

May 7, 2014

Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 10, Session 9

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of May 7, 2014

Featured guest this week—The Energy Coordinating Agency, Philadelphia, PA

Networking Opportunities

Funding Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of May 7, 2014

Status of the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grants

EPA's review of the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) proposals is complete and it is anticipated that an announcement of awards will take place in the next week.

It is important to remember that the EWDJT program has been an annual competition with requests for proposals usually issued late in the year with spring or early summer awards. Unfunded programs should not be discouraged if they do not receive grants on their first submission. Often unfunded proposals have been improved, rewritten, and resubmitted in subsequent years with great success. It is important that those serious about establishing an EPA-funded workforce development program contact their EPA Brownfields Job Training Regional Coordinator for a proposal debriefing. It is now time to begin work on the next round of EWDJT program plans.

For those receiving awards, it would also be a good idea to consult your Regional Coordinator to provide them a heads-up and establish contact.

HMTRI has one more PLC call on May 21 in this cycle

A new PLC cycle will begin in June and will welcome new grantees and all those interested in establishing new or expanding existing workforce development programs. As part of the next cycle, we hope to have a special session with EPA staff to provide guidance and answer questions. Suggestions on additional topics of interest are always appreciated.

Featured guest this week—The Energy Coordinating Agency, Philadelphia, PA

Many thanks to Pam Carunchio and Scott Coleman with The Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA) for showing us how their nonprofit organization has been able to prosper for over 30 years providing training to low income residents of Philadelphia. Despite a training curriculum that includes stormwater management, lead safety, RRP, BPI, Hazardous Waste Site Worker, sampling, and a variety of conservation courses, ECA has not received EPA assistance but has been aggressive in seeking state and local support.

1. As a true community-based training organization, leveraging and assistance has come from a variety of sources that include public, foundation, and private sectors. Initial funding came from the city of Philadelphia as an assistance grant to help underserved residents lower utility bills.
2. Additional support came from a \$1 million Knight Foundation grant supplemented by additional Challenge Grants and contributions to purchase and renovate an 18,000 square-foot community training center to BPI Gold status.
3. ECA pursues major foundation funding including Ford and Kaiser Family Foundations, not overlooking smaller local private foundations and grass roots contributors.

4. Participating in Youth Build and other WIB programs, ECA is able to leverage life skills, and recruitment and placement services. Staff ensures that participants receive all available benefits and subsidies.
5. As supplemental support, ECA provides incumbent worker training and fee for service training providing numerous certifications required by state statute.
6. Community colleges and local universities provide in-kind and credit to ECA participants.
7. Established as a leading authority with recognition, certification, and critical mass, ECA attracts city, state, and federal partnership opportunities.
8. Pre-apprentice programs with private companies develop relationships and contributions from non-governmental sources.
9. BPI certification programs provide additional revenue streams to support community and training activities.
10. Working with the community, ECA currently has a city wide pledge drive with a \$90,000 goal.

As illustrated, ECA operates in all venues to support and sustain their community assistance and workforce development program.

Pam briefed PLC members regarding the history and background of the Energy Coordinating Agency. She then introduced Scott Coleman, Director of Training at ECA. Early in his presentation, Scott attributed their training success to the following attributes:

1. Diversity in the participants is matched with diversity in the training staff. Every student must feel comfortable and be able to identify with program staff. They must also feel self-assured in their new occupation.
2. Use of a “living laboratory” with hands-on instruction and real-world problem solving exercises.
3. Stackable and progressive learning. Programs from high school to re-entry to pre-apprentice and workforce training with community college and university credits (up to 18 credits).
4. Certificates and certifications which bring value to program participants.
5. Close working relationships with contractors and employers for technical assistance.
6. Close working relationships with governmental funded organizations to leverage non-technical training and services.

Scott also provided us with his talking points presented below. Check out the ECA website for additional background information at <http://ecasavesenergy.org/>.

Knight Training Center - Talk Points for EPA PLC Presentation - May 7, 2014

History

- ECA founded in 1984 to solve energy poverty problem
- Major low income programs: NECs, Conservation, Heating, Water, Public Workshops
- Started training our own staff to build their skills and save more energy
- Became BPI Affiliate in 2008
- Renovated to LEED Gold and opened the Knight Training Center in 2010
- City Council Center of Excellence in 2012
- Became IREC accredited in 2013 (DOE created IREC)
- IREC 2013 Clean Energy Training Program of the Year - 3 I's: Innovation, Ingenuity and Inspiration

How We Operate/ How We Partner and Leverage Resources

- Serve the full spectrum of candidates: high school through engineers and architects
- Contextual teaching and learning
- Continuum of learning and advancement by partnering with organizations to serve trainees from high school through degree attainment
- Stackable, portable credentials
- Partnerships:
 - Philadelphia School District
 - Community College of Philadelphia - credits for selected coursework leading to Associate's Degree we created with them
 - Philadelphia Works - Scott's background
- Leveraging:
 - CCP - POP, TACT
 - Connection Training Services - YouthBuild, Re-Entry Program
 - ExxonMobil - Apprenticeship Program - DOL and PA approved
 - Wal-Mart - Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Curriculum. Certificates and Certifications

- IREC accredited curriculum (WXRT and EA) - Scott explain this process - commitment to always train to the highest national standard
- BPI training and certification
- Professional development for educators
- NCCER (National Center for Construction and Education Research) - NCCER certification is required by DOL for many of their youth based grants
- Environmental and Safety - EPA RRP, Lead, OSHA, etc - We'd love to be able to do HAZWOPER and one of our consultants is already trained to do it

Recruitment, Student Assessment and Placement Strategies

- Prerequisite of 8th grade math and writing on TABE for most courses with remediation available if required through partnership with local workforce system
- Partnership strategy - we focus on our core strengths (professional training) and look for partners to avoid duplication of services and build a solid, sustainable network
- Specialize in partnering with neighborhood based organizations that serve veterans, minorities, women, re-entry adults - they are perfect partners because they do case management and placement for their constituencies - there are a plethora of them in the city
- Scott touch on his background with Philadelphia Works and PWDC
- Passive placement activities - good relationships with contractors, regularly do contractor briefing events on policy changes, training requirements, and funding opportunities

Program Funding and Sustainability

- National foundations

- Fee for service - incumbent training, national certifications
- Current strategy - HEP - we're always watching national and regional policy that may affect training requirements or funding sources (EPA 111D, PA 129) with the long-term goal of market transformation
- Commercial - based on associations with groups like MAP, we are endeavoring to serve the commercial market and the nationally driven job task based formula that we currently apply to residential (talk about NREL)

Tips for New Programs

- Watch the policy changes and market trends in your community
- Ensure that the training is in line with industry needs based on employer engagement and feedback
- Align your curriculum and training to the highest possible national standards
- Look for partnerships with higher education and regional and local school districts
- We offer TA to a variety of groups (Puerto Rico, North Carolina, Baltimore, NJ)

Many thanks to Pam Carunchio and Scott Coleman for bringing to our attention the issue of program sustainability with diverse funding sources. Pam and Scott would be happy to discuss their program including the strategies that ECA employs in serving low income residents and business in Philadelphia. Pam is also a regular participant in PLC calls where she would be available to answer questions.

Pam Carunchio, Director of Planning and Development

pamc@ecasavesenergy.org

Scott Coleman, Director of Training

scottc@ecasavesenergy.org

The Energy Coordinating Agency

106 West Clearfield Street

Philadelphia, PA 19133

Office: 215.609.1057

Cell: 267.304.8347

Fax: 215.988.0919

www.ecasavesenergy.org

Networking Opportunities

Make plans now to attend the First Annual Southeast Brownfields Conference

Florida Brownfields Association

SAVE THE DATE: October 28–31, 2014 at the Rosen Plaza Hotel in Orlando, FL

~~Additional information coming~~

The Georgia Brownfield Association

9th Annual Georgia Environmental Conference

August 20-22, 2014

Location: Jekyll Island Convention Center

Jekyll Island, GA

Cost: \$350 Early Bird / \$425 Regular

The Georgia Brownfield Association is a premium sponsor of the 9th Annual Georgia Environmental Conference and is hosting the conference's Breakfast Keynote Panel, *Driving Economic Growth & Stewarding Environmental Resources*, on Thursday, August 21, 2014.

The conference is the state's largest and most comprehensive educational opportunity and will be attended by an estimated 600+ state, local, 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 and recycling experts, and many others with a strong interest in Georgia's and the Southeast region's environmental programs.

Over the three-day period, this conference will host an elite group of environmental professionals seeking to exchange knowledge and share ideas around environmental concerns in Georgia and the Southeast region. The curriculum, designed and developed by the 56-member steering committee, offers over 50 unique courses, allowing attendees to design their own personalized curriculum by selecting nine educational courses while receiving approved continuing education credits. With the combined efforts of the state's leading environmental organizations, the Georgia Environmental Conference is a valued educational experience focused on Sustaining the Future for the People of Georgia™.

To learn more, please visit the Georgia Environmental Conference Website.

100 Outstanding Projects for the 21CSC in 2014

Submit your good work and receive national recognition for your EWDJT program. Our EWDJT programs qualify for recognition. For each of the 10 weeks between April and early June, the Partnership for the 21CSC (P-21CSC) will feature an outstanding 21CSC project. In early June, the P-21CSC will announce the full list of *100 Outstanding Projects for the 21CSC in 2014*. Projects can occur anytime in 2014, and can be with any type of land/water agency partners—federal, tribal, state, local, non-profit, etc.

To add your program to the list, click to this URL, fill out the short form, and submit.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1P2dFGYTB8tAH>.

Funding Opportunities

Below are a few available federal funding opportunities. While these grants are not directly involved in environmental training, those interested in youth, veteran's programs, community education, and public health can find involvement in these programs a synergistic addition to ongoing environmental training activities. For details and RFPs, go to www.grants.gov.

DOL Announces TAACCCT and Apprenticeship Grants

President Obama and Vice President Biden announced, during a visit to the Community College of Allegheny County (PA), that the U.S. Department of Labor has released the fourth and final Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants program. A total of \$450 million will be awarded to individual institutions (up to \$2.5 million) and consortia of institutions located in the same state or economic region (up to \$15 million). The deadline to apply for a grant is July 7, 2014.

In addition to the work supported in previous grant rounds, this SGA also emphasizes scaling up previous efforts through partnerships with national industry groups or employers, working with partners to develop state career pathway systems, and improving the integration of state employment and education data systems. Applications that show strong partnerships with industry, the public workforce system, or registered apprenticeships will have an advantage.

The president and vice president also announced the new American Apprenticeship Grants, which will award \$100 million to partnerships to expand and improve registered apprenticeship programs. This program will be launched in the fall and is funded by the fees paid by employers for H-1B skilled worker visas.

Employment and Training Administration

Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations

Four grant awards of \$400,000 to \$650,000

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Women's Bureau (WB) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Office of Apprenticeship (OA), announced the availability of approximately \$1.8 million in grant funds authorized by the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations.

Awards made under this announcement are subject to the availability of federal funds. The DOL plans to disburse Program Year (PY) 2013 and PY 14 WANTO grant funds to up to four (4) community-based organizations (CBO) within the range of \$400,000 to \$650,000 for a two-year grant period to develop and operate innovative ETA projects to improve outreach, recruitment, hiring, training, employment, and retention of women, women of color, and women with disabilities in apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations.

For more information and the RFP, go to <http://www.grants.gov>.

National Park Service (NPS)

40 grants with a total of \$40 million

Training, education, and employment opportunities for young people and veterans.

NPS Youth Development Programs represent the future of the Service and encompasses a full range of youth-oriented developmental programs and projects conducted in and around national park units, NPS support offices, as well as in local communities and with partner organizations. The NPS Youth Development Program is committed to evolving and advancing vibrant and relevant youth programming that emphasizes the mission of the NPS.

The Youth Development Program is designed to provide employment, education, recreational, and public service opportunities to U.S. citizens and legal residents who are between the ages of 15 and 25 years of age.

The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) is a collaborative effort to put America's youth and veterans to work protecting, restoring and enhancing America's great outdoors. Through the 21CSC, young people and veterans will accomplish meaningful work, and gain important personal and professional skills while building a lifelong connection to the outdoors. The 21CSC strives to achieve the following goals:

1. Put Americans to work: The 21CSC will provide service, training, education, and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low income and disadvantaged youth.

2. Preserve, protect, and promote America's greatest gifts: The 21CSC will protect, restore, and enhance public and tribal lands and waters as well as natural, cultural, and historical resources and treasures. By producing high-quality, cost-effective project work the 21CSC will also increase public access and use while spurring economic development and outdoor recreation.
3. Build America's future: Through service to America, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities, and the nation.

Keep an eye on the Promise Zone Initiative

The Promise Zone Initiative is part of President Obama's plan to partner with and invest in communities to create jobs; increase economic security; expand educational opportunities; increase access to quality, affordable housing; and improve public safety.

On January 8, 2014, the President announced the first five Promise Zones. They are located in San Antonio, Texas; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Los Angeles, California; Southeastern Kentucky; and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. These five Promise Zones include urban, rural, and tribal designees that will benefit from grant preferences, assistance in accessing resources, and access to on-the-ground federal partners to help them implement their economic and community development goals. A second round of Promise Zone designations is planned to open for solicitation in 2014. A minimum of five and up to fifteen designations will be made in this round. By the end of 2016, twenty Promise Zone designations are expected.

To learn more about the Promise Zone Initiative, please go to <https://www.onecpd.info/promise-zones>. To provide written comments on the proposed selection process and criteria, please go to <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-04-17/pdf/2014-08772.pdf>.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: May 21, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. EDT

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.