

January 9, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 8, Session 1 (session 79)

Special note: This is the first session for PLC Cycle 8.

Topics: Updates from Washington

Working with Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)

Big picture planning perspectives

Upcoming environmental workforce related conferences/workshops

Regional Training Coordinators

Updates from Washington

The latest news is that the next Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant Request for Proposals (RFPs) will be released in late January with awards in late spring or early summer. Delays in issuing RFPs are not unusual. PLC members will be sent a copy as soon as it is released.

We are encouraging those interested in submitting a grant to contact the EPA Regional Coordinator in their Region before the RFP is issued. (See listing of Coordinators below.) After the RFP is issued, EPA staff will not have the flexibility to work with individual organizations on issues related to their specific program.

Working with Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)

Thanks go to Susan Almono and Odanis Hernandez with the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board. The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board has had two EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grants. The first grant was awarded in 2004 and another in 2011, which is currently active. In this cycle, the Merrimack WIB acts as the fiscal agent and prime grantee. However while providing oversight and supervision, they partner with local community organizations and colleges to provide training and services.

Merrimack Valley is an excellent model demonstrating how community organizations can partner with more sophisticated governmental organizations to secure federal assistance. The WIB provides the fiscal, legal, and an institutional experience required to successfully implement the grant. Local community organizations partner to do what they do best – respond to community needs. That may be training, recruitment, placement, life skills, or community awareness.

A little about WIB operation and Merrimack Valley

Merrimack Valley is home to over 318,000 residents throughout 15 diverse cities and towns in Northeastern Massachusetts. Communities range from urban and traditionally industrial, to rural and traditionally agricultural.

WIBs are regional entities created to implement the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Every community in the US has a local WIB (LWIB). Elected officials appoint its members. At the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board, members are appointed by the Mayor of Lawrence on behalf of the fifteen communities that make up the region. These appointed positions are unpaid. At least 50% of a WIB's membership must come from private businesses. There are also designated seats for representatives from labor unions and educational institutions like community colleges as well. Beyond these basic guidelines, many aspects of how an individual WIB operates can vary.

Below is a sample the Merrimack WIB activities.

1. The WIB's main role is to direct federal, state, and local funding to workforce development programs.
2. The WIB oversees One-Stop Career Centers, where job seekers can get employment information, find out about career development training opportunities, and connect to various programs in their area. The board charters and oversees two "ValleyWorks" One-Stop Career Centers in the region: one in Haverhill, and one in Lawrence. These centers serve the entire Merrimack Valley region. One-Stop Career Centers also provide many no-cost services to employers.
3. The WIB acts as a broker for many services available to employers through the region's workforce development system.
4. The WIB partners with other regional workforce organizations and entities, such as Northern Essex Community College, local economic development organizations, and the area's chambers of commerce.
5. The WIB assists businesses in contacting local training providers.

Services vary by state and WIB within each state. It is important to check with the local WIB to find activities they are undertaking. For a complete listing of the services available through the ValleyWorks Career Center, go to <http://www.ValleyWorks.cc>.

Contact information for Susan and Odanis along with a link to the Merrimack Valley WIB appears below.

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Resource Development Manager

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Odanis Hernandez

Email: ohernandez@mvwib.org

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

439 S. Union St., Ste. 102

Lawrence, MA 01843

Website: www.mvwib.org

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Fax: 978.794.1901

Big picture planning perspectives

1. Contact your EPA Regional Coordinator before RFP's are issued. Coordinators will not be able to discuss specific grants after the RFP is issued. Contact information for all regions is included at the end of these session notes.
2. Assess your community.
 - a. Contact the local WIB.
 - b. Check out the competition – who trains locally?
 - c. Search for employers as potential partners, mentors, and program contributors.
 - d. Research local government.
 - e. Find contacts in the Office of Economic Development.
 - f. Locate Brownfields contacts in state and local Departments of Natural Resources.
 - g. Become familiar with locally funded Department of Labor programs.
3. Consider potential partners – those to partner with, and those to coordinate and inform.
4. Search out organizations with federal grant and training experience as potential partners/mentors.
5. Review last year's RFP. Minor changes will be made in this year's review criteria.

6. If a previous submission was not funded, contact your EPA Regional Coordinator for a review before the RFP is issued.
7. Research previous grants or proposals for local Area-Wide Planning Grants, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, or Cleanup grants. Coordinate with stakeholders in these grants.
8. Start developing a stakeholder network.
9. Register for *Brownfields 2013*. (<http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>)
10. If you would like to invite a guest to the next Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) call, feel free to forward our contact information to them.
11. Check out our *Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at www.brownfields-toolbox.org. Those interested in providing content or suggestions are encouraged to contact Glo at: gianne@eicc.edu.

Upcoming environmental workforce related conferences/workshops

2013 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

April 16-18, 2013

Washington Hilton, Washington, DC

The 2013 conference will focus on 1) how to grow the clean economy to scale; 2) the role of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors in solving the country's pressing economic and environmental challenges; 3) the role of regulations in creating new markets; and 4) how people in every part of the U.S. are working collaboratively for social, economic and environmental justice, while building an economy with good jobs. Please visit www.greenjobsconference.org/2013.

National Brownfields 2013 Conference, Atlanta, GA, May 15-17, 2013. This is the most important environmental workforce related conference of the year attended by over 4,000 participants in Brownfields-related fields. Registration and housing is now open. It's important to get your hotel reservation early as the closest hotels will fill up fast. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

HMTRI will conduct a workshop discussion/roundtable on May 17, 2013, 11:15 AM - 12:30 PM as part of the Marketplace of Ideas. The session is called *Environmental Workforce Development Programs: How Can a Community Build a Success?* Earmark the workshop or go to <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org/en/Session/1974?returnurl=%2fen%2fsessions>.

It's important to get your hotel reservation early as the closest hotels will fill up fast. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

OSHA Health and Safety Train-the-Trainer, Davenport, IA, June 3-14, 2013. Each year the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST) provides a no-cost intensive "boot camp" for instructors. Scholarships covering travel, tuition, lodging, and meals are available. Space is limited. For additional information and the application forms, go to <http://nationalpete.org/downloads-resources/>.

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: January 23, 2013
 2:00pm EDT

Topics: Second session of PLC Cycle 8

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.