

January 18, 2017



Notes from the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 16, Session 2

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1. News from Washington and HMTRI

Grants.gov down for scheduled maintenance February 18–21

With the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) proposal submission deadline of February 24, 2017, a small “glitch” has been announced. Grants.gov will be taken out of service for scheduled maintenance February 18–21 (Friday through Tuesday before proposals are due on February 24). An extension was not been granted. That leaves February 22, 23, and 24 before 11:59pm to submit completed proposals. We recommend an early submission in case submission problems arise at the last minute.

Reminders from EPA Headquarters

Important message from EPA: “Please stress the importance of getting registered early in SAM.gov and grants.gov. If an applicant has used these systems before, this step is still very important to them. They should ensure that their organization’s SAM account is up-to-date, that their personal login information to grants.gov has not expired, and that they are designated as their organization’s AOR within grants.gov. Without having all of this up-to-date, applicants will not be able to submit through grants.gov and will not be considered for funding. Grants.gov has a help desk that is open 24/7. Should applicants encounter issues with the system while trying to submit through grants.gov, they should call this number (1.800.518.4726) at any time. Applicants should also keep in mind that grants.gov will be down for maintenance Feb 18-21.”

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)

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 gianne@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](#).

2017 Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Train-the-Trainer Institute

Openings are still available for the 2017 Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Train-the-Trainer Institute. This event is for trainers only, and will be held June 5–16, 2017, in Davenport, Iowa. See section 7, Training opportunities for EWDJT instructors, later in these session notes.

2. Questions HMTRI has received

We are considering submitting an EWDJT grant proposal that has two different training tracks. We have never done this before. Could someone send me an example of a EWDJT grant submission that has two training tracks? We are trying to figure out how to get all of the information in a 15-page limit. Any help we can get will be greatly appreciated.

As we understand, you can customize the tables as long as you provide all required information and support your entries in the narrative. We have posed similar questions to EPA headquarters and have received the reply below.

"Once the RFP is released, EPA cannot discuss issues that are not directly related to the RFP. However, as referenced in the guidelines, applicants have the ability to adjust and tailor the sample tables provided to better fit their needs. Applicants should ensure that they are supplying all the requested information within their customized table and narrative. And yes, as you mentioned, any pages over the limit of 15 pages will not be reviewed. There are multiple charts throughout the RFP that we ask applicants to supply."

There has been some confusion regarding OSHA 10-hour Construction Training. Is presentation of this course supported by the EWDJT grant?

While construction training by itself is not covered by EWDJT funds, OSHA 10-hour Construction Training is an exception. Confirmation from EPA is below.

“We have posted the Q&A transcript from the two webinars as one document. There are a couple corrections within them, including that OSHA-10 hour is an eligible use of grant funds so long as it is in concert and connection within an environmental training program. That part needs to be clear. The course covers many topics that are necessary on an environmental job site which is why it is an allowable cost. Apologies to any applicants who were misinformed or confused by the original answer.”

3. EPA’s webinar highlights and insights: Summary of last week’s informational webinars

As important as it was to prepare for the EPA EWDJT webinars by reviewing the RFP and frequently asked questions, it is now equally important to review the [presentation slides](#) and [post-session Q&A](#). After reading the EPA post-session documentation, we suggest deconstructing the RFP to ensure that every request for information is addressed in the proposal. Failure to address even one question can be the difference between a funded or unfunded proposal.

1. Establish a team of individuals to be active in the proposal development.
2. Select a project coordinator to be the enforcer and overall editor.
3. Deconstruct and identify every question and request for information presented in the RFP.
4. Assign every question and every request for information to the person best qualified to respond.
5. Establish milestones and meeting and deadline schedules for each team member. Work backwards from February 17.
6. Obtain firm time commitments from each team member regarding his/her deliverable(s).
7. Allow for delays and an early completion date as the proposal is developed.
8. On a regular basis, present deliverables to the entire team for peer-to-peer review and revision.

We have already discussed, in depth, administrative issues that are critical in order to submit the proposal to grants.gov. In prior PLC sessions, we have also discussed outreach and data gathering issues that also require considerable time and effort. Outreach includes the activities listed below.

- Personal contact with community governmental, non-governmental, and faith-based stakeholders.
- Personal contact with potential employers seeking guidance and support including commitments to consider program graduates as prospective employees; and participate as advisors, guest speakers, and program advocates.
- Personal contact with city government identifying Brownfields stakeholders and supporters.
- Personal contact with city council members who represent community residents who are potentially impacted by the EWDJT program to properly demonstrate that the EWDJT program is truly part of the community. Several team members need to be in the field collecting data and developing relationships.

At this point, the following question always arises: “What happens if we don’t get the grant? How do I respond to all the people to which we promoted the program? The answer is simple. During promotion activities, always be very clear and honest.

- Hopefully, the proposal will be funded. But with stiff competition, it may not be this year.
- In the event EPA support does not come this year, planning will continue for next year.
- A new EWDJT funding cycle will begin again next fall.

Some EWDJT programs have been surprised to find local funding and support even when federal assistance is not immediately available.

A note to those who may be discouraged after attending the EPA webinar: Some of the applicants participating in this cycle have been funded in the past—some several times. They have a deep knowledge of their community and stakeholders. Other applicants have been working on their proposal for many months, and attended the HMTRI Annual All-Grantee Meeting and PLC sessions during the year. Additional applicants have been rejected in the past, resolved issues, and improved their program plan. Below are some thoughts to consider.

- All proposals are evaluated on a level playing field. Awards will be made on the quality of the proposed plan and an understanding of program goals with no favoritism.
- Unfunded proposals can provide a launching pad for improved and successful programs during the next cycle.
- EWDJT programs can become a permanent part of the community with diverse community support.
- Do not be discouraged if at first the program appears difficult to organize.
- Grantees are often surprised by the amount of external support available to EWDJT programs.
- Local external support will not be forthcoming to those who do not seek that support.

During the next several PLC sessions, we will be discussing the components necessary to develop a sustainable EWDJT program. These are the same components EPA will be addressing to evaluate proposals for funding.

Contact the EPA regional job training coordinator (page 38 of the RFP) indicating intentions to submit a proposal. While EPA coordinators cannot speak to individual proposals, they are primary contact points for applicants and can be helpful in answering specific questions regarding the EWDJT RFP. Some regions may have special conference calls for prospective applicants in their region, so get on their distribution list.

4. Webinars this month

Redevelopment Using Green Infrastructure

EPA's Office of Water will be hosting a webinar, Little Rock: Main Street Redevelopment Using Green Infrastructure Best Practice, on January 25 at 3:00pm ET. No registration is required. To join the webinar, go to <https://epawebconferencing.acms.com/owbestpractices/>.

5. EWDJT resources

Subscribe to EPA's Brownfields Listserve

Are you interested in receiving updates from the Brownfields program? By adding your name to EPA's Brownfields listserv, you will receive periodic announcements and press releases related to the Brownfields program. To subscribe, send a blank email message to brownfields-subscribe@lists.epa.gov. To unsubscribe, send a blank email message to brownfields-unsubscribe@lists.epa.gov.

NOTE: To subscribe or unsubscribe to EPA's Brownfields listserv, you must send your email message from the location at which you normally send or receive email.

EPA's CLUIN website

EPA's [CLUIN archive website](#) has hundreds of internet seminars that are available for free download and replay. There are several topics that may be of interest to EWDJT grantees, such as Leveraging Resources for Brownfields Revitalization: Meet the Funders.

Twitter

Follow OLEM on Twitter for the latest news and announcements at <https://twitter.com/EPALand>. Here you can also follow @EPAblog and @EPAwatersense.

Brownfields Toolbox website

HMTRI's [Brownfields Toolbox](#) website contains a wealth of information pertaining to EWDJT grantees and prospective grantees including various EPA documents, EWDJT RFP guidelines, PLC post-session notes and audio files, and information on the various components needed to develop a successful and sustainable job training program.

HMTRI Grantee and Community Outreach Listserv and PLC Distribution List

If you are not on the HMTRI listserv and/or PLC distribution list, you may want to join. Listserv and distribution list members receive announcements from HMTRI and EPA, PLC post-session notes for each session, and other related information. To join, contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

6. Items of interest

National Brownfields Training Conference

Mark your calendar for the [National Brownfields Training Conference](#) to be held in Pittsburgh on December 5–7, 2017. Pre-conference training will be held on December 4. The conference is co-sponsored by EPA and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Offered every two years, the conference is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing formerly utilized commercial and industrial properties.

The National Brownfields Conference is now accepting submissions for ideas and posters. The conference theme is Sustainable Communities Start Here. Poster and idea submissions are due March 17, 2017. Go to their [submission website](#) for more information.

Other related OBLR grant programs

See an overview of other EPA Brownfields related grants and general information about the OBLR grant program on [EPA's website](#). Prospective EWDJT applicants should contact and participate in these related programs. While not directly related to environmental job training, it is important that EWDJT grantees and prospective grantees network with organizations funded by EPA in areas of common interest. Touching base with other local EPA award recipients demonstrates community coordination and may develop into leveraged partnerships.

Tribal programs

There are 566 federally recognized tribes within the United States. Each tribe is an independent, sovereign nation, responsible for setting standards, making environmental policy, and managing environmental programs for its people. While each tribe faces unique challenges, many share similar environmental legacies. EPA and tribes have been working together to clean up Brownfields sites for more than a decade, and the partnership is making a difference. In FY2016, EPA allocated more than \$12 million dollars to 107 tribes for their tribal response programs.

- More than 700 properties are enrolled in tribal response programs.
- More than 455 properties are cleaned up with required institutional controls in place.
- More than 3,800 acres of tribal lands are ready for reuse.

For more information on general Brownfields information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>.

For more information on Brownfields grants, visit <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding>.

For more information on state and tribal response programs, visit <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-state-local-tribal-information>.

For more information on environmental protection in Indian country, visit <https://www.epa.gov/tribal>.

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 1, 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.