

Powering Virginia's Workforce Future Solar for All and Beyond Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Date: 1/14/2025

Time: 11:00 am-12:30 pm (Meeting ended early at 11:45 am)

Attendees: Andrea Dixon-Schesventer (Presenter), Virginia Department of Energy
Callie Houghland (Moderator), Virginia Department of Energy
Bettina Bergoo, Virginia Department of Energy
Caetano de Campos Lopes, Virginia Department of Energy
Jessica Greene, Virginia Department of Energy
Amy Bowen, AppCAA
Larry Wilder
Phillip Green (Green Powered Technology)
Raye Elliott, Flipp Inc.
Cassandra Minor
Charles Paullin
Laure-Jeanne Davignon, HeatSpring training and LJDMC Workforce Strategies, Albany, NY
Charles Paullin, freelance journalist with Inside Climate News
Andrew Grigsby, Energy Services Director with Viridiant
Joe Ford of 1021 Development, LLC. Creating Next-Gen Nuclear Energy Workforce Education through K-12 CTE/STEM.
Jennifer Stevens, President and CEO of Virginia Ed Strategies (fiscal agent for the Virginia Energy Workforce Consortium)
Meghan Milo, Madison Energy Infrastructure
Lena Lewis, Energy, and Climate Policy Manager, The Nature Conservancy
Wilson Ratliff, Co-Executive Director at the Local Energy Alliance Program
Mickey Fanney Southern Energy Management
Bailey Harlow, Deputy Director for the Virginia Energy Foundation
Wilson Ratliff
Corey Earthright
Bailey Harlow
David Patterson, SHINE
Rashelle Parks

Agenda items

1. 11:00 AM – 11:10 AM | Welcome & Introductions
2. 11:10 AM – 11:15 AM | Highlight: Training for Residential Energy Contractors (TREC) Program
3. 11:15 AM – 11:35 AM | Highlight: Skilled Pathways for Advancement, Resilience, and Knowledge (SPARK) Youth Program
4. 11:35 AM – 12:00 PM | Spotlight: Solar For All Workforce Program Overview
5. 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM | Stakeholder Engagement & Feedback Session

Agenda items	Discussion Points	Discussion Responses
Solar for ALL Workforce Program Overview	The program is currently in the planning period and requests assistance from industry partners and stakeholders for confirmation on whether the program design is in line with the market's needs.	<p>Corey, Earthright –90% of residential solar companies will go out of business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wave of people who are looking for work, pools who are in solar, who may not have been installers, people who may have been doing something else. • Solar only companies (non-diversified businesses) – there will be a significant shift – how can we capture some of those folks from those companies <p>Laura - HeatSpring training and LJDMC Workforce Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market shake-up, but not all bad • Access to live and recent labor market data, make decisions about the job roles that fit SFA, and after-off-ramp. • Additional skills – operations and maintenance. We always have a need for more electricians, so we allow for as much flexibility as possible to adjust to these market conditions. <p>Meghan - 100% agreed with Laure Jeanne!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricians and O&M are great places that offer not only flexibility but also allow those jobs to stay within Virginia more permanently than solar installer positions.

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Battery Storage production/installation/maintenance	<p>Joe Ford inquired if Battery Storage production/installation/maintenance occupations would be included in the selected occupations for training.</p> <p>Corey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to get someone in to teach them inverter swaps, etc., service stuff can be straightforward, and no electrical background, good entry-level jobs • Gap in the market – basic service O&M – Corey says • Batteries are NOT easy. It takes VERY experienced folks to do batteries. Lots of complications – very energized electrician 	Virginia Energy is still developing the program design and will receive the labor market data on the need for these occupations to assist in solar market transformation.
Inquiry about the opportunity to utilize braiding to find opportunities.	Inquiry by Laura about the opportunity to offer labor market information to households a broader range of services by braiding funding. Laura recognizes that the process may be challenging for Virginia Energy's workforce team.	<p>Andrea agreed with Laura that utilizing funding from separate programs for entry-level training, such as SPARK, can assist individuals seeking additional training in the solar industry.</p> <p>Additionally, TREC, SPARK, and Solar for ALL workforce programs promote utilization of FastForward (FANTIC), WIOA, and other applicable funding opportunities.</p>
SPARK youth initiative program's goal is to promote energy-related occupations for K-12 education.	Joe Foard discussed a K-12 program for the energy cluster, focusing on CTE, and highlighted the importance of leveraging a "consortium" to encourage the energy cluster.	David Patterson mentioned that the Virginia Energy Workforce Consortium participated in implementing the legislation for the energy cluster. Additionally, Jennifer Stevens noted that the VEWC and Virginia Ed Strategies are collaborating now to conduct a workforce needs assessment and develop a report with data and recommendations to meet future needs. Andrea did identify that these agencies are working diligently to address the energy workforce needs in Virginia. However, there is a need for other state agencies, such as the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Community Colleges System, among others, to unite to streamline a connection between K-12 and skills trade and higher education programs in the energy workforce across the state.