

February 1, 2017



Notes from the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 16, Session 3

- Topics:
1. News from Washington and HMTRI
 2. Questions HMTRI has received
 3. Supercharging EWDJT proposals—Efforts that make job training programs stand out
 4. Webinars this month
 5. EWDJT resources and assistance
 6. Items of interest
 7. Training opportunities for EWDJT instructors

1. News from Washington and HMTRI

REMINDER: Grants.gov will be out of service for maintenance February 18–21. This is the Friday through Tuesday before the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) proposals are due on February 24. That leaves only February 22, 23, and 24 to submit completed proposals. We recommend submitting proposals early in case problems arise at the last minute.

Double check your current SAM registration. Even if your organization has used grants.gov before, make sure that the SAM account is up-to-date, the personal login information to grants.gov has not expired, and there is a designated AOR for submitting the EWDJT proposal. Without having up-to-date registration, proposals cannot be submitted or considered for funding. Grants.gov has a 24/7 help desk at 800.518.4726.

2. Questions since the last PLC session

I just read about all EPA grants being frozen. I wanted to see if either of you had further details on this, since the article made it clear that our EPA contact can't say much? Does this apply to current grantees as well?

Thanks for the question. We are aware of the article mentioned.

First, regarding contact with EPA Regional Job Training Coordinators. Once the RFP is released, EPA cannot discuss issues that are not directly related to the RFP. That is normal policy. As far as existing grantees and this year's grant applicants, all appears well at this time. Continue your good work, training cycles, and applications for the upcoming competition due February 24.

Current grantees and EWDJT applicants are working with funds from the FY17 appropriations and budget. FY17 money has been committed. For FY18, Dave and Gail (our people in Washington) are great communicators and have a high regard for EWDJT accomplishments. After all, EWDJT is all about jobs, infrastructure, and economic development. We look forward to continued EPA support and a strong turnout for this year's funding cycle.

Should leveraged resources be included as part of the budget? What is the difference between a subgrantee and a partner?

Only EPA funds are included in the budget. Leveraged resources should be included as part of the narrative, especially when a written commitment to contribute to the program has been obtained. It

may be helpful to discuss the relationship between stakeholders, partners, subgrantees, and contractors.

Stakeholders and partners—No money changes hands

Stakeholders and partners are umbrella terms for any group or individual interested or impacted by the EWDJT program. Stakeholders may be community residents, program participants, subgrantees, contractors, or governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Partner is a term generally used to describe an individual or organization with a more direct impact on the EWDJT program. Leveraging partners, for example, provide assistance and resources at no cost to the program. Leveraging partners may include Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, fire departments, or other governmental and nongovernmental organizations. If EPA grant funds are not paid for services, they are considered leveraging partners.

As noted above, contributions by leveraged partners should not be part of the EPA budgeted funds. When leveraged partners are included in the proposal narrative, written commitments should be obtained describing the services and resources to be provided.

Subgrantees and contractor partners—EPA grant funds change hands

When grant money changes hands, administrative rules apply. Providers are no longer “leveraged partners” but remain essential partners in program operation. Subgrantees are extensions of the EWDJT program. They are primarily other nonprofit or governmental organizations and must be written into the grant proposal and budget. They may include:

- Governmental organizations
- Educational nonprofit organizations
- Community development organizations
- Social nonprofit organizations

As extensions of the EWDJT program, subgrantees must comply with every EPA federal regulation for which the EWDJT grantee is responsible. They are subject to audit, allowable and unallowable costs, and contracting procedures as indicated in the Federal Register. As primary grantee, the EWDJT program is held responsible for compliance by subgrantees. They may be selected as a subgrantee without a competitive process as long as they are identified in the grant proposal, budget, and approved work plan. Change of a subgrantee requires EPA approval. Contractors and consultants are not usually considered to be subgrantees, while a community college or governmental organization may be a subgrantee or a contractor.

A contract partner is an organization (not including subgrantees) that is paid with EPA grant funds for goods or services. In simple terms, when money changes hands (paid with grant funds), potential contractors, consultants, or service providers must undergo a competitive review. EPA will not generally allow sole source procurement contracts for professional services or goods that are available in the commercial marketplace.

Contractors may represent a variety of organizational structures. The key distinction is that they are providing service or goods for a fee. While not subject to subgrantee regulations, they need to comply with federal procurement guidelines.

EWDJT grantees are required to purchase goods and services in accordance with the minimum EPA requirements even if their own procurement system has less stringent standards. Some organizations may have more stringent purchasing requirements than required by EPA. Since competitive bidding and contract administration take time to implement, it is important to start the bidding process early, preferably before the grant proposal is written. At a minimum the bidding process must include a public competition with at least three participating bidders. The award does not need to go to the lowest bidder, but justification needs to be recorded supporting the final award.

It is not necessary that the bidding process wait for the EWDJT grant award. In fact, it is helpful to have the training contractor or consultant in place so that they can be written into the grant proposal. This is a simple process in that the Request for Proposal (RFP) should include a statement that the award is contingent on receiving EPA funding, and an approval of the budget and work plan. RFPs can be conducted electronically, via website, or in print. It is important that winning contractors deliver services in accordance with EPA procurement requirements in addition to meeting the proposed training schedule. Official and detailed information can be found on [EPA's website](#). Because EPA funds are involved, expenses for contractors and consultants need to be included in the budget narrative.

3. Supercharging EWDJT proposals: Efforts that make job training programs stand out

If we assume that 15 EWDJT proposals will be funded at \$200,000 each and that 50–60 proposals will be submitted (this number can vary from year-to-year), every applicant has to “beat out” 3–4 other proposals in order to be successful. These are not bad odds since many proposals will not meet the Threshold Eligibility Criteria. However, with the remaining proposals, applicants should assume that every question and request for information in the RFP will be addressed.

The big question is how does your proposal stand out among every other proposal that responds to all questions and requests for information? We would suggest an expanded effort in the areas below that will make your proposal stand out.

- Community relationships—Personal contact with community governmental, nongovernmental, and faith-based stakeholders. To properly demonstrate that the EWDJT program is truly part of the community, someone or several team members need to be in the field collecting data and developing relationships. Include visits and documentation in the proposal.
- Public meetings—Meet with city council members potentially impacted by the EWDJT program. Public meetings can include a press release, city council announcement, library meeting, or church or neighborhood meeting. Document all public meetings and announcements, no matter how large or small.
- Employer involvement—Personal contact with potential employers to seek guidance and support including commitments to meet and consider program graduates for employment; and participate as advisors, guest speakers, and program advocates. Always document your meetings and commitments to include in the proposal.
- Advisory boards and strategic partners—Identify Brownfields stakeholders and supporters with the city government. In each instance just noted, recruit advisory board members and include them in proposal and program development. Include their participation in the proposal narrative.
- Remember—If any of these efforts are not included in the proposal narrative, the reviewers will never know they even existed.

- Document all these extra efforts in the proposal.

What happens if you don't get the grant? How do you respond to all the people to which you pitched the program? Always make this very clear—Unfunded proposals can provide a launching pad for an improved and successful program for the next cycle. Hopefully the proposal will be funded, but with stiff competition, it may not be this year.

In the event EPA support does not materialize this year, planning should continue. A new RFP will be due out next fall. This gives additional time to prepare and improve the program. Also, some EWDJT programs have been surprised to find local funding and support, even when federal assistance is not immediately available.

During the next PLC session we will be discussing last minute hints and tips that may not have been addressed in this year's EWDJT guidelines.

4. Webinars this month

Leveraging Resources for Brownfields Revitalization: Meet the Funders—Parks, Community Health, and the Arts

February 28, 2017

1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m. ET

Brownfield grants from the U.S. EPA are one of many sources of funds that can support redevelopment of contaminated sites. This webinar will highlight a number of redevelopment resources available from the National Park Service (NPS), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to leverage your Brownfields dollars. The webinar will also feature a presentation from a community that has successfully used grants, loans, and other support from these agencies for its revitalization efforts. It is the fourth in OBLR's webinar series on what communities need to know to successfully leverage resources for Brownfields revitalization. For more information and to register, see <http://clu-in.org/live>.

5. EWDJT resources and assistance

Outreach webinar slides, transcripts, and Q&As

EPA held two outreach webinars for prospective EWDJT applicants on January 10 and 12. Both webinars covered the same content. Questions received from attendees varied. Due to technical difficulties, only the January 12 recording [has been posted](#). However, the question and answer transcripts from both webinars were combined and [can be found posted on the brownfields website](#), including corrections to questions that may have been answered incorrectly or required supplemental information.

Below are items available for review and study.

-[Frequently Asked Questions \(PDF\)](#) (19 pp, 128 K)

-[FY2017 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant Guidelines \(PDF\)](#) (51 pp, 416 K)

-[Tips for Submitting Proposals through Grants.gov \(PDF\)](#) (3 pp, 343 K)

-[Outreach Webinar Questions and Answers \(PDF\)](#) (5 pp, 119 K)

-[FY17 EWDJT Outreach Webinar \(PDF\)](#) (42 pp, 1 MB)

Brownfields Toolbox website

EPA documents including RFP guidelines, PLC post-session notes and audio recordings, and much more about environmental job training programs are available on HMTRI's [Brownfields Toolbox](#) website.

Visitors to the website may want to also look at the “Start a Program” section. Click on the “Start a Program” tab along the top. Many components are regularly updated, so check back often.

6. Items of interest

2017 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

Mark your calendar and register for the 2017 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting. The meeting will be held August 9–10 at the Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria located at 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Travel days are August 8 and 11.

This meeting will be attended by:

- EPA regional and headquarters staff
- Present EPA-funded EWDJT grantees
- Past EWDJT grantees
- PLC members

The deadline to register and to make hotel reservations in the reserved block of rooms is **Monday, July 17, 2017**. **PLEASE REGISTER EARLY!** Contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu for more information and registration information.

2017 EPA National Brownfields Conference—Call for Ideas

EPA’s 2017 National Brownfields Conference will be held December 5–7 in Pittsburgh. Participants can now submit session ideas for the conference. For details, go to the [conference website](#).

7. Training opportunities for EWDJT instructors

2017 Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute

June 5–16, 2017 | Davenport, Iowa

Participants are prepared through a 10-day train-the-trainer program called the GreatEST Institute to deliver required certifications for public and private responders and workers including:

- 40-hour Waste Site Worker Health and Safety
- 24-hour Industrial Emergency Response
- DOT HazMat
- Hazard Awareness and Communication

Participants use CCCHST curriculum to train workers and responders in their local area and report to PETE the number of courses they provide. PETE reports these numbers to NIEHS. CCCHST members may charge for the courses offered in their local areas.

The cost of travel (by air or through mileage reimbursement) and lodging will be paid by National PETE. During the Institute, everyone will be staying at the Radisson Quad City Plaza in Davenport, IA. Local travel between the hotel and the training site will be provided. The hotel provides transportation to and from airport.

Some meals will be provided during the Institute. A registration fee of \$75 is charged to participants (reimbursed on travel forms) to cover the cost of snacks, beverages, three noon lunches, and the closing banquet. All other meals, including those during travel, will be reimbursed on a per diem basis.

This Institute is for trainers only and is limited to 20 participants. For more information and questions, please contact Patti Thompson at pattijthompson@gmail.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: February 15, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. ET
Please call in five minutes early.

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com.



Visit our *HMTRI Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at <http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org> for more information on Brownfields Job Training programs. All PLC session notes and recordings are also located on the *Brownfields Toolbox* website at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-corner/>. For those interested in providing content or suggestions, please contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

NOTE: The PLC brings together ideas and opinions of individuals interested in environmental workforce development and training. Ideas and opinions are not those of EPA, its policy or opinions and should not be taken as official guidance.