

March 18, 2015



Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 12, Session 8

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of March 18, 2015

Lewis and Clark County, Helena, MT

Workforce development in rural communities

The first year in Montana

Questions from Grantees

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HMTRI First Annual Mid-Year Grantee Update Webinar—April 20

HMTRI Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting—August 19–20

2015 National Brownfields Training Conference—September 2–4

Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015—April 13

EPA Brownfields Area Wide Grantees

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Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of March 18, 2015

The FY2015 proposals for Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Programs (EWDJT) are in process. Proposals not meeting qualification guidelines should have been notified by now. The remaining proposals are being evaluated according to ranking criteria and additional factors. The estimated schedule for announcement of funded proposals is now sometime in May. We will keep everyone posted as information becomes available.

Award announcements—May

Grant forms, work plans, etc.—June/July

Email that funds are available—August/September

Annual All-Grantee Meeting—August

Lewis and Clark County, Helena, MT

Thanks, Laura and Jennifer, for an informative discussion regarding events in Lewis and Clark County.

In recent PLC discussions, we have addressed EWDJT during the first year of operation including Detroit and Flint, Michigan. Today we looked at first year programs in rural communities. Hopefully, these discussions will provide insight on what to expect for new grantees soon to be announced.

Lewis and Clark County includes Helena (population 30,000) and is the sixth most densely populated counties in a sparsely populated state (slightly over 1 million). With a population density of 7 people per square mile, EWDJT must draw from a smaller base than urban programs previously discussed. Smaller target communities bring with them a host of challenges for EWDJT programs:

- A smaller recruitment pool
- A potential for larger classroom disparities
- Transportation issues
- Lower acceptance standards needs
- Relocation issues related to placement

Lewis and Clark County is in the proximity of large Superfund sites primarily related to mining and drilling activities. Additionally, the historic city has many old buildings loaded with lead and asbestos. For

these reasons, program managers correctly, in their needs assessment, identified major employers and training needs. The Lewis and Clark County curriculum has been oriented around lead and asbestos in addition to those certifications necessary to work at Superfund sites.

With their close relationship with the Montana Department of Labor, Helena Job Services and Anaconda Job Services will assist in recruitment/placement activities as will their connection to local community-based organizations. The Montana Business Assistance Connection will assist in linking graduates with employers. Helena College will provide instructors and technical support for the program.

While facing challenges associated with rural programs, Lewis and Clark County has done an excellent job in needs assessment and assembling partnerships to address all aspects of the EWDJT program.

An overview of the Lewis and Clark County program

Training goal

- Train 45 students
- Place 38 graduates in environmental jobs
- Track graduates for at least one year

Core curriculum (core training program includes 255 hours of instruction)

- 40-hour HAZWOPER
- Lead abatement
- Lead renovation, repair, and painting
- Asbestos abatement
- Emergency response
- Commercial driver's license (CDL)
- First aid
- Up to five federal certifications

Target population

- Unemployed and underemployed county residents
- Women
- Veterans
- High school dropouts
- Recent college graduates
- Ex-offenders

Key partners

- Helena College
- Lewis and Clark County Health Department
- Montana Department of Labor
- Montana Business Assistance Connection
- Helena Job Services
- Anaconda Job Services
- Community-based organizations
- Environmental employers

For more information about the Lewis and Clark County program, contact:

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Questions from Grantees

“As a Workforce Investment Board, our main objective is to get jobs. We try to develop training programs for projects that are 6-8 months down the road. Is it possible to get better communication regarding upcoming local area construction and brownfield job opportunities? Maybe in the form of an alert? For example, our area only has 1 superfund site that I am aware of, the Scovill Landfill but it does not seem to be a job generator. We do have building projects that will require cleanup. IE 44 Willow Street will need Brownfield remediation. Are projects like this listed with the EPA? Can we be notified when an application for cleanup goes in?”

Response from Ann Carroll at EPA Headquarters:

Anyone who wants to sign up for our (regional) Listserv will be notified of new brownfield grants when they are announced as part of each grant competition. I imagine, registering for an EPA New England listserv might also work if they only work in that region. Similarly, their state or local community brownfields program(s) may have similar listserv's and may want to link with their Regional and community brownfield organizations.

For general information, however (and maybe as a general information resource), individuals and organizations can check the following information sources to see about Brownfields, Superfund, or other contaminated sites in their areas.

1. Envirofacts and/or EPA's Cleanups in My Community (which only displays sites where EPA Superfund, Brownfields, or other contaminated site programs have directed funds or listed). <http://www2.epa.gov/cleanups/cleanups-my-community>
2. For sites of state or Tribal interest rather than federal, they can always check their state voluntary cleanup program to see if a site inventory is publically available. From the Brownfields homepage, someone can pursue the links and map from the state and Tribal response program page. http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/state_tribal/state_map.htm

Tribal program links can be found on the Tribal page.

http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/state_tribal/tribe_progs.htm

Response from Melissa Friedland at EPA Headquarters:

What I would suggest is contacting the community involvement coordinator wherever you know there is a Superfund site. That way, you can be up to date on site activities, particularly when construction will start. EPA webpages are a good place to begin.

Networking Opportunities

HMTRI First Annual Mid-Year Grantee Update webinar

In past HMTRI All-Grantee Meetings, participants have expressed interest in a mid-year update. In response to that request, HMTRI will be hosting an EWDJT Grantee Mid-Year Update webinar on Monday, April 20, 2015, from 1:00–2:00 p.m. CDT.

PLC participants are eligible and encourage to participate in this webinar.

Tentative agenda

- News from Washington—EPA HQ
- Resources for Improving Communications with Prospective Employers—EPA HQ
- Common Mistakes Made by Grantees from the Regional Perspective—EPA Region 4
- Placement Issues from the big-city perspective—OIA, Chicago, IL
- Placement Issues from the midsize city perspective—Florida State College at Jacksonville
- Placement Issues from the rural perspective—Zender Environmental Health and Research Group, Anchorage, AK
- Q&A

For questions, contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

HMTRI Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

The HMTRI Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting will be held August 19–20, 2015, in Alexandria, VA, with travel days of August 18 and August 21. This meeting is mandatory for all EWDJT grantees. Active PLC members are also invited to attend.

There is no fee to attend. Hotel accommodations will be provided for three nights for people from out-of-town, and some working meals will be provided. Participants must assume costs for transportation and additional meals.

Look for the invitation to be posted soon to the HMTRI Grantee and Community Outreach Listserv.

2015 National Brownfields Training Conference

The National Brownfields 2015 Training Conference will be held in Chicago, IL, on September 2–4, 2015. The conference will be held at the Chicago Hilton on Michigan Avenue. Additional meeting space and sleeping rooms will be available at the Palmer House Hilton. Please visit the Conference Website for additional information at www.brownfieldsconference.org. Registration for Brownfields 2015 is now open with reduced registration for early birds until February.

What topics are included in the program?

- Environmental assessment and cleanup
- Traditional and innovative financing approaches
- Marketing, real estate and economic development
- Planning strategies for better communities
- Incorporating sustainability into redevelopment activities
- Civic and community engagement
- Addressing liability and enforcement issues
- State, tribal and local partnerships

HMTRI has submitted a request to conduct a roundtable session for EWDJT grantees. We would like to organize an open discussion with all our EWDJT grantees and interested stakeholders.

Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015

The Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference will begin on April 13, 2015, at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Registration will open soon, but for now, make sure you're free to join hundreds of labor, environmental, business, non-profit, and civic leaders for Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015.

EPA awards 20 new Brownfields Area Wide Grants

Last week, the Environmental Protection Agency awarded \$4 million in new grants. Up to \$200,000 will be awarded to each of the 20 grantee communities in support of community engagement and planning activities. The area-wide approach recognizes that "revitalization of the area surrounding Brownfield sites is also critical to the successful reuse of the property." Brownfields Area Wide Grants Projects represent many possibilities for networking EWDJT programs with community brownfield activities.

- Camden, NJ
- Cheyenne, WY
- Dubuque, IA
- Duluth, MN
- Fresno, CA Hickory, NC
- Huntington, WV
- Itta Bena, MS
- Pittsburg, KS
- Portland, ME Racine, WI
- Rochester, NY
- South Bronx, NY
- St. Helens, OR
- Whitewright, TX

Funding and Coordination Opportunities

Environmental Education Grants

Since 1992, EPA has distributed between \$2 and \$3.5 million in grant funding per year, for a total of \$62,143,290, supporting more than 3,600 grant projects. The purpose of the EE Model Grants Program is to support environmental education projects that increase public awareness about environmental issues and provide participants with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. This grant program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques, and that will serve as models that can be replicated in a variety of settings. For more information on the new awardees and on future EE grant competitions, visit <http://www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>.

Operation AmeriCorps

The link to the official Operation AmeriCorps webpage is below, it offers great information about what the initiative is, and how to apply. <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/operation-amicorps>

Overview

Operation AmeriCorps is a new program to help tribal and local leaders use AmeriCorps to accomplish big things in their community. As part of Operation AmeriCorps, tribal and local leaders are being asked to identify a high-priority local challenge that AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC and/or AmeriCorps VISTA members can address in a relatively short period of time (no more than two years).

The grant competition is open exclusively to tribal and local governments, including counties, cities, towns, and school districts; and state service commissions. They are looking for proposals that are place-

based, coordinated with existing community organizations, and with transformational outcomes.

The solution may be a new initiative, or it may use national service to scale up an existing successful effort, but in either case AmeriCorps must be the additive ingredient to achieve transformative change at the local level.

Year 2015 Operation AmeriCorps competition has two funding priorities. Applicants may choose to apply to either of the priorities.

- The first priority focus is narrowly tailored to focus on specific post-secondary outcomes for students.
- The second priority is more flexible and allows localities to identify their most pressing challenge.

Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreements

“Environmental Justice cooperative agreements empower communities to implement environmental protection projects locally,” said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “With these agreements, EPA advances our commitment to communities by providing financial and technical assistance to take action against environmental harm.”

In 2003, EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) launched the first solicitation for the EJCS Cooperative Agreement Program. Since the Program’s inception, EPA has provided funding to 50 projects to help communities understand and address exposure to environmental harms and risks. Each of this year’s recipients are awarded up to \$120,000 to support two-year projects, including identifying and reducing sources of air pollution, reducing lead exposure in homes of low-income residents, and the cleanup and repurposing of community dump sites. Projects must use the Collaborative Problem Solving model, comprised of seven elements of a successful collaborative partnership, to address local environmental and/or public health issues.

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race or income, in the environmental decision-making process. These awards represent EPA’s commitment to promoting localized, community-based actions to address environmental justice issues.

Please visit <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/resources/publications/grants/cps-project-abstracts-2014.pdf> for a complete listing of the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement recipients and project descriptions. More information about EPA’s Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving Cooperative Agreement Program: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-cps-grants.html>.

Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has posted a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants at www.grants.gov. Public housing authorities, local governments, nonprofits, tribal entities, and for-profit developers are eligible to apply.

Applications must present a plan to revitalize a severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted multi-family housing project located in a distressed neighborhood into a viable, mixed-income community. Find additional information and see which grants have been awarded at

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn/fy14funding.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

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/>.

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.