

April 1, 2015

Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 12, Session 9

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of April 1, 2015

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., Portland, OR

Women in the environmental workforce

Issues to consider when recruiting, training, and placing women in environmental jobs

Staying engaged

Networking Opportunities

Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015—April 13

First Annual Grantee Mid-Year Update Webinar—April 20, 1:00 p.m. CDT

2015 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting—August 19-20,

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

2015 National Brownfields Training Conference—September 2-4

Funding and Coordination Opportunities

### **Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of April 1, 2015**

The FY2015 proposals for Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Programs (EWDJT) are nearing final reviews.

Award announcements—May

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

Email that funds are available—August/September

Annual All-Grantee Meeting—August

### **Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., Portland, OR**

Thanks, Amy, for an informative discussion regarding women in the trades. We would like to share a comment received from Samantha Stallybrass, Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation, regarding Amy's presentation.

*"Thank you for including us in these PLC meetings. I was in attendance on the call today, and found Amy James Neel and her organization, Oregon Tradeswomen, to be more than informative, but downright inspiring! What a great program they have there in Portland. I have ready emailed Amy to thank her and request the resources she offered us."*

Thanks Samantha, you summarized well our feelings about Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. (OTI).

Amy is dedicated to sharing the information and resources developed in their program with others interested in expanding gender neutral environmental workforce development and job training programs. While OTI is not currently funded as part of the EPA EWDJT program, they continue their mission of introducing women to higher paying non-traditional trades.

OTI first received EPA funding in 2004, and then again in 2007, 2009, and 2012. What makes their program unique? How does it work? Are there special issues to consider when placing women in environmental jobs?

[An overview of the OTI program](#)

OTI enrolled 94 students. 76 students graduated, and 64 graduates were placed in jobs (over 84%).

#### Key partners

- Portland Brownfields program including river and harbor cleanup, and Superfund cleanup and bridge repair and upgrades
- Groundwork Portland
- Portland Development Commission
- Verde
- Worksystems, Inc.
- Numerous contractors and private sector employers
- Organized labor construction trades

OTI has numerous partners and customized placement with the contractor network.

#### Curriculum

Oregon Tradeswomen is unique in that it provides general training in the construction trades. Then they provide environmental training to those most qualified and motivated to pursue environmental careers.

#### Pathways to Success

- A seven-week, women-only pre-apprenticeship class to help women prepare for a high-skill, high-wage career in the trades.
- Three days per week—expanding to include an additional evening program
- Intense attention is given to students (4 to 1 instructor student ratio)
- Basic training in first 7 weeks
- Day 1—Classroom, safe skills
- Day 2—Industry awareness, working with tools
- Day 3 – Fieldwork; trips to local sites of interest, cleanup, employers, and construction sites

A key objective of the basic program is to establish student interest and motivation in a specific trade. Additional life skills training includes strength training and presentation skills. The goal of the basic tool use course is to provide extensive tool and safety skills to those proceeding to environmental training. Basic life skills, strength training, and safety training is provided prior to the start of the environmental core curriculum.

At this point, students will have OSHA 10-hour training and numerous OSHA construction trade safety certifications.

Select students are then invited to apply for an additional three weeks of environmental training. Environmental training provides supplemental environmental credentials in addition to traditional basic construction skills and credentials including 40-hour HAZWOPER, an EPA mandatory training. Additional environmental curriculum is dynamic and depends on employer needs. Portland is in the process of a major harbor cleanup in addition to a massive bridge repair and upgrade cycle. Lead, asbestos, and harbor cleanup activities provide significant employment opportunities.

Additional curriculum includes:

- Solid waste management, and material recycling
- Innovative and alternative treatment technologies
- Environmental health and chemical safety
- Lead RR&P
- 16-hour asbestos operations and maintenance worker
- Training related to cleanup activities at the Portland Harbor Superfund site
- Certified erosion control

#### Certifications

- Multiple state and federal certifications including asbestos and RR&P

#### Placement and tracking

- Track graduates for two years
- 84% placement rate
- 42% enter apprenticeship programs
- One-on-one placement program with graduates and employers
- Extensive emphasis placed on preparation for employment and placement

OTI takes full responsibility in matching graduates with employers relying less on outside organizations. Graduates are encouraged to dress for the trades, removing issues associated with gender discrimination.

Graduates become part of an extended family serving as mentors and role models for those who follow.

#### Student recruitment

When recruiting a diverse participant population including women, insure that marketing materials including instructional staff are shown to be diverse. All male graduate class pictures and all male staff do not attract serious female participants.

OTI is targeting unemployed and underemployed women. Women veterans are a special target group with additional coordination with partner organizations.

OTI has a unique student recruitment process similar to a “tryout” recruitment strategy. Students first complete a basic construction skills and safety program. Those students demonstrating interest and aptitude are invited to apply for environmental supplemental training.

#### Student screening and support

- Graduates of the seven-week basic training program must apply for the supplemental environmental training program
- High school diploma or GED
- Driver’s license with clean driving record
- Drug and alcohol free (tested during program)
- Fitness test
- Basic English
- Serious about a construction career

Additional programs and services provided by OTI

**Building Girls**

Building Girls educates middle and high school girls about careers in the building, construction, mechanical, and utility trades.

**Tradeswomen Organized for Outreach, Leadership and Support (TOOLS)**

Builds the leadership skills of tradeswomen to advocate for equal representation for women in the trades.

**Tradeswomen Social Hour**

Last Tues. of each month  
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

**Building Girls Summer Camps**

Week-long camps for middle and high school girls in Grants Pass and in Portland.

**Pathways to Success Information Sessions**

1st -3rd Thurs. each month  
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
In Portland and Vancouver

For more information about the OTI program, contact:

Amy James Neel

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.

3934 NE MLK Jr. Blvd., Suite 101

Portland, OR 97212

[amy@tradeswomen.net](mailto:amy@tradeswomen.net)

503.335.8200, ext. 34

[www.tradeswomen.net](http://www.tradeswomen.net)

**Networking Opportunities**

HMTRI First Annual Grantee Mid-Year 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
- 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](mailto: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.

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.

This meeting is open to:

- EPA-funded EWDJT grantees
- Past EWDJT grantees
- Active PLC members

The 2015 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting will be held as follows:

CHECK-IN—Tuesday, August 18, 6–8 p.m. This is check-in only and to receive meeting materials. No meeting will be held on Tuesday evening so that everyone can get settled after a long day of travel.

MEETING—Wednesday–Thursday, August 19–20 | 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. each day

TRAVEL DAYS—Tuesday and Friday, August 18 and August 21

Location: Holiday Inn & Suites Alexandria Historic District, 625 First Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

To REGISTER, email Glo Hanne at [ghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:ghanne@eicc.edu) and include:

Your name, organization, address, city/state/zip, phone, fax, and organization you are representing. Please indicate if you are a PLC member or a grantee. The registration deadline is TUESDAY, JULY 29. If you have any questions, please contact Glo at 563.441.4081 or [ghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:ghanne@eicc.edu).

### 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. Find out more about the conference and register at <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

### Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015

The Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference will be held April 13, 2015, at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. Green Jobs 2015 provides an opportunity to network with environmental, business, non-profit, and civic leaders. The deadline to register online for the Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference has been extended until noon ET, Friday, April 10, but will also be available on site.

The Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference is focused on Energizing America by repairing and modernizing energy infrastructure. This is critical to determining how to address the threat of climate change, how to create family-sustaining jobs and increase global competitiveness, and how to protect the environment and secure the economy for generations to come.

The conference is a day-long event with exciting speakers like Senator Elizabeth Warren; opportunities to network with business, civic, non-profit, union and environmental leaders; and informative and interactive workshops focused on every part of the clean economy.

For more information and to see the full list of confirmed speakers and workshops, go to <http://www.greenjobsconference.org>.

### **Funding and Coordination Opportunities**

#### DOL—Training to Work funds

\$27M in grants to help incarcerated individuals in prison work-release find stable jobs, strengthen underserved communities, boost economy, and reduce prison recidivism.

WASHINGTON — Returning home from prison can be hard, particularly without the benefits of a stable job. Without employment, the likelihood of recidivism rises. To provide the support, training and assistance needed to find and keep a good job, the U.S. Labor Department today announced a \$27 million Training to Work — Adult Reentry grant program — to help thousands of soon-to-be-released inmates become productive citizens.

"A good job gives a person a sense of dignity and purpose. It enables them to find a decent place to live and enjoy a hot meal at home," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. "Good jobs are a pathway to the middle class. Those who have paid their debt to society deserve the opportunity to find and hold useful employment. It puts money in their pocket, most of which is pumped back into the economy. In the best America, everyone shares our prosperity. That's what these grants can make possible."

Training to Work grants will fund sustainable efforts to develop and adopt career pathway models — an approach designed to link and coordinate education and training services for individuals to obtain industry recognized credentials. With these credentials, these workers can find meaningful employment and meet the needs of local employers in growing sectors and industries.

The department expects to award approximately 20 grants with a maximum value of \$1,360,000 each to provide training and employment services for men and women, ages 18 and older (including veterans), who participate in state or local work-release programs.

Grant applicants must be located in an area with high poverty and high crime rates, including Promise Zones — communities which often have a larger proportion of returning citizens and higher rates of recidivism. Applicants will also be required to establish a committed Career Pathways Collaborative led by the grantee, and consist of representatives from the workforce system, work release programs, and employers and/or industry associations. The CPC leadership team will create a comprehensive program. Selected applicants will be expected to include the following components in their proposals: case management, mentoring services, educational activities, training that leads to industry-recognized credentials, workforce activities, and follow-up services.

Nonprofit organizations that meet the requirements of the solicitation may apply.

The Funding Opportunity Announcement, which includes information about how to apply, is available at <http://www.grants.gov>.

#### 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>.

Proposals under the EE Local Grants are closed for 2015, but this is an annual competition to keep in mind for early 2016.

#### 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21st CSC)

Letters of Interest are once again being accepted for the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21st CSC). The edited Federal Register Notice (FRN) omits specific references to dates regarding duration of membership and deadlines to submit Letters of Interest. Instead, the FRN now states that Letters of Interest may be submitted, and will be reviewed, on a rolling or as-needed basis.

Ten new organizations have been approved for 21CSC membership, bringing the total number of 21CSC member organizations to date to 162. As always, the complete list of 21CSC programs can be viewed on the partnership website at [www.21csc.org](http://www.21csc.org).

Several 21CSC programs and leaders were recognized as winners for The Corps Network's Corpsmember of the Year, Corps Legacy Achievement, and Projects of the Year awards.

As an additional reminder, the 21CSC Champion of the Year will be announced during the Corps Network's 2015 National Conference in February in Washington, D.C. If you haven't done so already, please consider your colleagues and partners for this recognition.

Please contact Levi Novey, Director of Communications & Marketing, at The Corps Network at [lnovey@corpsnetwork.org](mailto:lnovey@corpsnetwork.org) ASAP.

#### 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/ameri-corps/operation-ameri-corps>

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

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Next PLC Session: April 15, 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/>.

**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.