



Diversity Best Practices Guide for the Solar Industry



May 2019

“It’s well-known that diversity in teams leads to better decision-making, greater innovation and ultimately higher returns, but inclusion is what connects people to the business, and we believe it’s one of the core reasons they stay.”

-- Eva Bak, Vice President of People, BakUSA

Introduction

The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) and The Solar Foundation (TSF) are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce in the solar industry.

Solar is ushering in a clean energy revolution that’s making our economy stronger every day. Our companies are bringing a new kind of power to homes and businesses. Solar embodies American values — it gives us choice, independence and democratization of energy. That’s why it’s critical that we make solar jobs and solar energy available and accessible to all Americans.

We define diversity as the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other differing backgrounds or perspectives. Another way to define diversity is otherness — those human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet present in other individuals and groups.

We produced this guide because we want our members and others to be informed by best practices, and we want to demonstrate the commitment that’s required to truly become more diverse. And diverse organizations are more successful. Multiple studies have shown that more diverse and inclusive companies are more profitable and more innovative with better opportunities for new ideas. Improving diversity is not just the right thing to do, it’s also a smart business decision.

While the first goal is to build a more diverse workforce, we must also build systems that support these efforts. This is the essence of inclusion — which can be defined as *the practice of ensuring that through their work in organizations, people feel they*

belong, are engaged, valued, and connected to the goals and objectives of the organization.

We’ve taken a number of steps to foster diversity and inclusion. We’ve continued tracking our workforce diversity through a second Diversity Study. We also launched an education series on Diversity & Inclusion this year, formed partnerships with organizations such as the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Community Development Action Coalition to increase the solar industry’s recruitment of African-American students, and recruited solar companies to sign the [CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion Pledge](#).

Building this workforce will not happen on its own; it will take a sustained and conscious effort by our industry. We’ve made progress, but we have a long way to go.

Credits

This guide is a joint product of the members of SEIA’s Community Engagement Committee, with considerable support and input from [The HR Source](#) and input from the Solar Foundation, Grid Alternatives and Vote Solar. It is designed to assist companies with the practical application and implementation of diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives.

The guide is a companion to the *U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study 2019* from The Solar Foundation and SEIA, which provides the latest data on diversity and inclusion in the solar workforce and identifies areas where the industry can improve. That report is available at www.thesolarfoundation.org/diversity.

Diversity & Inclusion at SEIA

SEIA is the national trade group for solar energy and through advocacy and education is building a strong industry to power America. According to The Solar Foundation's *National Solar Jobs Census*, the U.S. solar industry employs more than 242,000 Americans and we represent organizations that promote, manufacture, install and support solar energy development. SEIA works with its 1,000-member companies to: create jobs; increase diversity in the industry; champion the use of cost-competitive solar in America; remove market barriers; and educate the public on the benefits of solar energy.

At SEIA, we strive to hire and retain people who are smart, passionate, curious and innovative, and then provide them the independence and development opportunities they need to flourish. Our success comes from great teamwork and exceptional individual effort, so we strive to nurture and reward collaboration and entrepreneurship. We celebrate diversity and inclusion — of culture, of background, of experience and of thought — and recognize it as a key to our ability to deliver insightful and creative services to our members and our industry.

SEIA believes that by building a more diverse workforce, the solar industry will enjoy broader recruitment pools, increased retention and a more engaged, productive and fulfilled workforce. Diversity and inclusion is an active endeavor that should permeate all major aspects of an organization.

SEIA President and CEO Abigail Ross Hopper has taken several steps to demonstrate leadership on diversity and inclusion. She made it a priority on the day she started at SEIA. She has supported The Solar Foundation's *U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study* series, starting with the initial report in 2017.

In addition, Ms. Hopper has taken the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion Pledge¹, a commitment to rally the solar community to advance diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Andrea Luecke, President and Executive Director at The Solar Foundation, has also taken the pledge, as have at least 70 solar industry executives at the time of publication.

“I’ve committed to making my own organization a space to have complex conversations around diversity and inclusion, implementing unconscious bias education and sharing best practices and challenges with others.”

-- Abigail Ross Hopper, *Huffington Post* December 2018

The Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion

What we can say unequivocally is: There is a place for everyone in the solar industry. People with different backgrounds offer innovative ideas — different ways of accomplishing our goals, different ways to reach new communities and different ways to solve problems. Put simply, we make better, more creative decisions when we have more varied voices at the table.

Additional Best Practices Welcome

SEIA and The Solar Foundation recognize that the implementation of these best practices requires continuous efforts. We will be continually developing and revising this guide. If your organization has developed best practices you are willing to share, please reach out to diversity@seia.org.

There are economic benefits, too. A study by the [Center for Talent and Innovation](#) found that companies that are more diverse are 45 percent more likely to grow their market share and 70 percent more likely to capture an entire new market. A [McKinsey & Company study](#) found that gender-diverse companies are 21 percent more likely to outperform other companies in their industry. Ethnically diverse companies are 33 percent more likely to be more successful than their peers.

Companies that have gender and ethnic diversity

and inclusion within their senior leadership teams are more profitable, the McKinsey study reported. The study also reported companies with diverse leadership teams create a strong corporate ethos that resonates across employee, customer, supplier, investor, and broader stakeholder groups.

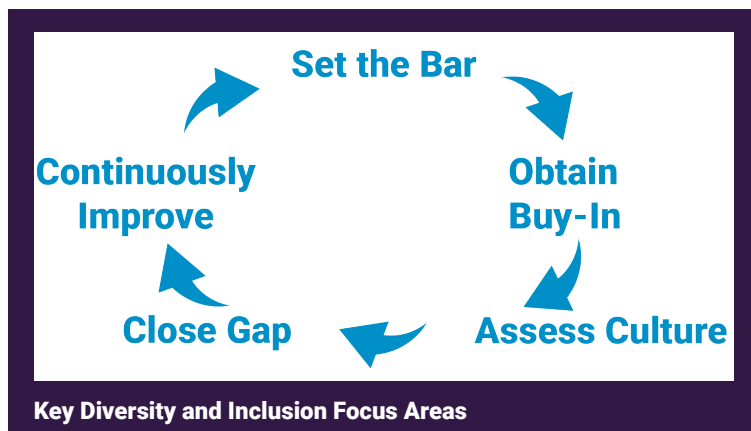
¹The CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion™ is the largest CEO-driven business commitment to advance diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Recognizing that change starts at the executive level, more than 600 CEOs of the world’s leading companies and business organizations have signed the pledge.

Guidelines for Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion in Solar Industry Companies

When you benchmark organizations that have achieved high levels of success in diversity and inclusion, you find one thing in common: they all take a strategic approach. They understand that long-term success starts with building commitment for the effort throughout the workforce and that a poorly conceived process has little chance of success — regardless of the merits of the plan. To reach the highest levels of success, diversity and inclusion must become part of the culture of the organization.

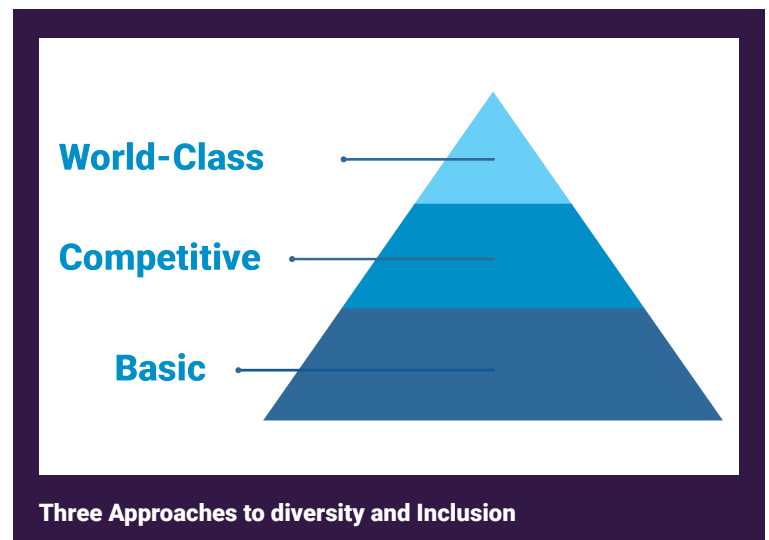
A strategic approach to diversity and inclusion includes 5 Key Focus Areas. They are:

- Set the Bar
- Obtain Buy-in
- Assess Culture
- Close the Gap
- Continuously Improve



Key Focus Area 1 – Set the Bar

The solar industry is composed of companies of varied sizes, at different stages of development and with vastly different levels of resources. Therefore, as with many industries, a “one size fits all” diversity and inclusion strategy will not work for solar. Companies should start by setting a realistic vision for diversity and inclusion based on one of three approaches: Basic, Competitive or World Class. That vision can be set based on a cultural audit, or other review of where your organization stands.



- The **Basic Approach** allows you to “get your foot in the door” with respect to building a diversity and inclusion focus in your organization. For example, if you already have a diverse workforce, you may not want to focus on recruiting. Instead,

you might focus your initial efforts on making sure you can retain and promote a diverse workforce.

- A **Competitive Approach** is designed to put your diversity and inclusion efforts on par with other employers in your industry. You will need to do your homework to determine what your competitors are doing so you will know where to place your bar (and how best to allocate your resources).
- For a **World Class Approach**, you will need to build and implement strategies in each of the 5 Diversity & Inclusion Focus Areas. In addition, you must have visionary leaders who are willing to incorporate new, innovative strategies into the diversity and inclusion effort.

Announce your initiative to employees and stakeholders. You can do this by providing information about the initiative on your website, in recruiting materials and in customer communications.

Best Practices

1. **Determine the type of program you can build and sustain.** Bear in mind that where you start is not necessarily where you will end up. Starting with a basic program is not a sign of a lack of commitment but an acceptance of current realities. Make sure that message is clear to all.
2. **Announce your initiative to all.** You can do this by providing information about the initiative on your website, in recruiting materials and in customer communications.
3. **Ensure your efforts meet minimum standards.** Regardless of the type of diversity and inclusion effort you launch, there are some minimum standards that you must meet. Specifically, your program should affirm that your organization: a) makes every effort to be an equal opportunity employer; and b) integrates individuals of all characteristics — including within federal and state protected classes — into leadership positions. Federally protected characteristics

include race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, genetic information, pregnancy and veteran status. State protected characteristics differ by jurisdiction but can include sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, political affiliation, familial status, status as a domestic violence victim and marital status.

Key Focus Area 2 – Obtain Buy-in

For any diversity and inclusion initiative to be embraced within an organization, it is imperative that the organization's leadership demonstrate a strong commitment and that leaders clearly articulate the business rationale.

Organizations should identify diversity and inclusion as core values with specific goals in place to ensure continued growth. These organizations must build programs, policies and structures in a way that establishes responsibility, accountability and shared values for advancing diversity and inclusion goals.

Buy-in efforts must address the common misconception by leaders that diversity and inclusion is a Human Resources/Diversity Team issue.

“Inclusive leader behaviors effectively unlock the innovative potential of an inherently diverse workforce, enabling companies to increase their share of existing markets and lever open brand new ones,” said a report by the Center for Talent Innovation.

“By encouraging a proliferation of perspectives, leaders who foster a speak-up culture also enable companies to realize greater efficiencies and trim costs.”

-- Center for Talent Innovation, *Innovation, Diversity, and Market Growth*

Best Practices

1. **Make diversity and inclusion a core value.** Add it to your mission statement, strategic plan and other places where other organizational core values are presented. Incorporate diversity and inclusion into the performance evaluation system for managers.
2. **Include diversity and inclusion in decision making.** Make sure major organizational decisions include consideration as to whether they are consistent with your diversity and inclusion values.
3. **Document and communicate the business case to leaders, employees, supporters, investors and the community.** It should be made clear that a diverse workforce is important to the organization and that leaders play a critical role in the success of the program. Oftentimes, it is the data in the business case argument that secures support from skeptics.
4. **Communicate the what, why, and roles of your diversity and inclusion effort.** Communication is key to success. Make sure employees know what you plan to do and how it supports the business goals of the organization. Leaders should consider scheduling face-to-face meetings with staff to regularly discuss diversity and inclusion efforts.

5. **Engage Leaders.** Don't just rely on HR and diversity leaders to get the word out about diversity and inclusion initiatives. Employees across the organization should convey the message that diversity and inclusion is a core value, both internally and externally. All staff should actively engage in these efforts by leading or facilitating diversity and inclusion discussions and mentoring others.
6. **Train leaders.** Provide leadership training in diversity, inclusion, cultural competency and other diversity-related topics to help organization leaders build the skills needed to nurture an inviting work environment. Make sure whoever performs the onboarding or training is aware of the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion so they can properly incorporate it into all training materials. Training sessions should include a discussion of the organization's values, the value of a diverse workforce, the definition of diversity and inclusion, and an open discussion of cultural differences, biases and stereotypes. In addition, they should discuss the responsibilities of managers and staff to promote and encourage a diverse work environment.
7. **Challenge leaders to be role models.** Start by creating behavioral standards. As role models, leaders should “live the values” and demonstrate these behaviors. One easy thing leaders can do is personally endorse the organization's diversity and inclusion goals and values.

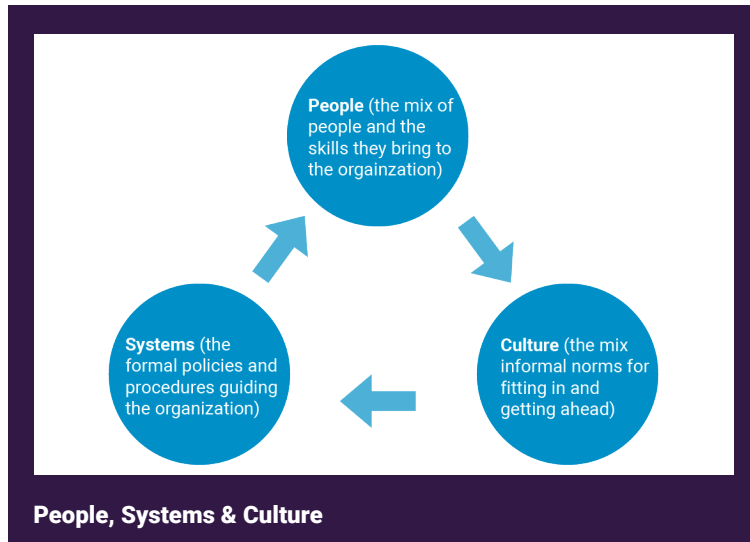
Key Focus Area 3 – Assess the Current State

To implement best practices to enhance diversity and inclusion, organizations should collect baseline information needed to understand the current state of diversity and inclusion in their workplace. This is not necessarily a demographic assessment, but instead should include a cultural assessment across three dimensions of the organization:

This is an area where “inclusion” takes center stage. The most telling indicator of workplace inclusiveness is employees' daily experiences and interactions with co-workers. The cultural assessment will give you

insights into the nature of those experiences.

Assess where you are and where you desire to be. The assessment can be done by survey, focus groups and other methods. **Note which systems and processes are aligned with your diversity and inclusion vision while also noting which ones may be hindering progress.**



Best Practices

1. **Make sure you hear directly from employees.** Don't assume you or leaders will know the diversity and inclusion issues and concerns of employees.
2. **Use an established survey/assessment process.** Diversity and inclusion is a complicated topic; a poorly designed survey or process can inhibit progress.
3. **Create an internal cultural assessment team.** Even if you are using an external consultant, it is still a good idea to form an internal team. The team can provide helpful context to the consultant, and support the process and implementation of the cultural assessment results.
4. **Use the results of the cultural assessment to guide the next steps of your diversity and inclusion initiative.** Consider dividing your action plan into short-term, mid-term and long-term actions and immediately begin work on the

short-term items to drive momentum.

5. **Enable feedback loops.** This is one of the most overlooked steps and may be one of the most important. Seeking feedback and implementing changes lets employees know you heard them, understand their concerns and are committed to addressing them.

How to Do a Cultural Assessment

Assessments can be performed by certified diversity consultants, HR professionals, or through the use of online tools. There are numerous options available, and we have included a few examples below. While these are paid tools, we are not explicitly endorsing any vendor.

- **Cultural Mapping Assessment**
www.knowledgeworkx.com
KnowledgeWorkx
The Cultural Mapping Assessment tool examines intercultural dynamics in the work environment. It is a 72-question online inventory that creates a profile along 12 dimensions of culture and how those dimensions affect behavior. The assessment is embedded into a broad individual and organizational development program. The program allows for Inter-Cultural Intelligence (ICI) to be developed and applied on individual, team, and organizational levels in areas such as Individual Coaching, Inter-Cultural Intelligence, Inter-Cultural Team Building Interventions, Inter-Cultural Team Development and Dynamics, Inter-Cultural Conflict Resolution, Inter-Cultural Negotiations, and InterCultural Communication.
- **Diversity Awareness Profile (DAP)**
www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787995541.html
Karen Stinson
The Diversity Awareness Profile (DAP) is a self-assessment tool that helps individuals improve working relationships among diverse co-workers and customers by

increasing the awareness of their behavior and how it affects others. This 6-page assessment can be bought as a stand-alone profile, or with the fully revised second edition of the DAP Facilitator's Guide, which walks facilitators through the process of preparing, administering, and debriefing the DAP.

- The American Association of Colleges & Universities has compiled a [list of assessment tools](#) that your company might consider exploring.

Key Focus Area 4 – Close the Demographic Gap

The *National Solar Jobs Census 2018* identified significant gaps in the representation of diverse employees in the industry. The study found women comprise only 26 percent of the solar workforce. With respect to people of color, the study found 17 percent of U.S. solar workers are Hispanic or Latino, which is comparable to the overall workforce. However, only 8 percent of solar workers are African American, compared to 12 percent in the overall workforce. Nine percent of solar workers are Asian. American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiians each account for 1 percent of the workforce.

To close the demographic gaps, solar energy companies should focus on six areas: **Outreach, Recruitment, Interviewing and Hiring, Retention, Upward Mobility** and building a **Culture of Inclusion**. This guide provides Best Practices information for each of these critical areas. Indicators of progress will include increased employee productivity, increased employee morale, increased employee satisfaction and decreased employee turnover.

Close the Demographic Gap | Outreach

Organizations that are most successful with diversity hiring will tell you they are successful because of their outreach efforts. Outreach refers to the efforts designed to build long-term relationships. Effective

outreach allows you to capture the attention of the best and brightest talent in the diverse pool. In addition, it builds partnerships that will prove fruitful for the long term.

Best Practices

1. **Use research and input from current employees to identify diverse sources.** Diverse employees are good at both identifying good sources and helping to build relationships with those sources. They often know key stakeholders – making it easier to start the relationship and build trust.
2. **Build relationships with the selected sources.** Identify the key individuals you need to know at each source and build a personal relationship with them. Make the outreach personal by including phone/video conference conversations.
3. **Make the relationship mutually beneficial.** Partner and/or collaborate with diverse groups on projects that support their priorities. Supporting them will build good will.
4. **Give it time to grow.** Building new relationships is like planting new crops. It will take time for the fruits of your work to be realized.

Close the Demographic Gap | Recruitment

Adopting a strategic approach to diversity and inclusion will likely involve expanding current recruiting sources and methods. It will require going beyond the typical job posting sources most commonly used in the industry (i.e. Indeed, Monster and CareerBuilder) with ones more commonly used by the diverse population(s) you seek to attract. [Appendix 1](#) provides a list of diverse job posting sources to consider.

Studies indicate that more than half of the jobs in the United States are filled through referrals and networking, making it imperative that organizations broaden their efforts to reach more diverse groups and make personal connections. To attract more diverse candidates, you will need to be creative, break out of current recruitment habits and take more risks.

Best Practices

1. **Determine which diverse groups are underrepresented for each core position.** Focus your diverse recruiting efforts on those groups.
2. **Communicate your organization's diversity and inclusion goals to stakeholders.**
3. **Consider creating marketing materials that emphasize the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.**
4. **Offer a referral bonus to current employees to broaden recruitment options.**
5. **Advertise open positions in diverse professional publications and websites.**
6. **Recruit candidates from educational programs** for part-time roles and recruit program graduates for full-time opportunities. A good example is the SEIA/TSF collaboration with Historical Black Colleges and Universities.
7. **Form strategic alliances with local and national diversity and inclusion organizations to identify diverse candidates.** Good examples include Women of Renewable Industries and Sustainable Energy (WRISE), the NAACP, Women in Energy Network and American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE).
8. **Participate in job fairs that are well-attended by diverse candidates.**
9. **Consider attending community events and sponsoring vendor tables to expand your organization's networking base.**
10. **Maintain contact with exceptional diverse candidates who choose other employment, eventually developing an alumni network.**
11. **Engage with workforce development boards** which can help broaden recruitment to diverse candidates in your area. A directory of workforce development boards can be found here: <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/WorkforceDevelopment/find-workforce-development-boards.aspx?newsearch=true>

Close the Demographic Gap | Interviewing & Hiring

Also, do not overlook the importance of training hiring managers on how to identify and eliminate personal [unconscious biases in the hiring process](#). Unconscious bias, more than intentional bias, is the most common cause of failed diversity outcomes in the hiring process.

Best Practices

1. **Keep in mind the diverse categories of people protected by federal, state, and local law.** Interviewers should avoid asking questions that implicate those characteristics.
2. **Train hiring managers on unconscious bias.** Make sure they understand and appreciate how socialization allows subtle biases to creep into our actions and decisions.
3. **Provide hiring managers guidelines for interviewing.** Interviewers should familiarize themselves with the types of questions that are proscribed by EEOC guidance.
4. **Ensure a consistent hiring process.** Make sure questions are the same and in the same order for each candidate. Ask open-ended questions that allow candidates to emphasize their strengths. Create an [interview rating matrix](#) as a tool for hiring managers.
5. **Consider adopting a [behavioral interview process](#).** This process uses a questioning format that [allows you to better validate the skills, competencies and experience of candidates](#).
6. **Identify the top three (or so) job duties.** This will allow hiring managers to focus on the qualifications of the candidate when making hiring decisions (not just if they like them or they interviewed well).
7. **Allow applicants to interview with several individuals.** Include other employees from diverse backgrounds, so that feedback is thorough and, potentially, more impartial.

Close the Demographic Gap | Retention

To be effective at retention, you need to know what employees want and need. Oftentimes, the answer varies greatly from one employee to another (and may have nothing to do with race or gender). For example, your organization would likely do very different things to retain Baby Boomers versus Millennials. And it is something altogether different to retain full-time employees versus part-time, or those working in headquarters versus those working remotely. Employers must be creative when developing retention strategies.

Best Practices

1. **Take the initiative to ensure all corporate policies are free from bias — including recruiting, work allocation, events and training.**
2. **Consider encouraging staff to participate in organizations focused on encouraging representation of particular groups in the workplace.**
3. **Develop a system for review of managers that includes diversity and inclusion.** This will allow you to identify managers in need of further training.
4. **Train leaders on tools and processes used for performance review, employee development, conflict management, mentoring and other management issues.** Provide leaders incentives to take advantage of the training (e.g. mandatory, “Required for Success”). Ensure the training is integrated into your onboarding process.
5. **Implement an evaluation process to ensure your organization’s diversity and inclusion program is working.** The assessment should ensure that individuals from groups underrepresented in your organization (for example, people of color, women, differently-abled individuals, and individuals who were formerly incarcerated) are achieving leadership positions in the organization.
6. **Create a formal staff mentoring program.**

Pair senior staff with junior staff to broaden communication and further career advancement opportunities. Mentors and mentees should set reasonable expectations and be provided with regular opportunities to meet.

7. **Consider incentives to encourage current employees to take new employees to lunch during their first few months with the organization.**

Close the Demographic Gap | Upward Mobility

One of the findings of the *U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study 2019* is that women are less likely to be represented at the Manager, Director, and President level than men, and are less likely to earn higher wages than men. Further, the majority of senior executives reported at solar firms are white (88 percent) and men (80 percent).

Additional highlights from the Solar Industry Diversity Study 2019:

48% of all respondents to the survey said they have successfully moved up the career ladder and continue to do so.

52% of men reported they have successfully moved up the career ladder, compared to only 37% of women.

51% of white respondents reported they have successfully moved up the career ladder, compared to 47% of black respondents.

7% of men responded they have not been successful in moving up the career ladder.

20% women responded they have not been successful in moving up the career ladder.

This is a clear sign that, as an industry, we have gaps to close to ensure that all employees have equal opportunities to succeed. Closing these gaps will improve the workplace experience for everyone and also be good for business.

Best Practices

1. **Provide opportunities for employees to develop.** Employers must commit to cultivating a rewarding work environment for employees that includes, but is not limited to, challenging work, support for employees to build authority within their roles, and movement up the career ladder.
2. **Create mentoring opportunities.** Mentoring is an industry best practice. Both formal and informal programs have proven effective. In addition to providing mentors for employees, ensure diverse employees also serve as mentors for others.
3. **Develop the performance management skills of employees.** Ensure they understand the performance management system and are aware of and know how to manage the subtle biases that impact the evaluation process. Also, consider adding diversity and inclusion goals to managers' performance plans.
4. **Check bias in promotion opportunities and succession planning.**
5. **Ensure that promotion opportunities are openly advertised** to all employees so that everyone has a chance to be considered.

Close the Demographic Gap | Culture of Inclusion

Work on inclusion at your organization should start by focusing on creating a culture that is authentic (i.e. true to your brand) while meeting the needs of your employees. Then, you should factor in issues of inclusion to ensure the culture allows all employees to contribute and thrive. Having transparent diversity and inclusion goals and acknowledging areas for improvement will make employees feel more included in the ongoing culture of the organization.

Best Practices

1. **Start an internal diversity and inclusion committee or council.** This group should be open to all staff members, encourage participation at all staff levels and should reflect the diversity of

- the company. Provide this group with training on diversity and inclusion, teambuilding and meeting management. Use this group to identify training and recruiting opportunities, organize inclusive events and to be a safe zone to address any diversity and inclusion issues that may arise.
2. **Continuously review and update policies and procedures.** Use the data from the organizational assessment, ongoing feedback from employees and changes in the laws to identify policies and procedures that need updating, and any new policies/procedures that are required to meet the changing needs of your diverse workforce.
3. **Ensure the organization's equal employment opportunity (EEO) statement is up to date with all federal and state protected classes.**
4. **Offer benefits that go beyond the traditional and support the diverse needs of your employees.** This may include things like ensuring there are refrigerators at staff events for breast milk, providing employee assistance programs and other mental health resources, establishing family leave policies and offering flexible work hours and work from home schedules.
5. **Ensure health insurance benefits are being offered to the appropriate dependents claimed by an employee, based on federal and state law and are meeting employee needs.**
6. **Ensure your meetings are inclusive.** When setting the day and time for meetings, consider the unique circumstances of employees who work remotely, work part-time, carpool or cannot stay after hours. Make sure to advertise the meetings company-wide.
7. **Ensure social invitations are inclusive.** For example, use wording that invites partners and not just spouses.
8. **Consider encouraging employees to form affinity groups to provide internal support to fellow employees.** Formally announce the fact that the organization supports the formation of these groups and, when possible, provide

financial and other support to the groups.

9. **Encourage input from employees from different faith communities, age groups, ethnic backgrounds and gender identities.**
10. **Find ways to understand the diverse cultures represented in your organization.** Offer space and time for employees to discuss their backgrounds and how their backgrounds influence their way of thinking, working, communicating, etc.

3. **Set clear goals and key performance indicators that periodically monitor the organization's progress.** Goals can be measured by utilizing metrics that analyze hiring, retention and attrition statistics as well as by soliciting feedback from staff and affiliates.
4. **Use data routinely collected on productivity, morale and retention to measure success.** Regularly evaluate which efforts are successful and adjust accordingly.

Key Focus Area 5 – Continuously Improve

Habit 2 in Franklin Covey's book *7 Habits of Highly Successful People* is "Begin with the end in mind." This is also important in the development of an effective continuous improvement strategy for your diversity and inclusion process. At the beginning of the process you should ask the question, "How are we going to measure success?" The *U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study 2019* found that 36 percent of solar employers formally track employee demographics and diversity. While this is an increase from 2017, a greater number of companies need to begin tracking these metrics if we, as an industry, are serious about achieving our diversity and inclusion goals.

The most successful diversity and inclusion programs are developed to continuously measure success. Metrics are built into the program tools and processes to provide the data they will need to assess success and guarantee support for the long term.

Best Practices

1. **Create systems (e.g. dashboards) for collecting and tracking key demographic data.** Smaller organizations or those with a limited budget for the diversity and inclusion efforts can use a spreadsheet that is periodically updated as an effective substitute.
2. **Hold leadership accountable for making positive progress toward achieving the organization's diversity and inclusion goals.** This is an essential success factor for sustaining diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Growing Solar in Your Community

“Solar can provide long-term financial relief to families struggling with high and unpredictable energy costs, living-wage jobs in an industry where the workforce has increased 168% over the past seven years, and a source of clean, local energy sited in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by traditional power generation.”

-- SEIA's Low-Income Solar Policy Guide 2018

A recent study commissioned by Groundswell and conducted by NYMBUS Holdings, a minority owned research firm in Washington D.C., said the solar industry's “wealth building economic expansion” is not delivering benefits to diverse entrepreneurs and corporate leaders. The study, “Solar Empowers Some,” was focused on the state of diversity and inclusion in Baltimore and Washington D.C. Other national studies suggest similar challenges exist throughout the industry.

The report says the two cities should accelerate programs that “enable equitable access to affordable solar and associated electricity bill savings.” It makes a strong case that there is not a culture of diversity in the solar industry.

Recommendations from the study that we encourage solar industry companies to adopt include:

- Leverage existing municipal programs to mentor people of color and woman-owned businesses in adjacent market space, such as general and electrical contracting, to compete in the solar market;
- Improve transparency and accountability by measuring women and minority-business participation in state or municipal RFPs;
- Collaborate with industry, academia, and local nonprofits to incubate women and minority-led businesses that can drive innovation; and

- Maintain momentum and accelerate programs such as DC Solar for All.

Additionally, a recent study by researchers at UC Berkeley and Tufts University² shows fewer rooftop solar photovoltaics installations exist in African-American and Hispanic-dominant neighborhoods than in white-dominant neighborhoods. The study found that when communities of color are initially seeded — or have first-hand access to rooftop PV technologies — the deployment significantly increases compared with other racial/ethnic groups for median household income below the national average. From a workforce development perspective, solar development in diverse communities is also an opportunity to spread awareness, generate interest, and inspire new potential solar employees to join our industry.

The “[Low Income Solar Policy Guide](#),” developed by GRID Alternatives, Vote Solar and the Center for Social Inclusion, also highlighted the importance of diversity and inclusion across the value chain citing potential benefits as: economic growth and jobs; widespread adoption of solar power; and equality.

²Disparities in rooftop photovoltaics deployment in the United States by race and ethnicity. Written by Deborah A. Sunter, Sergio Castellanos and Daniel M. Kammen. Available online: <https://rael.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Sunter-Castellanos-Kammen-Nature-SustainabilityDisparitiesPVDploymentRaceEthnicity.pdf>

Conclusion

A [recent study by the Brookings Institution](#) puts into context what is at play and why it's important. The study concludes that employment in low-carbon energy fields is better-paid than average jobs and is widely available to workers without college degrees. These jobs are “dominated” by men and some lack racial diversity, the study finds.

“This is a very accessible blue/green collar sector in many respects — widely distributed in both red and blue places, accessible to an inordinate number of people who don't have a college degree, and a genuine opportunity for all kinds of workers,” co-author Mark Muro said.

But Muro, an expert in industrial transitions told Axios: “We won't just naturally get a more diverse clean energy workforce. It is going to require active effort.”

We hope that this best practice guide will provide some tools to develop a more active effort on diversity and inclusion not just in the solar industry, but across the entire energy economy.



2019 Solar Works DC team in Northeast DC

Appendix 1 - Diversity and Inclusion Recruiting and Information Resources

The following are some of the many resources available that can help you build out your diversity and inclusion program.

Diverse Recruiting Resources

American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)
 Association for Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting (ALPFA)
 Equal Opportunity Publication
 Hire Veterans First
 Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement (HACE)
 Hispanic-jobs.com
 Job Opportunities for Disabled Veterans (JOFDVAV)
 LatPro
 Military Hire
 Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)
 National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (NAAAHR)
 National Association of Black Accountants, Inc.
 National Association of Black Journalist
 National Black MBA Association (NBMBAA)
 National Sales Network (NSN)
 National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
 Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
 Society of Women Engineers (SWE)
 TA Online (Careers for Transitioning Military)
 The Association of Hispanic Professionals (Prospanica)
 The Black Collegian
 The Consortium
 Women of Renewable Industries and Sustainable Energy (WRISE)

Other Diversity Resources

American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity
 American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE)
 B-Lab Best Practices Guide: Diversity & Inclusion in Your Workplace
 CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion
 Diversity Central
 DiversityInc
 Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
 Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs)
 Workforce Diversity Network

Website

www.aises.org
www.alpfa.org
www.eop.com
www.hireveteransfirst.com
www.haceonline.org
www.Hispanic-jobs.com
www.jofdav.com
www.latpro.com
www.militaryhire.com
www.manrrs.org
www.naaahr.org
www.nabainc.org
www.nabj.org
www.nbmbaa.org
www.salesnetwork.org
www.nsbe.org
www.shpe.org
<http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org>
www.taonline.com
www.prospanica.org
www.imdiversity.com
www.cgsm.org
www.wrisenergy.org

Website

www.aaed.org
www.aabe.org
<http://tinyurl.com/y2pmmadj>
www.ceoaction.com
www.diversitycentral.com
www.diversityinc.com
www.hacu.net
www.thehundred-seven.org
www.workforcediversitynetwork.com

Case Study

SunPower TIDE

TIDE is an employee-led initiative open to all SunPower employees and contractors in all locations. Starting as the Women's Exchange in 2014, TIDE continues to lead the effort to make our company more diverse and give individuals a sense of belonging. Our Vision is to foster a workplace culture of inclusion and empowerment where everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential and to feel safe in their work environment.

Our Mission is focused on three separate areas: Gender Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (DIB) and Family Programs.

Examples of initiatives that we've driven in the past few years:

- Regularly survey TIDE group (80-120 employees) to identify top issues that we should focus on as a group and drive within the company
- Communicate findings back to HR and company leadership (including our CEO and Executive Vice President of HR) to provide bottoms-up feedback on issues that need to be addressed
- Partnered with the recruiting team to provide resources and ideas on ways to attract a more diverse set of candidates for open positions
- Hosted a number of speaker series sessions where we've interviewed senior leaders within the company and asked them to share their career journey and insights & advice
- Hosted several external speakers on various topics including career growth, how other companies (such as Google) are approaching diversity, inclusion & culture to learn from them
- TIDE members have developed and lead training sessions on topics such as unconscious bias, sponsorship/mentorship and micro-aggressions

- Developed a recommendation for a Family Leave Policy and are working with HR and the executive team to get the program approved
- Proposed metrics around diversity that we wanted the organization to carry. The executive team introduced diversity metrics into the top level company dashboard as a result; metrics have varied over time
- Worked with HR to ensure that results of the annual salary equity review are shared with TIDE group
- Pushed for regular review of promotion data by gender (and sharing of results)



2017 International Women's Day at TIDE

Case Study

Namasté Solar

Namasté Solar is about more than helping homeowners and commercial property owners save money with solar. We're here to prove there is a better way to do business; one where you can make a profit and a difference. When you choose Namasté Solar, you're amplifying your impact by working with an employee-owned, local Colorado company that has passed the rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency required to become a Certified B Corporation.

As an employee-owned cooperative, Namasté Solar was designed from the beginning with equality in mind – as exemplified in our democratic one-person, one-vote process for making major decisions. As the company has grown to nearly 200 people, we've seen the need to go beyond intention of equality to attention to equity. In mid-2018 we increased our attention equity, diversity and inclusion with these education initiatives:

- Seminar series on Unconscious Bias – It's a common practice to 'build capacity' within an organization and as individuals by understanding unconscious bias. In-person participants in this seminar series watch compelling, curated videos and have open discussion. Anyone is encouraged to drop in, with no preparation needed. The content is shared with all employees, so if in-person attendance is not feasible it can be watched on their own time.
- Right Use of Power workshop – After engaging in this workshop, our people have come to use the terms "up power" and "down power" commonly in our workplace. Twice a year we offer a full-day experiential workshop available for all employees as paid time. Participants learn about power differentials, the "4 Is" of oppression: ideological, interpersonal, institutional, and internalized), and about microaggressions as aspects of communication and behaviors that perpetuate oppression and unhealthy power dynamics in the work place and beyond.

- "That's What She Said" book discussion – This book, authored by Joanne Lipman and subtitled "What Men and Women Need to Know About Working Together", has positively affected the way many Namastaliens perceive and behave. In fall 2018, we invited employees to participate in small group discussion centered around the content of the book. Within six months, 28% of Namastaliens had participated. The result is not only raised awareness leading to cultural change, but also a review of many of our processes and practices through the lens of potential gender bias.

We are committed to pay attention to our equity, diversity and inclusion educational efforts, which are a part of the "Namasté way". We are challenging ourselves to provide educational opportunities in formats that are accessible for the diverse work environments of our field and office employees.



Namasté Solar

Case Study

GRID Alternatives

Solar Works DC

One initiative that works to combat inequity in solar employment is the Solar Works DC program. Solar Works DC is a program of the DC Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), in partnership with the Department of Employment Services, and is implemented by GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic. The goal of this program is twofold: to bring clean, affordable energy to DC residents while also preparing residents to enter careers in the solar industry.

The 12-week solar installation job training program focuses on teaching practical work experience to District residents to open new career opportunities for them in the solar industry. Trainees begin the week in lecture-style seminars that involve PV 101 classes, hands-on training with certified staff instructors and professional development courses. The second half of the week is made up of “install days”, where participants can physically install a working solar system on a participating home.

In addition to covering installation and solar module basics, this program teaches individuals how to grow as a professional and to advocate for themselves and their careers. Brittany Moore, GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic’s Workforce Development and Volunteerism Manager, said that “the most rewarding part of Solar Works DC is seeing the trainees feeling confident in their own abilities and conquering their fears, allowing themselves to be challenged in a way they haven’t before.” Trainees can learn from each other, grow with each other, and interact with people who they may never have interacted with in the first place. The program is helping the next generation of solar workers shift how they see themselves and is opening up a whole new world of opportunity.

Things to consider when implementing a workforce development program in your community:

- Where will you be recruiting attendees from?

Have a plan in place for how and where you will be actively recruiting participants, and how to address specific needs that your participants may need. Look into community groups and social service organizations that can provide potential partnerships when recruiting new trainees.

- Have a case management plan in place:

You will likely have participants from a variety of different backgrounds who have a wide array of work requirements. Having a case manager on staff ensures sure your trainees are equipped to be job ready can help make the program easier and more enjoyable.

- Have an employment plan in place for trainees

How will you help your trainees enter the workforce? Will you hire them directly after the program ends, or will you have a system in place to get them in contact with other solar companies hiring in your area? Make these plans clear to trainees from the start, so they are aware of the goals they are working to achieve.

Read more about the Solar Works DC program [here](#)



Spring Cohort 2019 of Solar Works DC

Case Study

Sunwealth

Sunwealth is a Somerville-based clean energy investment firm driven to change who has access to renewable energy. Led by experienced solar industry professionals, Sunwealth has created diverse portfolios that include both commercial and residential projects, while delivering returns for local developers, installers, and investors. Since 2015, we have completed over 75 installations that will provide over \$9 million in savings to our power purchasers and host locations and over \$12 million in revenues to local solar developers and installers. From the very beginning, we have sought to work in those areas that are traditionally underserved by capital and to build diverse solar portfolios with a focus on access and inclusion. More than 50 percent of the projects we have developed and financed to date are located in low-income communities, and almost a quarter are located in communities of color.

Solar industry professionals may tell you that any racial disparities in solar deployment are unintentional, but that is exactly the problem. Unless we are intentional – intentional in including low-income people and communities of color in our outreach, education and business development efforts, intentional in who we employ and the customers we seek to serve, and intentional about where we locate our businesses – these communities will be left behind.

Sunwealth is intentional in how we are building our business, and in the community of partners with whom we are building it. We are proud to partner with local developers – organizations and individuals who share our vision of a more inclusive renewable energy future, including the [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#),

[Resonant Energy](#), [United Solar Associates](#), [Greentown Labs](#), [Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation](#), [Reinvestment Fund](#), [Boston Properties](#), the [City of Somerville](#), [Epiphany School](#), [Holyoke Gas and Electric](#), [Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center](#), [Boston Impact Initiative](#), Vote Solar and the more than 125 investors who support our work. Together, we acknowledge the inequalities around us and work to combat them. Together, we are working to recognize solar's full potential as a force to create energy savings, environmental benefits, jobs and revenues – not to mention the sense of ownership in the role we can all play in fighting climate change – in all of our communities, especially underserved ones.



Case Study

Bright Power

Since 2004, **Bright Power** has changed the built environment by dramatically reducing carbon emissions and improving building performance. From design to ribbon cutting, energy auditing to implementing improvements, and performance benchmarking to ensuring results, we deliver deep value to all stakeholders in real estate—owners, operators, investors, occupants, communities, and the planet that houses all of us.

One of our key employee-driven initiatives is the Alliance for Multicultural People in Sustainability (AMPS). AMPS is an initiative from Bright Power to encourage the representation of a multicultural and diverse body of staff in the field of sustainability, construction, clean energy, and data analytics. The group recruits guest speakers with expertise on D&I so they can learn methodologies and try to replicate successful programs within Bright Power. Recent meeting topics and areas of interest have included:

- Exploring connections between the communities that we work in and serve
- Increasing opportunities for Bright Power women and minorities to display their talent in several platforms
- Attracting and retaining a body of staff that is representative of the multiculturalism of the cities where we work and customers we serve
- Creating opportunities for multicultural collaboration and recognition among staff
- Setting the precedent for what a successful Diverse, Equitable & Inclusive organization in sustainability looks like

AMPS provides opportunities for the growth and representation of a multicultural staff to encourage: diversity in the industry, awareness of the sustainable and social impact in underrepresented communities and foster thought leadership inside and outside of the organization.

The Alliance for Multicultural People in Sustainability (AMPS)

Vision Statement

The Alliance for Multicultural People in Sustainability (AMPS) is an initiative from Bright Power to encourage the representation of a multicultural and diverse body of staff in the field of sustainability, construction, clean energy, and data analytics.

Mission Statement

AMPS provides opportunities for the growth and representation of a multicultural staff to encourage: diversity in the industry, awareness of the sustainable and social impact in underrepresented communities and foster thought leadership inside and outside of the organization.



The Bright Power Team

Case Study

Sunrun

Solar Leader Sets Example with 100% Pay Parity

Sunrun, the nation's leading home solar, battery, and energy services company and a member of the Solar Energy Industries Association, is committed to achieving 100% pay parity. Sunrun's commitment is felt at all levels. Lynn Jurich, Sunrun's co-founder and CEO made it clear that "fair and equal pay for all genders and races is a fundamental human right and integral to the Sunrun ethos. In the United States today, the workplace inequity that exists is unacceptable. On average, women are paid 80 cents on the dollar compared to men. Taking real action to address the issue is the right thing for our business, our communities and our society."

Sunrun believes achieving pay parity is a significant step toward gender equality in the workplace. Sunrun became the first national solar company to achieve this milestone after committing to [The White House Equal Pay Pledge](#) in 2016 under the Obama Administration. In 2018, Sunrun achieved 100% pay parity for its employees, regardless of gender, who perform similar work in similar locations across the United States.

Sunrun achieved its pay parity goal by committing to key principles:

- Completing a comprehensive annual review of compensation practices across the business with the help of an outside law firm.*
- Voluntarily adopting a policy prohibiting inquiries into a candidate's salary history.
- Providing equal parental leave for both male and female employees.

On April 1, 2019, Sunrun took the California [Equal Pay Pledge](#) developed as part of the partnership between the [California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls](#) and the Office of California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom.

"Equal pay is about fair compensation for work performance and improving the quality of life for employees and their families," said Jeanna Steele, Sunrun's General Counsel, member of the California Pay Equity Task Force, and Chair of Sunrun Women's Network. "Sunrun is proud to take the California Equal Pay Pledge and strongly encourages all businesses across the state and beyond to join this movement."

Sunrun's commitment ensures that not just women, but all employees are being compensated fairly within their organization, creating a more inclusive and equitable work environment for everyone. Sunrun strives to be a model for diversity and equity in the solar industry, with women making up 50% of its senior management team and 38% of its Board of Directors. Sunrun recently hired its first Director of Diversity & Inclusion, George-Axelle Broussillon Matschinga, who is leveraging her years of experience and expertise in diversity management to develop a vision and strategies to advance the company's progress, including a focus on hiring talent from underrepresented groups such as women, people of color and veterans.

Building a successful diversity and inclusion program requires continual review and evaluation of policies and practices. While obstacles remain on the road to creating an open, diverse and fair solar industry, Sunrun has taken great strides in changing workplace culture and providing equal opportunities to all for brilliant careers.

*Sunrun encourages organizations to seek outside legal help with these matters to ensure an objective, third-party analysis. Smaller companies with a tight budget should still consider this option, as law firms can offer a discounted rate to assist businesses looking to achieve pay parity.



About SEIA

The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA®) is the driving force behind solar energy and is building a strong solar industry to power America through advocacy and education. As the national trade association of the U.S. solar energy industry, which now employs more than 260,000 Americans, we represent all organizations that promote, manufacture, install and support the development of solar energy. SEIA works with its 1,000 member companies to build jobs and diversity, champion the use of cost-competitive solar in America, remove market barriers and educate the public on the benefits of solar energy.

About TSF

The Solar Foundation® is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to accelerate adoption of the world's most abundant energy source. Through its leadership, research, and capacity building, The Solar Foundation creates transformative solutions to achieve a prosperous future in which solar and solar-compatible technologies are integrated into all aspects of our lives. Learn more at TheSolarFoundation.org.



Explore More Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Resources:

www.seia.org/diversity