

November 18, 2015



## Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 13, Session 8

This was the eighth seventh session in this cycle of ten Professional Learning Community conversations. As part of our informal discussions, we plan to showcase experienced and new grantees, and seek input from government, nonprofit, and private sector mentors. During this cycle, we will focus on the following themes:

- Establishing Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) Programs
- Peer-to-peer mentoring and idea exchange
- Discovering resources for enhancing EWDJT programs
- Helpful hints and open discussion

### **Topics:** News from Washington and HMTRI

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### **News from Washington and HMTRI**

The FY2016 EWDJT Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued. To access the RFP and supporting documents, go to <http://www2.epa.gov/brownfields/fy2016-ewdj-t-documents>. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be posted to the website soon. For an overview of other EPA brownfields related grants and general information about the OBLR grant program, go to <http://www2.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#tab-6>. We encourage prospective EWDJT applicants to contact and participate in these related programs.

### EPA webinars for prospective applicants

The schedule has been announced for two Adobe Connect webinars for prospective applicants. The webinars will be held:

- December 2, 2015 at 12:00 p.m. EST
- December 10, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. EST

The purpose of these webinars is to assist applicants with the EWDJT application guidelines. They also provide an opportunity for applicants to pose questions to the EPA. To join the webinars go to <http://epawebconferencing.acms.com/fy16ewdj-t/>. For phone access only, call 866.299.3188 and use access code 202-566-1564.

The same presentation will be given for each webinar. However, depending on the audience, participant questions may be different.

You do not need to register in order to participate in the webinars. Audio will be made available through the Adobe Connect meeting and the conference call line.

Also note the resources below are available on the homepage of HMTRI's Brownfields Toolbox website under Funding Opportunities at [www.brownfields-toolbox.org](http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org).

- FY2016 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training RFP
- Tips for Submitting Proposals through Grants.gov
- EWDJT FAQ's (when issued)

#### PLC Holiday Schedule

In concert with the EPA Webinars, the EWDJT RFP due date, and holiday schedules, upcoming PLC sessions will be held as follows:

- Wednesday, December 9, 2:00–2:30 p.m. EST—Recruitment strategies
- Wednesday, December 16, 2:00–2:30 p.m. EST—Retention and placement
- Wednesday, January 6, 2:00–2:30 p.m. EST—Special session: EWDJT tune-ups

Each PLC session will include discussions related to the development of successful EWDJT proposals.

#### **Questions from PLC members**

*It looks to me that the previous eligibility requirement—entities awarded this year—has been removed and that anyone and everyone can apply. Am I correct?*

Per Joe Bruss at EPA HQ, awardees funded in 2015 are not eligible to apply for additional assistance in FY2016. The guidelines state, "Please note that applicants who received an EWDJT grant from EPA in Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) are not eligible to apply under this competition. Grantees who received EWDJT funding in FY15 may not apply under this competition under any circumstance, even if the applicant proposes to serve a different city or target area. Applicants who received an EWDJT grant in or before FY2014 and who did not receive funding in FY15 as described above, are eligible to apply for funding under this competition. Please indicate what community you propose to serve, including the town or city, as well as the neighborhood(s). This statement can be found on page 18 of the RFP.

*I am looking for the recent PLC conference call where screening program applicants was discussed. I missed it and would like to review the transcript, recording, or any resources available.*

Post-session notes and MP3 audio files for previous PLC sessions can be found on the HMTRI Brownfields Toolbox website at [www.brownfields-toolbox.org](http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org). Due to the RFP release, our PLC session discussing recruitment strategies has been scheduled for the next PLC session to be held December 9 at 2:00 p.m. EST. Hope to see you then.

#### **Things to do now**

Those participating in previous PLC discussions should be well on their way to developing their FY2016 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program. Below are some critical steps that need to be addressed in the early stages of program development.

#### Announcement of intentions

Contact your EPA Regional Job Training Coordinator (page 36 of the RFP) indicating your intention to submit a proposal. Regional Job Training Coordinators are primary contact points for applicants and can be helpful in answering specific questions regarding the EWDJT solicitation. Some regions may have special conference calls for prospective applicants in their region, so ask to be included on their distribution list.

Additional announcements should be made to community stakeholders, local government including city council, and in public forums. Note these announcements are intentions and not commitments. Local announcements will assist in developing relationships with community stakeholders and leveraging partners.

#### Assessments

Labor market assessments will define the community and individuals to be served, and locate and assess labor market needs of potential employers.

Check out EPA's new EJSscreen tool to provide support for assessing communities, demographics, and pollution sources. To access the tool, visit <http://www2.epa.gov/ejscreen>.

#### Partnerships

Identifying and recruiting partners consistent with assessments and program goals will lead to:

- Leveraging partners
- Administrative partners
- Training partners
- Recruitment and placement partners
- Partners that can provide in-kind and leveraged resources

#### Associations and contacts

Connect with associated programs and potential stakeholders such as city and county government, environmental offices, health, community services, workforce investment boards, the mayor's office of economic development, and the office of community relations and development.

#### Local employers

Connect with prospective employers such as manufacturers, transportation, manpower, cleanup, and consulting firms. Check out Cleanups in my Community to identify brownfield sources at <http://www2.epa.gov/cleanups/cleanups-my-community>.

Link up with assessment, revolving loan, and cleanup (ARC) grantees and stakeholders. ARC grants are "sisters" to the EWDJT program. Grantees and prospective grantees need to connect with communities requesting ARC assistance. Note that these grants are made primarily to city and county governments or to redevelopment organizations. The mayor's economic development or community planning offices should be able to provide additional contact information.

#### Assessment grants

Assessment guidelines are located at [http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/assessment\\_15-04\\_oblr.pdf](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/assessment_15-04_oblr.pdf).

#### Revolving Loan Fund grants

Revolving Loan Fund Grant guidelines are posted separately on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and <http://www2.epa.gov/brownfields/apply-brownfields-grant-funding>.

#### Cleanup grants

To access FY16 guidelines for Brownfields Cleanup Grants, visit <http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/epa-oswer-oblr-15-06.pdf>. Proposals are due December 18, 2015.

Additional guidance documents are available on the homepage at <http://www2.epa.gov/brownfields/apply-brownfields-grant-funding> and at <http://www2.epa.gov/brownfields/new-request-proposals-fy-2016-brownfields-assessment-revolving-loan-fund-and-cleanup>.

The reason for accessing associated brownfield RFP's is to assist in the connection between workforce development and the programs generating jobs for EWDJT graduates. As part of the ARC proposal process, applicants need to hold public meetings to announce their intentions. This provides an excellent opportunity for prospective EWDJT grantees to publically announce their intentions of developing or continuing an environmental workforce development and job training program for residents of impacted communities.

Linking with ARC grantees may also lead to a network of employer partners and leveraged resources. In summary, it would be wise to become acquainted with city staff working on assessment, revolving loan, or cleanup projects.

#### **Curriculum and EPA's EWDJT funding priorities**

This year EPA would like to align the level of training with contributions from each of the supporting program offices. See page 12 of the RFP. This could be a challenge to FY2016 EWDJT applicants.

Those contributions are:

- Brownfields hazardous waste assessment and cleanup training including petroleum cleanup training—\$3,363,000
- Solid waste management or cleanup training—\$10,000
- Superfund site cleanup and innovative and alternative treatment technologies training—\$25,000
- Wastewater treatment training—\$47,000
- Emergency planning, preparedness, and response training—\$20,000
- Enhanced environmental health and safety training—\$10,000
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training—\$10,000
- Alternative energy technologies (e.g. solar installation training, training in the preparation of formerly contaminated sites for renewable energy purposes, etc.)—\$15,000

It is understandable that each program office would like to see training proportional to their support. The challenge for EWDJT applicants will be to align their training, labor market assessment, and program priorities with those of EPA. Clearly brownfields hazardous waste assessment and cleanup training, including petroleum cleanup training with \$3,363,000 of support, deserves the highest priority training and curriculum.

EPA must allocate funds from other program offices to awareness training activities and/or a limited number of intermediate or advanced training activities supported by other program partners. Additionally, if proposals exceed funding available from other program support, the amount of the assistance will be reduced rather than renegotiated with revisions to the training plan.

For this reason, it is extremely important to include the following assessments as part of your planning process.

1. Work with local employers to identify jobs associated with brownfields hazardous waste assessment and cleanup including petroleum cleanup.
2. Connect (as described above) with local brownfields ARC programs including any petroleum cleanup programs.
3. When considering awareness training, provide the appropriate level of training consistent with labor market needs and available EPA funds.
4. Strongly consider leveraged resources to supplement EWDJT support.
5. If your training plan is highly dependent on advanced training in an under-supported program area, be aware that those funds may not be available if the grant is approved.

### **Making connections, networking, and items of interest**

As part of the assessment process, remember to check out other EWDJT grantees that may be in your area. EWDJT grantees are great and eager mentors. EPA will not allow programs to overlap, but they may be in the same general vicinity if different geographic and demographic groups are targeted. Current grantees can be an enormous help in mentoring and providing guidance to newer programs. Additionally, previous grantees who are no longer active may become valuable partners in a new expanded program. View past and current EWDJT grantees at [http://cfpub.epa.gov/bf\\_factsheets/index.cfm](http://cfpub.epa.gov/bf_factsheets/index.cfm).

### Funding Opportunity—The Employment and Training Administration

Grants like the TechHire Partnership Grants from the Employment and Training Administration are not directly applicable to EWDJT programs. They are, however, potential sources for leveraging. Connecting with such a program as a sub-grantee or stakeholder partner can provide additional resources to an EWDJT organization. Find out if the local WIB will be participating.

#### TechHire Partnership Grants

<http://www.grants.gov/view-opportunity.html?oppld=280094>

Expected number of awards: 35

Closing date for applications: March 11, 2016

Awards: \$2,000,000–\$5,000,000

The Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, announces the availability of approximately \$100,000,000 in grant funds for the TechHire partnership grant program. This grant program is designed to equip individuals with the skills they need through innovative approaches that can rapidly train workers for and connect them to well-paying, middle- and high-skilled, and high-growth jobs across a diversity of H-1B industries such as Information Technology (IT), healthcare, advanced manufacturing, financial services, and broadband.

Projects funded by this grant program will help participants begin careers in H-1B occupations and industries which are in demand and/or high growth in the area applicants are proposing to serve. On a limited basis, this grant program will also enable applicants to work with companies on increasing the skills of existing workers in lower-skilled jobs to move into more highly skilled positions requiring technology-related skills.

### Looking forward—an EWDJT schedule of events

As previously noted, the due date for FY2016 EWDJT proposals is January 14, 2016. As of today, below is how a tentative schedule would look.

- Request for Proposals—Issued
- Proposals due (grants.gov)—January 14, 2016
- Awards announced—April/May 2016
- Administrative and workplan approvals—July/August 2016
- Next Annual All-Grantee Meeting—August 2016
- Training and execution of workplans and project reporting—September 2016 and on
- Quarterly reports—due every three months
- Next National Brownfields Conference—Spring 2017

We will update this schedule as additional information becomes available.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: December 9, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. EST

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at [msenew@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.