

February 6, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 8, Session 3 (session 81)

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Updates from Washington – RFP to be issued soon

Latest news as of February 9: The Request for Proposals (RFP)/Application Guideline is anticipated to be issued to the public in the next week and a half with a tentative deadline for submission of proposals early-April 2013. For more information, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm>.

EPA press release

Please mark your calendars and let your prospective applicants know that we will have our two FY13 CLU-IN sessions on February 28 and March 7 from 3:00-5:00 eastern time. The call-in number is (866) 299-3188 and the conference code is 2025662772#. The CLU-IN sessions will provide prospective applicants an overview of the FY13 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant Application Guidelines/Request for Proposals, including an overview of threshold and ranking criteria, eligible vs. ineligible uses of funds, proposal formatting requirements, and an opportunity for prospective applicants to ask the EPA questions.

Registration is open. Please visit <http://www.clu-in.org/conf/tio/bfit2013/> to register.

Before the RFP

Important Note

We again encourage those interested in submitting a grant to contact the EPA Regional Coordinator in your region before the RFP is issued. (See listing of Coordinators below.) Even if you decide not to submit until later, it is a good idea to touch base with your Regional Coordinator now. This does not commit or obligate you in any way, and is only informational in nature.

After the RFP is issued, EPA staff will not have the flexibility to work with individual organizations on issues related to their specific program.

Working with the community

Community Involvement

Community involvement represented a full 25% weight in determining fundable projects in last year's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant competition. It is likely to have similar emphasis in this year's competition.

The importance of working with and engaging those we are interested in assisting should be obvious, but often participants are treated more like patients than partners. Let's examine community involvement in detail.

Community partners include a diverse group of individuals and organizations:

1. Community partners in the neighborhoods, and among target participant populations.
2. Community partners who assist with training and student support.
3. Community partners who involve themselves in employment and post-graduation support.
4. Community partners in governmental and nongovernmental organizations who provide overall institutional support and guidance.

Examples of community involvement

1. If an environmental workforce development program targets unemployed veterans, where is the organization that will coordinate services with those veterans?
2. The same goes with ex-offenders. Identify specifically which community partner is tasked with supporting ex-offender participants.
3. What faith-based organizations operate in the targeted community? Are they WORKING partners? Do they have representation of the advisory board? Are they included as part of the planning process?
4. What support organizations are active in the community? Salvation Army? Goodwill? Weed and Seed? Day care, homeless, and aid programs all provide ancillary services and need to be part of the community team supporting the project. Identify specific organizations, names, and contact information.
5. Post-graduation support should be provided by the program but can be leveraged with support from potential employers, local colleges, and community business. Post-graduation support is important and can be sustained with refresher training and alumni workshops. Potential employers, eager to find experienced workers, can become important partners in these activities.
6. Local Workforce Investment Boards, Department of Natural Resources, community economic development agencies, organized labor, state brownfields associations, environmental organizations, manufacturing trade associations, and the Mayor's office all are part of the governmental/nongovernmental institutional support partnership.

These community partners need to be specifically identified before and coordinated with during the program planning process. Advisory boards should meet as part of the planning process – not as an afterthought.

In the last PLC session, Colleen Kokas from NJDEP-Sustainability and Green Energy provided us a link to a document that lists state Brownfield programs and contacts. These contacts provide an excellent starting point for locating governmental stakeholders who can become or who can identify new community partners. To find state Brownfield activities and contacts, download the document entitled *State Brownfields and Voluntary Response Programs: An Update from the States* at http://epa.gov/brownfields/state_tribal/update2011/bf_states_report_2011.pdf. An updated version of this report will likely be issued before Brownfields 2013 in May.

Community involvement – start early

Community involvement is an activity that must be started early as it requires time to set in motion. Advisory committees should be operational and meeting as program plans are developed. Members of the advisory committee should also represent each of the sectors mentioned above.

As we discuss setting up advisory committees, arranging for public hearings and meetings, and making announcements, this question arises:

What if we do all this preparation and still do not receive funding?

1. The Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training program is an annual competition. Many current grantees submitted proposals that were not funded in their first submission attempt. Many wisely requested reviewer comments and additional guidance to strengthen their program and their proposal. Subsequent submissions were better planned, more comprehensive, and positively addressed all ranking criteria. Those proposals received EPA support.
2. Appearing at public meetings and having advisory committees in place with community support increases opportunities for obtaining support not related to the EPA workforce development program. Local governmental organizations, nonprofits, or foundations may recognize the benefits of establishing a community-based environmental workforce program. Any combination of these organizations is in a position to provide planning (or startup) funding for the new program. The proposal, program plan, and relationships established can serve as a springboard to state, local, or foundation funding.
3. With community support and a solid program in place, opportunities open for partnering with other community or regional organizations interested in environmental workforce development. Larger inclusive partnerships often result in programs that are more sustainable than a less ambitious program.

The Importance of strong community partners

The importance of informed community partners is demonstrated by EPA's request for contact information from organizations discussed in the proposal, including the following:

1. Two community-based organizations that aid in the development of the program.
2. Two references from the employer community involved with the program.
3. If individuals have been trained, two employers who have hired past graduates.

As part of EPA's RFP, additional requests for community involvement evaluation relate to public announcements, meetings, and informational sessions. It is important to conduct and document public announcements and informational activities as part of the proposal development process. A simple request to announce intentions to submit a proposal at a city council meeting is an excellent way to demonstrate community involvement. Additional announcements at church gatherings and community meetings should take place and be documented as part of the planning activities.

Upcoming environmental workforce related conferences/workshops

2013 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

April 16-18, 2013

Washington Hilton, Washington, DC

The 2013 conference will focus on 1) how to grow the clean economy to scale; 2) the role of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors in solving the country's pressing economic and environmental challenges; 3) the role of regulations in creating new markets; and 4) how people in every part of the U.S. are working collaboratively for social, economic and environmental justice, while building an economy with good jobs. Please visit www.greenjobsconference.org/2013.

National Brownfields 2013 Conference, Atlanta, GA, May 15-17, 2013. This is the most important environmental workforce related conference of the year attended by over 4,000 participants in

Brownfields-related fields. Registration and housing is now open. It's important to get your hotel reservation early as the closest hotels will fill up fast. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

HMTRI will conduct a workshop discussion/roundtable on May 17, 2013, 11:15 AM - 12:30 PM as part of the Marketplace of Ideas. The session is called *Environmental Workforce Development Programs: How Can a Community Build a Success?* Paula Paris from JFY, Lena Miller from Hunters Point Family, and Mike Senew will be hosting this open discussion. Earmark the workshop or go to <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org/en/Session/1974?returnurl=%2fen%2fsessions>.

It's important to get your hotel reservation early as the closest hotels will fill up fast. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

Announcements

Is your community submitting an application for EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance?

Call for applications for EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) Program

The SGIA program focuses on complex or cutting-edge issues, and projects can take about 18 months to complete. These projects explore innovative ideas to overcome barriers that are preventing communities from getting the kind of development they want. Since 2005, the SGIA program has allowed the Office of Sustainable Communities to work with a diverse array of communities from across the country on issues such as stormwater management, code revision, transit-oriented development, affordable housing, infill development, corridor planning, green building, and climate change.

Applicants may submit proposals under one of these categories (though other ideas are accepted also):

1. Community Resilience to Disasters and Climate Change
2. Redevelopment for Job Creation
3. The Role of Manufactured and Modular Homes in Sustainable Neighborhood Design
4. Medical and Social Services Facilities Siting

Applications are due on March 1. More information can be found at <http://epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia.htm>.

Seeking Nominations for Members to EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites nominations from a diverse range of qualified candidates to be considered for appointment to its National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC). The NEJAC is a multi-stakeholder, federal advisory committee that provides independent advice and recommendations to the EPA Administrator about cross-cutting issues related to environmental justice.

This notice solicits nominations to fill at least six (6) new vacancies. To maintain the representation outlined by the charter, nominees will be selected to represent the following stakeholder workforce sectors:

- Academia (2 vacancies)
- Grassroots community-based organizations (1 vacancy)
- Non-governmental/environmental organizations (1 vacancy)
- State and local government agencies (1 vacancy)
- Tribal governments and indigenous groups (1 vacancy)

Within these sectors, EPA is seeking nominees with knowledge and experience in community-driven initiatives, climate change adaptation, land use and equitable development, environmental sociology and statistical/data analysis, and environmental financing. In an effort to obtain nominations of diverse candidates, the agency encourages nominations of women and men of all racial and ethnic groups. All nominations will be fully considered.

Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified persons to be considered for appointment to this advisory committee. Individuals may self-nominate. Nominees should possess the following qualifications:

- Strong understanding of the issues facing communities with environmental justice concerns.
- Demonstrated experience with environmental justice and community sustainability issues at the national, state, or local level.
- Excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills.
- Consensus-building skills.
- Willingness to commit time to the committee, and demonstrated ability to work constructively and effectively on committees.
- Ability to serve a 3-year appointment, and to volunteer approximately 5 to 8 hours per month to support the Council's activities.

Nominations can be submitted in electronic format (preferred) following the template available at <http://epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac/index.html#membership>. In order to fill anticipated vacancies by June 2013, nominations should be received by February 20, 2012. For additional details regarding the nomination process and to learn more about NEJAC, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/nejac/index.html#membership>. To be considered, all nomination packages should include:

- Current contact information for the nominee, including the nominee's name, organization (and position within that organization), current business address, e-mail address, and daytime telephone number.
- Brief statement describing the nominee's interest in serving on the NEJAC.
- Resume and a short biography (no more than 2 paragraphs) describing the professional and educational qualifications of the nominee, including a list of relevant activities, and any current or previous service on advisory committees.
- Letter(s) of recommendation from a third party supporting the nomination. The letter(s) should describe how the nominee's experience and knowledge would bring value to the work of the NEJAC.

For further questions regarding this notice, please contact the EPA Office of Environmental Justice at (202) 564-2515.

Regional Training Coordinators – contact NOW

EPA Regional Job Training Coordinators:

- Region 1 – Kathleen Castagna, 617. 918.1429, castagna.kathleen@epa.gov
- Region 2 – Schenine Mitchell, 212. 637.3282, mitchell.schenine@epa.gov
- Region 3 – Jeff Barnett, 215.814.3246, barnett.jeff@epa.gov
- Region 4 – Kathleen Curry, 404.562.8660, curry.kathleen@epa.gov
- Region 5 – Linda Morgan, 312.886.4747, morgan.linda@epa.gov
- Region 6 – Amber Perry, 214.665.3172, perry.amber@epa.gov

- Region 7 – Ina Square, 913.551.7357, square.ina@epa.gov
- Region 8 – Christina Wilson, 303.312.6706, wilson.christina@epa.gov
- Region 9 – Wallace Woo, 415.972.3270, woo.wallace@epa.gov
- Region 10 – Susan Morales, 206.553.7299, morales.susan@epa.gov

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: February 20, 2013
2:00pm EDT

Topics: Fourth session of PLC Cycle 8

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com.

Visit our *Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at <http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org> for more information on Brownfields Job Training programs.