

January 7, 2015

Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 12, Session 3

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of January 7, 2015

Student training and support

Contact list of EWDJT Regional Coordinators

Networking Opportunities

—Using the HMTRI Listserve to ask questions

—2015 National Brownfields Training Conference

—2015 All Grantee Meeting – date and location to be released soon

—Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015

Funding and Coordination Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of January 7, 2015

The FY2015 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program (EWDJT) due date for proposals is February 3, 2015. All applicants will be required to submit through www.grants.gov.

Organizations not familiar with using www.grants.gov need to research the site as soon as possible as it takes some time and effort for first time users to sign up. Plan to submit early (in case there is a glitch).

If Internet submission is not possible, contact your EPA Regional Coordinator as soon as possible.

EPA's PowerPoint used during the EPA Adobe Connect Request for Proposals (RFP) webinar can be downloaded from the *Brownfields Toolbox* website at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/>. The link to the PowerPoint is at the top of the Homepage.

On January 7, Region 4 conducted a regional webinar. For those interested, the PowerPoint, RFP, and FAQ's can also be downloaded at <https://epa.connectsolutions.com/r30gy2kxalf/>.

Schedule for processing EWDJT awards

- Proposals due—February 3
- Rejections for not meeting qualification criteria—end of February
- Award announcements—April/May
- Grant forms, work plans, etc.—June/July
- Email that funds are available—August/September
- Annual All-Grantee Meeting—August
- Funds may be spent up to 90 days before final paperwork after official acceptance

Student training and support

Thanks to Guy Zaczek, e3 Energy Environment Education, for your comments from the last PLC. We would like to share them as we discuss training that addresses community needs.

“Sorry for taking so much time on your last teleconference but I wanted to express to your audience that the employers are now expecting different training than they have in the past. Sometimes they want training conducted at their companies and not at your school or organization. Companies want employees to learn topics in a relatively short period of time and to earn money for them when the training is over.

On Monday this coming week, I will be customizing 12 classes for this spring that will most likely involve 80 people in total where more than half are already employed and the other half are in employment training. It will involve OSHA training but also NFPA, IEEE, ANSI, and skilled trades topics such as GD&T, blueprint reading, electrical schematic reading, machine troubleshooting, and the basics of programmable controls. Package it and then run it like a semester so the school likes it. But the employer likes it because all his elements are in there.

Wastewater or water treatment training is a pink elephant. Many people in the jobs now are not qualified and never will be qualified (but are politically connected to these civil service jobs). Unemployed people who live in the area can take the training but can't take the test to become licensed because they do not have the hands-on experience. That is to keep the smart people out of the pipeline to get these job in the first place. So typically, each water department has the minimum number of operators who are actually licensed by the state but everyone else has a maintenance or meter reading job in this same department. That is why about 1/3 of America today is covered by for-profit water management companies.

Your comments were very good as to new opportunities and why EPA and others are looking to fill new and future training needs.

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Guy brings up some important concepts regarding labor market assessment as it relates to training.

1. Make sure primary training ties into the labor market assessment. It is best to demonstrate that relationship in the program plan.
2. Employers are looking for specific topics. Identify those topics in the labor market assessment and develop the curriculum around them.

In regard to water treatment operators, many are retiring. However, operator certifications are difficult and long-term goals. For EWDJT graduates, there are many positions that play supporting roles at water facilities. Environmental workforce training provides an entryway into water/wastewater as well as a longer term career path to certification. Water/wastewater jobs are stable and long-term. It is important that those interested in this training work with private and municipal operators. (Ann Terry, Memphis Bioworks Foundation, discusses their experience below.

Thanks to Ann Terry, Memphis Bioworks Foundation, for comments related to training schedules, delivery, and linkage to labor market assessments. Ann addressed some of the issues suggested by Guy Zaczek relating to water/wastewater training. Since the post-recession fallout, Memphis Bioworks has unemployed applicants with college degrees requesting training. These applicants have the potential as excellent candidates for wastewater plant operators. Additionally, their program engages local certified plant employees to participate in the training of EWDJT students. In effect, Memphis Bioworks has set up the perfect linkage between labor market assessment, employer involvement, placement, and training.

1. Experienced local employers will train to current labor market needs.

2. Employer trainers will get to know EWDJT participants on a personal level.
3. Employer trainers become graduate employers.
4. Employer trainers can serve an advisory, support, and even a leveraging role in the EWDJT program.

In addition to water/wastewater training, Memphis Bioworks Foundation has been successful in placement by providing a broader spectrum of training. Local training needs change from cycle to cycle and among employers. No single curriculum will address all of the employment opportunities open to program graduates. For this reason, students must be flexible and trained for multiple job opportunities.

Training Schedules

Some programs train evenings, and some part-time during the day. Many EWDJT programs appear to prefer training schedules that simulate the work week (40 hours per week for 3 months). However, each individual training schedule really depends on the profile of the applicants.

For unemployed participants, a full-time simulated work week makes sense. As Guy pointed out “the quicker, the better.” Some programs have students holding part-time positions, or have other commitments or issues that make full-time training impossible. For these programs, evening training works best.

Whichever schedule is adopted, the decision must be coordinated with the applicant recruitment process. To retain students, it must be made perfectly clear that full-time attendance is mandatory.

Curriculum

Training varies largely depending on local industrial activity, housing, the economy, and regulatory activity. Clearly, mandatory training in 1910.120 40-hour HAZWOPER is a must, with first aid, general construction, and confined space close seconds. These core courses prepare students for an introduction to most environmental jobs.

Next are those job skills determined to be in demand locally. Here, the labor market assessment and employer advisors guide the curriculum. “Train to local demand” is the advice from experienced EWDJT grantees. Advice from Ann Terry is to provide a broad enough curriculum to allow for a variety of workforce skills and certification requirements. Again, this driven by employer guidance and labor market assessments.

Curriculum Delivery Methods

Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) stands out in terms of curriculum and delivery methods. (Information provided to the PLC by Sarah Ashbrook.) FSCJ was the first EWDJT to replace printed textbooks with tablets. After researching tablet use, cost tradeoffs, and benefits, the Barnes and Noble refurbished Nook Tablet was chosen to replace 16 textbooks. Tablets issued to each student replace 16 printed texts resulting in an immediate cost savings and providing the ability to update materials “on the fly.”

A full-featured, refurbished Nook Tablet can be purchased for around \$80-\$90. It has a USB port, memory slot, reads multiple formats, and has a 2-month battery life. These devices are WiFi enabled and have expandable memory. They have an Android operating system with many available apps, email, and web capability. Content and reference materials are provided to each student via pdf format.

How the tablet program works

Each participant is issued a refurbished Nook (approx. \$89) upon signing an agreement of responsibility. Each Nook has been preloaded with curriculum and reference materials. This requires a tablet that, when plugged into a USB port, will show up as an external hard drive such that curriculum can be “dragged and dropped into the memory” from a master computer. USB splitters allow this process to be done quickly (4–8 at a time).

Students must register their Nooks with Barns & Noble but are not required to provide a credit card (extremely important). Each student sets up an email account. Supplements and revisions can be emailed to students as required. Upon graduation, students keep their Nooks.

Emails, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can be used for:

- Job placement and advancement opportunities
- Graduate tracking, applicant referrals, and potential job openings
- Alumni events, graduations, and recertification training
- Certification updates and new curriculum useful to graduates
- Networking among graduates
- Program announcements and information

Devices are not insured. The program keeps about 5 extra (used by staff). Loss rates have not been excessive to justify insurance. Two-year service agreements are available for around \$28.

Examples of topics developed or downloaded in a PDF format

- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous Waste Operator and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER)
- Florida DEP Storm Water, Erosion, Sedimentation Control Inspector
- OSHA Disaster Site Worker
- Environmental Sampling & Analysis
- OSHA Construction Safety
- OSHA General Industry Certification
- OSHA Maritime Industry
- FEMA, National Incident Management System (NIMS) IS-00700 Certificate
- FEMA, Introduction to Incident Command System IS100 Certificate
- EPA 24-hour Hazardous Materials Technician
- Collections and Wastewater Training
- Asbestos Worker Certification
- EPA Lead Renovator, Repair & Paint (RRP)
- American Red Cross First Aid, CPR, & AED
- OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens
- Awareness Training
- Environmental Justice Overview
- Solid Waste: Deconstruction & Recycling, Green Remediation Technologies
- Environmental Math & Chemical Safety
- OSHA Confined Space Entry
- Green Technology Industry: Urban Agriculture
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST)

Issues selecting a tablet for curriculum delivery

In the case of FSCJ, Barnes and Nobel stores are easily accessible for WiFi, additional apps, and technical assistance. The refurbished Nooks have proven to be an excellent choice. Other brands may also work such as Hisense, Dragon Touch Venturer, RCA, or Nextbook. Most of these use 1.2 ghz processors with Android operating systems and can be purchased refurbished for under \$100. Check out Amazon.com tablets for options. Service contracts are available at SquareTrade.

Keep in mind the following issues

1. Curriculum must be in PDF format and “copyright-cleared.”
2. Memory—8 gig with option to expand with extra flash memory cards
3. USB port with the ability to connect to a host computer for initial curriculum download
4. WiFi and email enabled with formats compatible with available curriculum
5. Android compatible to download additional apps
6. Protective case (preferably with charger pocket)
7. Students must be willing to sign a “responsibility” contract
8. Limited training is required for proper care and use of the tablets

Student services and retention

We will discuss student recruitment, retention, and placement during the next PLC. Its importance cannot be overstated. Contributions from foundations, employers, human services, workforce programs, and re-entry programs provide the leveraged resources not provided by the EPA EWDJT grant. These services may include:

1. Transportation services
2. Daycare
3. Health screening
4. Drug testing
5. Life skills
6. Equipment and supplies necessary for employment
7. Transportation, food, and housing allowances
8. Part-time, paid internships

While leveraged providers must supply the resources needed for student support, significant “heavy lifting” is still needed to assist participants with personal issues and obtaining available benefits.

Content Resources

Below are sample curriculum resources available to EWDJT grantees. It is important not to spend limited resources developing curriculum already developed, tested, and in use.

Health & Safety Curriculum—OSHA and NIEHS provide the best sources for PDF curriculum materials. The following is excerpted from the NIEHS WETP National Clearinghouse curricula catalog, where NIEHS curriculum is posted.

<http://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=603>

Downloading Curricula from the NIEHS WETP National Clearinghouse Online Catalog

Users can download curricula material from the online catalog. As you browse through the catalog, you will see that course material is specified as 1) provided by the Clearinghouse; 2) provided by the Awardee, or 3) provided by 'Other Entities.' Only material listed as 'Provided by the Clearinghouse' can be downloaded through our online system. Material provided by the Awardee may be obtained by contacting the individual listed for that particular training organization.

Important Note for Users:

The use of any material from this curricula catalog is for educational purposes only, in support of the Worker Education Training Program's (WETP) goal of increasing worker health and safety. Copyright marks cannot be removed from any material in this curricula catalog. All curricula in this curricula catalog must be used in its entirety. If you have any questions about the online curricula catalog, please contact the National Clearinghouse at 202-331-7733, or e-mail info@wetp.org."

Recycling and solid waste management

Training links in recycling and solid waste management

- Construction and Demolition (C&D) recycling:
WasteCap Resource Solutions (formerly WasteCap Wisconsin) provides accreditation and training in recycling of C&D materials. <http://www.wastecap.org/services/training/>
- Deconstruction:
The Building Materials Reuse Association has provided some training in the past on deconstruction, and have developed a community college level curriculum. <http://www.bmra.org/resources/training>
BMRA has some additional training resources listed at <http://www.bmra.org/other-training-resources>
<http://www.cdrecycling.org> CMRA Trade Association has some detailed websites for particular materials:
Concrete www.concreterecycling.org
Drywall www.drywallrecycling.org
Shingle www.shinglerecycling.org
Pacific Northwest Wood www.greatnwrecyclers.org
- Solid Waste Management:
Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) has landfill, composting and recycling training and certification programs
Training <http://swana.org/Education/Educate/Training/tabid/98/Default.aspx>
- Recycling and Zero Waste Training:
Recycling Organizations of North America (RONA) is developing national standards and training. See Certification Programs for Resource Management at <http://recyclingorganizations.org/>

Contact list of EWDJT Regional Coordinators

Inform your EPA Regional Job Training coordinator of your intentions to respond to the 2015 EWJDT Request for Proposals. Regional Coordinators cannot address EPA RFP ranking criteria issues but would welcome your interest in the EWDJT program.

Region 1—Kathleen Castagna, 617.918.1429, castagna.kathleen@epa.gov

Region 2—Schenine Mitchell, 212.637.3282, mitchell.schenine@epa.gov

Region 3—Jeff Barnett, 215.814.3246, barnett.jeff@epa.gov

Region 4—Kathleen Curry, 404.229.6354, curry.kathleen@epa.gov

Region 5—Linda Morgan, 312.886.4747, morgan.linda@epa.gov

Region 6—Amber Perry, 214.665.3172, perry.amber@epa.gov

Region 7—Alma Moreno-Lahm, 913.551.7380, lahm.alma@epa.gov

Region 8—Christina Wilson, 303.312.6706, wilson.christina@epa.gov

Region 9—Noemi Emeric-Ford, 213.244.1821, meric-ford.noemi@epa.gov

Region 10—Robert Tan, 206.553.2580, tan.robert@epa.gov

Networking Opportunities

Using the HMTRI Listserve to Ask Questions

The EWDJT Grantee ListServe has been updated to include all of the new grantees who attended the last *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* in Alexandria, VA. For some of you, this is new information. For others, this is a reminder of the benefits of using this ListServe as a networking tool.

Using this ListServe is just like sending a normal email. The only difference is that a single email address includes many recipients. Members of this ListServe include attendees of this year's All-Grantee meeting and past grantee meetings. The email address to use to post a message to this ListServe is jtgrantees@ateec.org. You may want to add this to your email address book.

When you send an email to the ListServe, you will receive an automated response telling you that your message is waiting for approval by the moderator. The ListServe is set up this way to prevent spam and automated Outlook Office Assistant messages from being sent to all members. The moderator is Glo Hanne who attends to these approvals as quickly as possible.

2015 National Brownfields Training Conference

The 2015 National Brownfields Training Conference will be held in Chicago, IL, September 2–4, 2015. The Conference will be held at the Chicago Hilton on Michigan Ave. Additional meeting space and sleeping rooms will be available at the Palmer House Hilton. Please visit the Conference Website for additional information at www.brownfieldsconference.org. Registration for Brownfields 2015 is now open with reduced registration for early birds until February.

What topics are included in the program?

- Environmental assessment and cleanup
- Traditional and innovative financing approaches
- Marketing, real estate and economic development
- Planning strategies for better communities
- Incorporating sustainability into redevelopment activities
- Civic and community engagement
- Addressing liability and enforcement issues
- State, tribal and local partnerships

HMTRI has submitted a request to conduct a roundtable session for EWDJT grantees. We would like to organize an open discussion with all our EWDJT grantees and interested stakeholders.

EPA grantees are encouraged to submit ideas showcasing their individual accomplishments and good work.

2015 All Grantee Meeting – date and location to be released soon

All EWDJT grantees are invited to the *2015 Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* to be held later this summer. PLC members will also be invited to this informative workshop. While three nights lodging will be provided, participants need to budget for transportation and meals.

Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015

The Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference will begin on April 13, 2015, at the Washington Hilton Hotel. Registration will open soon, but for now, make sure you're free to join hundreds of labor, environmental, business, non-profit, and civic leaders for Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2015.

Funding and Coordination Opportunities

FY15 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants

EPA is announcing the availability of funding to nonprofit organizations and eligible entities to deliver environmental workforce development and job training programs focused on hazardous and solid waste management, assessment, and cleanup associated activities, chemical safety, emergency response, integrated pest management, and waste and stormwater management. These grants are provided to organizations to develop environmental programs that recruit, train, and place unemployed and under-employed, including low-income and minority, residents historically affected by hazardous and solid waste sites and facilities with the skills needed to secure full-time, sustainable employment in the environmental field and in the assessment and cleanup work taking place in their communities. Please note that under this competition, applicants will be required to submit their proposals through www.grants.gov. Hard copy submissions will not be accepted under the FY15 competition. Proposals are due February 3, 2015.

The RFP and FAQs can be accessed at: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm> or through <http://www.grants.gov>.

Link up with assessment and cleanup grants in your community. Participate in public meetings and announce intentions regarding EWDJT proposal development.

Environmental Education Grants

Since 1992, EPA has distributed between \$2 and \$3.5 million in grant funding per year, for a total of \$62,143,290, supporting more than 3,600 grant projects. The purpose of the EE Model Grants Program is to support environmental education projects that increase public awareness about environmental issues and provide participants 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, and that will serve as models that can be replicated in a variety of settings. For more information on the new awardees and on future EE grant competitions, visit <http://www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>.

21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21st CSC)

From Joe Bruss, U.S. EPA Headquarters:

"EPA EWDJT grantees are encouraged to submit letters of interest to become members of the 21st CSC! I hope that grantees will consider taking the small amount of time out of there busy schedules to become part of this important effort!"

Letters of Interest are once again being accepted for the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21st CSC). The edited Federal Register Notice (FRN) omits specific references to dates regarding duration of membership and deadlines to submit Letters of Interest. Instead, the FRN now states that Letters of Interest may be submitted and will be reviewed on a rolling or as-needed basis.

Ten new organizations have been approved for 21CSC membership, bringing the total number of 21CSC member organizations to 162 to date. As always, the complete list of 21CSC programs can be viewed on the partnership website at www.21csc.org.

Several 21CSC programs and leaders were recognized as winners for The Corps Network's Corpsmember of the Year, Corps Legacy Achievement, and Projects of the Year awards. As an additional reminder, the 21CSC Champion of the Year will be announced during the Corps Network's 2015 National Conference in February in Washington, D.C. If you haven't done so already, please consider your colleagues and partners for this recognition.

Please contact Levi Novey, Director of Communications & Marketing, at The Corps Network at lnovey@corpsnetwork.org ASAP!

Operation AmeriCorps

The link to the official Operation AmeriCorps webpage is below, it offers great information about what the initiative is, and how to apply. <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/operation-amicorps>

Overview

Operation AmeriCorps is a new program to help tribal and local leaders use AmeriCorps to accomplish big things in their community. As part of Operation AmeriCorps, tribal and local leaders are being asked to identify a high-priority local challenge that AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC and/or AmeriCorps VISTA members can address in a relatively short period of time (no more than two years).

The grant competition is open exclusively to tribal and local governments, including counties, cities, towns, and school districts; and state service commissions. They are looking for proposals that are place-based, coordinated with existing community organizations, and with transformational outcomes.

The solution may be a new initiative, or it may use national service to scale up an existing successful effort, but in either case AmeriCorps must be the additive ingredient to achieve transformative change at the local level.

Year 2015 Operation AmeriCorps competition has two funding priorities. Applicants may choose to apply to either of the priorities.

- The first priority focus is narrowly tailored to focus on specific post-secondary outcomes for students.
- The second priority is more flexible and allows localities to identify their most pressing challenge.

Grant Funding Guidance for State and Tribal Response Programs 2015

Section 128(a) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended, authorizes a noncompetitive \$50 million grant program to establish and enhance state and tribal response programs. Generally, these response programs address the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of brownfields sites and other sites with actual or perceived contamination. This document provides guidance that will enable states and tribes to apply for and use Fiscal Year 2015 section 128(a) funds. The application deadline is January 31, 2015. For more information and to view the guidance, please visit http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/state_tribal/fund_guide.htm

Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreements

“Environmental Justice cooperative agreements empower communities to implement environmental protection projects locally,” said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “With these agreements, EPA advances our commitment to communities by providing financial and technical assistance to take action against environmental harm.”

In 2003, EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) launched the first solicitation for the EJCPs Cooperative Agreement Program. Since the Program’s inception, EPA has provided funding to 50 projects to help communities understand and address exposure to environmental harms and risks. Each of this year’s recipients are awarded up to \$120,000 to support two-year projects, including identifying and reducing sources of air pollution, reducing lead exposure in homes of low-income residents, and the cleanup and repurposing of community dump sites. Projects must use the Collaborative Problem Solving model, comprised of seven elements of a successful collaborative partnership, to address local environmental and/or public health issues.

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race or income, in the environmental decision-making process. These awards represent EPA’s commitment to promoting localized, community-based actions to address environmental justice issues.

Please visit <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/resources/publications/grants/cps-project-abstracts-2014.pdf> for a complete listing of the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement recipients and project descriptions. More information about EPA’s Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving Cooperative Agreement Program: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-cps-grants.html>.

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for 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 multifamily housing project located in a distressed neighborhood into a viable, mixed-income community. Applications are due Monday, February 9, 2015. Find the full application package at www.grants.gov. Click on Search Grants. The CFDA number is 14.889. Find additional information at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn/fy14funding.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: January 21, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. EST

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com.

Visit our *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* Web site 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.