

March 30, 2016



## Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 14, Session 4

This was the fourth 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—Labor market assessments  
3. City of Detroit  
4. Webinar on EPA subaward policy—sub grantees vs. contractor partners  
5. Making connections, networking, and items of interest  
6. Opportunities

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

EWDJT proposals are in their final review stage. Reviews appear to be on schedule with funding announcements in May. REMINDER—Brief your partners on the status of your proposal. Those noted in the proposal may be contacted by reviewers. The next request for new 2017 proposals is only eight months away. Keep your team together.

### 2016 Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

August 17–18, 2016

PLC participants are invited to the Annual All-Grantee Meeting to be held August 17–18, 2016. Hotel and meeting fees are provided. Participants must cover travel and meal expenses.

This meeting is a networking and learning event attended by the following participants:

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

See section **#5. Making connections and networking** for more information.

### **2. Questions—Labor market assessments**

*How would you recommend conducting a labor market assessment as it relates to environmental workforce and the EWDJT program?*

Labor market assessments are much more than researching local labor market statistics. They form the basis for recruitment, curriculum, placement, and stakeholder involvement.

By coincidence, this month's *CONNECT News* newsletter specifically addresses labor market assessments. Please see the March 2016 *CONNECT News* on the Brownfields Toolbox website at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/newsletter-archive/>. The section on labor market assessments is also copied below.

#### LABOR MARKET ASSESSMENTS (taken from March 2016 *CONNECT News*):

Conducting a labor market assessment (LMA) is one of the most important components to building an EWDJT program. You can potentially do a huge disservice to students if the proper analysis isn't performed addressing your program's occupational focus.

Conducting an LMA is difficult and takes time and patience. If done correctly, an LMA could provide the following results:

- A path for:
  - Recruitment
  - Training
  - Placement of graduates
- Identification of:
  - Program supporters
  - Contributors
  - Potential employers
- A path for sustainability with:
  - Potential new partners
  - Program leveraging opportunities

An LMA may be done on a large or small scale. In the context of EWDJT programs, the LMA is usually a local effort and is essential to assess the extent and type of education and training needed by local employers.

There are three primary methods for conducting an LMA:

- Distribute a survey instrument to potential employers, either the entire population or a representative sample.
  - Can include a large number of employers, but return rate is usually low, and identifying employers who should receive the survey and their addresses can be time-consuming.
- Convene a focus group of potential employers to collect information through a strategic group interview.
  - Smaller, more intimate group but difficult to find a date and time that works for everyone invited.
- Conduct one-on-one, face-to-face meetings with individual employers.
  - For this application, face-to-face meetings with individual employers usually yield more successful results for most EWDJT programs.

A face-to-face LMA can provide useful contact with potential employers for specific labor needs. In this way, the LMA serves to provide employer referrals and commitments to look at EWDJT graduates as possible job applicants.

Establish relationships with the potential employers. This takes time and is labor intensive but is perhaps the most important component of sustainable job training programs. As employers are identified, take the following steps:

1. Bring them into the training process as participants in training.
2. Ask them to serve on advisory boards.
3. Ask them to provide curriculum guidance.
4. Document your meetings.
5. Start and/or expand an employer contact file. (You will use this later when placing graduates in jobs.)
6. Ask them to consider your graduates for available jobs. (Document in writing if possible.)

Below are some examples of employers looking for EWDJT graduates with environmental certificates and certifications.

- Local unions
- Manpower and temp firms
- Consultants—remediation and service providers
- Manufacturing firms
- Chemical and refining facilities
- Municipal facilities and utilities
- Painting companies
- Construction and deconstruction companies
- Transportation and material handling operations
- Scrap, recycling, storage, and landfill operations

Use yellow pages and search engines to identify potential employers including labor unions, consultants, service providers, and large manufacturing firms. Seek out temp and manpower organizations for possible interest in environmental technicians. Contact local municipal agencies regarding possible stakeholder interest. This effort will be useful in establishing a responsive curriculum.

Additional issues that may be discussed when conducting an LMA include:

- Type and size of the organization as well as its products and/or services
- Wage for entry-level personnel
- Minimum level of education, skills, knowledge, and certifications required for employment
- Required work experience for employment
- Employer's interest/ability to provide leveraged resources
- Other organization referrals that may also be interested in hiring well-trained graduates

Always leave with an action plan, commitment, or closure.

LMAs can be much more than simple information gathering efforts. When done properly, they form a solid base upon which to direct and implement the entire EWDJT program.

### 3. City of Detroit

Thanks, Ray Scott and Anita, for your informative presentation.

Detroit has received its share of press, but when one looks at their progress in partnering with business and coordinating between government agencies, the city is very impressive. Detroit's focus on jobs for local residents is perhaps one of the best in the country.

As an introduction to the Detroit EWDJT program, read the press release below and go to the link to watch a broadcast developed by the local media station.

Press release:

"Detroit Employment Solutions is offering certification opportunities to Detroiters interested in environmental remediation. With a \$200,000 grant from the EPA, Detroiters can achieve certification in asbestos abatement, lead abatement, hazardous materials response, and incident management.

Detroit is knocking down 150 homes per week, but before a building can be demolished, the asbestos must be removed. The Detroit Land Bank is offering over 600 homes for rehab, but before they can be renovated, the lead must be abated."

<http://www.clickondetroit.com/news/certifications-in-hazmat-programs-offered-to-detroiters>

This type of publicity and outreach is exactly what every EWDJT program should seek out. It not only informs but also indirectly promotes recruitment, placement, and support. Public announcements and feature stories are great for local news outlets and bring unmeasurable awareness to the EWDJT program. In Detroit's case, the video demonstrates community need; opportunities for residents; and the availability of trained, certified workers.

Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC) is a nonprofit supported by the Workforce Development Agency, state of Michigan, and indirectly by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Since Detroit has an extremely strong and active workforce program, a wise decision was made to enlist them as a primary partner to manage operations for the EWDJT grant. Essentially, the EPA program has been embedded in a larger organization capable of providing additional services and leveraging opportunities. Without EPA support, an environmental workforce program that provides jobs beginning at \$9/hour and progressing to as high as \$32/hour would not be available to local residents.

DESC handles the day-to-day operations for the EWDJT program under a subprogram called Detroit Environmental Employment Program (DEEP). Under the DEEP program, services provided by DESC include:

- Brochures, awareness, and marketing
- Recruitment
- Applicant screening and testing
- Training coordination and deliver
- Student support and qualification for additional assistance and services
- Placement—participation in area-wide job fairs
- Apprentice opportunities
- Tracking

(As a side note to simplify organizations and funding streams, HMTRI lumps organizations like DESC into a general term of Workforce Investment Boards [WIBs]. WIBs were created and supported by the U.S. Department of Labor under the old Workforce Investment Act [WIA] now replaced by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act [WIOA].)

DESC provided services to over 23,000 jobseekers during the last program year, and over 1,500 metro-Detroit businesses. Through partnerships with community- and faith-based organizations, foundations, and many others, DESC provides employers with access to jobseekers with a wide range of job-related skills and certifications (now including certified environmental workers).

DESC has locations throughout Detroit to service residents and provide a knowledgeable workforce to employers. DESC has three One-Stop Service Centers located in east, southwest, and northwest Detroit. They also have neighborhood access points located around the city providing access to basic jobseeker services.

For general information about DESC, please see <http://www.descmiworks.com/>.

#### Program overview

##### Core curriculum

The curriculum has been based on employer demand associated with an estimated \$100 million required to deconstruct and remodel 4,000 structures, many with lead and asbestos issues. As a result of the massive deconstruction activity in Detroit and their relationship with the Detroit Housing Authority, HAZWOPER, asbestos, and lead abatement training has taken center stage.

The first cohorts focused on asbestos remediation. With recommendations from the advisory committee, lead supervisor and worker courses were added as an important part of the curriculum. Incident Management Systems training also remains as an important part of the core curriculum.

- 40-hour HAZWOPER
- Asbestos abatement
- Lead abatement
- CPR
- National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) training
- Job readiness training and participant benefits provided by DESC
- Federal and state certifications

##### Target population

- Unemployed and underemployed city residents
- Veterans
- Minorities
- Resident impacted by manufacturing plant closures

##### Partners

- Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC)
- Sierra Club
- United Community Housing Coalition
- Detroit Future City

- ESK Services, Inc.
- Metro Occupational Trainers, Inc.
- Numerous community-based organizations
- Environmental employers and deconstruction contractors

#### Recruitment

DESC has the ability to utilize a form of try-out recruitment by drawing from other DSEC programs. Motivated construction students interested in environmental remediation can extend training to obtain environmental certifications. Graduates have a leveraged education in both construction and environmental remediation.

Recruitment and initial screening is performed by DESC.

- Orientation and application events
- Screen for interest in environmental occupations
- Assessment—5<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math (Those not able to qualify can be offered remedial education.)
- Drug testing is part of the application process
- On-site interviews
- Ex-offenders are welcome—the DEC participates in expungement fairs

#### Placement and tracking

(It is important to understand that the primary employer of EWDJT graduates is not at the general contractor level, but at the lead or asbestos remediation subcontractor level. They are the advisors and guests that EWDJT programs need to recruit.)

- Special consideration is provided between employers and ex-offenders.
- Job readiness training, tools, and transportation are provided by city and state employment programs.
- Partnerships with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation provide \$5,000 incentives to hire graduates for 30 hours per week at a minimum wage of \$10/hour.

Those interested in leveraging and partnering with local workforce programs can contact Ray at:

Raymond Scott  
 City of Detroit  
[scottr@detroitmi.gov](mailto:scottr@detroitmi.gov)  
 313.471.5108

Jessica Carr would also be happy to discuss EWDJT recruitment, training, benefits, and placement issues:

Jessica Carr  
 Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation  
[jecarr@detempsol.org](mailto:jecarr@detempsol.org)  
 313.664.5639

#### **4. Webinar on EPA subaward policy—sub grantees vs. contractor partners**

EPA has finalized its subaward policy implementing the new Sub-recipient Monitoring and Management requirements in the Uniform Grant Guidance, effective March 29, 2016. The subaward policy is posted at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-policies-epa-grant-recipients>.

EPA will host a webinar session for EPA grantees and prospective grantees that will explain the subaward policy. Please see the date and time listed below. To participate, please click on the webinar link below, and use the call-in information for audio.

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Eastern Time

Webinar link: <https://epawebconferencing.acms.com/sptapril/>

Call-in: 866.299.3188

Call-in passcode: 202.564.0223

EPA plans to post answers to questions raised by recipients, along with responses to inquiries EPA has already received within two to three weeks of the April 6 webinar. Please submit questions before or after the webinar to Jim Drummond at [Drummond.James@epa.gov](mailto:Drummond.James@epa.gov) and Julie Milazzo at [Milazzo.Julie@epa.gov](mailto:Milazzo.Julie@epa.gov).

In addition, OGD is revising their Internet site. Below are links you may find useful.

Grants Home page:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants>

Grants policy page:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-policies-epa-grant-recipients>

Subaward policy page:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients>

EPA will also post Frequently Asked Questions, online training, and other helpful resources soon. Once they are posted, you will be able to access them from the Subaward Policy Page. If you have any questions, please contact Julie Milazzo at [Milazzo.Julie@epa.gov](mailto:Milazzo.Julie@epa.gov).

## **5. 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, many others with a strong interest in environmental activities in Georgia and the Southeast region.

To learn more, go to <http://www.georgiaenet.com>.

## **6. Opportunities**

### Local Environmental Education (EE) Grants

Local EE grants are a great addition to EWDJT program activities. The program funds many small grants and tend to be less competitive and easier to get than larger federal grants.



Under the Environmental Education Grants Program, EPA seeks grant proposals from eligible applicants to support environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and help provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. This grant program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Since 1992, EPA has distributed between \$2 and \$3.5 million in grant funding per year, supporting more than 3,600 grants.

Applicants must represent one of the following types of organizations to be eligible for an environmental education grant:

- Local education agency
- State education or environmental agency
- Colleges or universities
- Non-profit organization
- Noncommercial educational broadcasting entity
- Tribal education agency

Applications are due April 8, 2016.

For more information, visit <http://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grant-solicitation-notice>.

#### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Next PLC Session: April 13, 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.