

July 25, 2012

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 6, Session 9 (session 69)

This is the last session of Cycle 6. PLC Cycle #7 will begin in late August (date TBA) with a new series of bi-weekly, 30-minute discussions on various topics related to job development and training. Reminders will be distributed to participate in PLC Cycle #7 in mid-August.

Topics: Current Happenings – Updates from Washington
 Stepping Forward to Plan an Environmental Workforce Development Program
 Upcoming Events

Current Happenings - Updates from Washington

Now is the time to begin planning for the next round of EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants. Although there is nothing official, we would like to think that the current funding and EPA support of the environmental workforce development program will continue at current levels. We also hope that EPA will resume its previous RFP release schedule with the RFP released in the fall, and proposals due before the end of the year with awards made in the spring of 2013.

Whether or not this schedule holds, it is still time to begin planning for the development of a comprehensive environmental workforce program in your community.

While these programs are difficult and require considerable leveraging and support, they also provide many benefits not only to employers but to otherwise under-served and unemployed residents of the community.

HMTRI will keep PLC members up-to-date regarding developments as they are released in Washington. We also urge participation in the next PLC cycle to start in late August.

Stepping Forward to Plan an Environmental Workforce Development Program

This week we discussed six steps to move forward in planning a community environmental workforce development program.

1. Visit two important Web sites first. These resources provide an excellent introduction to environmental workforce development.
 - a. <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm> This site will lead to current resources, tools, and governmental links related to job development.
 - b. <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/> This site, as previously discussed, leads to specific environmental workforce development resources. If you are interested in providing content or suggestions about the *Brownfields Toolbox* Web site, please contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

2. Contact the Regional EPA Environmental Workforce Coordinator. If a proposal has been funded, not funded, or is in the planning stage, please contact the EPA Regional Workforce Development Coordinator. Coordinators can provide local contacts and helpful information specific to their region. Contact information for Regional Environmental Workforce Coordinators appears later in these notes.

3. Scan the EPA and HMTRI Web sites to locate nearby programs. Communication with nearby programs is recommended and will prevent duplication of effort. Such communication may also result in new partnerships, mentoring assistance, leveraging, and technical resources. All EPA grantees are encouraged to mentor new and developing programs.
4. Begin a Community Assessment. Community assessment provides the most important set of planning metrics in the development process. Potential demand for trained workers “make or break” the best program plans. Who will be the potential employers? Do potential employers have institutional constraints or policies that become hiring impediments? What are their certification requirements? These questions need to be answered even before the target population to be trained can be addressed. Information from community assessments may likely lead you to a different set of primary partners, participant target groups, and even different geographic service areas.
5. Scan the community for strong local partners (primary and secondary). Ranking criteria proposal evaluation requires a strong fiscal partner, training experience, community interaction, and a recruitment/placement track record. These attributes can be best addressed with careful selection of partners who, in partnership, are much stronger than any single organization. Note that this activity should follow initial community assessments. Until geographic and demographic targets are identified, it is difficult to determine those organizations best suited as strong working partners.
6. Start spreading the word. Intent to plan and implement an environmental workforce development and training program can become a magnet for leveraged funding and strong working partners. Such an action is especially important in city or county government, and equally important among colleges and large nonprofit organizations. When the word gets out, similar plans may surface. Emerging plans may be competitive proposals in development, or unorganized and interested stakeholders looking for working partners. If steps 1-5 have been undertaken, those with solid geographic, demographic, and labor market demand data will emerge as strong primary partners in the new environmental workforce development and job training program.

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

Upcoming Events

National Brownfields Conference, Atlanta, GA, May 15-17, 2013

Call for Ideas – OPEN until August 3, 2012.

Organizers of the 15th National Brownfields Conference want your ideas! The program for this annual conference is intended to motivate Brownfields stakeholders to share knowledge and expertise, and learn from each other. Venues for over 100 educational sessions include panel and plenary presentations, discussion-based roundtables and town hall meetings, business development opportunities such as the Economic Redevelopment Forum and exhibit hall, mobile workshops, and redevelopment walking tours. Abstracts are due by August 3, 2012. For more information and to submit an abstract, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org/en/home>.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: New Cycle #7 to start in late August 2012 (exact date TBA)
2:00pm EDT

Topics: A variety of topics related to workforce development, funding, and sustainability

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.