

CONNECT News

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

January 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.

FUNCTIONAL ADVISORY BOARDS

BENEFITS TO ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND JOB TRAINING (EWDJT) PROGRAMS

Advisory boards are an essential part of EWDJT programs. They are not used to evaluate program performance, direct policy, or approve activities and staff expenditures. The best EWDJT grantees use advisory boards as working committees to provide guidance, experience, and networks for many of its activities.

Advisory board members bring many benefits to an EWDJT program. Members can:

- Act as a link to community organizations and residents.
- Provide a pathway into city and state government.
- Consult as to services and leveraging opportunities available to the EWDJT program.
- Advise on social services and additional training opportunities available to EWDJT participants.

- Interface with potential employers and employment opportunities.
- Act as mentors and role models for program participants.
- Provide guidance on local certifications, skills, and training needs.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

When recruiting advisory board members, it is important to understand the attributes they will bring to the table. Advisory board members are not necessarily political or prominent members of the community. Many members work in various environmental jobs themselves.

Examples of working advisory board members may include the types of representation below.

- City government employees (offices of planning, economic development, community relations, social services, mayor's office)
- Community organizers, church leaders, and informal community leaders

- Organized labor representatives
- Remediation contractors
- Employment and temporary employment firms
- Environmental trainers and consultants (college representatives, if applicable)
- Workforce Investment Boards, OneStop organizations, or other employment service organizations
- Program graduates
- Environmental remediation workers

Each invitation should be individualized and include:

- The specific purpose for their selection and their importance to the program.
- Advisement that they will be working as an active member of an EWDJT advisory board providing training and job opportunities to community residents.
- The purpose and objectives of the program, background information, and the attributes and contributions they will bring to the program.
- Membership responsibilities.

The best way to build advisory boards is to rely on recommendations as the labor market assessment is being conducted and as initial contacts are made during the discovery phase of program planning. Program advisors often become program partners and leverage resources, so it is best to begin forming the advisory board as part of the grant writing process.

MEMBER DYNAMICS AND SIZE OF BOARD

EWDJT advisory board membership is less formal than in larger organizations. Participation may be dynamic with additions and subtractions occurring depending on program needs and participant interest. With an emphasis on job placement, it is preferable

to have several employer representatives on the board. An advisory board consisting of fifteen board members allows for illness and schedule conflicts. Members who do not participate should be asked for substitutes or replacements.

FREQUENCY OF BOARD MEETINGS

The frequency of the meetings may vary from semiannually to quarterly depending on program needs. Additional working committees and individual contributions may supplement regular meetings.

RESOURCE EXCHANGE

Many partners, including advisory board member affiliations, will exchange resources that benefit each other. These in-kind donations, or traded services, are an excellent avenue for seeking the elements that will contribute to the successful operation of the EWDJT program and may be used for obtaining future funding.

Examples of shared resources may include:

- Training
- Screening and testing services
- Office space, laboratories, or classrooms
- Personnel with specialized skills
- Equipment
- Facilities
- Instructional materials

This exchange of resources makes better use of infrastructure and greatly reduces operating costs for both partners. Partnering, combining, and affiliating with other organizations, especially when done through advisory board members, nearly always has the potential for in-kind exchanges that benefit everyone.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Building an Effective Advisory Committee](#), published by the [Department of Education's Mentoring Resource Center](#), examines advisory boards and their impact on nonprofit organizations. This publication is targeted to education but is equally applicable to EWDJT programs.

For more information about how to build a quality advisory board, see [Effective Advisory Committees. In Brief: Fast Facts for Policy and Practice](#) (ERIC# ED463411).

ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL JOB DEVELOPMENT ALL-GRANTEE MEETING

Registration is now open 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 9 and 11. This meeting is open to:

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

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

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

HMTRI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance services for EWDJT grantees and prospective grantees provided by HMTRI 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
- grantee scans
- individualized technical assistance

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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