

# **Hanford Advisory Board Draft Advice**

**Topic: Workforce Collaborations for the Future**

**Authors: Emmitt Jackson, Ed Pacheco, Tom Galioto**

**Originating Committee: Budgets and Contracts Committee**

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**Workforce Collaborations for the Future – Version 011720 v5**

**Working Title:** Future Workforce Collaborations Pipeline

**Issue Managers:** Emmitt Jackson, Ed Pacheco, Tom Galioto, Tony Umek

## **Background**

Hanford has made significant cleanup progress with effective teamwork among the Department of Energy (DOE), the regulators, Hanford contractors, and the dedicated, skilled Hanford workforce. However, the pace of cleanup will quicken, and operations will expand to support tank cleanup, the Waste Treatment Facility, and land management. The success of these activities will require an experienced, innovative, and flexible workforce consisting of individuals with varied backgrounds and capabilities.

The Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) appreciated receiving a presentation on “The Hanford Workforce: Collaboration for the Future” from DOE and the Site Contractor Presidents at our December 4, 2019, HAB meeting. DOE and the Hanford contractors appear to be engaged in a site-wide approach to fulfilling the current workforce needs focused on forming a network of partnerships and collaboration activities that result in retaining and capturing the appropriate workforce skill mix. The HAB believes DOE’s goal is to develop a site wide workforce pipeline strategy and system that is easy to navigate and makes DOE and the Hanford Contractors employers of choice. Part of that goal should be to establish and maintain a Hanford Environmental Workforce Pipeline (HEWP, Reference 1), the feed funnel of recruits to fill Hanford workforce needs.

The HAB is concerned that due diligence and the required attention will not be continuously applied to fulfill the HEWP. After years of using long-term process-based contract models, the Office of Environmental Management is instituting the “End State” contract model for Hanford Prime Contracts, and this model utilizes the indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) approach.

The HAB believes that DOE faces several critical challenges in using this contracting approach. One such concern is how the execution of this new task-orientated end-state approach will affect the current and future workforce. DOE Senior Adviser raised this concern for Environmental Management William (Ike) White (Reference 2). The HAB believes that this new contracting approach may exacerbate workforce concerns.

Creation and maintenance of a HEWP or similar strategy will require the involvement of DOE and its contractors, Labor Unions, K-12 public and private schools, post-secondary institutions, community agencies, human resources and other departments. This partnership will better serve all students: however, the program will include elements that emphasize under-represented groups, attracting more of those individuals into the science and engineering curricula, and then into the Pipeline. This partnership and collaborations will enhance the potential pipeline recipients’ education by providing real life meaningful work experience, relevant job training, mentoring partnerships, and role models.

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## Demographics:

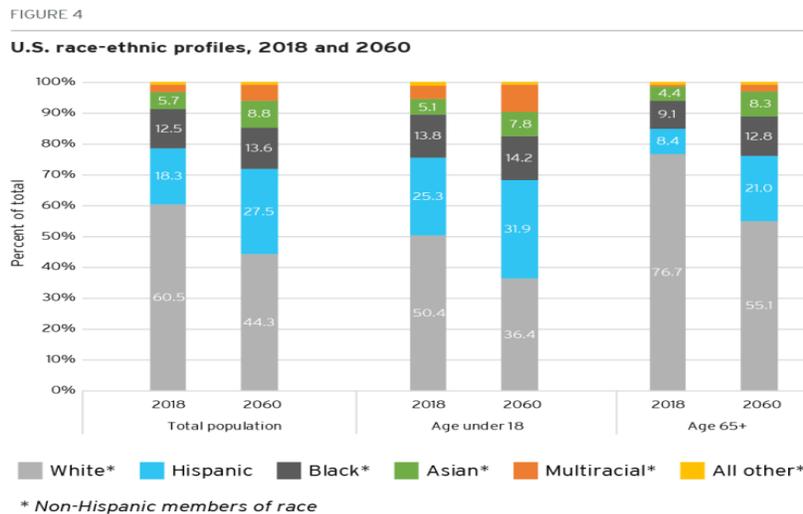
DOE communicated the current Hanford demographics and future skills needed over the next 10 years at the December 4, 2019, HAB meeting. DOE projected the workforce to be consistent at approximately 9,000 workers for those next ten years. Currently, 75% of the workforce is male and 25% female, with 16% identified as minorities. Hanford has a high percentage of workers 50 years of age or older, with less than 10% at 30 years of age or younger. Depending on the contractor, 25-35% are eligible to retire and some hold critical positions. The site has a highly educated workforce with 50% having degrees, and the building trades and unions represent 37% of the workforce. On the ORP/RL side, 22% are eligible to retire immediately and 42% are eligible for retirement in the next 4 years.

## Loss of Institutional Knowledge:

The HAB is sensitive to the risk of losing critical institutional knowledge that could severely affect mission success due to the number of eligible workforce retirements. There does not appear to be a consistent Hanford-wide strategy to address this issue.

## The Need for a Diverse Workforce:

The Figure below (Reference 3) makes clear how important minority youth populations will become for the nation, even through 2060. At that point in time, the census projects white Americans will comprise only 36 percent of the under age 18 population, with Hispanics accounting for 32 percent. This contrasts sharply with the minority contribution to the nation's seniors, which will still be over half white.



Source: William H Frey analysis of U.S. Census population projections released March 13, 2018 and revised September 6, 2018

**B** Metropolitan Policy Program  
at BROOKINGS

Diversity and multiculturalism have great advantages for maintaining a strong Hanford workforce into the future. This type of workforce enhances the ability to identify and implement new ideas and philosophies, strengthening workforce cohesiveness and thereby successfully completing the challenging cleanup goals at Hanford. In 2015, McKinsey & Company

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(Reference 4) conducted a study that found companies with high racial and ethnic diversity among their employees **outperformed their counterpart companies by 35%**.

DOE and the Hanford site have a storied reputation of possessing the best educational outreach programs among all of its sites (Reference 3). However, DOE and its Contractors should “Walk the Talk” more effectively. DOE senior management should advocate for a diverse workforce at all organizational levels, recognize the demographic shift, and make diversity a part of the Hanford culture. If this is not done, DOE risks instilling a belief in the workforce and potential candidates that there are limited career opportunities at Hanford. DOE should lead on this issue with open and honest dialogue with the contractors and workforce.

### **Advice:**

The following Advice provided addresses necessary improvements in the Hanford Workforce planning, development, and security as discussed above. Where appropriate the HAB has also provided suggestions on possible methods that DOE may be able to utilize in addressing the concerns.

- The HAB requests that DOE define a smooth transition process between IDIQ tasks to ensure that experienced workers (some in very critical positions) see that their Hanford employment is secure. This may also include financial incentives for experienced workers to remain on critical jobs to completion.
- The HAB recommends that DOE consider benefit program improvements, including 401K/ retirements that are fully transportable both inside or outside DOE contracts; enhanced matching contributions and vesting (to encourage retention beyond 2 - 3 years); and reimbursed relevant education and reimbursed health/exercise programs.
- The HAB recommends that DOE thoroughly assess and provide a briefing to the HAB of DOE Complex-wide Contract Transition lessons learned since the issuance of the Defense Authorization Act of FY 1993, Section 3161 - “Worker and Community Transition”. This should include the significant financial hardships endured by dedicated, career Hanford workers during past Hanford contract transitions. We also recommend DOE establish an Integrator or standing Consensus Committee to address contract transitions to assure that the Hanford workforce are protected from any undesirable affects during these transitions.
- The HAB encourages DOE to institute a mandated apprenticeship utilization program for building trades (to address the shortage of skilled labor in this region and the nation). Additionally, DOE needs to look strongly at re-implementing the Metal Trades Apprenticeship Program.

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- The HAB recommends that the development of the HEWP (Hanford Environmental Workforce Pipeline), diverse workforce objectives (accountability) and a site integrator be an award fee item with the newly awarded Hanford Prime Contractors, and future Hanford contracts.
- The HAB recommends re-instituting concepts similar to the Cooperative Office Education concept (COE) and Inquiry Into Science (IIS) programs (see attached description of these past programs). These programs create pathways to work, helping to produce a workforce with an appropriate cultural mix for optimal value. This allows the site to develop local talent and to train diverse and underrepresented populations at a lower cost.
- The HAB recommends that DOE again take the lead in re-introducing Hanford cultural awareness events that focus on specific ethnic groups. These initiatives will help increase the sensitivity to the changing demographics, diversity, and teamwork required to complete the Hanford mission.
- The HAB recommends that DOE develops and implement a Formal Mentoring Program to help maintain Hanford's institutional knowledge and help advance cultural awareness in all employment categories. This Mentoring Program should become a contractual requirement for all existing and future contracts.
- The HAB recommends DOE strengthen the Hanford safety culture requirements that all workers share a culture of inclusiveness and respect for all. Lack of support for this culture should be made subject to disciplinary action leading potentially to dismissal. Actions to accomplish this could include modification to DOE's "Hanford Site-Our Commitment to Ethical Conduct" letter to address these concerns.
- The HAB recommends DOE develop a "Hanford Critical Skills" database, and to identify those individuals at Hanford (and at other DOE sites if possible) that possess those skillsets. This list employed effectively would utilize individuals that can assist in high priority tasks in which they are qualified to assist.

The HAB strongly believes without a smooth transition of the new IDIQ model, fresh innovative workforce initiatives that emphasize diverse backgrounds, and the need for robust education outreach initiatives the Hanford Mission will be at serious risk. We believe DOE needs to put fee requirements on the recommended advice to become a priority for completion by the Hanford Contractors. All progress on Hanford cleanup activities is dependent upon an effectively trained

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and fully engaged, dedicated, and diverse workforce. The HAB looks forward to further discussions with DOE on these important issues.

Very truly yours,

Susan Leckband, Chair  
Hanford Advisory Board

### **References**

- 1) Environmental Education Work Force Pipeline, Strategic Plan, DOE, April 1994, pg.1
- 2) WEAPONS COMPLEX/ MONITOR, Vol. 30 No 44/11/15/2019, Wayne Barber, pg.1
- 3) William H. Frey analysis of U.S. Census population projections released March 13, 2018 and revised September 6, 2018, Figure 4, pg. 4
- 4) McKinsey & Company, McKinsey Report Diversity Matters, February 2015, pg.3

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## **ATTACHMENT**

### **Description of Previous DOE Education Outreach Work-Based Learning Model Programs**

#### **Cooperative Office Education (COE) Program:**

Provides an opportunity for High School students to experience administrative support roles through a cooperative work experience. They must have at least a 2.5 GPA, be 16 and not work more than 20 hours a week while in school. They receive mentorship and learn work discipline that leads to successful careers. A high percent of these students become vital employees of their perspective companies after graduation from high school, trade schools and college.

#### **Inquiry Into Science (IIS) Program:**

Provides an opportunity for High School students to experience technical support roles through a cooperative work experience. They must have at least a 2.5 GPA, be 16 and not work more than 20 hours a week while in school. They receive mentorship and learn work discipline that leads to successful careers. A high percent of these students become vital employees of their perspective companies after graduation from high school, trade schools and college.