

# Planning for a Modern Distribution System

2024 Cohort

A NARUC-NASEO Initiative

## Overview of the Cohort

Distribution grids are facing increasingly complex challenges as the way we generate, move, and store energy evolves. New and affordable technologies, expanding policy goals, and emerging consumer trends are introducing new opportunities to better utilize the distribution system for state and local priorities.

Effective planning can be a powerful tool to navigate changes across the distribution system while maintaining reliability and resilience, enabling electrification, ensuring cost-effective grid modernization, and meeting other policy objectives.

**The *Planning for a Modern Distribution System* Cohort is an opportunity for NARUC, NASEO, and NASUCA state and territory members to learn and advance best practices in distribution planning.**

Cohort members will participate in four interactive virtual workshops from **August – December 2024**. Workshops will build upon each other and enable participants to explore challenges and opportunities specific to their jurisdictions' current contexts through group problem solving and peer learning.

This cohort and associated activities are part of the DOE-sponsored *NARUC-NASEO DER Integration and Compensation Initiative*.



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# Background and Context

State decision makers are currently navigating the most significant changes the energy system has seen in the last 100 years. Load growth is placing new strain on grids, increasing system costs are resulting in significant rate increases, and DERs are creating new grid visibility and management issues while also providing new sources of grid flexibility.

Fortunately, there are a growing number of tools and analyses that can better support decision makers to effectively plan for a modern distribution system. These include leveraging load forecasting and scenario planning tools to improve investment efficiency, using modeling to support effective DER program design, and utilizing new approaches to identify resilience and reliability needs.

## Delivery: Peer Cohort

The *Planning for a Modern Distribution System* Cohort will focus on building decision maker capacity to deploy solutions to better utilize the distribution system. Participating NARUC, NASEO, and NASUCA state and territory members will commit to a series of four virtual interactive workshops that focus on how to increase visibility into, plan for, and leverage the distribution grid to advance forward-looking grid technology investment strategies.

Participants will learn through expert presentations and facilitated discussions, application-focused case clinics, and peer-supported problem solving. Cohort participants are expected to participate throughout the series' activities to create a cohesive learning group atmosphere and make progress together.

## Workshop Arc

<b>Pre-Read</b>	Participants will receive a pre-read one week before Workshop 1. The pre-read will provide key content that will set the foundation for rich engagement; it will also include notable challenges facing jurisdictions today and case studies for participants to consider.
<b>Workshop 1</b> <i>August 13</i> 2-4:30pm EDT	<b>Foundations of Modern Distribution Planning.</b> Participants will develop and refine a short list of challenges they are facing in distribution planning today and explore how their jurisdictions' policy objectives translate into distribution planning guidance.
<b>Workshop 2</b> <i>September 17</i> 2-4:30pm EDT	<b>Tools &amp; Analysis for Distribution Planning (Part 1).</b> Participants will learn about 1 or 2 tools or analyses from technical experts and case studies. Topics may include assessing reliability and resilience, load and DER forecasting inputs & assumptions, and scenario development.
<b>Workshop 3</b> <i>October 10</i> 2-4:30pm EDT	<b>Tools &amp; Analysis for Distribution Planning (Part 2).</b> Participants will learn about 1 or 2 additional components of modern distribution planning through engagement with technical experts and case studies. Topics will be decided based on participant interests and priorities.
<b>Workshop 4</b> <i>November 20</i> 2-4:30pm EST	<b>Leveraging Grid Planning to Inform Decision Making.</b> Participants will explore how to use distribution planning efforts to inform and implement grid modernization and prioritization of investments in their states and territories.

## Participant FAQ

**Q. What will I learn that is different from other initiatives on integrated distribution system planning (IDSP)?**

A. While this cohort will draw on the cutting-edge modern resource planning research from Berkeley Labs and other leading research organizations, the approach will be different. Instead of training based on presentations, participants will engage in interactive activities and discussions on applying best practices in jurisdiction-specific contexts.

**Q. What tangible output will I end the workshop cohort with?**

A. Participants will co-develop near-term strategies they can implement in their jurisdictions to address current distribution system challenges.

**Q. Do I need to join all the cohort workshops?**

A. Participation in all four workshops is highly encouraged. If you are unable to participate in one of the sessions, please let us know in advance and consider having a colleague fill in for you.

**Q. Do I need to be a technical planning expert to join the workshops?**

A. Workshops are designed for both technical and non-technical experts.

**Q. Will the workshops be recorded so I can watch back if I can't attend at the meeting times?**

A. To best support candid discussions and peer sharing, most workshop sessions will not be recorded. We understand conflicts arise, and we will work 1:1 with participants who miss a session to ensure they're well equipped for future sessions.

## Participation

NARUC, NASEO and NASUCA state and territory members interested in participating in the *Planning for a Modern Distribution System* Cohort should register via the below link by **August 6, 2024**.

[Register here](#)

## Contact Information



### NARUC

Danielle Sass Byrnett:

[DByrnett@naruc.org](mailto:DByrnett@naruc.org)

Jeff Loiter:

[JLoiter@naruc.org](mailto:JLoiter@naruc.org)

### NASEO

Kirsten Verclas:

[KVerclas@naseo.org](mailto:KVerclas@naseo.org)

Rodney Sobin:

[RSobin@naseo.org](mailto:RSobin@naseo.org)

