

November 7, 2012

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 7, Session 6, (session 75)

Topics:           Special request  
                      Updates from Washington  
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                      Grant opportunities  
                      Upcoming events and reminders

### **Special request**

Our thoughts go out to communities suffering from the impacts of recent storms in the northeast.

We have several environmental job development programs serving the impacted areas. The training and certifications provided by those programs will be of great assistance to cleanup efforts as they were after the 911 and Katrina disasters. If you are aware of or have program participants working in the cleanup effort, we would appreciate a quick email indicating your participation. Please also let us know if there are any areas of assistance that you're requesting related to the response or cleanup efforts such as curriculum development, etc.

HMTRI is collecting data on the participation of grantees in the cleanup effort. It will be helpful in documenting community contributions made by the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program. Please email your comments to Glo Hanne at [ghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:ghanne@eicc.edu).

### **Updates from Washington**

The elections are behind us. What are the implications for environmental workforce development and job training? With the incumbent administration re-election, we can hopefully expect a continued emphasis on workforce development. The current administration and staff at EPA should get A+ for assisting and supporting communities in efforts directed towards training residents for environmental cleanup.

- 1) While many of us would like to see a larger program, EPA has protected federal assistance to communities and expanded the scope of the environmental job training program. As massive administrative changeovers will not be necessary, goals and objectives including the importance of community-based environmental job training programs hopefully will remain intact.
- 2) EPA continues to assist communities by providing coordinators in every region who work with organizations interested in establishing local environmental workforce development programs.
- 3) EPA staff at all levels promotes the environmental job development program. The Assistant Administrator established and continues a dialog among potential employers emphasizing the contributions made by local environmental job development programs.
- 4) All indications are that we can expect continued support and refinement of the EPA Environmental Workforce and Job Training grant program. The next cycle of grant requests and funding awards are expected to begin next month.

Having stated the positives looking forward, we should also consider the headwinds facing all federal budgets.

- 1) Instead of working on yearly continuing resolutions, the Budget Control Act serves as the budget for 2012 and 2013. More than just a resolution, the Budget Control Act is law with severe discretionary caps for the next 10 years.
- 2) Even after political issues are worked out, the EPA budget will be under extreme pressure including the environmental workforce development program.
- 3) Hopefully any reductions in the environmental workforce development program will be limited and potentially offset by expansion of its scope to include additional program areas.

It is likely that the next Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant RFP will be released in December with awards made in late spring or early summer. It's not too early to begin preparations for responding to the RFP. For guidance, check out last year's RFP. While it's likely to be slightly different regarding curriculum, it's also likely to be similar in qualification and ranking criteria. We will keep PLC members informed with updates.

### **Operating resources**

Thanks go to Christine Campbell with Clover Park Technical College for her insights in working with the city of Tacoma. As one of the early EPA environmental job development programs, Tacoma first organized its program in 2000. It was then refunded in 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2011.

The city of Tacoma is an excellent example of a city acting as fiscal agent and primary grantee, sub-granting "heavy lifting" or operation of the environmental job training program to, in this case, a community college. Other models might include sub-granting to a community organization, nonprofit, or tribe.

### Observations – cities partnering with community organizations and or colleges

- 1) The city of Tacoma acts a fiscal agent by providing legal, accounting, auditing, and other administrative services.
- 2) Clover Park Technical College provides training and the facilities with control over curriculum, schedules, and operational issues.
- 3) As part of a city/college partnership, the environmental training program gains access to a variety of city services and leveraged resources.
- 4) Although budgets are tight and financial resources are limited, the city/college partnership or partnerships with other community organizations provides a synergistic leveraged system.
- 5) Communication channels with ties to city government enhance opportunities for additional leveraged resources and operational funding.

As with startup funding, operational resources can come from strategic partnerships with governmental agencies and strong community groups.

### **Grant opportunities**

#### EPA Announces Opportunity to Apply for 2013 Environmental Justice Small Grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it is seeking applicants for a total of \$1.5 million in environmental justice small grants to be awarded in 2013. EPA's environmental justice efforts aim to ensure equal environmental and health protections for all Americans, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. The grants enable nonprofit organizations to conduct research, provide

