

September 26, 2012

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 7, Session 3 (session 72)

Topics: Updates from Washington
 St. Nicks Alliance, Brooklyn, NY
 Upcoming events / Reminders

Updates from Washington / HMTRI

EPA is indicating that it will issue the next Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant Request for Proposals (RFPs) in December. We will keep PLC members informed with updates.

EPA has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup grants. Proposals are due November 19, 2012. Communities interested in starting environmental workforce development programs should coordinate with Assessment, Cleanup, and RLF grantwriters. The best place to find out who is writing a grant submission is to contact the city and/or county planning departments. They may refer you to the office of economic development, a special Brownfields office, planning office, or the environmental department. Working together with those on the “ground floor” will bring you into the network of Brownfields stakeholders. It is not too early to establish your local Brownfields network.

1. Ask to be a part of public meetings announcing intent to submit an EWDJT grant.
2. Coordinate with city, county, and state offices.
3. Network with potential employers.
4. Gather together community and stakeholder support.
5. Develop a comprehensive and coordinated plan which includes community training.

The RFP can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/applicat.htm>.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The sign-up date for the Annual All-Grantees meeting in Alexandria, VA has passed. You may still be able to get a room. Contact Glo Hanne today at 563.441.4081 or gghanne@eicc.edu. She may have openings or cancellations. As a PLC participant you are eligible to attend this free meeting sponsored in cooperation with EPA and HMTRI.

St. Nick's Alliance, Brooklyn, NY

Many thanks go out to Carolann Johns from St. Nick's Alliance for her presentation describing the difficulties that face environmental job trainers in today's economy.

Community Background

This Brooklyn community has become home to over 113 major pollution sources with 13 toxic waste emitters, over 390 hazardous waste sites, and two highly polluted waterways. Like Hunters Point Family, who presented at the last PLC session, St. Nick's decided to act. Formerly known as the St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corp., St Nicks started in 1975 to preserve and improve this threatened urban area of more than 9,000 low to moderate income people.

St. Nicks provides services in five main areas: affordable housing, health care, workforce and economic development, youth, and education.

St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation was first funded by EPA in 2002. By 2006, 135 graduates were finding local jobs paying \$13-\$32 per hour in environmental occupations. Since 2002, St. Nicks has been awarded five EPA environmental workforce development and job training grants, and has received national recognition for their efforts.

Currently, St. Nick's Alliance finds itself with the following MAJOR issues:

1. The local economy has "tanked" with little hiring and extreme competition from local organized labor. St. Nick's finds itself with 75 program graduates waiting for sustainable environmental job opportunities.
2. With a flooded job market, employers are less likely to consider ex-offenders even with excellent training and credentials. Job training programs need to reconsider the number of difficult ex-offenders entering any one training cycle. Also the number and types of offences are of major importance and must be considered as part of the recruitment screening process.
3. EPA funding is limited, with current assistance ending September 30th. Fortunately, St. Nick's is part of a larger organization and has other programs that may sustain operations in the short term. Sustainable funding for mature well-run training programs is still a major issue for many communities.

These three issues with no immediate solutions are likely shared by other new grantees and those in the planning stages of community environmental workforce development and job training programs.

Contact Carolann Johns, St. Nick's Alliance, at 718.302.2057, ext. 216 or cjohns@stnicksalliance.org.

Upcoming Events / Reminders

Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting, Alexandria, VA, October 1-2, 2012

National Brownfields 2013 Conference, Atlanta, GA, May 15-17, 2013. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

Reminder

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: October 10, 2012
 2:00pm EDT

Topics: Establishment, implementation, and sustainability of programs

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.