

October 10, 2018



Notes from the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 19, Session 7.

This series of bi-weekly phone calls examines effective Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) strategies from experienced grantees. PLC calls share ideas among successful grantees and prepare interested organizations for the next EPA Request for Proposals. Calls will be a mix of open discussion, workforce development news, resources, and presentations from current grantees.

- Topics:
1. News from Washington and HMTRI
 2. Questions from PLC members
 3. Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB)
 4. More websites and environmental Twitter feeds
 5. Upcoming webinars
 6. Professional development opportunities
 7. FYI – Active EWDJT programs
 8. Funding opportunities
 9. Placement opportunities
 10. EPA Regional Job Training Coordinators
 11. Tune into the next PLC call – Wednesday, October 10th, 2018

1. NEWS FROM WASHINGTON AND HMTRI

EPA Happenings:

No current news in Washington regarding environmental workforce issues. To keep up with a variety of environmental happenings in Washington and around the country we have added additional twitter feeds to our current collection in section 4 of these notes.

HMTRI News:

Bruce Diamond with HMTRI will be sending emails to active grantees next week asking for EWDJT program information to update our Employee Finder.

HMTRI maintains a database we call the Certified Employee Finder. The Employee Finder is somewhat a misnomer. The obvious purpose is to provide potential employers (especially national employers) a guide to EWDJT programs, core curriculum, graduation dates, certifications, and contact information. When certified environmental workers are needed anywhere in the country, employers have a resource to find local screened certified employees. The Employee Finder is also helpful to grantees and prospective EWDJT applicants. Information provided in the Employee Finder includes the following. When compiled, the Employee finder will be posted on the HMTRI website brownfields-toolbox.org.

- Location and contact information of active grantees
- Training and certifications offered at various locations
- Cohort sizes
- Training schedules and graduation dates
- Core curriculum and student services
- Graduation dates

For additional information contact bdiamond@eicc.edu.

2. QUESTIONS FROM PLC MEMBERS

If you have questions you would like addressed, send it to Heather Ballou at hkballou@eicc.edu

What is ARC? Who are the ARC grantees?

This year EPA selected 144 communities for Brownfields Environmental Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup Grants (ARC). The 221 grants totaling \$54.3 million will provide communities with funding to assess, clean up, and redevelop underutilized properties while protecting public health and the environment. ARC grantees are important to Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) grantees as they are a prime source of jobs for EWDJT graduates. It is also important that prospective applicants for EWDJT funding partner with local ARC grantees. In fact, that coordination between EWDJT and ARC is written into Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup grant requests for proposals.

3. MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD (MVWIB)

Thanks go to Susan Almono, Deputy Director of the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board.

Workforce Investment Boards

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are regional entities created to implement the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. When President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014, WIOA replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 retaining WIBs and expanding Workforce Investment Board responsibilities.

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA also authorizes programs for specific vulnerable populations, including the Job Corps, YouthBuild, Indian and Native Americans, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs as well as evaluation and multistate projects administered by the Department of Labor (DOL).

Every community in the US has a local WIB. Elected officials appoint its members. At the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board, members are appointed by the Mayor of Lawrence on behalf of the fifteen communities that make up the region.

These appointed positions are unpaid. At least 50% of a WIB's membership must come from private businesses. There are also designated seats for representatives from labor unions and educational institutions like community colleges as well. Beyond these basic guidelines, many aspects of how an individual WIB operates can vary. Services vary by state and WIB within each state. It is important to check with the local WIB to find activities they are undertaking.

Since passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), local labor boards have been required to become creative in maximizing available funds in order to provide the best quality of service to unemployed residents of their community. For many progressive communities, that means seeking resources and partnering with organizations outside the Department of Labor.

Partnering with the EPA Environmental Workforce and Job Development Program provides Workforce Investment Board (WIB) organizations supplemental resources to reach additional unemployed

residents. Several of our best EPA environmental training programs partner with the local WIB or use the WIB as primary grantee.

Merrimack Valley

Merrimack Valley is home to over 318,000 residents throughout 15 diverse cities and towns in Northeastern Massachusetts. Communities range from urban and traditionally industrial to rural and traditionally agricultural.

The WIB provides fiscal, legal, and an institutional experience required to successfully implement the grant. Local community organizations partner to do what they do best --- respond to community needs -- be it training recruitment, placement, life skills, or community awareness. While providing oversight and supervision, they partner with local community organizations and colleges to provide training and services. Depending on resources and services offered, WIBs can provide opportunities to leverage many of the services not supported by EPA. As previously noted, services vary by state and WIB within each state. It is important to check with the local WIB to find activities they and their partners are undertaking.

- Applicant recruitment and referral
- Screening and assessment services
- Student supplies and support for those who qualify
- Child care
- Transportation resources
- Case management
- Remedial and supplemental life skills training

MVWIB responsibilities

1. The WIB's main role is to direct federal, state, and local funding to workforce development programs.
2. The WIB oversees One-Stop Career Centers, where job seekers can get employment information, find out about career development training opportunities and connect to various programs in their area. The board charters and oversees two ValleyWorks One-Stop Career Centers in the region-one in Haverhill and one in Lawrence. These centers serve the entire Merrimack Valley region. One-Stop Career Centers also provide many no-cost services to employers.
3. MVWIB acts as a broker for many services available to employers through the region's workforce development system.
4. The WIB partners with other regional workforce organizations and entities, such as Northern Essex Community College, local economic development organizations, and the area's chambers of commerce.
5. The WIB assists businesses in contacting local training providers.

The MVWIB Environmental workforce development program

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board has secured five EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants. The first grant was awarded in 2004. After a five year pause, MVWIB applied and received Federal funding in 2011. They have continuously exceeded expectations receiving funding ever since.

Merrimack Valley provides a model demonstrating how community organizations can partner with governmental organizations to secure Federal assistance. The partnership dramatically increases leveraging opportunities and provides sustainability. Merrimack WIB acts as fiscal agent and prime grantee.

Targeted Community

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board is targeting low-income and minority residents of Lawrence. The city of Lawrence is a federally designated Renewal Community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city's population is 76,377. Community residents are primarily Hispanic (75%).

Program Partners

- GroundWork Lawrence
- City of Lawrence's Community Development Department
- Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
- Centro de Apoyo Familiar
- Lawrence Community Works
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
- ValleyWorks Career Center
- Primary industry partners
- Teamsters Union Local 25
- Department of Public Works
- Environmental Remediation
- LaborOnSite
- Envirovantage
- TRC Environmental Solutions
- Triumvirate Environmental
- Waste Haulers

Training Cohorts

It should be noted that training has changed as the program matures. Revisions are the result of feedback from program participants and local employers. As relationships strengthen with employers and graduates, their input influence the direction and emphasis of the curriculum. Recently, training has shifted towards hazardous materials transportation. Training is delivered on a traditional workday schedule. Here are examples of more recent training provided by MVWIB:

- 5-7 Week Training - Prepare 32 unemployed and under-employed minority residents of the City of Lawrence, MA for jobs as heavy truck and equipment operators on hazardous waste remediation sites, waste water/storm water system upgrades, and solid waste/recycling services. Their goal is 28 graduates and 22 (80%) job placed.
- 5 Week Training - Prepare 45 Lawrence residents for jobs as environmental remediation technicians or storm-water/waste water technicians. One cohort taught in Spanish.
- 6 Week Training - Prepare 45 Lawrence residents for employment in environmental remediation.
- 11 Week Training - Prepare 45 Lawrence residents for employment in recycling, deconstruction, and sustainable landscaping.

Student Recruitment and Selection

- Extensive use of social media, radio, and networking
- Potential applicants attend scheduled orientation sessions
- Interested participants receive personal interviews
- Selected applicants undergo a tryout day to assess teambuilding and motivation
- Academic Level - GED and TABE 7
- Drug testing not required for admission – graduates are randomly tested by employers
- Transportation required
- Bi-lingual materials are available – classes are in English

Student Services and Retention

- MVWIB works closely with local career centers for recruitment and placement
- A dedicated Business Services Representative specializes in placement
- Additional assistance from other partners adds depth to the placement team
- Employers have contributed funding allowing graduates to enter organized labor programs
- MVWIB uses career days as both a recruitment and placement tool
- MVWIB takes measures to insure that unemployment assistance continues during training

Placement

- MVWIB guides the program based on employer and trainees' needs
- If the right training doesn't exist, the curriculum is revised
- Use mentoring relationships on a personal and professional level to support growth toward success
- Use local resources so customers have easy access to them in the future
- Cultivate employer involvement and arrange warm hand-offs, matching best candidate with job
- Field trips to job sites, job fairs, and union hall PLUS employer visits to class to foster trainee hires

You can find Susan's Best Practices presentation from the 2018 All-Grantee Meeting at Brownfields-Toolbox.org under the PowerPoints section. Here is Susan's contact information and a link to the Merrimack Valley WIB appears below. She would be happy to discuss working with WIBs.

Susan Almono

MVWIB Deputy Director

Email: salmono@mvwib.org

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

439 S. Union St., Ste. 102

Lawrence, MA 01843

Website: www.mvwib.org

4. WEBSITES AND TWITTER FEEDS

Thanks to grantee contributors, here are additional twitter sites that may be of interest.

- #GreenJobs
- #BetterTogether
- #Webinar
- #Training
- #ReduceReuseRecycle
- #Recycle
- #Superfund
- #Brownfields
- #HazWaste
- #Preparedness

EPA has a variety of social media sites both on the national and regional level. In addition, many states maintain local social media sites addressing brownfield issues. Here is a sample of EPA national and regional feeds.

EPA Land

[@EPALand](#)

News and information from U.S. EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management.

OLEM was formerly known as OSWER and sponsors the EWDJT program.

[OLEM on Twitter](#)

U.S. EPA Headquarters

[@EPA](#)

News, links, tips, and conversation from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA Region 2

NJ, NY, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and 8 Tribal Nations

[@EPAregion2](#)

EPA Southeast

AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, and 6 Tribes

[@EPASoutheast](#)

U.S. EPA Region 10

Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and 271 Tribes.

[@EPAnorthwest](#)

5. UPCOMING WEBINARS

[New Insights into the Opioid Crisis and Work](#)

Information for Workers and Employers

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Total Worker Health (TWH) Webinar Series is hosting a webinar focused on new research at the important intersection of work and the nation's opioid crisis. This webinar features national experts, Chris Cain, C.I.H., of the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR), Letitia Davis, Sc.D., of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and Sara Luckhaupt, M.D., of the NIOSH Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations, and Field Studies. The presenters will share their latest insights related to the risks of opioid use, misuse, and overdose in worker populations. The webinar will be held November 6, 2018, from 1:00-2:30 pm ET.

Center for Creative Land Recycling

Interested in [CCLR](#)'s webinars? CCLR is an EPA's technical assistance provider for brownfield assessment and cleanup grantees. Center for Creative Land Recycling records and saves all of their [webinars](#).

6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Community and College Consortium for Health and Safety Training

The Community and College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST), administered by the [Partnership for Environmental Technology Education](#) (PETE) can training components for EPA EWDJT trainers. CCCHST consists of 120 partners offering hazardous materials instruction (HAZWOPER and related Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910.120) in most states of the nation. CCCHST uses a curriculum developed by the Hazardous Materials Training

and Research Institute (HMTRI) through a train-the-trainer model program. CCCHST instructors, prepared by PETE and HMTRI, annually train 10,000 workers, technicians, and supervisors to protect themselves and their communities from exposure to hazardous materials encountered during waste site clean-up, disaster site cleanup, Brownfields redevelopment, transportation of hazardous materials, and in response to spills and releases of hazardous materials. Here is the schedule for upcoming CCCHST professional development opportunities:

The GreatEST Institute

June 3 – 14, 2019

Eastern Iowa Community College District – Rescue Center, Davenport, IA
 OSHA Health and Safety Hands-On Instructor Training

Disaster Site Response for Trainers Institute

January 7 – 11, 2019

Indian River State College – Treasure Coast Public Safety Training Complex – Fort Pierce, FL

PETE Instructor Professional Development Conferences

- *March 27-29, 2019 – Arkansas Environmental Training Academy, Little Rock, AR
- April 23-25, 2019 – Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, PA
- July 16-18, 2019 – South Central College, North Mankato, MN

***PETE & NESHTA Specialty Instructor Training Opportunity**

March 24-26, 2019

NESHTA Designing & Delivering Effective Training Pre-Conference Workshop

ACRES training for EWDJT grantees

[Brownfields Online ACRES Training](#)

EPA offers the following two online training courses to aid Brownfields Cooperative Agreement Recipients in reporting their grant-funded activities using ACRES:

Day	Date	Time	Webinar Link
Tuesday	December 11, 2018	1 p.m. EST	WebEx Session EXIT
Tuesday	March 12, 2019	1 p.m. EST	WebEx Session EXIT

To Join Training

There is no need to pre-register for training, however it is recommended that you [test your computer EXIT](#) to ensure compatibility prior to the training. On the day of training, follow the instructions below (you will need to join BOTH a conference call and a virtual meeting):

Phone: Dial 1 (408) 650-3123

Phone: Enter the conference code 958-346-757

Phone: the Audio Pin isn't needed

Computer: Click the Join Meeting link next to the training you would like to attend

Computer: Enter the meeting password ACRES

[Contact Us](#) to ask a question, provide feedback, or report a problem.

7. FYI – ACTIVE EWDJT PROGRAMS

New and Refunded Grantees	Region	State	FY Award
Alaska Forum, Inc.	10	AK	2016, 2018
Auberle	3	PA	2016
Civic Works, Inc.	3	MD	2016, 2018
Cypress Mandela Training Center, Inc.	9	CA	2016
Earth Conservancy	3	PA	2017
Energy Coordinating Agency	3	PA	2016
Essex County Division of Training and Employment	2	NJ	2018
Florida State College at Jacksonville	4	FL	2017
Fortune Society, Inc., The	2	NY	2017
Full Employment Council, Inc.	7	MO	2018
Glens Falls, City of	2	NY	2016
Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps, Inc.	5	WI	2017
Groundwork Rhode Island	1	RI	2018
Hunters Point Family	9	CA	2018
King County	10	WA	2018
Lawson State Community College	4	AL	2016
Limitless Vistas, Inc.	6	LA	2016, 2018
Los Angeles Conservation Corps	9	CA	2016, 2018
Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board	1	MA	2017
Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, Waterbury	1	CT	2016
Nye County	9	NV	2016
OAI, Inc.	5	IL	2017
Oregon Tradeswomen Inc.	10	OR	2017
PathStone Corporation	2	PR	2017
People United for Sustainable Housing, Inc.	2	NY	2017
Pittsburg, City of	9	CA	2016, 2018
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe	10	WA	2016
RecycleForce	5	IN	2018
Redevelopment Authority of Cumberland County	3	PA	2016
Richmond, City of (California)	9	CA	2017
Rochester, City of (New York)	2	NY	2016
Salish Kootenai College	8	MT	2017
Santa Fe Community College	6	NM	2017
Springfield, City of (Missouri)	7	MO	2016, 2018
St. Louis Community College	7	MO	2017
St. Nicks Alliance	2	NY	2018
Sustainable South Bronx	2	NY	2018
Tacoma, City of	10	WA	2016, 2018
The Hunters Point Family	9	CA	2016
Training to Work an Industry Niche	4	NC	2018
West End Neighborhood House, Inc.	3	DE	2018
Zender Environmental Health and Research Group	10	AK	2017

[Map of EPA Regions](#)

8. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

US EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants Program

Environmental Justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The Environmental Justice Small Grants Program provides financial assistance to eligible nonprofit organizations and tribal governments to build collaborative partnerships, identify local environmental and public health issues, envision solutions, and empower the community through education, training, and outreach. Environmental Justice Small Grants fund projects up to \$30,000. For more information, go [here](#).

The 2018 Department of Transportation BUILD Discretionary Grants

The other BUILD ACT – not to be confused with The 2018 BUILD Act & EPA Brownfields Program. The 2018 Department of Transportation BUILD Discretionary Grants NOFO are currently available. The DOT's BUILD Discretionary Grant replaces the previous DOT TIGER program. BUILD Discretionary grant information is located [here](#), as well as the link to original [NOFO](#). [The DOT Build webinar](#) highlights Environmental Protection criteria on Slide 13.

U.S. Department of Labor announces funding opportunity for apprenticeship expansion in key industry sectors.

U.S. Department of Labor today announced \$150 million in grants to support sector-based approaches to expand apprenticeships on a national scale in key industry sectors. When awarded, the grants will move a step closer to President Trump's vision set forth in [Executive Order on Expanding Apprenticeship in America](#), which calls for increasing the number of apprentices in the U.S. across all industries.

This grant program aims to accelerate the expansion of apprenticeships to new industry sectors, and to increase apprenticeship opportunities for all Americans. Veterans, military spouses, service members re-entering the civilian workforce, and underrepresented groups in apprenticeship, including women, people of color, and ex-offenders will benefit from their investments. As directed by the 2017 Executive Order, the Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion released on May 10, 2018, its [final report to the President](#), which provides detailed recommendations for meeting these goals.

"The expansion of apprenticeships makes the greatest workforce in the world – the American workforce – even stronger," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta. "This funding is an investment in America's workforce, will contribute to competitiveness by helping job creators meet increasing demands for skilled workers, and meets the nation's need for family-sustaining careers." There are more than 6.6 million job openings in the U.S., many of which require advanced skills. The Department will award up to \$150 million in H-1B funds to approximately 15 to 30 apprenticeship programs, with awards ranging from \$1 million to \$12 million. The grant size will depend on the size of the targeted industry sector and the proposed scale of the apprenticeship projects.

Funding will be awarded to projects designed to:

Expand apprenticeships to occupations that have not typically used apprenticeships to bring new entrants into the workforce. By focusing on information technology, advanced manufacturing, banking and finance, and healthcare, we can offer new job seekers opportunities and upskill those already employed in these industries to bolster the sector's competitiveness; increase the level of apprenticeship activity among a range of new employers within these industry sectors, particularly

small and medium-sized businesses; and Promote a sector-based approach to large-scale expansion of apprenticeships that include a paid, work-based learning component and a required educational or instructional component that results in the issuance of an industry-recognized credential and meet appropriate quality assurance standards. For additional information on grant eligibility, and how to apply for funds, visit <https://www.grants.gov>.

9. PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

[AmericanSolarWorkforce.org](https://www.americansolarworkforce.org) links solar employers and job seekers

AmericanSolarWorkforce.org, a comprehensive online platform linking solar employers and job seekers to build a strong and diverse solar workforce. This career platform is managed by the Solar Training Network, a program led by The Solar Foundation with a team of partners and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office.

The Solar Training Network developed the platform after its research showed a large majority of solar employers find it difficult to hire qualified candidates. And their 2017 study, [Solar Training and Hiring Insights](#), reported that a majority of solar employers find current job board services insufficient or difficult to use.

[AmericanSolarWorkforce.org](https://www.americansolarworkforce.org) helps fill these gaps by facilitating connections between solar companies, career seekers, training providers, and workforce boards. Using this platform, which is free of charge, employers can post job opportunities and connect with thousands of candidates. Solar career seekers can create attractive profiles, apply for jobs, identify training providers, and make connections with solar companies.

This platform includes original research and useful resources to support solar workforce development. For example, a new toolkit, [Strategies for Solar Workforce Development](#), shows how solar companies can engage with local workforce development resources and build a pipeline of talented employees. The platform also features a “Solar Panel” with advice from workforce experts, and a shared news and events page for users to post updates.

Any employer or job seeker can sign up on the platform now and start building new connections in solar. You can get started by creating a free profile on [AmericanSolarWorkforce.org](https://www.americansolarworkforce.org).

10. EPA REGIONAL JOB TRAINING COORDINATORS

EPA Region 1 Danny Rodriguez	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT	Phone: (617) 918-1060 E-mail: rodriguez.danny@epa.gov
EPA Region 2 Schenine Mitchell	NJ, NY, PR, VI	Phone: (212) 637-3283 E-mail: mitchell.schenine@epa.gov
EPA Region 3 Jeff Barnett	DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV	Phone: (215) 814-3246 E-mail: barnett.jeff@epa.gov
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11. TUNE INTO THE NEXT PLC CALL – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2018

Cycle 19 – 2018 Environmental workforce PLC schedule

10/24/2018 Session 200

11/21/2018 Session 202

11/07/2018 Session 201

Join our 30 minute discussion with EPA EWDJT grantees, alumni and new interested stakeholders. PLCs give grantees a chance to highlight their programs and an opportunity for others to learn from their experience. Email questions or to be placed on the PLC register send contact information to hkballou@eicc.edu.

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Heather Ballou at hkballou@eicc.edu.

Visit our [HMTRI Brownfields Toolbox](#) website for more information on Brownfields Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training programs. All [PLC session notes and recordings](#) are also located on the website. For those interested in providing content or suggestions, please contact Heather Ballou at hkballou@eicc.edu.

NOTE: The PLC brings together ideas and opinions of individuals interested in environmental workforce development and job training. Ideas and opinions are not those of EPA or its policy and should not be taken as official guidance.

