labor would like to highlight Commissioner Guinn's newsletter sent on July 30, 2025. We appreciate the active dialog in which she discussed how federal funding is impacting OTDA's programs.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): DDD Management and Labor have held discussions about AI since November, 2024, and Labor appreciates the fast and readily responses Management has provided thus far. Labor continues to encourage Management to keep an open dialogue with Labor prior to implementation.
- Health and Safety is currently working on parking issues Statewide. Members with parking issues are encouraged to reach out to parking@pef.org along with OTDA Bureau of Facilities and Operations Support (FOS) and OGS Parking.

The following individuals were present at the OTDA PEF Labor/Management Meeting held on August 19, 2025.

PEF:

Carl Anderson
Leslie Apacible
Pam August
Bruce Giddings
Germaine Greco
Omotayo Kuku
Matthew Nirelli

Jill Poeller
Chelsea Propati
Joyel Richardson
Annie Rutsky
Scott Staub
Ryan Stoliker
Nathan Tucker

Management:

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| Donnovan Beckford | Jim Ryan |
| Rajni Chawla | Eric Schwenzfeier |
| Barbara C. Guinn | Samuel Spitzberg |
| Kadijah Jenkins | Felicia Valle Job |
| Christian Mullin | Kenneth Wells-Crannell |
| Matthew Rider | |

Next Meeting/Date & Place

- Thursday, November 6, 2025, at PEF Headquarters

The following representatives certify the minutes above to be an accurate representation of the PEF OTDA Labor/Management Meeting held August 19, 2025.

X


Pamela August
PEF Labor Management Chair, OTDA

08/25/2025

Date

X


James P. Ryan
Director of Human Resources, OTDA

08/25/2025

Date