

The Women in Energy series is a joint project between USEA and USAID that was developed out of USEA's Engendering Utilities Partnership, a program funded by USAID to improve gender policies and gender outcomes at their respective organizations.



Every month we feature a woman who has shown exemplary leadership. We want to showcase your story this month. The women among you come from diverse backgrounds and roles, and they bring with them a unique perspective to gender equality within the energy sector.

Women in Energy Interview Questions

1. How have your education and career path led you to where you are now?

My education was absolutely essential for my career advancement at Baltimore Gas and Electric. There was a natural progression from the University of Maryland, College Park to my current role as Vice President of Transmission and Substations at BGE. After graduating from Maryland with an electrical engineering degree, I received my MBA from the University of Baltimore which was necessary for leadership roles I wanted to pursue at the company.

I actually began my career at BGE as an intern and from there I progressed to different engineering positions including key leadership responsibilities in nontraditional roles. Those positions include manager of strategic customer engineering, supervisor of substation support, and business lead for the mobile infrastructure project. My first key leadership role was the director of BGE's 24x7 operation control center which operates and monitors our distribution system including system restoration.

In 2003, I became the first woman to be named director of overhead distribution, which helped pave the way for current female leaders in field organizations. In 2005, I was promoted to my first vice president role when I was named temporary VP of Electric Distribution. I became the first and only female leader of electric distribution when I was made permanent VP of Electric Distribution in 2006. From there, I served as the VP of business transformation, I became the first female VP of Technical Services, I was named VP of utility oversight for Exelon Utilities, VP of Customer Operations, VP of Support Services, and now my current role in Transmission and Substations. None of this would have been possible without the backbone of my education and the commitment from BGE and our parent company Exelon to diversity and inclusion.

2. Over the course of your career, have you witnessed changes in the sector that have launched more women into leadership positions?

Absolutely, I believe that my career is a perfect example of how much the utility industry has progressed and changed. A huge part of that change is STEM education that has become a priority for many schools, beginning as early as elementary grade levels. By engaging girls at a young age and getting them excited about science and math we are helping create a better, more diverse work force for the future.

As a company we have changed how we look for top diverse and inclusive talent by actively recruiting and developing women for leadership roles. The leadership team and employee population are significantly more diverse compared to when I joined the company.

Personally, I'm the executive sponsor of BGE's Women in the Field group which supports women in nontraditional field roles, recruits women to work in non-traditional roles and advocates for change in the workplace, such as, the availability of flame retardant clothing made for women.

For the past five years BGE has partnered the National Association of Women in Construction's (NAWIC) for a summer camp offering middle school and high school girls an opportunity to explore the construction industry. The Women in the Field group provides the girls hands-on experiences from a day in the life of a BGE field employee.

I am also very proud of the efforts we've employed to encourage interest in STEM for young women in our community. BGE, the Exelon Foundation and United Nations Women HeForShe created the STEM Innovation Leadership Academy in 2018. The leadership academy provides young women from Maryland and D.C. high schools with hands-on STEM activities centered on climate action and includes discussions with prominent female STEM leaders from BGE and Exelon.

These types of programs, encouraging and supporting women pursuing STEM and nontraditional roles, did not exist during the early part of my career.

3. Technology is transforming the traditional utility business model into a more modern interactive grid. Some utilities view this transformation as an opportunity to focus on change management and diversity. Research provides compelling evidence that inclusion and diversity unlock innovation and drives better business performance. What, if anything, is your organization doing to attract, retain, and promote more women into senior management positions to respond to the dramatic industry transformation?

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a core value for Exelon and BGE at all levels across the organization. From our internship programs, to entry level positions, and throughout our leadership ranks we are continually employing strategic, innovative programs to attract, retain and promote women throughout our company.

All you have to do is look at the number of women who are in upper management and other leadership positions to see the success of our ongoing approach. In 2015, the number of women on BGE's executive leadership team was 12%, and the number of female key managers was 28%. Now in 2020, 1/3 or 33% of our executive leadership team is female and 34% of our key managers are women.

Exelon has also created a new program in 2019 specifically for women in executive roles. The Forum for Executive Women consists of executive-level women across Exelon operating companies and was developed to offer female leaders an opportunity to collaborate, share lessons learned, and focus on how women can advocate and support one another.

We also ensure that women and diverse talent are well represented in all of our development programs across the company which has been crucial in these efforts as well. These programs focus on individual contributors, leadership opportunities, initiatives for new leaders, and advancement opportunities for experienced leaders and are invaluable to providing a clear path for career growth.

BGE also supports and encourages participation in multiple development programs focused on female talent including:

- **Odyssey Day** which is a 2-day conference with programming targeted at mid-level professional women and entrepreneurs.
- **The Odyssey Business Retreat** is a four-day conference for women of color and consists of a corporate boot camp followed by three days of keynote speakers, workshops and activities that focus on the unique professional and personal development needs of multicultural women. The target audience is women of color at leadership levels.

There are numerous additional avenues where we promote diversity across our business, and there are several different programs that I would like to highlight.

Employee Resource Groups (ERG) continue to be a strong focus across Exelon, and at BGE we have a particularly active and vibrant membership across many of the groups. NEW, the Network of Exelon Women, was created to help foster a respectful and nurturing environment for every female employee at Exelon and BGE. NEW's mission is to give every individual the ability to grow personally and professionally in an atmosphere where everyone's contributions are acknowledged and appreciated, and where we celebrate the differences that make us stronger as a company. I am proud to be the executive sponsor of NEW-Baltimore. NEW holds

many events throughout the year to help promote inclusivity for women across Exelon. These include leadership panels, networking events, and inviting external guest speakers to offer new perspectives and insights. NEW's ultimate goal is to foster an inclusive environment across the company, particularly with female employees in mind, and this is an area where we have been very successful.

This really just scratches the surface when it comes to the numerous diversity and inclusion efforts across BGE and the broader Exelon family of companies.

In terms of the development and growth of employees across our organization, in partnership with our HR team, we have created a platform across our executive leadership team to review talent on an ongoing basis. These talent discussions aim to provide visibility and exposure of high potential talent across BGE to our executive leadership. This initiative also helps drive accountability with our leadership team by addressing areas of opportunity for diverse talent. The discussions are focused on creating specific actionable development plans for the key talent, as well as discuss potential experiences, or roles, and mentorships that would aid in the development of this key talent.

Additionally, at BGE, we created a program specifically focused on women mid-level leaders, Communicating with Influence, to help them become as effective as possible in this area. Through this skill building session, women are able to practice and hone their skills to become more effective communicators and to build their influencing skills. Many of these women are from areas in the business that would not normally interact with each other on work-related topics, so this program allows them to network and create strong bonds with each other. These relationships have created a community of women who can provide support for each other.

Exelon has also created a unique program to help identify women for leadership roles. The Exelon Women's Leadership Summit held its inaugural conference in 2015 and is held every other year to focus on personal and professional development. Attendees, both female and male, are nominated after being identified as having high potential or being a high performer at the all Exelon operating companies.

4. Are talented women within your organization making it to top leadership positions? Why/why not?

We are seeing progress in this area, within the last year three new female executives joined BGE. We still have opportunities to improve, but there has been steady progress in this space over the last several years. As a female executive at BGE, I believe I have a responsibility to mentor and sponsor high performing women in the organization in support of this goal. As we continue on our journey to become a more diverse executive leadership team, it is critical for

women to be well represented in leadership positions. Seeing is believing and executive female role models can represent and expand what is possible for all women in the organization.

5. Companies that embrace diversity outperform their competitors. What type of diversity programs does your organization have in place to mentor future women leaders? How does your organization measure and report gender diversity? Is the data publicly available?

As I mentioned earlier, Exelon made a commitment to diversity and inclusion by joining a United Nations initiative called HeForShe that will help us improve gender diversity. HeForShe is about engaging men and boys as change agents to help achieve gender equality. I am one of the executive sponsors for HeForShe at BGE and it has been a great opportunity and learning experience for both men and women at the company. Each executive held Listening and Learning sessions with female employees to learn about their experiences in the workplace. As a result, we launched Creating an Inclusive Workplace and Unconscious Bias trainings where we encourage honest discussions about working at BGE and how we as team can always strive to make it better.

We recognize that mentorship opportunities are a critical component of career development, particularly for women in our workforce. We are currently exploring technology opportunities that will create a mentorship matching platform connecting senior leaders with mentees, and we are hoping to launch that program next year.

The hiring process is also important to promote diversity and inclusion at BGE. When we have open positions at BGE – from entry level to executive leadership - we ensure that both the interview panel and the pool of candidates are diverse. Both of these focus areas have impacted our success in increasing the representation of women in many areas throughout the company.

Diverse panels and diverse slates ensure that qualified, diverse talent is not overlooked for these opportunities. Many companies and organizations can miss an accomplished candidate by quickly selecting someone who is top of mind simply because they are already working in the department with the open position and visible to the hiring manager. This can inadvertently leave qualified talent out of the conversation and decision-making process. By requiring a diverse interview field, we ensure a wide variety of talented individuals are being considered during the interview process.

Also, Exelon and BGE have a very robust business talent review process that is conducted annually to proactively plan for succession to key management positions. This is a very thoughtful process that focuses on identifying diverse and non-diverse candidates for future leadership roles and helps tailor their development so that they are ready for those positions.

This process ensures that women are considered for those key leadership positions along with other qualified candidates.

The implementation of a Gender Equity Scorecard, reviewed quarterly by Exelon's top executives, has been a great tool to make sure that women are progressing professionally at the same rate as their male counterparts. The scorecard tracks pay equity, promotion rates, and voluntary resignation rates.

6. What actions should the energy and electricity sector be focused on to accelerate change, increase diversity, and foster a better gender balance in the boardroom?

There are many actions that are important to help increase diversity and foster gender balance. Many of the steps that I discussed previously are critical to aid in these areas. Diverse interview panels and slating processes are key. Focusing on development down into entry level positions, and up to the board room is critical to help address opportunity areas. BGE also actively recruits diverse talent for our Board of Directors. Thirty-three percent of the board are female and fifty percent of the board are people of color.

The next piece is to ensure that opportunities to build representation are being prioritized. To do this, a company must drive accountability across senior leadership. Having robust talent discussions that focus on the development of diverse employees while establishing recommended actions and next steps as a team moves us toward a more diverse and inclusive workforce. So does starting at the earliest levels of education, creating and funding programs that expose young women to the possibilities available to them in the energy industry. Expanding the pipeline through initiatives like the STEM and construction summer camps I reference earlier is key.

Mentorship is another key element that I have not discussed in detail that is impactful to a woman's career. Particularly for women in non-traditional fields, mentors can help to provide perspective and aid in the development of women. Whether it is through a formal mentoring program, or through 1:1 mentoring, this can provide the critical support and perspective that women need to develop into higher level leadership roles.

The last component to consider is culture. Driving a culture of inclusion is vital to ensure the environment is one where women and diverse talent can be successful. If companies strictly focus on the recruitment and development piece of diversity and inclusion and have not examined their culture, they are missing out. A company must create a culture where their employees can bring their full selves to work each and every day. Inclusive behaviors are critical to creating this type of environment.