

May 26, 2010

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) Session #21

Session leader: Mike Senew

Topic: Defining your Program – Identifying target populations, green occupations, energy jobs, environmental jobs, and program implementation

## NOTES FROM SESSION 21

Determining the scope and definition of your job training program will have a major influence on the development of curricula, certificates, and course offerings. Three general green occupations related to Brownfield jobs are:

1. Environmental jobs
2. Energy jobs
3. Construction jobs linked to 1 and 2 above

### 1. Environmental jobs

Brownfield job training programs traditionally focused on environmental jobs. Within this major occupational category lay several sub-disciplines including environmental assessment, testing and analysis, remediation, control systems, tracking, and management. These occupations are associated with numerous environmental jobs that can be found in an ATEEC publication available at <http://www.ateec.org/store/catalog/Defining-Environmental-Technology-report-163.html>.

### 2. Energy jobs

With the recognition of a broad category of green jobs and their link to Brownfields economic redevelopment, training programs have expanded their focus to include energy related jobs. General occupations in this area include energy assessment, testing and analysis, weatherization, control systems, energy generation systems, tracking, and management. These general occupation categories are associated with numerous energy jobs that can be found in an ATEEC publication available at <http://www.ateec.org/store/catalog/Defining-Energy-Technologies-and-Services-report-164.html>.

### 3. Construction jobs

Construction training is not directly associated with either environmental or energy Brownfields training but can be used as a base for dual or triple track job development. Many environmental and energy jobs involve and use construction skills. Conversely, environmental and energy skills can be integrated into construction jobs. Pairing environmental and/or energy training with construction skills provides program participants versatility that will allow them to work on a wider range of projects resulting in increased job security and flexibility. An excellent program that demonstrates the use of construction training paired with environmental and energy training is the Cypress Mandela Training Center in Oakland, CA. Visit their Web site at [http://www.cypressmandela.org/our\\_programs](http://www.cypressmandela.org/our_programs) to learn more about this program.

Whichever approach or combinations of approaches is used in setting program scope and direction, a comprehensive needs assessment should be conducted before proceeding. Needs assessments can be a large formal survey, or a less formal data collection effort involving direct contact with potential employers. For smaller training programs like those associated with Brownfields economic

redevelopment, less formal data gathering involving direct and repetitive contact with potential employers is a highly effective approach to building a sustainable job training program.

As noted in the last PLC session, excellent resources for finding environmental activities in your community include the following URLs. These companies can be contacted as part of a formal survey or informal needs assessment.

<http://iaspub.epa.gov/Cleanups/>

<http://www.epa.gov/epahome/commsesarch.htm>

Needs assessments (which provide snapshots of the demand for workers) should also be accompanied by scans of training providers (providing snapshots of potential job seekers). This is especially relevant in weatherization training. As a result of stimulus funding combined with an anticipated need for weatherization jobs, many training programs have recently been developed and, in some cases, provided graduates for whom demand has not materialized. Successful programs are able to identify areas of study where a shortage of skilled workers exists and little or no local training capability is available.

The final issue that influences the scope and definition of a new Brownfields training program is the target participant population. If, for example, a program is targeted at ex-offenders or at-risk youth 18-24 years of age, jobs available for program graduates must allow workers with these backgrounds to be successful and have sustainable careers. Similarly, targeted participants with physical disabilities must be able to complete the full course of study and job prerequisites if, for example, respirators, climbing, or other physical activity is required.

In summary, one approach to program scope and definition might involve a comprehensive needs assessment followed by a scan of available training. Upon focusing in on skills to be provided during training, the target participant population can be defined. The target participant population then includes individuals who will be successful graduates of the defined program.

A second approach, one quite different from that described above, involves defining the target population first. Next proceeding to defining sets of skills and certifications applicable to the proposed target participant population. The final step is a needs assessment and scan of existing workers for potential job vacancies.

Additional discussion related to needs assessments, and environmental- and energy-related jobs can be found at <http://www.ateec.org/> and <http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org/>.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Next PLC session:       Wednesday, June 9, 2010  
                                  2:00 p.m. EDT

Topic:                    Program Startup: Certifications, core curriculum, training time tables,  
                                  developing a green curriculum, program length and depth

Feel free to invite a guest! Those who have not previously signed up, please paste <http://tiny.cc/w41fh> in your browser and complete the online form with your contact information.

OR

Send your contact information to Mike Senew at [msenew@aol.com](mailto:msenew@aol.com).