

## **ReImagine Appalachia, Keystone Research Center and Partners**

### **PA Rising Series Virtual Convening**

#### **Tying It Up — Final Feedback for Project Applications**

##### **EVENT NOTES**

On August 7, 2025 ReImagine Appalachia, Keystone Research Center, and partners hosted a virtual event –Tying It Up–Final Feedback for Project Applications– as a part of the PA Rising Series Events. This virtual event mainly consisted of two rounds of breakout sessions to provide any final feedback and support before the August 29th RISE PA grant deadline.

**Our next event in the series will be hosted on September 25, 2025 at 3pm ET via zoom:**

[Listening Session: RISE PA, a Model for Other States and the Nation - ReImagine Appalachia](#)

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##### **Breakout Rooms**

###### **1. Apprenticeship utilization requirement, Fair Labor Bonus, and the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program**

- a. James Kunz, PA Foundation for Fair Contracting
- b. Stephen Herzenberg, Keystone Research Center

###### **2. The Community Benefits Bonus**

- a. Carlos Claussel Velez, Renewable Thermal Collaborative

###### **3. Identifying ways to increase emissions reduction to meet the 20% minimum requirement and/or seek a bigger Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Bonus award**

- a. Karl Koerner, Clean Air Council
- b. Jim Clark, Clark Energy

###### **4. RISE PA Application and Q&A**

- a. Louie Krak, Implementation Lead, RISE PA
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##### **Summary of Breakout Rooms**

- 1. Breakout Room #1** – Fair Labor Bonus requirements and participation in the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program (CWTP) are ways to fund more apprentices/trainees and meet the 15% apprenticeship requirement. RISE PA will continue to work with and provide grantees with technical support to help meet the 15% requirement.
  - 2. Breakout Room #2** – Speakers and attendees discussed community partnerships to increase visibility of the project. They also talked about what comes next after funding ends and the types of programs that can be created to continue engagement with community partners.
  - 3. Breakout Room #3** – Discussion focused on ways to reduce emissions and the requirements to meet the minimum 20% reduction and/or seeking increased Greenhouse Gas Reduction Bonus Award.
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### **Round 1: Breakout Room #1**

*Apprenticeship utilization requirement, Fair Labor Bonus, and the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program*

#### **Attendees (12)**

1. Steve Herzenberg
2. James Kunz
3. Ellie Cadden
4. Olivia Yost
5. Tori Bristol
6. Michael Farren
7. Ron Motsch
8. Aaron Peterman
9. Michael Morren
10. Brenna Kotar
11. Robert Gertz
12. Thomas Mills

## Q&A

Stephen described the topics for this breakout room and opened the floor for questions.

First question: Thomas Mills asked about getting in touch with Registered Apprenticeship Programs for solar and battery storage.

Stephen shared that there is a database, but it is difficult to navigate, so he recommends to reach out to him and Claire Kovach ([Kovach@keystoneresearch.org](mailto:Kovach@keystoneresearch.org)) to pull the data for him.

Michael Morren asked what database they are referring. Stephen added to the chat that the database is the "Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System," or RAPIDS. Stephen explained that the database is not very accessible, so to reach out to him and Claire Kovach ([Kovach@keystoneresearch.org](mailto:Kovach@keystoneresearch.org)).

James Kunz also recommended that during the bidding process, they should clearly state that they are requiring a contractor that is affiliated with a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), either in PA or in the contractor's home state.

Stephen noted that the Fair Labor Bonus requirements and participation in the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program (CWTP) are ways to fund more apprentices/trainees and meet the 15% requirement.

Ron Motsch asked a clarifying question because a 4:1 ratio of journey worker to apprentice was mentioned. James Kunz clarified that state law requires that a 4:1 ratio is not exceeded. If it is exceeded, some apprentices will have to be paid prevailing wage and treated like a journey worker.

Stephen mentioned that RISE PA will continue to work with grantees to help meet the requirements such as the 15% apprenticeship requirement. Technical support will be available to help grantees.

Tori Bristol asked how the requirement will be tracked. James shared that to maintain compliance with prevailing wage, contractors must submit weekly certified payroll documentation where they will note which of the employees are apprentices. Additionally, every Registered Apprenticeship Program generates a letter that could be provided.

It was noted that projects can use their own internal apprenticeship program if it exists, and to inquire about if it is a registered program in PA.

James noted that all hours of different types of construction need to be in compliance, and 15% of the total hours will have to be apprentices. He can provide assistance to determine which type of work is applicable. He noted that the Commonwealth Workforce

Transformation Program helps to expand apprenticeship programs and defer some of the costs of apprenticeships.

The alternative option is a Good Faith Exemption from the apprenticeship requirement, but documentation must show that enough steps were taken to find apprentices and/or RAPs.

Ellie shared the [Program Guidance](#) document and explained that the exemption information can be found on page 6.

***One question was brought up and flagged for a response:***

As projects could receive reimbursement from eligible expenditures dating back to October 1, 2024, does the project have to comply with the 15% requirement from October 1, 2024 onward or from the date of the grant agreement?

There was a question about how to determine prevailing wage. It was noted that prevailing wage laws are determined by category and by county in PA. Stephen noted that in practice, the prevailing wage in most trades is the same as the wage determined in collective bargaining.

It was recommended that the Department of Labor and Industry can answer any questions about contractors.

It was clarified that the total work hours for the apprenticeship requirement only include the construction work completed for the project. Administrative, clerical, and supervisory work hours are not included.

**End of Notes from Round 1: Breakout Room #1**

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**Round 1: Breakout Room #2**

*The Community Benefits Bonus led by Carlos Claussel Velez, World Wildlife Fund*

Diane Motel – We're far along in the process and doing the final review of the grant next week.

- When this grant ends – some of the funding for community partners will also end. Looking for ways to continue engaging with those community partners.

- Example: Will help fund the finishing of the butterfly garden – offering continued volunteer hours.
- Example: Co-creating a program with local high school where they will hold a career day monthly.
- What are other ways companies have continued engagement after funding ends?
  - Samira – Community Benefits projects are designed to establish ongoing community involvement.
    - Identify community needs and establish durable partnerships with community organizations, rather than focusing on individual projects. Allow funding from CBB to help grow the community organization.
    - Companies often invest in community funds.
    - MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) – Helpful in ensuring alignment of longtime goals and individual projects.
    - Identify key partners in the community and work with them to guide the company towards sustainable and meaningful projects.
    - Connect with national organizations that can provide funding for sustained projects.
    - Communicate clearly with community partners to allow them to help develop community benefit plans that align with company needs/goals.
      - Examples: Workforce pipelines, expediting permitting, representation at community events
  - Carlos – Identify what you want to learn from the project that can inform your long term community involvement approach.

Julie Shuff

- How can we connect existing community involvement practices to the CBB portion of the grant application.

- The requirements of the CBB mean that community involvement projects must be tied to the feasibility of the grant project.
  - Identify how existing projects can connect to the grant project.
  - Show that your entity is committed to being a “good neighbor” by demonstrating that your commitment is not entirely dependent on the CBB.
  - Ask “How can the Community Benefits Plan improve the outcome of the project?”
- The CBB should be used to further extend philanthropic activities of the company, not rely on existing practices.

Samira Fazili

- “Workshop” is an organization at the national level. “Ramp Up” program helps entities develop Community Benefits Plans.

Evette Houston – PECO – Far along in the grant process.

- CBP – Primarily informed by the needs of the sub-recipients.
  - Providing upgrades and repairs for HVAC and electrical systems.
  - Advice for sustained involvement
    - Community Asset Mapping – Identify community needs
    - Help connect sub-recipients with other sources of funding
    - Sustainability plan should serve as a guide for the sub-recipient.

Carlos Claussel

- Highlighting importance of letters of support from community organization.
- Community Development Plan should clearly identify goals of individual projects.
- Legally binding agreements between applicant and community organizations show true commitment.

Amanda Woodrum – ReImagine Appalachia

- The meaningful projects involve providing community access to the labor force involved in the project.

- Workforce training
- Committing to a certain number of hours being performed by disadvantaged communities.

## **End of Notes from Round 1: Breakout Room #2**

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### **Round 1: Breakout Room #3**

*Ways to Increase Emissions Reductions led by Karl Koerner, Clean Air Council; Jim Clark, Clark Energy*

**Speakers:** Jim Clark – Clark Energy

Karl Koerner – Clean Air Council

#### **Known / Identified prospective applicants:**

Allison Otteni - PECO

Meghan Rehkopf – Bloom Energy

Dan Sabina – United Refining Co.

Randy Rutherford – Kanin Energy

#### **Topics of Discussion:**

1. Ways to lower Emissions
2. Requirements to meet minimum 20% reductions and/or seek a bigger GHG Reduction Bonus award

**Statement:** Companies often underestimate Energy Savings because equipment is often run at ½ load. Replacement equipment can easily improve efficiency by 20-80% Consider approval before starting project. Follow M&V protocols.

**Question:** Sawmill creates biomass and wants to convert rolling stock to Electric. Wants to know about savings. CHP / Turbine for Kilns?

**Statement:** Forklifts charging at proper times can reduce costs by reducing electricity usage at peak hours. In internal combustion types, 2/3 energy is wasted in exhaust gasses. Reciprocating engines may achieve thermal recycling from the water jackets in the block. Also, for forklifts /internal combustion equipped, motor vehicle emissions software can be targeted for recycling / savings.

**Question:** We develop industrial waste heat to power projects. We're looking to eliminate scope 2 emissions from grid power purchases by using WHP produced on site. I haven't yet started our application. How should we calculate scope 2 emissions reductions associated with grid power purchases? EPA's AVERT model for regional grid intensity? Other grid intensity metrics?

*Question was submitted for RISE PA program answer.*

### **Examples of Projects – James Clark**

1. Goal was to save water at a glass plant. Was told that customer had addressed all aspects already. He saw a lot of once through water usage. Through processes he implemented, they achieved 60% in emissions and water savings.
2. Old processes of coating applications were wasting energy. By switching to powder coating and drying via infrared, the overall process took less time and was more efficient.

**Statements:** A loose bearing in the process can cost 10% +/- efficiency and is accumulative, thus contributing to GHG emissions. Proper maintenance can save energy and lower GHG emissions.

Technical problems can be solved with manufacturer information, product data, and an energy expert.

No such thing as overproviding detail in energy calculations. Be accurate with energy assumptions pertaining to equipment capacity to obtain accurate end calculations.

Referenced that all SATs should reach out to PennTap.

Stressed the importance of Fugitive Emissions reduction by means of Thermal Oxidizers and or Flares.

Noted that according to EPA, a compressed air system that is considered "good" will typically have 10% leaks, the same is true for Steam systems. An "average" equivalent Compressed Air or Steam system will likely have a leak factor of 30%. These leaks and inefficiencies will lower system pressure and therefore cause the need for more energy to be spent to offset the problems.

Thermostats in offices, and Heat Pumps are also a small but good way to economize energy usage.

These are all ways to achieve the small gains that perhaps may be needed to attain the Emissions Reduction Bonus.

## **End of Notes from Round 1: Breakout Room #3**

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### **Round 2: Breakout Room #1**

*Apprenticeship utilization requirement, Fair Labor Bonus, and the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program*

**Speakers:** James Kunz – PA Foundation for Fair Contracting

Stephen Herzenberg – Keystone Research Center

#### ***Known / Identified Prospective Applicants:***

David Sheh – Capture 6 (sub)

#### ***Others Present***

Amanda Woodrum – Reimagine Appalachia

Sameera Fazili – Workshop Resource Provider

Topics of Discussion:

Focusing on 3 labor bonus adders FLB, CWTP, Apprentice Utilization

Statement: Many people are not aware that Apprentice Utilization is a mandatory aspect of the bonus adders of the program.

Ways to Utilize Apprentices:

1. Use a reputable Contractor that uses apprentices.
2. Go to Local Building Trade Council / Unions.
3. Possibly reach out to RISE PA.

#### ***Statement:***

Remember that the 15% Apprentice Utilization requirement is here to stay. It is required and you must pay Prevailing wages.

The importance of using Apprentices from LIDACs was stressed by an attendee.

When planning a project, think of how to dovetail into CWTP.

**Question:** Can draft RFP template language at an early stage be helpful to attain bonus for Apprentice Utilization requirements?

**Answer:** Must use clear language in proposals.

At that point a prospective Applicant (David Sheh of Capture 6) was asked to give an overview of his company and their technology. It is as follows:

**Capture 6:**

Capture 6 is a Company located in NE Pennsylvania and is primarily focused on the Carbon Capture space and is mostly point source. They are interested in knowing the requirements of the bonus adders. They assume that they will essentially be operating as a sub-contractor/grantee. David Sheh will primarily be responsible for the overall proposal. They mainly use feed stock which may be wastewater affluent or brine. Their technology is providing chemicals to further decarbonization.

Capture 6 also stated that they are not just creating carbon credits, but also cleaning up wastewater and brine. Two current projects which they are working on are in California within the Palmdale water district, and in Western Australia

**Question to Capture 6: Do you bid out contracts?**

**Answer: Yes, we use commercial off the shelf equipment in a novel configuration.**

**End of Notes from Round 2: Breakout Room #1**

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**Round 2: Breakout Room #2**

*The Community Benefits Bonus*

**Attendees (6)**

1. Carlos Claussel
2. Tom Lewis
3. Olivia Yost
4. Lilia Pagan
5. Jere McCarthy
6. Michael Longo

**Introductions** were conducted.

## **Q&A**

Jere McCarthy explained his company's project and explained that he wanted to look at possibilities for the Community Benefits Bonus. He explained the significance of the sawmill and its impact on surrounding communities.

Carlos Claussel prompted the breakout room to think about the social components of the project, and how it could benefit from community partnerships to ensure project visibility.

Examples noted were opportunities for other businesses to help with the operation and maintenance of the project equipment or implementing a specific project related to improving the quality of life of the community.

Ellie shared the Penn EnviroScreen tool to determine if the facility is located in and/or impacting Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities.

Ellie also shared the Program Guidance and noted that examples of community benefits projects can be found on pages 31-35.

Carlos shared a list of resources in the chat:

[Energy Benefit Project Repository.](#)

[Reimagine Appalachia](#)

[BlueGreen Alliance](#)

[Renewable Thermal Collaborative](#)

Ellie noted that translation services are available through the Commonwealth if someone would like to meet to discuss their project in another language. Attendees were invited to email Ellie with any questions or interest in scheduling a call.

A resource, Workshop, was mentioned in the breakout room. Workshop is a community benefits resource provider that helps applicants to develop and implement a Community Benefits Plan.

## **End of Notes from Round 2: Breakout Room #2**

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## **Round 2: Breakout Room #3**

*Ways to Increase Emissions Reductions led by Karl Koerner, Clean Air Council; Jim Clark, Clark Energy*

- Any time that you do electrical conversion of equipment, consider charging logistics, making sure you are not incurring additional charges for increased electricity demands, particularly in peak times.
- By generating on-site electricity, you are reducing the amount of electricity lost in transmission.
  - Negotiate contract with electricity supplier to sell back excess electricity generated, being mindful of the rates negotiated for the buy back. Do not assume that buy back rates will be the same as the rate you pay for usage.
- Energy calculations are often difficult with new technologies. Reach out to RISE PA or PennTAP if you are struggling with making those calculations.
- Manufacturing processes often use steam and compressed air.
  - Repairing leaks often can result in significant GHG reductions at a relatively low cost.
  - A “good” system leaks 10%, so this often presents an opportunity to increase your reductions.
- 80% of the energy that goes into compressed air is wasted.
  - One of the easiest ways to decrease energy usage in compressed air systems is to shut off unnecessary compressors.
- Electrification can significantly decrease your GHG emissions.
- Inspections to sure up leaks, increasing inspections or maintenance of equipment, changing lighting can “push your project over a threshold” to reach the 20% reduction requirement.
- Speak to facility managers, environmental managers at facilities to identify inefficient processes and systems.
  - They are familiar with the equipment and processes and often provide meaningful insight, even if they do not have access to statistical analysis.
- Questions: Can you recommend a resource I can call upon to identify whether solar is suitable for my facility?
  - Energy Sage
  - <https://pasolarcenter.org/>

- Non-profit based in Pittsburgh, but covers all of PA
- Will help you understand how to vet solar companies, plan your project.
- Counties often have cooperatives that vet and approve companies.

**End of Notes from Round 2: Breakout Room #3**

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