

January 25, 2012

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Topics: Upcoming events
 Status of the EPA RFP release
 Sustainable environmental workforce development and training programs
 General observations and comments from JFY and New Jersey Youth Corps
 Funding opportunities

Upcoming Events

- The 15th National Brownfields Conference is headed to Atlanta, Georgia on May 15–17, 2013. The Conference, cosponsored by U.S. EPA, is the largest and most comprehensive event in the nation that focuses on issues important to community revitalization and the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of contaminated properties. Stay tuned to www.brownfieldsconference.org for more information on the 2013 conference!
- NAWB Forum 2012 Dialogue for Workforce Excellence
March 10 – 13, 2012
Hilton Washington
The program is posted online at www.nawb.org/forum/
- Oklahoma Brownfields Conference 2012
The program is posted online at www.oklahomabrownfields.com
- Ohio Brownfields Conference 2012
May 23 - 24, 2012
Columbus Convention Center
Attendee Registration coming in Jan/Feb 2012
- New Partners for Smart Growth Conference
February 2 - 4, 2012
The program is posted online at www.epa.gov/tp/calendar/conferences.htm

Links to the Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conferences can be found at www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm. Registration for Green Jobs Regional Conferences is now open.

- Southern Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference
February 23 & 24, 2012
Atlanta, Georgia
- Western Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference
March 15 & 16, 2012
Los Angeles, California
- Eastern Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference
April 3 & 4, 2012
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Midwestern Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference
May 10 & 11, 2012
Detroit, Michigan

Status of the EPA RFP Release

Requests for Proposals were to be released this week. That did not happen. Look for the release next week. We will send out announcements. Details on proposal due dates and expected award dates will also be available.

An example program planning schedule:

- Requests for proposals - Late January/early February 2012
- Proposals due April/May 2012
- Preparation of proposals and review on various levels
- Initial screening of proposals (qualifying criteria) (rejected proposals notified in 2-3 weeks)
- Intensive review of proposals (ranking criteria)
- Grant awards July - August 2012
- Annual All Grantee Meeting - Alexandria, VA late September 2012
- First training cycles begin late 2012 - Early 2013
- Optimal placement opportunities - First quarter 2013

Sustainable Environmental Workforce Development and Training Programs

JFY Networks

Thanks go to Paula Paris with JFY Networks, Boston, MA. JFY has conducted a sustainable Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program for over 10 years. Some of those years included federal assistance and some did not. While JFY has been able to use EPA federal grant dollars to “jump start” and improve their environmental job development program, principle support comes from additional sources.

In their early days, JFY (originally known as Jobs for Youth) targeted young unemployed and underemployed youth. As economic and demographic conditions have changed, JFY has expanded its scope. Today, JFY works with unemployed community residents of all ages, with an average age in their environmental program of around 30 years old. Serving all demographics, JFY has additionally focused on ex-offenders, minority populations, and women. While being all inclusive, JFY does not have organized labor affiliations. JFY demonstrates how aggressive, smart staff willing to be flexible and adapt to changing demographics and economic conditions can sustain a successful environmental workforce development program.

JFY serves as a model to those interested in developing a sustainable program in their community. You can reach Paula at pparis@JFYnet.org.

New Jersey Youth Corps

Additional thanks go to George Paffendorf with New Jersey Youth Corps. New Jersey Youth Corps has also conducted a sustainable Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program for over 10 years. New Jersey Youth Corps, while being one of the most comprehensive Environmental Workforce Training Programs in the country, is not funded with federal EPA grant dollars. Although the EPA Environmental Workforce and Job Development grant initially helped New Jersey Youth Corps expand its environmental training, the program has been growing for several years without the EPA grant using support from a variety of other programs. New Jersey Youth Corps currently services many parts of the state with environmental and energy programs in several locations. George’s program also works with ex-offenders using “bonding” programs to place ex-offenders with employers concerned with hiring felons.

New Jersey Youth Corps is another sustainable program “jump started” with EPA federal assistance serving community needs and providing jobs to local residents. You can reach George at majorgwp@aol.com.

General Observations and comments from JFY and New Jersey Youth Corps

Observations expressed by Paula and George.

- It is possible to develop your program with seed money from the EPA Environmental Workforce and Job Development Grant and then expand it into a sustainable program. The program need not end when EPA assistance ceases.
- Working with ex-offenders can make your program stronger. Look for “bonding” programs in your state to assist employment of hard-to-place graduates.

- A word of caution regarding weatherization. Programs and funding continue, but demand is specific to each community. Many have found that few jobs are available due to an over-trained population in some areas.
- Even in urban areas with a strong union workforce, opportunities exist for sustainable, expanding environmental workforce development and job training programs not affiliated with organized labor. Affiliations make for strong partners but are not mandatory for successful programs.

Grant Opportunities

1. EPA Announces Solicitation of Applications for \$1 Million in Environmental Justice Grants. More information on the Environmental Justice Small Grants program and a list of grantees can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-smgrants.html>.
2. Environment Justice Small Grants 2012 Request for Proposals and schedule of pre-application teleconference calls. EPA will host the last pre-application teleconference calls on February 1, 2012 and February 15, 2012 to help applicants understand the requirements. <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/resources/publications/grants/ej-smgrants-rfp-2012.pdf>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the Agency is seeking applicants for \$1 million in environmental justice small grants expected to be awarded in 2012. EPA's environmental justice efforts aim to ensure equal environmental and health protections for all Americans, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. The grants enable non-profit organizations to conduct research, provide education, and develop solutions to local health and environmental issues in communities overburdened by harmful pollution.

The 2012 grant solicitation is now open and will close on February 29, 2012. Applicants must be incorporated non-profits or tribal organizations working to educate, empower and enable their communities to understand and address local environmental and public health.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: February 8, 2012
2:00pm EST

Topic: At Last the 2012 - EPA Environmental Workforce and Job Training RFP should have been issued.
How to begin (or improve) a comprehensive EPA Job Development and training program

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.