

December 31, 2014

Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES—UPDATES & QUESTIONS

Over the holidays, we have been sending out reminders and notes to PLC members regarding environmental workforce development issues. “Front and center” are discussions with organizations interested in starting a workforce development program with EPA assistance. Earlier this month, EPA issued a Request for Proposals for funding up to \$200,000 for nonprofits, tribes, and communities. Proposals are due February 13, 2014.

The current schedule for responding to and receiving notice of awards is below. (Note that other than the deadline for submission of proposals to EPA, dates are estimated and may change.)

February 13, 2014	Deadline for submission of proposals to EPA
Early March 2014	Applicants who failed to meet “Threshold Criteria” are notified
May 2014	Anticipated announcement of grant selections
August 2014	Grants are awarded; budget and project periods begin

IMPORTANT NOTE: PLC discussions are informal and do not reflect EPA policy, rules, or regulations. They are opinions of PLC participants and grantees, and must be received with caution regarding accuracy and completeness. The purpose of these discussions is to enhance dialog and information exchange among individuals interested in environmental workforce development and training.

Topics: Current Happenings / Updated from Washington / Best wishes in 2014
Things to do now as the holidays end
Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington

EPA will conduct a webinar overview of the FY14 EWDJT grant guidelines on January 6, and again on January 9. Everyone needs to attend. These are excellent presentations by those who developed the guidelines. The webinar is comprehensive lasting 2 hours, and provides an opportunity to ask EPA questions regarding EWDJT.

The proposal due date is February 13, 2014. Submission is by hard copy or www.grants.gov.

Webinar #1—January 6, 2014 | 2:00–4:00 PM EST
URL: https://epa.connectsolutions.com/fy14jobtraining_1/

Webinar #2—January 9, 2014 | 2:00–4:00 PM EST
URL: https://epa.connectsolutions.com/fy14jobtraining_2/

Anyone who has the URL for the meeting can enter the room. We suggest testing out the site beforehand. If you prefer to call in to either session, call 1.866.299.3188. The participant code is 2025662772#.

Things to do now as the holidays end

EWDJT proposal preparation activities that require longer preparation and follow up:

FY2014 EPA Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup (ARC) Grants guidelines were announced on November 22. Communities will have until January 22, 2014 to submit their applications. EWDJT staff needs to determine if their community already has or is planning to submit one of the above mentioned grants. If they are, it is important to partner and coordinate with other EPA-funded programs. This coordination should become part of the workforce development program and grant proposal.

How do you find out if your community has or is requesting funding for assessment or cleanup? The Mayor's office of economic development is a good place to start. Another contact is the local, county, or state environmental agency. A third source is the EPA website. Follow the link below where you can find past and current EPA grants: http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/grant_info/index.htm.

As indicated in EPA's Frequently Asked Questions, it is important to make sure your proposal is not duplicating another federally-funded program. While the EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program is unique, other federal and state programs may provide similar training. It must be demonstrated that the proposal addresses curriculum and target groups not duplicated with other federal funding. Possible overlaps may occur in OSHA, health and safety training, wastewater training, and energy related training. It is OK if others train in similar areas as long as the demographic and geographic areas are unique. Uniqueness must be demonstrated in the proposal.

Establishing advisory boards, partners, and supporters can be time consuming. This activity takes longer than anticipated and is integral to program development. Seeking the best mix of stakeholders greatly impacts the sustainability of the EWDJT program.

An activity counter intuitive to many programs is the establishment of partners, boards, and supporters. Instinctively, program managers might wait for funding before establishing these relationships. EPA, however, requires these relationships be established before the grant is funded. This activity can be time consuming when organizations new to environmental training are starting from scratch. As the program begins, stakeholders will change, but the initial group needs to be part of the proposal development process. As previously discussed, a good place to start is city, county, or state government. Additionally, community leaders, trainers, and potential employers need to participate in program development.

Comprehensive community and occupational needs assessments require additional effort and time. Demographic and geographic data is relatively easy to find. Information specific to local environmental opportunities and employers can be more difficult. Many of the best employers may not be environmental remediation firms. They may be manufacturing, transportation, construction, or manpower firms. Finding potential employers is a long process that begins with program proposal development and continues as long as graduates need to be placed. A solid needs assessment goes a long way in identifying potential partners, supporters, and potential employers. Local needs assessment should be considered as an ongoing activity supporting EWDJT program development.

How do you begin a local needs assessment for environmental occupations? Local environmental occupational data comes from multiple sources and is often buried in broader private sector activities. Sources may include some of the following resources.

- Phone books
- Advertising materials

- Environmental enforcement actions
- Governmental agencies—office of economic development, health and environmental, community development
- Job boards
- Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stops
- Community college and university placement offices
- Labor organizations

Community involvement and participation is a long-term activity beginning as part of EWDJT proposal development. With heavy emphasis on community involvement, it is important to begin participating in community meetings as soon as possible. Again, this is a counter intuitive activity, but one that must start before the proposal is developed.

It is not necessary to have a funded program to announce intentions to develop a program. Community meetings, city council meetings, public hearings, and meetings associated with other brownfield programs are all venues for announcing intentions to submit a proposal for EPA support. Get on the agenda. Make an announcement. Publish your intentions.

It is important to record and document all community meetings demonstrating involvement and intent to bring local stakeholders into the proposal development process.

Opportunities

2014 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

February 10-11, 2014, Washington, D.C. at the Washington Hilton Hotel

Advance registration for the Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference ended November 6. The Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference gathers an interesting mix of organized labor, tribal, city government, and environmental organizations with a common goal (green jobs). For additional information, please visit www.greenjobsconference.org/.

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>

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>.

Grant Funding Guidance for State and Tribal Response Programs

Section 128(a) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended, authorizes a noncompetitive \$50 million grant program to establish and enhance state and tribal response programs. Generally, these response programs address the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of brownfields sites and other sites with actual or perceived contamination. This document provides guidance that will enable states and tribes to apply for and use Fiscal Year 2014 section 128(a) funds. The application deadline is January 31, 2014.

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

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/>.