

CONNECT News

Community Support, **N**etworking, and Assistance for **E**nvironmental **C**areer **T**raining

July 2017

The Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute (HMTRI) provides technical assistance to communities interested in developing and delivering environmental job training programs. HMTRI also provides technical support to [Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training \(EWDJT\)](#) grantees funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These efforts are made possible with a cooperative agreement with the U.S. EPA.

HMTRI is part of Eastern Iowa Community Colleges and has provided environmental workforce development technical assistance since the inception of EPA's Brownfields Initiative.

EWDJT APPLICATION PROCESS

EWDJT grant funds are provided to nonprofit and governmental organizations, tribes, and colleges to recruit, train, and place disadvantaged, unemployed, and underemployed individuals living in areas affected by solid and hazardous waste by providing secure, full-time, and sustainable employment in the environmental field. The program is sponsored by EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR).

Since the program was created in 1998, more than 14,600 individuals have completed training, with about 72 percent finding employment in the environmental field. Their average starting hourly wage has been approximately \$14.32/hour. As of 2016, EPA has funded 256 job training grants totaling over \$54 million.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is usually issued in November with proposals due in January or February.

Stakeholders who plan to submit a proposal in any given year need to start early, as the proposal requires several months to properly assemble. Preparation activities include establishing partnerships, conducting labor market and community assessments, developing relationships with employers, and establishing leveraging opportunities.

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS

Establishing partnerships is a key component of a successful grant proposal. Examples of important partnerships include the organizations and individuals listed below.

- State and regional agencies, Emergency Planning Districts (EPD), Departments of

Environmental Quality (DEQ), Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Health (DOH), local and regional economic and/or community development departments, and Workforce Development and/or Workforce Investment Boards (WIB).

- Area Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup (ARC) grant recipients (past and/or current).
- Other local nonprofit, nongovernmental, and quasi-governmental organizations which will commit to in-kind partnerships for assistance with outreach, recruitment, screening, and life skills including job readiness training, placement, and tracking.
- Community leaders.
- Training providers.
- Potential employers and labor organizations.
- Government agencies who may employ program graduates.

CONDUCT COMMUNITY AND LABOR MARKET ASSESSMENTS

Understand the community. Labor market and community assessments provide insight regarding the need for establishing an EWDJT program. Labor market assessments guide curriculum development activities, and ensure that there are placement opportunities for program graduates.

Community assessments validate the need and justification for an environmental training program in the targeted community, and assist in developing local partnerships and recruiting students.

Applicants often find published data to support their community assessment. These assessments are not sufficient for a good proposal. Applicants need to establish contact with community leaders and organizations. Specific and current information from the community needs to be presented in the proposal.

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

Developing relationships with employers is essential as the EWDJT program matures. But it is also necessary in the proposal development stage. Employers should be asked to consider becoming a partner and prospective employer, and to contribute a letter of support. They may serve on the advisory board and be included as part of the application development process.

Relationships like these take time to nurture and require face-to-face interaction. They also need to be established before proposal writing begins.

ESTABLISH LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES

EWDJT funding is limited to specific environmental training as presented in the RFP. Since supplemental training and student support are not provided by the EWDJT grant, every program requires leveraging.

Partnership leveraging can support the activities listed below. While many of the activities are eligible for EWDJT funds, they are often available from other community services on a leveraged basis.

- Remedial education.
- Life skills training.

- Student support, counseling, and transportation.
- Training facilities and equipment.
- Recruitment, student assessment, and health screening.
- Placement services, tracking, and employer relations.
- In-kind administrative and training support.
- Financial assistance, stipends, and scholarships.
- Associated training such as construction skills.

Leveraging sources and resources need to be in place before the grant proposal is written as it is an essential part of the review process.

WRITING THE EWDJT GRANT PROPOSAL

Every organization has their own approach to writing grant proposals. The following tips and hints are presented for consideration.

- Develop and construct the proposal as a team effort with an assigned team leader.
- Collect and discuss the research and preparation in group session.
- Discuss the general scope and direction of the project as a team.
- Dissect the RFP, identifying every request for information.
- Assign every request to the individual best suited to respond to each question.
- Answer each question to stand by itself. Do not assume the reader will read the entire proposal.
- Assign a single proposal writer that will interact individually with each of the contributors.
- Circulate drafts of the proposal as it is developed.

- Save budgeting until last, ensuring all activities are covered and budgeted.
- Assemble “boilerplate” materials and collect attachments.
- Review, revise, review, revise, and double- and triple-check budgets.
- Let the proposal “sit” before final review.
- Provide a lot of time for final review and submission.
- **START EARLY.**

ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL JOB DEVELOPMENT ALL-GRANTEE MEETING

Registration has closed for the 2017 **Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting**. This year’s meeting will be held August 9–10, 2017 at the Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria hotel in Alexandria, VA. Travel days are August 8 and 11.

This meeting is for:

- Present EPA-funded EWDJT grantees.
- Past EWDJT grantees.
- Members of HMTRI’s Professional Learning Community (PLC).

There is no fee to attend. HMTRI covers the cost of lodging for three nights for participants attending from out of town. The deadline for making hotel reservations at the group rate was Monday, July 17, 2017.

All PowerPoints and materials used and distributed will be available on the Brownfields Toolbox website after the meeting takes place.

Contact Glo Hanne for more information at ghanne@eicc.edu.

NATIONAL BROWNFIELDS TRAINING CONFERENCE

The [National Brownfields Training Conference](#) will be held in Pittsburgh, PA on December 5–7, 2017 with pre-conference workshops on December 4. The conference is co-sponsored by the EPA and ICMA. The conference, offered every two years, is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing formerly utilized commercial and industrial properties.

HMTRI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance services provided by HMTRI for EWDJT grantees and prospective grantees include:

- Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting.
- Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Update Webinar.
- Grantee and Community Outreach listserv.
- Environmental Workforce Development Professional Learning Community (PLC).
- MentorLink program.
- Individualized technical assistance.
- Certified Employee Finder (directory of certified EWDJT graduates available for employment).
- Directory of EWDJT grantee websites and social media sites.
- Bi-monthly “CONNECT News” newsletter.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on HMTRI technical assistance services or to be added to our Grantee and Community Outreach listserv, please contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

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