

November 21, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 9, Session 10 (session 98)
(This was the final PLC presentation of this cycle. Join us on December 11 for helpful hints and open discussion in our PLC wrap-up for this cycle.)

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of November 20, 2013
Zender Environmental Health & Research Group program (RACEJT), Alaska
Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of November 20, 2013

December/January is the estimated timeframe for EPA issuing the next request for proposals. Expect delays due to the government shutdown. We will keep you updated.

Those interested in submitting or resubmitting proposals need to begin now. Regional coordinators are available to assist individual programs until the RFP is issued. After that, only questions regarding the RFP clarification are allowed.

1. If a proposal was submitted last cycle, contact the Regional Workforce Development Coordinator for a briefing. Find evaluation scores for each review criteria. Low criteria scores will indicate where your proposal needs additional work.
2. Do not go into the new RFP cycle “blind.” Touch base with your regional coordinator. Regional coordinators like to learn who will be submitting proposal. Just touch base indicating your intentions. Ask for pointers before the RFP is issued.
3. A list of EPA Regional Workforce Development Coordinators appears below.

EPA Regional Workforce Development 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—Charlie Foley, 913.551.7710, foley.charlie@epa.gov

Region 8—Christina Wilson, 303.312.6706, wilson.christina@epa.gov

Region 9—Noemi Emeric-Ford, 213.244.1821, emeric-ford.noemi@epa.gov

Region 9—Nova Blazej, 415.972.3846, blazej.nova@epa.gov

Region 10—Robert Tan, 206.553.2580, tan.robert@epa.gov

Zender Environmental Health & Research Group program (RACEJT), Alaska

Lynn Zender and April Reed-McCoy reviewed the development and operation their environmental job development program in an ultra-rural disbursed community. Thank you, Lynn and April, for your presentation.

Zender’s RACEJT environmental workforce development and job training program faces all of these challenges:

- Working with multiple tribal governments and populations can be a challenge.
- Training non-English speaking participants presents additional considerations.

- Providing training to disbursed communities not accessible by road raises transportation issues.
- Environmental workforce training and placement in rural communities is difficult.
- Cold weather and short construction seasons have major impacts on training and placement scheduling.

Below is an overview of the Zender RACEJT environmental workforce development and job training program.

Background

- Zender is targeting unemployed residents of small and rural Alaskan Native Villages located throughout Alaska. Many are off the state road system and can be reached only by plane or chartered boat.
- Zender Environmental Health and Research Group's job training program serves up to 40 of the 197 remote and rural communities in Alaska.
- Their mission statement is “providing environmental job training to support local hire in rural Alaska communities...”

Targeted Community

- The target community has a combined population of 70,473 with populations greater than 30 percent Alaska Native. The unemployment rate in some villages can be as high as 19 percent, and approximately 22 percent of residents live in poverty.
- The state has approximately 6,287 known contaminated sites, with much of the contamination resulting from inadvertent spills, careless chemical handling, and unregulated waste disposal during the last century's development.
- In addition, thousands of remote mining sites likely contain high concentrations of heavy metals and processing chemicals.
- Recent program participants have been 95% native Alaskan (previously 10 % female—currently 30% female).

Key Partners

- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
- Association of Village Council Presidents Housing Authority
- Total ReClaim
- Tribal programs throughout the state
- Alaska Department of Labor
- State of Alaska Response Team—training provider
- Northern Alaska Tribal education programs—training provider
- University of Alaska Fairbanks (10-credit articulation and tuition program)
- Multiple leveraging partners

Training Objectives

- Due to severe weather conditions and employment cycles, training takes place in early spring for summer work. Class size is 18–19 participant openings.
- Students are required stay in Anchorage for 2-week training sessions.
- Leveraged funding allows for transportation, telephone, and meal allowances.
- To provide graduates employment in their home communities, efforts are made to create local environmental jobs. For example, as communities expand, resident waste manager positions

can be justified. The same applies to local spill response and fuel tank assessment jobs.

- The same approach applies to wastewater treatment facilities. However, existing training programs provide adequate wastewater treatment operator training. Solid waste, landfill, and spill response appear to be most in demand across the state and in local communities.

Core Training Program

- 40-Hour HAZWOPER, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120—UAF credentialed
- Alaska Village Solid Waste Management & Resource Recovery Technician PTI—UAF credentialed
- Forklift Operation, OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.178
- CPR/First Aid—American Heart Association Standard
- Freon Recovery—EPA Section 608 Universal Technician Certification
- OSHA Confined Space Entry 29 CFR 1910.146
- Oil Spill Response
- Alaska Village Home and Facility Light Auditing
- Alaska Village Home Fuel Tank Assessment
- Water and Soil Laboratory Sample Collection
- Rural Alaska Landfill Operation (RALO) Training
- Alternative Treatment of Contaminated Sites Introduction
- Underground and Above-Ground Tank Introduction

Cultural, life skills, and employment readiness courses are also included as part of the program.

Training Delivery and Schedule

- Due to severe weather conditions and employment cycles, training takes place March 3–14 with a spring break, and continues March 31–April 11.
- Training is centralized in Anchorage requiring students to travel from remote communities, remain in Anchorage for 2 weeks of training, return home, and then return for 2 weeks of final instruction and graduation. Classes consume the entire day simulating a working environment.
- Graduates receive a Program Diploma and individual course certifications.
- Example graduate placements include:
 - Waste Collector
 - Landfill Operator
 - Contaminated Site Worker
 - Tank Inspector
 - Brownfields Technician
 - Hazardous Materials and Spill Response

Student Services, Retention, and Placement

- Scholarships available with leveraged funding.
- Extensive job readiness training.
- Non-English speaking assistance.
- Placement services and job fairs.
- Transportation and meal reimbursement.
- Additional social services with leveraged assistance.
- Additional leveraging with the Alaska Communication System.
- Phone cards available with leveraged funding to call home.
- Heavy emphasis on placement resulted in 83% and 100% placement rates.

Student Recruitment

In Alaska and other rural communities, perhaps one of the best communication, awareness, and marketing approaches is extensive use of radio. Lack of Internet and remote locations make radio an essential marketing and recruitment media. Internet, however, is important and extensively used by the RACEJT program. The www.zendergroup.org website is one of the best grantee sites, and is used for instructional materials, resource distribution, marketing, recruitment, and application processing.

RACEJT applications are online at www.zendergroup.org/racejt.html.

Additional program information, schedules, recruitment materials, and much more are posted on the site. The website was developed with leveraged funding from an environmental justice grant.

Student Screening in Remote Communities

In Alaska as with other rural communities, it is not feasible for participants to commute. For this reason, recruitment is handled differently than most, more concentrated grantee programs. Applicants download and complete applications available online with telephone assistance and support. While a GED is required, there are few other application requirements.

The next step is a series of telephone interviews providing RACEJT staff an opportunity to assess the applicants' desire and interest in the program. This essentially replaces the one-on-one personal interview used by most programs.

The final step is a board review of the application and interviews. The system works surprisingly well with most applicants graduating, and placement rates close to 100%.

Summary Notes

Environmental workforce development in rural and disbursed communities is difficult, but not impossible. Student populations may be lower than in urban communities, but with 83-100% placement rates, RACEJT demonstrates that rural and Tribal programs can flourish.

Rural communities have the ability and necessity to leverage with other rural programs bringing multiple resources to students. It is important that organizations in small communities seek out all available partners and resources to help offset constraints imposed on rural programs.

Lastly, check out their website for some good ideas: www.zendergroup.org.

Contact and Additional Information

Lynn and April would be happy to discuss their program and issues associated with working with Tribes, non-English speaking students, rural, and disbursed communities.

Lynn Zender

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Opportunities

2014 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

Advance registration for the Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference ended November 6. The Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference gathers an interesting mix of organized labor, tribal, city government, and environmental organizations with a common goal (green jobs).

February 10-11, 2014

Washington, D.C. at the Washington Hilton Hotel

For additional information, please visit www.greenjobsconference.org/.

National Worker Safety and Health Conference

The National COSH will be holding its third annual National Worker Safety and Health Conference at the Maritime Institute outside of Baltimore, MD, on December 11-12, 2013. The conference will include:

- ❖ Approximately 40 different workshops on a wide range of topics including legal rights under OSHA, how to organize successful worker safety and health campaigns in the workplace and in the community, policy advocacy strategies and methods, effectively reaching and working with immigrant workers, workplace violence, chemical hazards, and many other technical training topics.
- ❖ Several panels including some of the leading figures in workplace safety and health around the country.
- ❖ Several workshops on a variety of topics in Spanish; English/Spanish interpretation in all plenary sessions.
- ❖ Inspiring keynote speakers (to be announced).
- ❖ A pre-conference plenary panel on Tuesday evening, Dec 10.
- ❖ An awards banquet and program on Wednesday evening, Dec. 11.

For additional information, please visit www.coshnetwork.org/2013Conference.

The GreatEST Institute—Act ASAP—Fills quickly

The Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) is accepting applications for enrollment in the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST). Annually, nineteen instructors are accepted to attend a no-cost, ten-day Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute that provides standards, curriculum, and hands-on methods for delivering Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response training. Your participation in the GreatEST Institute will provide you with:

- An annual CCCHST trainer certificate.
- A license to use and duplicate CCCHST curriculum.
- CCCHST technical assistance.
- CCCHST instructor support materials.
- National marketing for your program.

The GreatEST Institute will be held at Eastern Iowa Community College District, Davenport, Iowa, on June 2-13, 2014. To apply, please contact Patti Thompson at pattijthompson@gmail.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: December 11, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. EDT
FINAL session of this cycle—PLC cycle wrap-up.

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. All PLC session notes and recordings are also located on the *Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-corner/>.