

CONNECT News

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

July 2016

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.

In this issue of *CONNECT News*, we will summarize various types of organizations who have served as the principal partner in an EWDJT program with demonstrated success.

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS—OVERVIEW

By design, EWDJT programs require leveraging partners to provide services and training that EPA funding does not support. Partners provide a variety of resources including life skills, supplemental training, student support services, equipment, and financial assistance. While EWDJT programs require multiple partners to succeed, only one primary organization can apply for funding.

The principal partner is the organization eligible to submit and pass EPA threshold requirements for being considered for funding. Secondary partners, however, are essential and will be discussed in a future issue of *CONNECT News*.

Following is a summary of the types of organizations that have been principal EWDJT partners. No single organization structure ensures program success, and each has advantages and drawbacks. A choice for the best principal partner to establish an EWDJT program depends upon availability, desire, and

capabilities of eligible entities in any given community.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Educational institutions are excellent candidates as principal partners.

Pros

- Colleges often have development personnel specifically assigned to track and administer grants.
- Colleges often have experienced accounting and auditing staff familiar with federal regulations.
- Colleges are usually experienced in writing and submitting federal grant proposals.
- As a post-graduate institution, colleges have a track record in training and placement.
- Some colleges have strong noncredit and incumbent training programs.

- With facilities and equipment in place, leveraging opportunities exist in-house.

Potential issues

- Colleges may have multiple layers of management requiring several layers of approval.
- Colleges may have internal policies not compatible with EWDJT programs.
- EPA does not provide for indirect costs as part of the grant request.
- Some colleges may have conflicts between credit, noncredit, and EWDJT training.
- Academic institutions may not be located in target communities.
- Colleges may not have close relationships with underserved residents.

TRIBES

Tribes and Native Americans are an important part of the EWDJT program.

Pros

- Tribes have close relationships with their underserved residents.
- Few Tribes are active EWDJT grantees and are encouraged to apply for EWDJT support.
- Native Americans live on the reservation, but are usually eager to travel for work.
- Facilities and support services are often available on the reservation.
- Leveraged funding is likely available to supplement EWDJT funds.

Potential issues

- Tribes may not have experience writing and submitting federal grant proposals.

- Often Tribes do not have the administrative and accounting depth needed to meet EPA audit standards.
- Tribes, like other rural communities, have difficulties with recruitment and placement activities.
- Tribes may have limited training experience.
- Tribal policies and regulations may not be compatible with the EWDJT program.
- Smaller Tribes may lack the scale and resources needed to comply with EWDJT expectations.

Larger, established tribes have demonstrated the ability to work with federal grants, audits, reporting, and grantee deliverables. Smaller Tribes that partner with nonprofit organizations having administrative and technical experience have also worked well together. Another approach used to train Native Americans involves an independent nonprofit organization with administrative and training capability establishing a close relationship with one or more Tribes. Grantees including Alaska Forum and Zender Environmental create a critical mass by servicing multiple Tribes to deliver a successful, comprehensive environmental training program.

GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Offices in city government and workforce investment boards (WIBs) are in a great position to become successful principal partners.

Pros

- City governments and WIBs have experience submitting and executing federal grants.
- City governments and WIBs are familiar with the communities they serve.

- Local government has experienced accounting and audit staff.
- Leveraged funding is likely available from many governmental organizations.

Potential issues

- Governmental organizations need to contract out training services.
- Governmental staff may not live or have close relationships to community residents.
- Internal rules and policies may not be compatible with EWDJT operation.
- EWDJT programs may get lost in large governmental organizations.
- Personnel policies may inhibit the ability to recruit dedicated, experienced staff.
- Large governmental organizations may not have the dexterity necessary for EWDJT programs.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Local nonprofit entities organize to respond to community needs.

Pros

- Community-based organizations have clear goals to service their community.
- Smaller organizations have flexibility and energy that many larger organizations lack.
- Local nonprofit organizations are familiar with the communities they serve.
- Local nonprofit organization staff have positive relationships with the community residents they serve.
- Many local nonprofit organizations have outstanding reputations in the communities they serve.

Potential issues

- Smaller nonprofit organizations may not have experienced accounting and audit staff.
- Smaller nonprofit organizations may not have experience writing and submitting federal grant proposals.
- Community organizations need extensive leveraging to provide non-EPA funded services.
- Local nonprofit organizations must recruit partners who can provide sustainability to the program.
- Smaller organizations may not have back-up staff and resources when required.
- Community organizations may lack financial resources to provide required EWDJT services.

LARGE, ESTABLISHED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Joining a larger, established nonprofit organization is like opening a franchise or adding an additional rail car to a moving train.

Pros

- Many of the start-up costs have already been made.
- Large nonprofit organizations have experience submitting and executing federal grants.
- Many larger nonprofit organizations have training experience in related fields such as construction.
- Larger nonprofit organizations bring established relationships to the new environmental program.
- Linking with a larger organization provides established leveraging opportunities.

- Expanding an existing organization provides for increased stability and sustainability.

Potential issues

- Larger nonprofit organizations may have priorities other than environmental training.
- Large nonprofit organizations may have goals not aligned with the EWDJT program.
- EWDJT may compete for services with other programs within the larger organization.
- Large organizations may not have the flexibility, but smaller nonprofit organizations may.

Attaching EWDJT programs to large nonprofit organizations provide many benefits from proposal development to graduate tracking.

SUMMARY

The key to choosing a principal grantee partner is to find an organization with the depth, reputation, financial strength, and experience working with federal workforce grants. Ideally, the organization will have the capability of continuing the EWDJT program (once established) without federal assistance.

2016 ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL JOB DEVELOPMENT ALL-GRANTEE MEETING

The 2016 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting will be held Wednesday and Thursday, August 17 and 18, 2016 in Alexandria, Virginia. This meeting provides a unique opportunity to share a variety of approaches to job training and development. The focus of the meeting is for EWDJT grantees to exchange information and ideas with each other and with EPA regional/headquarters representatives. The meeting is open to:

- Present EPA-funded EWDJT grantees
- Past EWDJT grantees
- Professional Learning Community members

All present EWDJT grantees are strongly encouraged to attend. The registration and hotel reservation deadline has been extended to **Friday, July 29, 2016**. To register, contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on HMTRI technical assistance services, please contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

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