

February 26, 2014

Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 10, Session 4

This was the fourth PLC session in this cycle of ten 30-minute conference calls every other Wednesday.

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of February 26, 2014

- Materials Worth Downloading
- Social Media to Connect and Get the Word Out
- EPA Funding Sources
- Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of February 26, 2014

For grantees, keep reporting program accomplishments. Washington needs to know about your good work.

If an EWDJT grant proposal was submitted, then “silence is golden.” Those proposals not passing the qualifying criteria will be notified in early March. Remaining proposals will continue the ranking criteria evaluation with awards anticipated in May.

Materials Worth Downloading

<https://epa.connectsolutions.com/r2z1vk9r45b/>

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment hosts periodic webinars for the EPA grants community. Last week's webinar covered grants management topics including how to find and apply for grant opportunities and preparing a proper budget detail. While the webinar date has passed, useful materials about EPA funding sources and grant policies are still available for download. (Additional discussion regarding funding sources appears below). Webinar materials for download included:

- Competition presentation—EPA funding sources
- Preparing and Managing Your EPA Award

Social Media to Connect and Get the Word Out

Thanks go to Pam Carunchio with the Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA) in Philadelphia for her discussion regarding their use of social media. ECA uses many of the digital social media tools available to promote community awareness and maintain a dialog with students, supporters, and potential employers. If you wish to contact Pam regarding their use of social media, her email is

pamc@ecasavesenergy.org.

Most of us are familiar with popular digital social media in our personal lives. But can these communication tools be used as part of a comprehensive awareness, marketing, recruitment, and placement strategy?

Yes, they can and should be used in conjunction with traditional social media communications. Social media serves multiple program objectives:

- Community awareness
- Program credibility
- Reminders to potential partners and supporters
- Familiarity among potential resource providers

- Credibility with potential employers
- Awareness among target participant groups
- Awareness among political and governmental organizations

Traditional Social Media

(For discussion purposes, we will refer to old-school marketing/public relations as “traditional social media.” This contrasts with today’s popular digital social media.)

It is important not to abandon traditional social media while relying only on digital strategies to promote program awareness, student recruitment, and placement. We have subdivided traditional social media into the following tools:

- Multimedia
 - Press releases—Utilize congressional notifications by sending a letter to your congressman announcing graduation dates with an invitation to attend. Attach materials about your program and accomplishments. Graduations and site visits provide elected officials with an excellent opportunity to stay in touch with their constituents. Don’t be discouraged if they are not able to attend, and keep sending invitations. They want to know about the good work happening in their district.
- Videos, CDs, and PowerPoints—Useful tools for all public events.
- Radio and television
 - PSAs—or better yet, radio shows. One of our grantees had a weekly radio show.
 - PSA Spot—local news happenings and graduations.
- Print
 - Posters and flyers
 - Newspapers and magazines for announcements and articles
 - Check out *Brownfield Renewal*, especially the job board. Submit an article. www.brownfieldrenewal.com
- Public appearances
 - Churches
 - Study groups
 - Exhibits

In addition to traditional social media, digital social media tools are especially useful in recruitment, placement, and staying in touch with participants and graduates. Examples of digital social media include:

- Website—If the EWDJT program is part of a larger nonprofit organization, make sure the EWDJT activities are easy to locate.
- Facebook—Connect with others interested in environmental jobs. Have participants, employers, and supporters “Like” your program on Facebook to get organization and activity updates.
- Google +—Connect with others interested in environmental jobs using “Circles.” Circles is useful as a tool to connect with current and past program participants.
- Twitter—Quick and easy information and announcements regarding program activities and information exchange. Follow “@your program” on Twitter.
- YouTube—Create a YouTube channel. YouTube can be used not only for graduations, but also can serve as a useful tool for training demonstrations and as a recruitment/awareness aid.
- LinkedIn—Incorporate LinkedIn as part of the resume and job search life skills training.

- Pinterest—Helpful articles about environmental training and career opportunities. Develop a following on Pinterest to see pins about environmental careers, technology, and employment opportunities. Traditional media can be uploaded to Pinterest as well as YouTube for quick and broad dissemination.

It is clear that all social media—traditional or digital—requires time and effort. Neglected websites can be as bad as having no websites. Whichever tools are used, assign responsibility for development and maintenance of that effort.

EPA Funding Sources

Earlier we discussed materials worth downloading from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment Webinar presented last week. Here are a few of the talking points and websites from that presentation.

- Grants.gov: www.grants.gov. Find current competitive opportunities. Synopses include important information such as funding amounts, eligible entities, submission deadline, and more. Searchable by CFDA, keyword, agency, type of entity, etc. Starting in October 2014, proposals must be submitted online. You must pre-register for Grants.gov. This takes time but is not difficult. Obtain your DUNS. Register with SAM. Setup your username and password. Users can obtain automatic notifications of opportunities.
- Other ways to find agency competitive opportunities
 - EPA program office websites—Check program websites for current funding opportunities. For example, the Office of Air and Radiation:
http://www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html

EPA Grants Competition Community Forecast

http://www.epa.gov/ogd/training/resources_for_communities/community_grants_table_a.htm

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)

www.cfda.gov

Read more about assistance programs, typical funding amounts, and types of projects.

EPA Grants 101 Tutorial

http://epa.gov/ogd/training/resources_for_communities/epa_grants_101.htm

EPA's Competition Policy

Familiarize yourself with EPA's policy on competition at

<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/policy.htm>

Opportunities

While these grant opportunities are not directly involved in environmental training, those interested in environmental justice, community education, and public health can find involvement in these to be a synergistic addition to ongoing environmental training activities.

EPA Seeks Environmental Education Grant Applications

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently accepting applications for environmental education projects under the Agency's Environmental Education Grant Program. The program works to engage communities across the country through a wide variety of educational projects that have a

lasting impact on people's health by facilitating environmental stewardship. Projects in the past have engaged students in stream monitoring, created sustainable mentoring communities, and provided professional development to teachers on subjects including science, technology, engineering and math.

Eligible organizations include local education agencies, colleges or universities, state education or environmental agencies, tribal education agencies, 501(C)(3) nonprofit organizations, and noncommercial educational broadcasting entities working in education.

This competitive grants program will total \$2.77 million. Each of the ten EPA regional offices will award two or three grants and one or two grants will be awarded from EPA's headquarters in Washington, DC. Each award will be an estimated \$75,000 to \$200,000. EPA expects to award between 22 and 32 grants nationwide.

For more information about the program and how to apply, please visit <http://www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>.

EPA Announces Request for Applications for the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Office of Environmental Justice announces the opening of its Request for Applications (RFA) for the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program. The (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and/or public health issues within an affected community. Awards will be made in amounts of up to \$120,000 per award for a two-year project period. Interested applicants are invited to participate in conference calls with EPA to address questions about the EJCPS Program and this solicitation.

<http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-cps-grants.html>

The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC)

National Council is requesting letters of interest from all conservation and youth corps programs that would like to be identified as a 21CSC member organization. USDA is initiating this outreach in order to catalyze the establishment of a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans and returning veterans in public lands and water restoration. For more information, contact:

USDA Forest Service
ATT: Merlene Mazyck
1620 Kent Street, RPC,
4th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209
21CSC@fs.fed.us.

The GreatEST Institute is full but you may be able to get on a waiting list

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: March 12, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. EDT

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/>.

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.