

## BREAKOUT Session 2A - Proactively Developing Set of Community Benefit Principles

Wed Jan 17, 12:30 - 1:30 pm

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[Full Summit Agenda Here](#)

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[Tips for Mentimeter Here](#)

### Workshop 2A: Proactively Developing Set of Community Benefit Principles

**Description:** As part of the Biden Administration's Good Jobs Initiative, the federal Department of Energy essentially requires companies incorporate the use of community benefit plans in project proposals. In order to avoid a race to the bottom that enables companies to do the bare minimum, can we work together across a broad set of stakeholders through the Ohio River Valley region of Appalachia to develop a set of community benefit principles to which we can all agree?

**Facilitator:** Amanda Woodrum, Relmagine Appalachia & Esther Baldwin, BLAC

#### Special Invitees:

- James Kunz III , invited
- LEE GEISSE , invited

**Notetaker:** George Banziger

#### Draft Agenda:

1. **Short backgrounder - Amanda**
  - a. Community Benefit Agreement versus Community Benefit Plan vs. Community Benefit Policy
  - b. Biden Administration's Good Jobs Initiative, and DOE requirement
  - c. Basic staples of CBAs
  - d. Gold standard example - sharing the model concept paper (Cuyahoga County [Community Benefit and Opportunity Initiative](#) Draft Ordinance - 11 point plan)
2. **Mentimeter and discussion** - What would you want to see in a community benefit agreement? [ie local hire, community input into project, labor standards, prevailing wage, apprenticeship utilization requirements, set aside of funds for pre-apprenticeship, green building standards, transit access & vouchers to job sites, low-income housing for workers or displaced residents, etc.]
  - a. Esther, Jim and Lee add thoughts to start conversation off
  - b. Open to others
3. **Additional discussion questions:** Esther Baldwin - discuss BLACprint - sharing BLAC Print process, call for help, how to get involved, provide input
  - amanda woodrum

- Sharing [draft Community benefit concept paper](#) for feedback / input
- Join Appalachian community benefit working group - volunteers

### **Notes:**

Amanda Woodrum (RA)– Provided some background and definitions for community benefit principles. These principles are required for grant applications to the U.S. Department of Energy; so far, the DoE is the only federal agency requiring applicants to address these principles, but other agencies are considering them.

A “community benefits agreement” (CBA) describes the official principles agreed to by the project developer and the community-benefits coalition.

A “community development plan” is essentially the DoE requirement comprising 20% of the grant-application score for competitive funding.

A “community development policy” involves the procurement principles and relates to the size of public subsidies. This is meant to be a means of preventing anti-labor projects and a way to ensure worker- and community-centered principles in projects to be supported by DoE funds.

The common provisions of a community development plan are: job qualifications, local hires, targeted hires (under-represented groups), environmental standards, availability of public transportation to the site, affordable housing, community amenities (grocery stores, green space), accounting provisions.

Scoring criteria: community & labor engagement, quality jobs, diversity/equity/inclusion & access (under-represented groups, Justice 40 (benefit to disadvantaged communities; this would include all counties in Appalachia), mitigating harms.

What should be in a CBA? early engagement of all stakeholders, working class control, local procurement of equipment & supplies, local hiring, childcare, green space, local access, community gardens, housing, access to sustainable work opportunities, revolving loan opportunities, forfeiture agreements, strong health & environmental standards, comprehensive recruitment.

Jordi Comas (PA Department of Environmental Protection) – The New Shell plastics plant in Beaver County should adopt these CBA principles. Monsanto Chemical has an enforcement agreement involving these principles.

Esther Baldwin (BLAC) – CBAs should include guarantees of clean air, water and land, inclusion of justice-involved job applicants, preservation of historic neighborhoods, early commitment of stakeholders.

Jim Kunz (organized labor) – Construction labor groups should be at the table from the beginning of the project. Laborers from outside the project area should not reduce the wage level of workers in the project. Training & apprenticeships should be included in a CBAs. Project applicants should acknowledge that there have been many retirements in trade-union jobs, and this should be anticipated in planning any project. In rural areas where a population of skilled laborers may be in short supply, the notion of “local hires” should be expanded.

Lee Geisse (organized labor) – Advocates for organized labor are needed.

Kitty French (Affiliated Construction Trades of Ohio) – Start visits early in project life. High wages and health benefits should be ensured.

Esther – Enforceability is important; advisory groups can be an instrument for this.

Jay Mehta (Jobs to Move America) – Manufacturers should pay for training; Example is the bus company, New Flyer, the largest bus manufacturer in North America, which included full participation in both construction and manufacturing with the overriding principle of environmental justice in mind.

Jared Spears – Shuttered coal plants are an important target of sustainable-energy projects, but many companies involved are private investors. We need advocacy from the “bottom-up” to promote CBAs.

Amanda – An important question to ask in the context of CBAs is whether a particular project is part of a larger community vision.

Kitty – Employment in operations and maintenance is more important than in construction. Projects should retain incumbent workers when possible; we need case studies that go beyond just construction projects. In the case of project fatigue, it is important to have multiple partners.

Amanda – We need regionally endorsed models.

Jim – The focus in CBAs should be on some, not all, grant programs. A statutory requirement should be a ten-year plan; tax credits for ongoing activities.

Heidi Shadeck – In arranging projects we need a ready & willing coalition so that CBA principles are put into motion when the project begins.

Sally Roberts (Rise Up WV) – The focus on immediate (short-term) jobs leads to worthless projects and poor health effects.

Amanda – We need health-impact assessments as part of CBAs and guarantees to offset or mitigate harm in any proposed project.

Jordi – We need intermediary conveners to facilitate connections among project partners.

Amanda – That would be a community benefit coalition!