

December 24, 2013

Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES—UPDATES & QUESTIONS

Since EPA issued the 2014 Request for Proposals, we have been sending out reminders and notes to PLC members regarding environmental workforce development issues.

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 / Updates from Washington

EPA release of Frequently Asked Questions regarding the 2014 Request for Proposals

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#.

EPA release of Frequently Asked Questions regarding the 2014 Request for Proposals

It is also important to review the EPA Frequently Asked Questions. The full text is available from the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm>.

Below are a few highlights from EPA's Frequently Asked Questions. We recommend you read the full text.

The proposal due date is February 13, 2014. Submission may be by hard copy or www.grants.gov. Next year, everyone will be required to use www.grants.gov—however, not this year.

Q7. What are the important deadlines?

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

NOTE the issues below associated with this year's competition:

- The FY14 competition maintains the reduction in the number of mandatory training requirements that was introduced in the FY12 RFP.
- As such, the only required training in the FY14 guidelines is OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120, 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER).
- The applicant is still expected to provide additional training courses, but there is more flexibility to fit each applicant's training program based on the labor market needs identified by that applicant.
- Additionally, applicants that propose to deliver some, or all, training listed in items 1-5 in Section I.B., pages 6-7 in the RFP, are more likely to receive funding preference.
- The additional types of environmental training are:
 - Solid Waste Management or Cleanup Training
 - Superfund Site Cleanup (innovative and alternative treatment technologies) Training
 - Wastewater Training
 - Emergency Response Training
 - Enhanced Environmental Health and Chemical Safety Training

Please note that Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) training for high priority sites is not an eligible activity in this year's RFP. However, applicants may still propose training related to the assessment and cleanup of low-priority leaking underground storage tanks as referenced in the Brownfields Law.

The national minimum anticipated number of persons to complete training is at least 600 persons with a minimum job placement rate of at least 70%. Each grant award is anticipated to result in at least 50 individuals completing training with 12 awards anticipated to be made.

Q20. What is the average number of persons trained through a training cycle?

In past EWDJT reporting, 20-24 appears to be the average number of persons trained during each cycle. This is usually due to the maximum number of trainees that can be accommodated in a classroom setting. This number also fluctuates depending on if the training program is located in an urban setting versus a rural geographic setting where there may be a larger number of persons seeking training. While EPA does not set requirements on the number of individuals to enter and complete training, EPA encourages applicants to train the maximum number of persons possible. Different grantees will also have varying numbers of persons entering training based on the intensity and comprehensiveness of the curriculum, the number of certifications to be earned, the varying costs of delivering training, etc.

Q21. What is the average number of training cycles delivered under a grant?

In past EWDJT reporting, 2-3 training cycles per year appears to be the average number of training cycles offered. This number can fluctuate depending on the curriculum being offered as it correlates to available employment. While EPA does not set requirements on the number of training cycles that must be offered, EPA encourages applicants to offer training as often as possible. Different applicants will also have a varying number of cycles based on the schedule which the cycles are offered (days, nights,

weekends, etc.).

Q4. How will my proposal be evaluated?

Each proposal undergoes two stages of evaluation. In the first stage, EPA regional staff reviews the threshold criteria responses. Threshold criteria are evaluated on a pass/fail basis. If a response fails to meet any of the threshold criterion listed in Section III.B, the proposal will be disqualified from further consideration and the applicant will be notified within 15 business days of the determination. However, EPA regional representatives may seek clarification from an applicant regarding its response to a threshold criterion. Each proposal that passes all threshold criteria will then be evaluated on its responses to the evaluation criteria by a national review panel.

During the second stage of review, evaluation panels comprised of EPA headquarters and regional staff and representatives of other federal agencies will evaluate the ranking criteria outlined in Section V of the Proposal Guidelines. The evaluation panel will score each proposal's responses against the ranking criteria. Applicants should make every effort to respond to each and every criterion to the best of their ability, even if it doesn't apply. Scores on each ranking evaluation criterion will be totaled to determine the panel's recommended proposal rankings. EPA will not seek clarification of responses to any ranking evaluation criteria.

Under the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act, the highest ranked proposals will be recommended for funding. In making final selection recommendations, EPA's Selection Official may then consider other factors if, and as, appropriate.

Q9. How can I demonstrate my program is not duplicative of other federally funded environmental job training programs?

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed training project does not duplicate other federally-funded programs for environmental job training in your target community. Some examples of types of duplicative training might include:

- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) hazardous waste worker training programs (HWWTP) and Minority Worker Training Programs (MWTP). NIEHS maintains a list of their worker training grantees on their website at <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/wetp>. If you are listed on this website as a recipient, you must demonstrate how services under this proposed project will complement, but not duplicate, existing federal job training activities in your targeted service area (i.e., different target audience, such as an age group, type of training to be delivered, certifications to be earned, etc.). Applicants must undergo similar analyses for other federally-funded environmental job training programs serving the area or community(ies) in their application.
- The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Green Jobs Innovation Fund (GJIF) seeks to increase the number of individuals completing training programs who receive industry-recognized credentials and to increase the number of individuals completing training programs for employment in green jobs. ETA has funded organizations with existing career training programs to provide technical and basic skills training that lead to green job opportunities. For a full listing of the DOL's Employment and Administration's grant recipients, including ARRA funded Pathways Out of Poverty environmental training grantees, visit <http://www.doleta.gov/grants/2011grants.cfm>.
- The U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program has funded the new Weatherization Innovation Pilot Program to accelerate innovations in whole-house weatherization. This competitive funding can include the private sector, colleges or universities,

utility companies, nonprofit organizations, or existing weatherization providers. For more information on this and other DOE environmental job training programs and recipients, visit <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/financial.html>.

The EPA will also conduct duplication screening internally with other EPA offices and federal partners.

Q13. If my organization is successful in obtaining EPA funding, can we charge the costs we incurred for a consultant to prepare our grant proposal?

No. Costs for preparing proposals are an unallowable administrative cost. Additionally, all consultant services funded under the grant (once awarded) must go through a competitive selection process, as described in the Procurement Standards at 40 CFR Part 30.40-30.48 or 40 CFR 31.36, as applicable.

Q10. What are examples of eligible uses of funds under this grant opportunity?

Some example types of training supported under this grant opportunity are included directly in the RFP. However, additional eligible uses of funds, including training, under this competitive grant opportunity may include:

- Training in Freon removal or the removal of hazardous substances from white goods.
- Training in weatherization; Building Performance Institute (BPI) training; energy efficiency retrofitting; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); and energy auditing.
- Training in the use of compost and soil amendments and associated sampling, testing, and design considerations, and management techniques to support the assessment and cleanup of sites for urban agriculture and horticulture.
- Training participants in planning and conducting ecological restoration of contaminated land, including general botanical classes or introductory horticultural classes related to land and stream restoration or indigenous species re-vegetation; landscaping; and soil science.
- Training in building trades related to constructing beams, caps, synthetic barriers, pumping facilities, and similar structures to remediate contamination.
- Training in vapor intrusion testing and mitigation.
- Personnel costs for instructors to conduct training, fringe benefits, and/or personnel costs for tasks associated with programmatic reporting requirements.
- Costs for screening and placement of individuals in the training program.
- Costs for training materials and work gear associated with the training curriculum.
- Development and refinement of existing curricula for training.
- Training participants in the use of techniques and methods for cleanup of hazardous substances, petroleum, and pollutants, such as training in asbestos abatement, lead abatement, lead renovation, repair, and painting (RRP), mold remediation, and cleaning up sites contaminated by the manufacturing of illegal drugs (e.g., methamphetamine labs), abandoned gas stations, or mine-scarred lands.
- Implementing job development outreach activities directed toward engaging prospective employers to be involved in the job training program and to hire graduates.
- Training residents in the preparation of contaminated sites for water or stormwater management systems, low-impact development (LID), and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).
- Training that promotes safe work practices to reduce exposures to chemicals, including promotion of safer chemical products, engineering controls such as well-designed ventilation to promote air exchange, use of correct personal protective equipment including

respiratory protection, gloves, goggles, or coveralls, isolation of work areas, safe storage and handling of chemicals, promoting sanitation and hygiene, and prevention of spills and proper waste disposal. These general worker protection methods have been well-established and are important to consider in any work environment (homes, schools, commercial buildings, clean-up sites, or traditional industrial facilities where chemical exposures are possible).

- Training in national historic preservation and tribal historic preservation regulations associated with cleanup projects.
- Insurance a trainee needs to participate in the job training program.
- Training participants to conduct chemical inventories; inspect and recommend proper chemical storage; safely handle chemicals; and oversee removal of dangerous, unlabeled, and unnecessary chemicals.
- Training in site surveying, mapping, computer-aided design and drafting (CADD), and geographic information systems (GIS).

NOTE: This list is not exhaustive and applicants may propose other types of training related to the statutory authorities cited in the RFP.

Q17. Can a non-profit organization or eligible governmental applicant submit a joint application in partnership with a for-profit organization?

No. EPA awards Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grant funds to a single eligible applicant. Successful applicants may sub-grant to eligible entities or may contract for necessary goods and services with for-profit organizations under competitive procurement procedures as required by EPA grant regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31, as applicable.

We suggest review of the EPA Frequently Asked Questions before participating in EPA's Webinar in January.

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/>.