

# Energy Industry Association Recommends Training Field Leaders in 2026

*MEA Energy Association Encourages Utilities to Begin 2026 Training Schedule Planning with MEA Field Leader Training*

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-- MEA Energy Association (MEA) is encouraging natural gas and electric utilities to begin securing their 2026 training calendars now by hosting private, in-house sessions of Field Leader Training, the only leadership program built specifically for field workers in the natural gas and electric industries.



“

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*Past Participant*

As retirement and turnover accelerate across the industry, less experienced employees are moving into leadership roles faster than ever before. MEA Field Leader Training is not about the technical aspects of field work. This training equips shift supervisors, crew leads, and team leads with practical, real-world leadership skills that drive safety, efficiency, and career growth.

“Having something in place now is extremely critical because about 50% of the workforce is considering a retirement right now,” said Dennis Skubal, contract trainer for MEA. “And so, as we have that knowledge walking out

the door, it’s totally necessary that we’re on board with educating people how to lead in the utility industry.”

See What Participants Are Saying

Hear directly from utility leaders about the value of MEA Field Leader Training: [Watch the video testimonials.](#)

Why MEA Field Leader Training?

Unlike generic leadership programs, Field Leader Training was created to meet the specific needs

of utility field operations. The program focuses on the ways adaptable leadership can improve team engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction—no fluff, everything relates to day-to-day work tasks.

The two-day, in-person training focuses on real-world applications—helping participants learn how to:

- Plan work effectively and safely
- Lead teams with confidence and adaptability
- Balance “being on the line” as both a team member and leader
- Address challenges like limited authority, generational differences, and evolving workplace culture
- Communicate clearly with both crews and management



Recent Field Leader Training at Baywater Pipeline.

Training is delivered in a highly interactive, activity-oriented format with case studies and examples drawn directly from utility field operations. Additionally, training is facilitated by industry professionals who have over 25 years of field and leadership experience.

Participants walk away with skills they can apply immediately on the job. On average, field leaders report a half-point increase (on a 5-point scale) across nearly every skill area, with the greatest gains in delegation, conflict resolution, coaching crew members, and communicating with management.

“Even more remarkable is that participants from the past 18 months show a 21.4% improvement in their self-awareness of leadership strengths and weaknesses,” explains Daneen Goncalves, Leadership Programs Manager at MEA.

Plan professional development for 2026

MEA recommends utilities start booking their private, in-house Field Leader Training sessions for 2026 now to ensure their teams have the training they need to lead effectively in a changing industry.

“I really enjoyed the breakout groups and the opportunity for participation throughout the two days,” said a recent participant who is a Supervisor of Field Operations from National Fuel Gas. “Everyone’s input was valued and discussed 100% of the time. I appreciate that the course is led by someone with industry knowledge. Generally we have trainings like this and there are significant communication barriers between those of us in the industry and the instructor.”

Beginning in 2026, MEA will also offer a new virtual extension of its signature Field Leader Training designed to reinforce and expand leadership growth beyond the in-person experience. Over a three- or six-month journey, participants will engage in interactive webinars, group coaching, and peer accountability partnerships that deepen self-awareness and apply leadership concepts to real workplace challenges.

For more information about the curriculum, facilitators, and other details or to schedule training, visit [MEAEnergy.org/field-leader-training](https://MEAEnergy.org/field-leader-training).

#### About MEA

Founded in 1905, MEA Energy Association is a trade organization dedicated to empowering the energy industry through education, leadership development, and industry connections. MEA offers a wide range of training programs, conferences, and resources designed to support professionals across the gas and electric utility sectors.

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