

February 12, 2014

Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 10, Session 3

This was the third PLC session in this cycle of ten 30-minute conference calls every other Wednesday.

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of February 12, 2014

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment Webinar on February 19, 2014

Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference—Where Jobs and the Environment Meet

YouTube posts

Opportunities

### **Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of February 12, 2014**

2014 requests for federal assistance to establish and deliver environmental workforce development and job training programs were due Thursday, February 13, 2014. Keep in mind this is an annual competition. Planning a community environmental workforce development program should continue. Those proposals not selected for funding this year have an excellent chance for future funding as the program plan is enhanced.

#### Approximate notification schedule

Early March 2014	Applicants who fail to meet "Threshold Criteria" are notified
May 2014	Anticipated announcement of grant selections
August 2014	Grants are awarded; budget and project periods begin

### **EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment Webinar on February 19, 2014**

Existing, new, and prospective grantees should plan to attend EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment Webinar on February 19 from 2:00–3:00 p.m. EST. No registration necessary. On the day of the webinar, go to <https://epa.connectsolutions.com/r2z1vk9r45b/>.

The Office of Grants and Debarment hosts periodic webinars for the EPA grants community. The webinars cover grants management topics including how to find and apply for grant opportunities, and preparing a proper budget detail. In addition, a Q&A session will be held during the second half of the webinar.

Webinar materials will include a competition presentation, and Preparing and Managing Your EPA Award. <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/training/grantaward.htm>

### **Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference—Where Jobs and the Environment Meet**

"Climate change? Or just weather? What about infrastructure? Those of us with snow, ice, cold, or drought...bad roads, bridges, chemical spills, and failing water systems need to answer our children's question. 'Dad—did you do all you could to make our world a safe and healthy place for us to live?'"

This was the question posed by Leo Gerard, President of the United Steelworkers at this year's Good Jobs Green Jobs National Conference held earlier this week.

This PLC session addressed issues presented at the BlueGreen Alliance's Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference and how they impact Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training programs.

In 2006, Leo Gerard of the United Steelworkers met with staff from the Sierra Club. They came to the realization that labor and advocates for the environment had more in common than most acknowledged. Repairing and growing the nation's infrastructure while protecting workers health and the environment are mission goals common to both labor and environmental protection organizations.

Moving forward to promote their common goals, the BlueGreen Alliance formed a coalition of eleven of the country's largest unions and four of the country's largest environmental organizations.

Some of the members include:

- Sierra Club
- National Resources Defense Council
- Union of Concerned Scientists
- National Wildlife Foundation
- United Steel Workers
- United Auto Workers
- AFLCIO
- Federation of Teachers
- Utility Workers
- Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers

Acting together, members represent more than 15 million members and supporters. The BlueGreen Alliance has become a significant voice for building a cleaner and more competitive economy. The BlueGreen Alliance advocates growth in the number and quality of jobs in the clean economy by expanding environmental job awareness in a broad range of industries including:

- Renewable energy
- Energy efficiency
- Substitution of safer, cleaner chemicals
- Modern, clean transportation systems
- Advanced vehicle technology
- Clean domestic manufacturing
- High-speed Internet
- Smart, efficient electrical grid
- Green schools and other public buildings
- Improving water infrastructure
- Stormwater/wastewater improvements
- Recycling
- Sustainable agriculture

The BlueGreen Alliance is active on social media. Check out some of these sites.

- [Facebook](#): Connect with others interested in green jobs. "Like" the BlueGreen Alliance on Facebook to get organization and activity updates.
- [Twitter](#): For quick and easy information on what the BlueGreen Alliance is doing, follow @bgalliance on Twitter.
- [Pinterest](#): Helpful articles about living a greener life and clean technology, alongside information about the BlueGreen Alliance's work. Follow on Pinterest to see pins about green living, clean technology, and the issues the BlueGreen Alliance cares about.
- [The Ally](#): A biweekly update from the BlueGreen Alliance providing recently released reports,

letters, press releases, and other publications curating important congressional and administration updates, commentary, and context through the BlueGreen lens. Sign up to get *The Source*, a daily collection of green jobs media stories from across America created by the BlueGreen Alliance.

### Environmental Justice and Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Programs

A memorable event occurred at the Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference that was unplanned, controversial, and notable. After four presentations discussing progress, projects, and success stories in environmental justice, Dr. Beverly Wright from Dillard University and the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice stood up to make the following observations.

“Today we had four presenters all talking about the work they have done with underserved populations. Presentations reviewed several projects addressing immigrant rights, Asian, Hispanic, and undocumented worker’s needs. I heard nothing today about the crisis in our black community. Unemployment among black workers, especially young black men, is out of control, increasing, and being pushed aside in the environmental justice movement.

Dr. Wright and Robert Bullard have worked on EJ issues for over 20 years. Together they brought to our attention “Cancer Alley” and the employment and environmental health issues associated with being black, unemployed, and underserved.

Dr. Wright went on to explain that she has perceived a shift from assisting underserved black residents to focusing on other underserved populations. Dr. Wright attributes this shift to cultural and historical issues between black youth and program managers who are primarily white and have better relationships with other ethnic groups. Working with unemployed black youth can be more challenging than working with other ethnic populations. It is understandable that the screening and selection process can inadvertently remove this population from program participation.

Are Dr. Wrights comments biased, exaggerated, unsubstantiated? Or does she have an observation we should consider when designing our environmental workforce development programs? Learn about the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at the website below. This site provides a comprehensive list of links to environmental justice resources.

[http://www.dscej.org/index.php?option=com\\_weblinks&view=category&id=74&Itemid=255](http://www.dscej.org/index.php?option=com_weblinks&view=category&id=74&Itemid=255)

### **YouTube Posts**

During the last PLC session, we discussed YouTube posts that present work from various environmental workforce development programs. The BlueGreen Alliance has numerous presentations available at the following sites: BlueGreen Alliance, Good Jobs Green Jobs, and Leo Gerard Steel Workers.

Also check out the YouTube searches we discussed earlier:

- Environmental Workforce Development
- EPA Environmental Training
- Year Up
  - Year Up was featured on *60 Minutes*. Year Up programs (for financial, not environmental jobs) are similar to our environmental workforce development program many of which are sustained with foundation and corporate donations.

## **Opportunities**

### EPA Announces Request for Applications for the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Office of Environmental Justice announces the opening of its Request for Applications (RFA) for the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program. The (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and/or public health issues within an affected community. Awards will be made in amounts of up to \$120,000 per award for a two-year project period. Interested applicants are invited to participate in conference calls with EPA to address questions about the EJCPS Program and this solicitation.

<http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-cps-grants.html>

### The GreatEST Institute is full but you may be able to get on a waiting list

The Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) is accepting applications for enrollment in the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST). Annually, nineteen instructors are accepted to attend a no-cost, ten-day Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute that provides standards, curriculum, and hands-on methods for delivering Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response training. Your participation in the GreatEST Institute will provide you with:

- An annual CCCHST trainer certificate
- A license to use and duplicate CCCHST curriculum
- CCCHST technical assistance
- CCCHST instructor support materials
- National marketing for your program

The GreatEST Institute will be held at the Eastern Iowa Community College District in Davenport, Iowa, on June 2–13, 2014. To apply, please contact Patti Thompson at [pattijthompson@gmail.com](mailto:pattijthompson@gmail.com).

### EPA Seeks Environmental Education Grant Applications

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently accepting applications for environmental education projects under the Agency's Environmental Education Grant Program. The program works to engage communities across the country through a wide variety of educational projects that have a lasting impact on people's health by facilitating environmental stewardship. Projects in the past have engaged students in stream monitoring, created sustainable mentoring communities, and provided professional development to teachers on subjects including science, technology, engineering and math.

Eligible organizations include local education agencies, colleges or universities, state education or environmental agencies, tribal education agencies, 501(C)(3) nonprofit organizations, and noncommercial educational broadcasting entities working in education.

This competitive grants program will total \$2.77 million. Each of the ten EPA regional offices will award two or three grants and one or two grants will be awarded from EPA's headquarters in Washington, DC. Each award will be an estimated \$75,000 to \$200,000. EPA expects to award between 22 and 32 grants nationwide.

For more information about the program and how to apply, please visit

<http://www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>.

The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC)

National Council is requesting letters of interest from all conservation and youth corps programs that would like to be identified as a 21CSC member organization. USDA is initiating this outreach in order to catalyze the establishment of a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans and returning veterans in public lands and water restoration. For more information, contact:

USDA Forest Service

ATT: Merlene Mazyck

1620 Kent Street, RPC,

4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Arlington, VA 22209

[21CSC@fs.fed.us](mailto:21CSC@fs.fed.us).

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Next PLC Session: February 26, 2014 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 *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* Web site 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.