



April 15, 2015

Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 12, Session 10

This was the last session in this cycle of Professional Learning Community conversations. Cycle 13 will begin in June 2015.

Topics: Current Happenings / Latest news as of April 15, 2015

Review of Cycle 12 PLC presentation

Critical elements in successful EWDJT programs

Program start-up issues—urban, midsize, and rural communities

Women in the environmental workforce

Networking Opportunities

First Annual Mid-Year Grantee Update Webinar—April 20, 1:00 p.m. CDT

2015 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting—August 19-20

2015 National Brownfields Training Conference—September 2-4

Funding and Coordination Opportunities

Current Happenings / Latest news as of April 15, 2015

First Annual Mid-Year Grantee Update Webinar—April 20, 1:00 p.m. CDT

HMTRI, under cooperative agreement U.S. EPA, will be hosting an EWDJT Grantee Mid-Year Update webinar on April 20 from 1:00–2:00 p.m. CDT. No registration is necessary. The link to the webinar is <http://connectpro51639880.adobeconnect.com/bf-webinar/>.

Presentations by EPA staff will focus on news from Washington and resources for improving communication with prospective employers. Presentations from OAI, Inc., Florida State College at Jacksonville, and Zender Environmental Health and Research Group will focus on placement issues.

Tune in for a great session on EWDJT placement strategies and resources.

Review of Cycle 12 PLC presentations

PLC Cycle 12 began in December with the final call being held today. Early in the cycle, we focused on critical elements associated with sustainable EWDJT programs. Hopefully, these discussions assisted existing grantees in tuning up their programs for spring training sessions. For those communities submitting grant proposals to EPA, these PLC sessions may have provided information useful in fine tuning their proposed program plans.

Rather than repeat content of these sessions, we have listed the sessions associated with each of the critical elements discussed. Post-session notes and recordings of those calls are available on the *Brownfields Toolbox* website at www.brownfields-toolbox.org under the PLC Corner tab.

Critical elements in successful EWDJT programs

Program Planning—PLC session 120

Assessment—PLC session 121

Curriculum—PLC session 122

Recruitment—PLC session 123

Marketing and Social Media—PLC session 125

After the FY2015 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training proposals were due, the PLC shifted gears to address the following questions:

- What if we get the EWDJT grant?
- Now what?
- What will that first year be like?

To address these questions, we asked three of our first-year grantees to provide an overview of that first year. Presentations from Detroit, Michigan; Flint, Michigan; and Lewis and Clark County, Montana, represented perspectives from an urban, midsized, and rural EWDJT program. Below are highlights and presenter recommendations from those presentations.

Program start-up issues

URBAN

LaReina Wheeler, City of Detroit; and Jessica Carr, Detroit Employment Solutions

City-sponsored EWDJT programs have definite advantages and some disadvantages.

- The good news—Email notices are sent to program directors with a hard copy “notice of funding” sent to the Chief Executive (in Detroit, it was the mayor’s office). It is important to stay close to individuals listed in the proposal as program staff may be the last to receive the good news.
- Funding is not a slam dunk—in Detroit’s case, the city council and the mayor’s office are required to formally accept the award. The chief executive and the board need to be on board with the EWDJT program, reinforcing the need for good communications between project staff and administration. Detroit’s mayor is totally onboard and plans to include the effort in his State of the State address.
- The check is not in the mail yet—More work still must be completed before funding begins. A specific and detailed work plan needs to be submitted to the EPA project officer for approval. While work plans follow closely with the proposed project plan, they provide more detail and a timeline for project deliverables. Work plans may be tweaked after consulting with the project officer to insure better outcomes. (Our recommendation to become close with the Regional Coordinator early in the proposal process comes in handy during the start-up phase.) Work plans are flexible and can be changed at a later date after discussion with the project officer. In Detroit’s work plan, an unanticipated demand for trained workers in the summer of 2015 resulted in a dramatically accelerated training program and a revision in course offerings.
- Getting paid—if a fiscal agent is not registered with SAM (System for Award Management), grantees will be directed to complete training and set up a payment account. This process can take about two weeks. PLC members may wish to visit www.sam.gov for useful background information on the federal payment process.
- At last—Grantees are now ready to begin their good work. Twenty weeks may have passed, but much of that down time could be used to begin preparation for the first recruitment and training cycle. While grantees are allowed to incur costs only after award and up to 90 days

prior to final funding, billable costs must conform to the work plan and approved budget. It would be wise to discuss any of these plans with the EPA Project Officer. For example, attendance at the All-Grantee meeting in August can be covered if the award has been made but the accounting system is not yet operational. NOTE: While EPA may allow those expenditures, each individual organization may have internal restrictive regulations.

- The city of Detroit's experience going through the award and funding process—LaReina does not feel the process just described was burdensome or difficult. Their proposal, work plan, and relationships with partners were well developed such that everything went smoothly. Suggestions during refinement of the work plan and timeline were constructive and resulted in revisions to the proposed training curriculum. As a result of the massive deconstruction activity in Detroit and their relationship with the Detroit Housing Authority, HAZWOPER, asbestos, and lead abatement training took center stage.
- Four months into the first year—The close partnership between the EWDJT program and Jessica Carr, DESC (workforce development), has provided an ample supply of excellent candidates who are screened and qualified for additional benefits. The close partnership between the EWDJT program and the Detroit Housing Authority and their contractors is resulting in an expanded demand for program graduates. Contractors, under mandate to hire local residents, have expressed interest to hire three times the number of proposed graduates for the 2015 deconstruction season. This demand is enhanced by a \$5,000 incentive provided by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to hire residents at a minimum wage of \$10 per hour for at least 30 hours per week in sustainable jobs.

As a result, the city of Detroit has revised their work plan to accelerate training to include three cycles of 20 participants each for the first year of their EWDJT program.

MID SIZE

Jonathan Jarrett, Mott Community College (MCC)

Adapting programs in a changing economy coupled with the unexpected program and staff changing events at Mott community College are not unique and have occurred with other EWDJT grantees. What is special is the way Jonathan addressed and overcame unexpected staff changes at their college.

Shortly after receiving their EPA EWDJT award, the principal program manager left the college. With an unfilled position, Jonathan was asked to take over an unfamiliar program. Imagine becoming responsible for a program with limited knowledge of its origins, program plan, content, or deliverables. Staff changes can occur in any EWDJT program for a variety of reasons (and often has). It is important to consider ways to mitigate those transitions.

To Jonathan's credit, he approached his new responsibility with an open mind and willingness to learn. Jonathan attended the 2013 Annual All Grantee Meeting just a few months after the EPA award. New to the program, many of the strategies and experiences presented were foreign. Successful strategies used by other grantees were not part of MCC's program plan. As the first cycle proceeded, Jonathan learned

how difficult the first year of an EWDJT program can be. He discovered the importance of recruitment and close relationships to employers emphasized at the Annual All-Grantee Meeting.

Jonathan feels the real breakthrough came at the second Annual All-Grantee meeting he attended last October. Jonathan brought three key staff with lots of issues and questions. Together, they discussed techniques and strategies used by others that could apply to their program. He feels their first year program has now been reinvented. Most significant was the development and adoption of a version of the try-out recruitment process used by OAI, Inc. Staff focused on the importance of program awareness in the community and recruitment, as well as matching curriculum to local employer needs.

Advice for new grantees—New grantees need to recognize the first year of a new EWDJT program will be filled with unexpected consequences and a learning curve unlike other workforce development programs. Those who are new to EWDJT would be wise to learn from mistakes and successes of other more experienced programs. EPA has established mechanisms for mentoring through HMTRI's PLC program, the Grantee and Community Outreach Listserv, and the Annual All-Grantee Meetings; and EPA Regional Coordinators. New programs should not hesitate to revise strategies that do not appear to be working (also discuss those changes with your EPA Regional Coordinator).

RURAL

Laura Erikson, Lewis and Clark County, Helena, Montana

Lewis and Clark County includes Helena (population 30,000) and is the sixth most densely populated county in a sparsely populated state (slightly over 1 million). With a population density of 7 people per square mile, EWDJT must draw from a smaller base than urban programs previously discussed. Smaller target communities bring with them a host of challenges for EWDJT programs.

- A smaller recruitment pool
- A potential for larger classroom disparities
- Transportation issues
- Need to lower acceptance standards
- Relocation issues related to placement

Lewis and Clark County is in the proximity of large superfund sites primarily related to mining and drilling activities. Additionally, the historic city has many old buildings loaded with lead and asbestos. For these reasons, program managers correctly, in their needs assessment, identified major employers and training needs. The Lewis and Clark County curriculum has been oriented around lead and asbestos in addition to those certifications necessary to work at superfund sites.

Their close relationship with the Montana Department of Labor, Helena Job Services, and Anaconda Job Services will assist in recruitment/placement activities as will their connection to local community-based organizations. The Montana Business Assistance Connection will assist in linking graduates with employers. Helena College will provide instructors and technical support for the program.

While facing challenges associated with rural programs, Lewis and Clark County has done an excellent job in needs assessment and assembling partnerships to address all aspects of the EWDJT program.

Summary

Urban, midsize, and rural communities each have special issues associated with the operation of their EWDJT program. Larger communities have an advantage over smaller communities with larger applicant pools, numerous employers, and often, more assessment and remediation taking place.

It is important for all to recognize the issues faced by midsize and rural EWDJT programs. These issues include:

- Smaller applicant pools
- Larger classroom disparities
- Fewer local employers
- Geographically disbursed participant populations
- Transportation to training and potential employment opportunities
- Limited environmental opportunities available to program graduates

Given these issues, midsize and rural programs can be successful and sustainable when careful attention is given to labor market assessment, close relationships with employers, established job assistance programs, and available leveraging opportunities.

Women in the environmental workforce

The final Professional Learning Community session in this cycle was a revisit to Oregon Tradeswomen. Women in the environmental workforce addresses not only gender neutrality but includes environmental justice and the mitigation of employment barriers facing women in trades positions.

Rather than repeat the presentation by Amy James Neel, we suggest those interested listen to the recording of PLC session number 128, or read the post-session notes. Amy does a great job of explaining the difference between a “half-hearted” approach to recruiting women, and a better approach to bringing women into EWDJT programs.

Amy’s Advice

1. Insure women are in all marketing materials.
2. Insure women are on staff and attend welcome events.
3. Use mentors and graduates as role models.
4. Dress as an environmental worker and not as a clerical worker.
5. Allow participants to become familiar with tools of the trade.
6. Focus on safe use of equipment.
7. Address issues of special interest to women.

Networking Opportunities

Tribal Solid Waste Advisory Network (TSWAN)

Kami Snowden

Thanks to a grant from U.S. EPA, TSWAN will offer a 40-Hour HAZWOPER course for tribes May 18-22, 2015 in Lewiston, Idaho, hosted by the Nez Perce Tribe. Clandestine Meth/Drug Lab Identification will be included as part of the curriculum in the 40-hour class. This free training together will be offered with partners in the project, the University of Washington (Seattle) and the Washington State Patrol.

For more information contact:

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Brownfields webinar on Tuesday, May 5

You are invited to attend a free brownfields webinar on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 from 2:00 to 3:15 p.m. CST, which is being co-hosted by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and the Technical Assistance to Brownfields Program (TAB) at Kansas State University. Although all are welcome to register, focus will be on information for communities in Nebraska.

Does your community have an abandoned building, old gas station or other potentially contaminated building that is impeding your future growth? This webinar is designed to help you and your community to find answers to questions such as: What is a brownfield site and why would a community want to assist in their redevelopment? How should a town or city approach the redevelopment process in a matter that limits their liability? What programs are out there to assist local government in assessment, cleanup and redevelopment?

To register, go to the webinar webpage at <https://www.ksutab.org/education/webinars/>.

Who should attend? Local and regional government officials, not-for-profit economic and community development organizations and anyone interested in learning about brownfields or about financial resources for local redevelopment.

For more information contact Carrie Wiese, NDEQ, at carrie.wiese@nebraska.gov or 402.471.6411 or Wendy Griswold, KSU TAB, at griswold@ksu.edu or 785.532.0910.

HMTRI Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

The HMTRI Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting will be held August 19–20, 2015, in Alexandria, VA, with travel days of August 18 and August 21. This meeting is mandatory for all EWDJT grantees.

There is no fee to attend. Hotel accommodations will be provided for three nights for people from out-of-town, and some working meals will be provided. Participants must assume costs for transportation and additional meals.

This meeting is open to:

- EPA-funded EWDJT grantees
- Past EWDJT grantees
- Active PLC members

The 2015 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting will be held as follows:
CHECK-IN—Tuesday, August 18, 6–8 p.m. This is check-in only and to receive meeting materials. No meeting will be held on Tuesday evening so that everyone can get settled after a long day of travel.
MEETING—Wednesday–Thursday, August 19–20 | 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. each day
TRAVEL DAYS—Tuesday and Friday, August 18 and August 21

Location: Holiday Inn & Suites Alexandria Historic District, 625 First Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

To REGISTER, email Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu and include:

Your name, organization, address, city/state/zip, phone, fax, and organization you are representing.
Please indicate if you are a PLC member or a grantee. The registration deadline is TUESDAY, JULY 29.
If you have any questions, please contact Glo at 563.441.4081 or ghanne@eicc.edu.

2015 National Brownfields Training Conference

The National Brownfields 2015 Training Conference will be held in Chicago, IL, on September 2–4, 2015. The conference will be held at the Chicago Hilton on Michigan Avenue. Find out more about the conference and register at <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

Funding and Coordination Opportunities

DOL—Training to Work funds

\$27M in grants to help incarcerated individuals in prison work-release find stable jobs, strengthen underserved communities, boost economy, and reduce prison recidivism.

WASHINGTON — Returning home from prison can be hard, particularly without the benefits of a stable job. Without employment, the likelihood of recidivism rises. To provide the support, training and assistance needed to find and keep a good job, the U.S. Labor Department today announced a \$27 million Training to Work — Adult Reentry grant program — to help thousands of soon-to-be-released inmates become productive citizens.

"A good job gives a person a sense of dignity and purpose. It enables them to find a decent place to live and enjoy a hot meal at home," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. "Good jobs are a pathway to the middle class. Those who have paid their debt to society deserve the opportunity to find and hold useful employment. It puts money in their pocket, most of which is pumped back into the economy. In the best America, everyone shares our prosperity. That's what these grants can make possible."

Training to Work grants will fund sustainable efforts to develop and adopt career pathway models — an approach designed to link and coordinate education and training services for individuals to obtain industry recognized credentials. With these credentials, these workers can find meaningful employment and meet the needs of local employers in growing sectors and industries.

The department expects to award approximately 20 grants with a maximum value of \$1,360,000 each to provide training and employment services for men and women, ages 18 and older (including veterans), who participate in state or local work-release programs.

Grant applicants must be located in an area with high poverty and high crime rates, including Promise Zones — communities which often have a larger proportion of returning citizens and higher rates of recidivism. Applicants will also be required to establish a committed Career Pathways Collaborative led by the grantee, and consist of representatives from the workforce system, work release programs, and

employers and/or industry associations. The CPC leadership team will create a comprehensive program. Selected applicants will be expected to include the following components in their proposals: case management, mentoring services, educational activities, training that leads to industry-recognized credentials, workforce activities, and follow-up services.

Nonprofit organizations that meet the requirements of the solicitation may apply.

The Funding Opportunity Announcement, which includes information about how to apply, is available at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has posted a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants at www.grants.gov. Public housing authorities, local governments, nonprofits, tribal entities, and for-profit developers are eligible to apply.

Applications must present a plan to revitalize a severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted multi-family housing project located in a distressed neighborhood into a viable, mixed-income community. Find additional information and see which grants have been awarded at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn/fy14funding.

\$3.5M in Susan Harwood Safety and Health Training Grants Now Available from US Labor Department

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is accepting 2015 applications for targeted-topic training grants and capacity-building training grants under the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program. A total of \$3.5 million is available for nonprofit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations, employer associations, labor unions, joint labor/management associations, tribal organizations, and colleges and universities.

The grant program honors the late Susan Harwood, a former director in OSHA's Office of Risk Assessment, whose 17-year tenure with the agency led to the development of worker protection standards for exposure to bloodborne pathogens, cotton dust, benzene, formaldehyde, asbestos and lead. The grants fund the creation of in-person, hands-on training and educational programs and the development of materials for workers and employers in small businesses; industries with high injury, illness and fatality rates; and vulnerable workers who are underserved, have limited English proficiency or are temporary workers. The grants will fund training and education for workers and employers to help them identify and prevent workplace safety and health hazards.

"These grants provide such a valuable service to American workers because they're providing essential training to the vulnerable workers in small businesses and high-risk industries that need it most," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. "Susan Harwood program grants fund great programs with a truly noble goal, which is to make sure that every worker gets home safe and healthy at the end of the day."

The targeted topic training grants support quality training programs and educational materials that focus on identifying and preventing workplace hazards. Applicants must address the occupational safety and health hazards designated by OSHA in the grant announcement. Grants may be eligible for one additional follow-on grant, based on satisfactory performance. This announcement also makes available

funds for targeted-topic training and educational materials that focus on developing quality training materials.

Two types of capacity-building grants are available: capacity-building pilot and capacity-building developmental grants. Capacity-building pilot grants are intended to assist organizations in assessing their needs and formulating a capacity-building plan before launching a full-scale safety and health education program. Capacity-building developmental grants focus on improving and expanding an organization's capacity to provide safety and health training, education and related assistance to target audiences. Capacity-building developmental grant recipients may be eligible for up to three additional 12-month follow-on grants, based on satisfactory performance.

Read the funding opportunity announcements at <http://www.grants.gov>, where new applicants must register and returning applicants must confirm accuracy of their registration information before completing the application. The registration process generally takes three to five business days, but may take as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner. Organizations new to the System for Award Management need to allot an additional 14 days for registration to obtain a commercial and government entity code.

To allow for these processes, applicants are encouraged to begin the registering with www.grants.gov as soon as possible. Applications for both targeted topic training grants (SHTG-FY-15-01) and capacity building grants (SHTG-FY-15-02) must be submitted electronically, no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT on June 2, 2015. No extensions will be granted. OSHA has developed a series of short webinars to assist prospective applicants in understanding the application process, which can be viewed at <http://www.osha.gov/dte/sharwood/index.html>.

More information on the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program is available at <http://www.osha.gov/dte/sharwood/index.html>. Questions from the public should be directed to Kimberly Mason by emailing harwoodgrants@dol.gov or calling 847-759-7700. Please note that this is not a toll-free number.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: June, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. EST (date TBA)
Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at 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/>.

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.