

Equity Hiring Proposal

Joint Stakeholder Presentation by Blacks in Green, National Consumer Law Center,
& Natural Resources Defense Council

Illinois Stakeholder Advisory Group + Income Qualified Advisory Committee
Meeting

June 3, 2020



Proposal

- ▶ Increase the number of local, diverse vendors and subcontractors that deliver energy efficiency programs
- ▶ Seeking increased transparency on how implementers are chosen, and how the utilities' contracting structure is configured -- particularly within the income qualified (IQ) program area.
- ▶ Hold a facilitated conversation, through the SAG portfolio planning process, on equity hiring
 - ▶ Conversation should be open to any interested stakeholders
 - ▶ Discussion should include ways to: increase training opportunities, make RFPs more accessible, and other issues raised at previous IQ and SAG meetings on this topic
 - ▶ Discussion should include: detailed outline of the current layers of contracting and why they're necessary
 - ▶ Goal: to reach consensus and a clear process for increasing local diverse vendor and subcontractors going forward.
 - ▶ Include clearly identified goals and ongoing reporting requirements around equity hiring going forward

Background: A principle priority of the Future Energy Jobs Act was to increase clean energy job training, access, and opportunities in under-resourced communities of color.

- ▶ How are utilities currently prioritizing this?
- ▶ What current metrics/goals do you in place to accomplish equity hiring?
- ▶ What metrics/goals are in place to increase the hiring of:
 - ▶ local entities
 - ▶ diverse companies
 - ▶ diverse workforce development
 - ▶ not-for-profits that have experience delivering energy efficiency (e.g., community action agencies delivering IWAP)
 - ▶ governmental entities

What's needed

- ▶ Increase in the opportunities and hiring of Illinois-based, diverse contractors
- ▶ Increased transparency and reporting around implementation contractors and subs
 - ▶ Helpful to see visuals such as a “family tree” of contracting
- ▶ Understanding of why there are so many contracting layers
- ▶ Understanding of if diverse, Illinois-based entities have been provided the opportunity to bid on energy efficiency implementation and oversight role contracts.
- ▶ Understanding of the size of projects/contracts diverse, local vendors are receiving

Increase Community Partnerships: Economic Development Case Study - Blacks in Green @ The Green Living Room

- ▶ **Utility Bill Relief Program:** helping neighbors relieve household burden of water, gas, and electric utilities - free assistance with account negotiations, contractor services, reconnection deposits, and household finance supports
- ▶ **Energy Efficiency:** Awareness campaign continues, expands geographically and in services to include assessments, installations, deep retrofits, adds multi-family and commercial
- ▶ **BIG Clean Power:** worker-owned social mission enterprise offering full-spectrum energy services including weatherization, efficiency, solar, sales, and PVC panel assembly plant in Woodlawn
- ▶ **Green Power Alliance:** workforce education and placement, strategy and advocacy, industry tracking, and project finance



Recommendations

- ▶ Establish diverse, local hiring and contracting metrics/goals [dollars, individuals, avg dollars per individual, per company, per Chicago Community Area]
- ▶ Ensure transparency in contracting
- ▶ Minimize layers in contracting
- ▶ Enable more direct reporting of implementers to Utilities, not competitors
- ▶ Increase bidding to enable more opportunities
- ▶ Don't assume bigger (national) companies are better
- ▶ Look locally first
 - ▶ Institutionalize a preference for maximizing the services provided by qualified smaller, local delivery contractors (rather than having such work taken on by larger, overseeing firms)
- ▶ Establish community partner relationships
- ▶ Expand these goals to entire portfolio, not just low income programs
- ▶ Return a proper ratio of energy efficiency program investment in all forms (including jobs, contracts) to black/brown and other diverse communities that make up your service territory
- ▶ Invest in building capacity of contractors to access utility resources and opportunities
- ▶ Invest in a system of communication aimed at announcing resources and opportunities and simplified access
- ▶ Review RFP requirements and other impediments to equalizing the playing field to lower the cost of entry into competitive programs for black/brown contractors

Thank you! Questions?

▶ BIG

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