

March 1, 2017



Notes from the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 16, Session 5

- Topics:
1. News from Washington and HMTRI
  2. Issues from the last PLC discussion
  3. Keeping partners and stakeholders informed
  4. City of Tacoma, WA—Partnerships that work
  5. The recruitment dilemma
  6. EWDJT resources and assistance
  7. Items of interest
  8. Training opportunities for EWDJT instructors

### **1. NEWS FROM WASHINGTON AND HMTRI**

Hopefully prospective grantees were able to submit their proposals without incident to grants.gov. Best wishes to all who applied.

A reminder to current grantees—Make sure your ACRES and quarterly progress reports are up-to-date. Failure to remain current may come back to haunt you when it's time to resubmit your next EWDJT proposal.

HMTRI is in the process of updating the [Brownfields Toolbox](#) website and [Best Practices for Job Training Programs in Brownfields Redevelopment Initiatives](#) report. If you have photos you would like to share on the website or in the updated best practices report, please contact Glo Hanne at [gghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:gghanne@eicc.edu) for additional information.

### **2. ISSUES FROM THE LAST PLC DISCUSSION**

During the PLC session held on February 15, 2017, a discussion began concerning if, when, and how drug testing should be addressed as part of an EWDJT program. On today's session, Amy Bell with Goodwill of the Olympics & Ranier Region discussed their approach to this issue. Her presentation is summarized in section 5 of these post-session notes.

### **3. KEEPING PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED**

For those who submitted proposals last week, it is important to keep your partners and stakeholders informed regarding the progress of the grant review. Also note that primary partners may be contacted by reviewers to confirm their involvement in the program. A tentative timeline for the grant review process is below.

- March—Confirmation that EWDJT proposals have been received and are being reviewed.
- March/April—Rejection notices for not meeting qualification criteria.
- May/June—Awards announced.
- July/August—Administrative and work plan approvals. Funds may be spent up to 90 days before completion of final paperwork after official acceptance is made.
- August/September—Official notice that funds are available for spending.
- August 9–10, 2017—Annual All-Grantee Meeting in Alexandria, VA.
- September and ongoing—Training and execution of work plans including quarterly and ACRES reports.
- November 2017—FY2018 EWDJT Request for Proposals issued (tentative).

#### **4. CITY OF TACOMA, WA—PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK**

Thank you, Keith Armstrong, Amy Bell, and Michelle Barre for your EWDJT program update.

The city of Tacoma first received EPA funding in 2000. They were refunded in 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2013. Not being funded in 2015, the city of Tacoma came back strong in the 2016 competition with an expanded proposal and renewed emphasis on recruitment and placement.

What makes the city of Tacoma program outstanding?

While the city government administers their EWDJT program, Keith Armstrong (the project director) delegates responsibility to partner organizations. Each partner:

- Represents a major program component including recruitment, training, student support, and placement services.
- Brings to the grant their specialized talent.
- Leverages their networks, contacts, and resources.

Keith maintains a close and cordial working relationship among partners. The city of Tacoma provides the environment, effort, and support needed from city government to make the partnerships work. With city involvement, coordination among agencies and leveraging is facilitated.

#### Program overview

##### Partners

- Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region—Recruitment and placement
- Clover Park Technical College—Training
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department—Services
- Northwest Cascade Inc.—Employer partner

- Northwest Laborers-Employers Training Trust Fund
- City of Tacoma Public Works and Environmental Services Department
- Workforce Central, Metropolitan Development Council
- Tacoma REACH Center—Services

## Curriculum

- The core training program includes 200 hours of instruction.
- Participants completing training will earn nine state or federal certifications.
- Key environmental instruction includes:
  - 40-hour HAZWOPER
  - OSHA 10-hour Construction Industry training
  - First aid/CPR
  - Confined space training
  - Respiratory protection training
  - Asbestos training
  - Lead abatement worker training
  - Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (UST)
  - Chemical safety awareness
  - Remediation technology
- Additional certifications such as Flagging Certification allow graduates to work in entry level jobs at hazardous materials cleanup sites. Additional materials and flagging curriculum may be found on the [National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse](#) website.

## Training goals

- Three cohorts. The first cohort has completed. The second cohort is underway.
- Please at least 39 out of 54 students.
- The current cohort includes a class of 22 students.

## Student recruitment

- The Tacoma program targets residents of Pierce County who have been disproportionately impacted by environmental threats, including unemployed and underemployed residents in specific zip codes.
- The program is also targeting veterans in or out of the target community.
- For each cohort, three orientation sessions are organized with support from community partners and public service announcements.
- As an event and tracking tool, Amy recommends [Event Brite](#) (free to nonprofit organizations) as a great tool for event planning and tracking.

## Applicant screening

- Must be drug-free with testing after acceptance into the program.
- Background check with no felonies in the last seven years.
- Must score 10<sup>th</sup> grade level in reading and math on CASAS test.
- In Tacoma's current cohort, 158 applicants were screened to take the CASAS test. Of those, 56 passed the 10<sup>th</sup> grade math and reading aptitude. Of those, 22 were selected with three alternates. The alternates allow for dropouts that may occur from acceptance through the first several days of training. Alternates are an excellent option for filling otherwise vacant seats. Applicants are explained their stand-by status. In the current cohort, all three of the stand-by applicants were accepted into the program filling all 22 openings.

## Student support

- Participants are reviewed for additional potential WIA benefits and other city and Goodwill support services.

## Additional observations in starting a new EWDJT program

- Keith provides the following advice to new grantees:
  - Whatever the task, start early and expect unintended consequences. Allowing for delays is part of good project management.
  - Allow time for reports, forms, and informational requests.
  - Stay close to your working partners. Be as detailed as possible regarding milestones, expectations, and deliverables.

## Contact Information

Keith, Amy, and Michelle will welcome questions about their program.

Amy Bell—Recruitment/Placement, [amyb@goodwillwa.org](mailto:amyb@goodwillwa.org)

Michelle Barre—Training, [michelle.barre@cptc.edu](mailto:michelle.barre@cptc.edu)

Keith Armstrong—Administration, [karmstrong@ci.tacoma.wa.us](mailto:karmstrong@ci.tacoma.wa.us)

## 5. THE RECRUITMENT DILEMMA

Amy Bell, from Goodwill of the Olympics & Ranier Region with the city of Tacoma's EWDJT program, continued the discussion from the February 15 PLC session regarding ex-offenders and drug testing as part of the screening process.

Drug testing—Yes, EWDJT programs need to drug test, even when some forms of drug use are legal locally. EWDJT is a program supported with federal funds which maintains that cannabis use is still

prohibited. Additionally, labor market assessments find that employers are not willing to hire graduates that test positive for marijuana even when it is legal locally.

In Tacoma's program, tests are given for narcotics and cannabis by a private testing firm. The \$45 test is funded by the city of Tacoma and administered just after applicants have been accepted into the program. MAJOR emphasis is provided during orientation that testing will be administered with a zero tolerance policy. This policy continues during the program with the expectation that students will not graduate or obtain employment if they do not adhere to the program's drug-free policy.

Ex-offenders—Recruiting and placing ex-offenders is more subjective than drug use. Depending on the pool of potential employers, ex-offenders may be easy to place or not possible to place. When the number of potential employers is large, there are often several firms willing to give applicants a second chance. Indeed, some remediation and construction companies are owned by ex-offenders. Additionally, minor offenses and the types of offenses are major factors on employability. In the case of the Tacoma program, applicants will be considered if they have not had a felony conviction for the last seven years. A comprehensive labor market assessment and connections with potential employers is absolutely essential in determining ex-offender screening policies.

## **6. EWDJT RESOURCES AND ASSISTANCE**

### Brownfields Toolbox website

EPA documents including RFP guidelines, PLC post-session notes and audio recordings, and much more about environmental job training programs are available on HMTRI's [Brownfields Toolbox](#) website. Visitors to the website may want to also look at the "Start a Program" section. Click on the "Start a Program" tab along the top. Many components are regularly updated, so check back often.

### PLC distribution list

If you are not on the PLC distribution list, you may want to join. Participants on the list receive post-session notes for each session before they are posted to the [Brownfields Toolbox](#) website.

### TechDirect

The purpose of TechDirect is to identify new technical, policy, and guidance resources related to the assessment and remediation of contaminated soil, sediments, and groundwater. Anyone interested in subscribing may do so on the [CLU-IN](#) website. All previous issues of TechDirect are also archived there, and can be searched by keyword or viewed as individual issues.

## **7. ITEMS OF INTEREST**

### Virginia Brownfields Conference

March 15–16, 2017

Fredericksburg, VA

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has announced the dates for their 2017 Virginia Brownfields Conference. The FREE day and a half event will be held March 15–16, 2017, in Fredericksburg, VA at the Hospitality House Hotel and Conference Center. Day 1 features a special afternoon training session on the Virginia Unified Risk Assessment Model (VURAM) followed by an evening of networking. Day 2 is an all-day event similar to those you may have attended in the past. The agenda will include sessions on:

- Grant Planning, Leveraging, and Layering
- Brownfields to Breweries
- Landfills to Solar
- Asbestos Issues

The conference is free and includes lunch on day 2. A block of rooms has been reserved under the name VADEQ conference at a rate of \$91/night. If you need accommodations, contact the [Hospitality House Hotel and Conference Center](#) and ask for the VADEQ rooms. To register and for more information, see their [website](#).

#### 2017 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

Mark your calendar and register for the 2017 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting. The meeting will be held August 9–10 at the Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria located at 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Travel days are August 8 and 11.

This meeting will be attended by:

- EPA regional and headquarters staff
- Present EPA-funded EWDJT grantees
- Past EWDJT grantees
- PLC members

The deadline to register and to make hotel reservations in the reserved block of rooms is **Monday, July 17, 2017**. **PLEASE REGISTER EARLY!** Contact Glo Hanne at [gthane@eicc.edu](mailto:gthane@eicc.edu) for more information and registration information.

#### National Brownfields Training Conference

Mark your calendar for the National Brownfields Training Conference to be held in Pittsburgh, PA on December 5–7, 2017 with pre-conference workshops on December 4. The conference is co-sponsored by the US EPA and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) The conference, offered every two years, is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing formerly utilized commercial and industrial properties. <http://brownfields2017.org/>

## National Brownfields Training Conference—Call for Ideas

This is a reminder that the Call for Ideas for the National Brownfields Conference is open NOW through March 17. Proposals are being accepted for educational sessions, pre-conference training, and poster presentations. The planning team is looking for a wide range of topics including reuse success stories; greener solutions; local community engagement; and liability, enforcement, and technical considerations. Please consider submitting your own proposal, as well as encouraging potentially interested stakeholders to do so. This is a great opportunity to showcase the work you do to strengthen communities. Information and details can be found at <http://brownfields2017.org/>. Feel free to contact Enid Chiu with any questions or concerns at [chiu.enid@epa.gov](mailto:chiu.enid@epa.gov) or 215.814.3219.

## **8. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EWDJT INSTRUCTORS**

### 2017 Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute

June 5–16, 2017 | Davenport, Iowa

Participants are prepared through a 10-day train-the-trainer program called the GreatEST Institute to deliver required certifications for public and private responders and workers including:

- 40-hour Waste Site Worker Health and Safety
- 24-hour Industrial Emergency Response
- DOT HazMat
- Hazard Awareness and Communication

Participants use CCCHST curriculum to train workers and responders in their local area and report to PETE the number of courses they provide. PETE reports these numbers to NIEHS. CCCHST members may charge for the courses offered in their local areas.

The cost of travel (by air or through mileage reimbursement) and lodging will be paid by National PETE. During the Institute, everyone will be staying at the Radisson Quad City Plaza in Davenport, IA. Local travel between the hotel and the training site will be provided. The hotel provides transportation to and from airport.

Some meals will be provided during the Institute. A registration fee of \$75 is charged to participants (reimbursed on travel forms) to cover the cost of snacks, beverages, three noon lunches, and the closing banquet. All other meals, including those during travel, will be reimbursed on a per diem basis.

This Institute is for trainers only and is limited to 20 participants. For more information and questions, please contact Patti Thompson at [pattijthompson@gmail.com](mailto:pattijthompson@gmail.com).

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session:        March 15, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. ET  
                                      Please call in five minutes early.

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at [msenew@aol.com](mailto:msenew@aol.com).



Visit our *HMTRI 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* website at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-corner/>. For those interested in providing content or suggestions, please contact Glo Hanne at [ghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:ghanne@eicc.edu).

**NOTE:** The PLC brings together ideas and opinions of individuals interested in environmental workforce development and training. Ideas and opinions are not those of EPA, its policy or opinions and should not be taken as official guidance.