

May 11, 2016



Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 14, Session 7

This was the seventh session of PLC Cycle 14 that will feature informal, 20-minute discussions with EPA EWDJT grantees, alumni, and interested stakeholders. The goals for this new cycle include:

- Highlighting EWDJT programs, and identifying successes and challenges
- Exploring proven strategies and activities used by established EWDJT programs
- Discovering resources and leveraging opportunities
- Helpful hints and open discussion

Topics: 1. News from Washington and HMTRI  
2. Questions from PLC participants  
3. Limitless Vistas, Inc.  
4. Making connections, networking, and items of interest

### **1. News from Washington and HMTRI**

Congratulations to the new EWDJT grantees announced on May 12, 2016:

- Civic Works, Inc., Baltimore, MD
- City of Rochester, Rochester, NY
- Limitless Vistas, Inc., New Orleans, LA
- Energy Coordinating Agency, Philadelphia, PA
- Cypress Mandela Training Center, Inc., Oakland, CA
- Nye County, Tonopah, NV
- Redevelopment Authority of Cumberland County, Carlisle, PA
- Auberle, McKeesport, PA
- Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, Waterbury, CT
- City of Tacoma, Tacoma, WA
- City of Pittsburg, Pittsburg, CA
- Hunters Point Family, San Francisco, CA
- Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Los Angeles, CA
- City of Glens Falls, Glens Falls, NY
- City of Springfield, Springfield, MO
- Lawson State Community College, Birmingham, AL
- Alaska Forum, Inc., Anchorage, AK
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Kingston, WA

If you were not awarded, consider this as the start of preparations and planning for the next round of EWDJT proposal requests. Best wishes to all who applied.

REMINDER: PLC participants are invited to the *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* on August 17–18, 2016. Hotel and meeting fees are provided. Participants must cover their own travel and meal expenses.

The *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* is a networking and breakout event attended by:

- Present and past EWDJT grantees
- PLC members
- EPA regional workforce development coordinators
- EPA headquarters staff

Contact Glo Hanne for more information at [ghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:ghanne@eicc.edu).

## **2. Questions from PLC participants**

*"If our grant application was not funded, can we find what we did wrong?"*

Absolutely. With all the hard work it takes to prepare an EWDJT proposal, both funded and unfunded grantees deserve a conference. We suggest meeting with the EPA regional coordinator as soon as possible. Together you can review the reader notes and comments, suggestions for improvement, and your ranking in relation to other proposals. Post-award conferences can be a constructive step in getting to know the regional coordinator. This applies for funded programs as well as unfunded programs.

The next request for EWDJT applications is only six months away. It's not too early to begin preparations for the next round. Build on weaknesses and strengthen partnerships. As a PLC member, register for the *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* in August and prepare for a successful application this winter.

## **3. Limitless Vistas, Inc.—Turning a vision into success through partnering**

Thank you, Sherry Callaway, for your presentation.

Limitless Vistas, Inc. (LVI) is one of our best examples of a highly leveraged EWDJT program working closely with the private sector, national workforce development programs, and community residents.

Patrick A. Barnes was thinking about training underserved residents back in 1997 when his environmental engineering services company (BFA) had a contract to work in disadvantaged communities as an EPA Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Advisor. It was his belief that disadvantaged young adults would be good at environmental remediation because of the real-world, hands-on nature of the field.

After Hurricane Katrina, BFA secured a debris removal contract in New Orleans. Patrick felt this provided an opportunity to start a nonprofit to train and secure local environmental jobs for community residents. At first, LVI partnered with Goodwill Industries of southeastern Louisiana, Inc. to receive an EWDJT grant in 2008. Encouraged by their success, LVI continued to reach out for additional partners, expanding their scope and mission. In 2010, LVI successfully competed for a new EPA award that built upon the original Goodwill program. In order to leverage the environmental program, LVI needed and received assistance from:

- The Conservation Corps of Greater New Orleans (CCGNO)—CCGNO is the local branch of The Corps Network (a national coalition of the Service and Conservation Corps). The CCGNO grant provided the operational support for four quarterly cycles of 30 participants and provided each graduate with an AmeriCorps Education Award of \$1250.
- The Greater New Orleans Workforce Investment Board and JOB1—Together they established a new multi-site Youth Corp focusing on green job training, recruitment, placement, and student services.
- The Alliance for Affordable Energy, Old City Building Center, Arc of Greater New Orleans, City of Hope, Recovery School District, and Tri-Parish Restoration Corps all provided networking and leveraging opportunities.

LVI successfully re-competed for EPA EWDJT grants in 2012, 2014, and 2016. LVI also is recognized for the reasons below:

- LVI began from “0” with a vision and community need.
- Its founder recognized the skills and knowledge needed for employment.
- To establish a program, LVI recognized the need to partner with an established organization.
- To expand the program, LVI linked to established, well-funded organizations for leverage support.
- Its origins and close relationships to private sector and municipal employers guided training to match employment opportunities.
- Their approach to placing municipal water/wastewater workers is especially noteworthy.

#### Program overview

##### EWDJT goals

Under the 2016 EPA award, LVI has committed to train 60 students and place at least 42 graduates.

##### Training approach

With their association to the Corps Network, LVI is able to integrate environmental training into a much larger life skills, community service, and hands-on education program. With leveraged assistance, students are able to receive stipends and scholarships, and participate in community service projects and internships. The Field Tech program provides site assessment and restoration experiences in the field.

##### Core curriculum

The basic program consists of 344 hours of instruction with the following environmental components funded by the EWDJT grant:

- 40-hour HAZWOPER
- Brownfields site assessments
- Field technician basics
- Hazardous waste management and shipping
- Solid waste management and remediation
- National incident management
- Soil and groundwater sampling
- Discharge monitoring, sampling, and reporting
- Wetland ecology
- Introduction to wastewater
- OSHA 10- or 30-hour general construction safety

Other awareness instruction includes:

- 8-hour DOT
- Underground storage tank license
- Gas station attendant operator
- Disaster response
- Field services, mapping, and phase I and phase II awareness
- First aid

Participants who complete the training also earn one state certification and three federal certifications.

Leveraged training includes extensive life skills, and community service and financial literacy education. Students are provided community service, field tech, and internship opportunities with program partners.

Target community

LVI, with assistance from the WIB, recruits disadvantaged youth, ex-offenders, veterans, and low-income residents of New Orleans' Gert Town and Central City neighborhoods. Gert Town and Central City were two of the most vulnerable neighborhoods impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. An estimated 94.5 percent of Gert Town residents are African-American, and 48.6 percent of residents live in poverty.

Key partners

- New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board
- NOLA for Life
- Job1 and NOLA YouthWorks (WIB)
- OXFAM America
- Sojourner Truth Community Center
- New Orleans Health Department
- South Central Planning and Development Commission
- New Orleans Workforce Investment Board
- Regional Brownfields Commission
- New Orleans Mayor's Office of Workforce Development
- New Orleans Office of Coastal and Environmental Affairs
- The Corps Network
- Numerous community-based organizations
- Environmental employers

Leveraged support grants and partnerships

- AmeriCorps
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conservation Corps
- My Brother's Keeper
- Private remediation and consulting organizations
- Training from remediation consultants
- Leveraged stipends, scholarships and internships
- Life-skills training from other nonprofit organizations

#### Recruitment and screening

Community outreach, including referrals provided by local workforce offices, provide a pool of qualified applicants. Graduates and reputation provide the best vehicle for student recruitment. Few restrictions are placed on potential applicants. Application is open to all.

#### Graduate placement and tracking

Close relationships with employers and opportunities for internships provide the best vehicle for placing graduates in entry level water/wastewater jobs. LVI works with municipal water/wastewater organizations to provide internships for program participants, and tracks graduates for two years.

Those interested in the Corps Network or the LVI program may contact Sherry or Patrick.

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#### **4. Making connections, networking, and items of interest**

##### 2016 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

August 17–18, 2016

Travel days: August 16 and August 19

Holiday Inn & Suites

Alexandria, VA 22314

The *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* is a networking and break-out event attended by:

- Current EPA-funded Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) grantees
- Past EWDJT grantees
- PLC members
- EPA regional workforce development coordinators
- EPA headquarters staff

Reservation deadline is Tuesday, July 26, 2016. For additional information or questions contact Glo Hanne at [ghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:ghanne@eicc.edu).

##### Second Southeast Brownfields Conference

Save the date: October 16–19, 2016

Omni Downtown Hotel, Jacksonville, FL

Event hosted and organized by the Florida Brownfields Association with regional partners.

##### The Annual Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute

June 6–17, 2016, in Davenport, Iowa

The annual Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute is a 10-day train-the-trainer program that delivers the required certifications for public and private responders and workers including:

- 40-Hour Waste Site Worker Health and Safety

- 24-Hour Industrial Emergency Response
- DOT HazMat
- Hazard Awareness and Communication

Participants must apply and be approved to attend this training sponsored under an NIEHS grant to the Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE). The deadline to submit your application is February 29, 2016. For more information, contact Patti Thompson at [pattijthompson@gmail.com](mailto:pattijthompson@gmail.com).

2016 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

June 6, 2016  
Cleveland, Ohio

Registration is now open for the 2016 Good Jobs, Green Jobs conference. The conference is about investing in America. Good Jobs, Green Jobs affords an opportunity to join with labor, environmental, business, and community leaders to forge the links between the economic possibilities created through protecting the environment and solving climate change.

Early registration is open (\$199) at <http://www.greenjobsconference.org>.

Annual Georgia Environmental Conference

August 24–26, 2016  
Jekyll Island, Georgia

In its 11th year, the Annual Georgia Environmental Conference is the state’s largest, most comprehensive and diverse educational opportunity. The conference will be attended by over 700 local, state, and federal government officials, business and industry leaders, attorneys, consultants, engineers, developers, land owners, architects, agribusiness leaders, energy experts, water planning districts, universities, public health officials, solid waste, enviro-tech, recycling experts, and many others with a strong interest in environmental activities in Georgia and the Southeast region.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Next PLC Session:        May 25, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. ET  
                                  Please call in five minutes early.

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at [msenew@aol.com](mailto:msenew@aol.com).



Visit our *HMTRI Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at <http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org> for more information on Brownfields Job Training programs. All PLC session notes and recordings are also located on the *Brownfields Toolbox* website at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-corner/>. For those interested in providing content or suggestions, please contact Glo Hanne at [ghanne@eicc.edu](mailto:ghanne@eicc.edu).

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