

July 29, 2015



Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 13, Session 4

This was the fourth session in this cycle of ten Professional Learning Community conversations. 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

Environmental justice—Insuring environmental justice is part of the EWDJT program
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News from Washington and HMTRI

The estimated target date for the next round of EWDJT request for proposals is November. Awards are expected to be made in late January 2016. Those interested in submitting proposals need to start now as many ranking criteria require collaboration and partnership development. A good starting point for new communities not familiar with the EPA EWDJT program is to obtain a copy of the FY2015 request for proposals available on EPA's website (or request one Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com). Note that the 2016 solicitation may have provisions not included in previous RFPs. While the basic requirements of the 2016 are likely to remain the same, organizations considering submitting proposals need to familiarize themselves with changes in the evaluation criteria when it is issued.

Major networking opportunities for EWDJT stakeholders

The *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* will be held August 19–20, 2015, in Alexandria, VA. The deadline for participation has past, but the September PLC will be summarizing the workshop presentations.

The 2015 National Brownfields Training Conference will be held September 1–4, 2015, in Chicago, IL. There is still time to participate. Note the pre-conference sessions beginning September 1. The national Brownfields conference is convened every other year and addresses all aspects of Brownfields redevelopment including financing assessment, remediation, reuse, and job training. Several thousand participants provide an excellent opportunity to discuss employment opportunities with potential employers. See sessions related to job training and registration information below.

[Brownfields Utilization, Investment and Local Development \(BUILD\) Act of 2015](#)

Six Senators introduced the [Brownfields Utilization, Investment and Local Development \(BUILD\) Act of 2015](#). This legislation would provide the tools local governments and other entities need to clean up and revitalize brownfield sites. Authorization for the Brownfields program expired in 2006 and has been funded by Congress since then but is not a formally authorized part of the federal budget. The Build Act of 2015 would not only reauthorize the program, but also make significant improvements—opening up the program for more communities and local entities to clean up brownfields and transform them by revitalizing underutilized and contaminated land.

Senators Inhofe (R-OK), Markey (D-MA), Rounds (R-SD), Boxer (D-CA), Crapo (R-ID) and Booker (D-NJ) all signed on as original cosponsors.

The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment also held a hearing to examine the many benefits of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [Brownfields program](#).

Highlights of the BUILD Act:

- Authorizes up to \$7,500 in technical assistance grants to eligible entities in small communities, Indian tribes, rural areas, and disadvantaged areas.
- Expands the eligibility for Brownfields grants for nonprofit organizations to include certain nonprofit organizations, limited liability corporations, limited partnerships, and community development entities.
- Increases the funding limit for remediation grants to \$500,000 for each site, with some exceptions for higher funding, and authorizes multi-purpose grants up to \$950,000, which provide greater certainty for long-term project financing.
- Allows certain government entities that do not qualify as a bona fide prospective purchaser to be eligible to receive grants so long as the government entity did not cause or contribute to a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance at the property.
- Allows eligible entities to use up to 8 percent of their Brownfields grant funding for administrative costs.
- Directs EPA in providing grants to give consideration to brownfield sites located adjacent to federally designated floodplains.
- Requires EPA to establish a program to provide grants of up to \$500,000 to eligible entities and to capitalize a revolving loan fund to locate clean energy projects at Brownfields sites.
- Reauthorizes the Brownfield program at the same authorized funding level (\$250 million per year) through fiscal year 2018.

Environmental justice—Insuring environmental justice is part of the EWDJT program

Environmental justice (EJ) and the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) program go hand-in-hand, providing job opportunities to underserved community residents.

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

While EJ is not a formalized part of EWDJT programs, a sensitivity towards EJ needs to be considered in:

- Establishing target communities for EWDJT training.
- The development of participant recruitment strategies and policies.

EPA recently released a new and comprehensive tool that can assist in the identification of EJ target communities:

EJSCREEN, Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released EJSCREEN, an environmental justice screening and mapping tool that uses high resolution maps combined with demographic and environmental data to identify places with potentially elevated environmental burdens and vulnerable populations. EJSCREEN's simple to understand color-coded maps, bar charts, and reports enable users to better understand areas in need of increased environmental protection, health care access, housing, infrastructure improvement, community revitalization, and climate resilience. EJSCREEN can highlight communities with greater risk of exposure to pollution based on 8 pollution and environmental indicators including traffic proximity, particulate matter, and proximity to superfund sites. These indicators are combined with demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Five-Year Summary Survey enabling users to identify areas with minority or low-income populations who also face potential pollution issues. EJSCREEN's capabilities can provide support for educational programs, grant writing, and community awareness efforts so that users can participate meaningfully in decision-making processes that impact their health and environment. To access the tool, visit <http://www2.epa.gov/ejscreen>.

Introduction to the Sustainable Community Development Group

Thank you to Deeohn Ferris from the Sustainable Community Development Group for her informative presentation.

Sustainable Community Development Group (SCDG) is a Washington, DC based nonprofit that specializes in building healthy communities which provide sustainability for all. They believe that healthy inclusive community building results from a process that intersects three directives: equitable economic development, environmental justice, and smart growth.

Cities, towns, and neighborhoods are interdisciplinary systems, and striving to make them healthy, sustainable, and equitable places to live is a complex enterprise. Sustainable Community Development Group was established to help stakeholders effectively navigate those complexities. Their areas of expertise incorporate 4 critical community essentials:

- Environmental and Health Factors—pollution, climate change, land use, clean air and water, energy, and infrastructure
- Social and Economic Factors—racial and wealth disparities, affordable housing, worker readiness, and entrepreneurship
- Education and Equitable Access Factors—public and private goods and services, transportation, parks, health care, and nutrition
- Historical and Legacy Factors—heritage preservation, blight and stigma, brownfields, vacant properties, and sprawl

Their goal is to educate and develop leaders who understand the processes of equitable economic development, environmental justice, and smart growth. This means research, teaching, coaching, leadership development, and best practices to convey how public and private community development can be effectively used to clean up the environment, create jobs, green the infrastructure, and tackle health and socioeconomic concerns.

Please consider attending this year's Equitable Development Workshop being held prior to the start of the Brownfields Conference in Chicago on September 1, 2015, from 9:00am-3:00pm at the Palmer House Hotel. The focus this year is on Workforce Strategies, Entrepreneurial Development, and Job Training.

Equitable Development Workshop

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 - 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Equitable development seeks to comprehensively address deeply entrenched issues such as poverty, economic development, and environmental quality within our communities. Economic opportunity is a cornerstone of equitable development particularly within communities facing the additional challenges associated with brownfields sites. Where there are opportunities to clean up and sustainably re-use brownfields sites, the timing is ripe to integrate and invest in equitable development. It involves residents, property owners, workers, local businesses, planners, government officials, and developers cooperatively engaging in decisions and investments which address past inequities, while creating a new vision for a sustainable future. The foundation for creating strong, economically resilient and liveable communities is increasingly built upon a spectrum of place-based activities that develop improved community revitalization tools and strategies. This workshop is designed to give participants practical tools, learning from practitioners working at the cutting edge of connecting low income and minority populations to opportunities and the beneficial socioeconomic outcomes of sustainable brownfields redevelopment.

Roundtable group discussion, Establishing Effective Workforce Development Programs for Brownfields Redevelopment, from 11:20am-11:55am. HMTRI will introduce the 9:50am-10:25am panel for the session Brownfields Environmental Employment and Education: Targeting Low Income, Unemployed and Under-Employed Workers, and facilitate the discussion afterwards from 10:25am-10:40am. The session features Joe Bruss from EPA Headquarters, and a representative from a company that has hired program graduates.

If you have additional questions about her presentation, contact Deeohn at:

Deeohn Ferris

Sustainable Community Development Group

7059 Blair Road NW, Suite 102

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Brownfields 2015—Workforce development events to consider

The 2015 National Brownfields Training Conference

For those interested in this important conference, the 2015 National Brownfields Training Conference will be held in Chicago, IL, 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>.

HMTRI will have a booth in the exhibit hall that grantees are invited to use as a meeting spot and a place to distribute program materials.

Additional workforce development events to consider include:

EJ Caucus

If you plan on attending the Environmental Justice Caucus and haven't registered, there is no registration fee but they are trying to gain a better sense of how many will be attending for food planning purposes. The website to register is

http://www.brownfieldsconference.org/en/activities/environmental_justice_caucus.

Making a Visible Difference in Communities

Joe Bruss, US EPA Headquarters

Sharon Beard, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

Robert Baumann, College of the Holy Cross

Disadvantaged communities affected by brownfields and other sources of pollution have struggled to revitalize neighborhoods to make them healthy, safe, livable, and sustainable. The NIEHS Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP) and the EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) Program have addressed this by providing grant funding to support training and creating career pathways to the environmental field. This session will provide organizations with strategies via roundtables for effectively implementing and evaluating programs, developing approaches to serve specific high-risk populations such as ex-offenders, and summarize the recent findings of an Economic Impact Analysis of the NIEHS ECWTP.

Town Hall Meeting

Vernice Miller-Travis, Skeo Solutions

Deeohn Ferris, Sustainable Community Development Group Inc.

Mathy Stanislaus, US EPA Assistant Administrator for Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

Twenty years after the EPA awarded its first assessment grant to Cuyahoga County, the EPA's Brownfields Program has awarded thousands of grant awards to communities throughout the country to support assessment, cleanup, revolving loan fund, job training, technical assistance, and area-wide planning. The Brownfields Program was designed to specifically address environmental justice concerns. This session is intended to provide an opportunity for open dialogue with community stakeholders and environmental justice leaders to solicit feedback on what additional steps need to be taken, what are the areas of improvement, and what programs have been successful and should be highlighted in order to lay the framework for the next era of brownfields revitalization.

OAI Open House

Friday September 4, 2015 from 2:30–4:00 pm

OAI cordially invites you to join us for a gathering of workforce development agencies and colleagues, directly following the 2015 Brownfields conference on Friday September 4, 2015 from 2:30–4:00 pm.

OAI is pleased to host this event at our new facility, located in downtown Chicago at 180 N Wabash, Suite 750, Chicago, IL 60601. This event is meant to share tools and best practices between organizations. OAI will present a workshop about our latest curriculum innovations including our efforts to include a blended learning approach to the Environmental Careers Worker Training program. We will make sure that our presentation includes useful resources/takeaways for all attendees and their respective programs. We are looking for 3–4 additional presenters from partner organizations to share their best practices as well. Please RSVP to mdowling@oaiinc.org by Friday August 28, 2015.

Mollie Dowling, Executive Director

Chicago office: 312.528.3555

Park Forest office: 708.283.5020, ext. 12

www.oaiinc.org

EPA's Technical Assistance Programs "Office Hours" at Brownfields 2015

Looking for support in advancing your community's brownfield sites from assessment to cleanup to vibrant reuse? Want your community's redevelopment planning to be more equitable and beneficial to all? Looking for assistance in developing a competitive brownfields grant proposal or having a TA provider review your draft grant proposal? EPA's Technical Assistance programs are here to help!

All Brownfields 2015 conference attendees are invited to drop in and meet EPA's Technical Assistance provider teams during their open "office hours" at Brownfields 2015 on Thursday, September 3 in Salon A-5 from 12:30pm to 3:30pm. Learn about the various opportunities for targeted, tailored technical assistance, and how these teams can help your community reach its brownfield redevelopment, job training, financing, environmental justice, and equitable development goals.

EPA grants funding to entities whose experienced brownfield practitioners can offer technical assistance to communities affected by brownfield sites. This TA can be delivered in a variety of ways depending on the program, and on your community's needs. Below is a description of the Technical Assistance programs offered by EPA, each of which will have representatives on-hand for this special informal session.

The TAB Program funds technical assistance to communities and other stakeholders on brownfields issues with the goal of increasing the community's understanding and involvement in brownfield cleanup and revitalization, and helping to move brownfields sites forward toward cleanup and reuse. There are four different TAB grantees that cover different geographic zones throughout the country. These grantees, among other things, serve as an independent resource center assisting communities with all things brownfields related including community involvement, reviewing drafted grant proposals, helping communities to better understand the health impacts of brownfield sites, science and technology relating to brownfield site assessment, remediation and site preparation activities, brownfield financing, providing information on integrated approaches to brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, facilitating stakeholder involvement, identifying sources of brownfields assessment and cleanup funding, understanding and complying with state brownfields and voluntary cleanup program requirements, and facilitating redevelopment activities.

Regions 1 & 3 are served by New Jersey Institute of Technology's TAB Program.

Regions 2, 4, 9, & 10 are served by Center for Creative Land Recycling's TAB Program.

Regions 5, 6, 7, & 8 are served by Kansas State University's TAB Program.

The Groundwork USA Program for Technical Assistance on the Integration of Environmental Justice & Equitable Development for Brownfield-Impacted Communities provides technical assistance on the integration of EJ and equitable development for communities affected by brownfields. The technical assistance program consists of webinars, training, and peer-to-peer learning through topic-specific and regional workgroups, development of an online resource center that includes guides on key topics and other resource materials, and targeted one-on-one technical assistance to individual communities. All technical assistance is directed toward low-income and minority communities, with a focus on brownfields area-wide planning grantees, using channels to reach small and large cities, rural communities, and tribal communities throughout the nation. The program covers the process of community-driven planning and redevelopment, specific reuse strategies, and community-wide EJ and equitable development tools. Through this technical assistance, communities will learn how to turn brownfield liabilities into assets such as greenspace and recreational facilities, affordable housing to ensure that communities remain inclusive and economically diverse, and healthy food sources such as urban farms, community gardens, grocery stores, and farmers markets. Communities also will learn how

to use brownfields redevelopment to support strategies that help benefit local residents such as developing local and first-source hiring ordinances, project labor agreements (PLAs) contracting with small and minority-owned businesses, inclusionary community development, creating resident-owned enterprises, rent control policies, and other tools to help address gentrification.

The Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA) Brownfields Technical Assistance

Program provides support to brownfields communities, with a focus on brownfields revolving loan fund grantees, to help them understand the myriad of financing programs available to lift a revitalized brownfield site to an economically viable development and to provide technical assistance to brownfields-impacted communities undergoing economic restructuring including communities affected by recent manufacturing plant closures and communities that were dependent on single industries. Through this program, CDFA builds on the organization's 34-year leadership in the development finance industry, along with the experience of 52 private-sector strategic financing partners, to provide targeted and specialized assistance to brownfields communities. The technical assistance provided through this program will be offered in two forms. The first form will focus on Project Marketplaces, where communities will be invited to pitch their available sites and ideas for redevelopment to dedicated focus groups of CDFA partners comprised of bankers, lawyers, financial advisors, redevelopment consultants, developers, and project financiers. The second form will engage Project Response Teams of two to three financing experts concentrated on a specific site or industry in 36 target communities to provide individualized technical assistance.

The HMTRI Brownfields Technical Assistance Program uses its Community Support, Networking, and Assistance for Environmental Career Training (CONNECT) Program to provide technical assistance, information, and peer-to-peer networking to new, existing, and prospective Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grantees. HMTRI assists communities to build and expand their programs through annual workforce development meetings, professional learning communities, mentor links, webinars, individualized technical assistance, the Brownfields Job Development Toolbox and Trainers Resource website, the grantee and community outreach listserv, and other support services. The CONNECT Program contributes to the economic sustainability of communities by providing employment to residents who otherwise are likely to be unemployed or receiving public assistance and linking graduates with ongoing environmental assessment and cleanup projects as well as wastewater treatment and other land restoration projects; the social sustainability of communities by providing residents a career path and meaningful work that requires specialized training and certifications that result in livable wages and career pathways; the environmental sustainability of communities by establishing a local skilled workforce capable of performing environmental remediation; and the public health of communities by educating residents to identify and reduce health and environmental threats posed by contaminants at brownfields and other solid and hazardous waste sites.

Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech's Research on the Benefits of Brownfields

Redevelopment is developing and running a pilot test of a "Community Benefits Calculator" that will merge national, state, and local data into a model that can track the social, environmental, and economic benefits to a community from the reuse of brownfields. This calculator will be in the form of a mobile device application, which will allow for the efficient and consistent collection of community condition data by stakeholders, such as local officials and community members, into a national database. Once the calculator is developed, the Institute will select a pilot partner community with strong "open data" policies in which to test it to determine how easily it can be employed for data collection and the consistency and reliability of the generated impact measures. When the calculator is ready for wider use, the Institute will: 1) develop an easy-to-access users manual; 2) host a series of

webinars based on the user's manual that will serve as "Train-the-Trainer" sessions; 3) provide in-person or virtual workshops for state brownfields staff to obtain feedback; and 4) develop a strategic plan for stimulating adoption and wider utilization of the tool.

Networking and Items of Interest

@EPALand on Twitter

EPA recently launched @EPALand on Twitter to help you learn about what is being done to protect and clean up our land. Stay up to date on topics including [site cleanups](#), learn about [renewable energy technologies](#) on contaminated sites, [sustainable materials management](#), and understand how EPA responds to [hazardous material emergencies](#). Follow @EPALand and join the conversation at <https://twitter.com/EPALand>.

The Corps Network

Established in 1985, The Corps Network is the voice of the nation's 151 Service and Conservation Corps. Currently operating in every state and the District of Columbia, Corps annually enrolls more than 30,000 young men and women in service. Corps annually mobilizes approximately 289,000 community volunteers who in conjunction with Corps members generate 13.5 million hours of service every year. For more information visit www.corpsnetwork.org

Annual Georgia Environmental Conference

August 26–28, 2015

The Annual Georgia Environmental Conference is the state's largest, most comprehensive and diverse educational opportunity. Over the four-day event, this conference will host an elite group of environmental professionals seeking to exchange knowledge and share ideas around environmental concerns in Georgia and across the Southeast region. The curriculum offers 56 unique courses, allowing attendees to design their own personalized curriculum by selecting ten (10) educational breakout sessions.

This year's conference will be held at the LEED Certified Jekyll Island Convention Center. The registration fee is \$350 for those who register on or before July 15, 2015. After July 15, the fee is \$450. The Government, University, and Nonprofit (GUN) registration fee is \$300, and the student registration fee is \$150.

www.georgiaenet.com/registration-information

Reminder

To access the *Brownfields Toolbox* website go to www.brownfields-toolbox.org. Those interested in providing content or suggestions are encouraged to contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: Mid-September 2015

We are taking a summer break and will resume the PLC in mid-September after the Brownfields 2015 conference. Notices will be sent to all PLC participants and posted to the HMTRI Listserve. When we resume, we will focus on helpful hints, presentations, and open discussion on establishing sustainable environmental workforce development and job training programs.



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.