

November 6, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 9, Session 9 (session 97)

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of November 6, 2013
Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB), Lawrence, MA
Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of November 6, 2013

Those interested in submitting or resubmitting a proposal need to begin planning now. Partnership development requires longer lead times than proposal development. Use last year's RFP as a guide giving special attention to partnership and community development. December-January is an estimated timeframe for EPA issuing the next request for proposals. We will keep you updated.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB), Lawrence, MA

Susan Almono reviewed their grant award in 2011, and made updates to a follow-up grant in 2013. Thank you, Susan, for your presentation.

Working with local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) can bring significant resources into environmental job training programs. Program participants benefit with assistance from multiple established institutionalized sources. The environmental training program can plug into resources already in place as part of an already established WIB operation.

Since passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), local labor boards have been required to become creative in maximizing available funds in order to provide the best quality of service to unemployed residents of their community. For many progressive communities, that means seeking resources and partnering with organizations outside the Department of Labor.

Partnering with the EPA Environmental Workforce and Job Development Program provides WIBs supplemental resources to reach additional unemployed residents. Several of our best EPA environmental training programs partner with the local WIB, or use the WIB as the primary grantee.

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board is an example of an excellent program with the local workforce investment board as primary grantee.

Below is an overview of the MVWIB environmental workforce development and job training program.

Targeted Community

- City of Lawrence, MA (a federally designated renewal community).
- Community residents are primarily Hispanic (75%).
- At the height of the recession, unemployment rates in seven of the nine census tracts in the community exceeded 25%.
- In August, the unemployment rate exceeded 14%.
- Approximately 33% of residents live at or below the poverty level.

Training Objectives and Schedule

NOTE: This PLC session reviewed the 2011 MVWIB program and discussed changes made in developing the 2013 proposal. It should be noted that revisions made to the program were the result of feedback from program participants and local employers. As relationships strengthened with employers and graduates, additional input guided the direction and emphasis of curriculum and delivery.

- The 2011 program included 39 students over three cycles. Each cycle lasted 8-10 weeks.
- The 2013 proposal reduced the program delivery to 5 weeks, with 8-hour days and a goal of training 45 students. Program delivery was revised to simulate the standard 8-hour workday. The compressed training schedule also worked better for program participants, getting them to work earlier and more accustomed to an 8-hour work day.

Core Training Program

- 40-Hour HAZWOPER
- Introduction to careers in recycling
- Leaking underground storage tank corrective action
- Stormwater management / groundwater testing
- Recycling, reuse, and remanufacturing industry
- Confined space entry
- 10-hour construction safety
- Fall protection
- Lead and asbestos abatement RRP (Merrimac Valley communities have extensive lead and asbestos issues.)
- Life skills

MVWIB offers a total of six state and federal certifications.

In their 2013 proposal, MVWIB placed increased emphasis on recycling and remediation, especially lead and asbestos. Merrimac Valley communities have many small-scale remediation firms. Placement feedback from employers during their first grant period indicated a strong demand for graduates with RRP and asbestos remediation skills and certifications.

Training Delivery and Curriculum

MVWIB partners with GroundWork Lawrence for training delivery. WIB program staff must work closely with multiple partners including various divisions in their own organization. Training delivery and curriculum is jointly coordinated with each of the program stakeholders.

Student Services, Retention, and Placement

- MVWIB works closely with local career centers for recruitment and placement.
- A dedicated Business Services Representative specializes in placement.
- Additional assistance from other partners adds depth to the placement team.
- Employers have provided funds allowing graduates to enter organized labor programs.
- MVWIB uses career days as both a recruitment and placement tool.
- MVWIB takes measures to insure that unemployment assistance continues during training.

Student Recruitment

Each applicant is required to perform one day of community service before entering the program. In addition to being an “attitude adjustment”, one day of community service acts a filter for those serious about committing to the program.

- Academic level.
- GED and TABE 7.
- No drug testing required.
- Transportation required.
- Bilingual materials are available. Classes are taught in English.
- Extensive use of social media, radio, and networking.

Key Partners

- GroundWork Lawrence
- City of Lawrence's Community Development Department
- Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

Summary Notes

- Observe the community.
- Where do local jobs exist?
- Is there a market?
- Who are the local employers?
- Become aware of state and federal regulations (i.e. changes in demolition rules, scrap yards, organic waste generators).
- Maintain solid contact with partners and employers.
- Stay engaged.

Contact and additional information

Susan and Odanis would be happy to discuss their program and issues associated with working with WIBs.

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Opportunities

2014 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

Advance registration for the Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference ended November 6. The Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference gathers an interesting mix of organized labor, tribal, city government, and environmental organizations with a common goal (green jobs).

February 10-11, 2014

Washington, D.C. at the Washington Hilton Hotel

For additional information, please visit www.greenjobsconference.org/.

National Worker Safety and Health Conference

The National COSH will be holding its third annual National Worker Safety and Health Conference at the Maritime Institute outside of Baltimore, MD, on December 11-12, 2013. The conference will include:

- ❖ Approximately 40 different workshops on a wide range of topics including legal rights under OSHA, how to organize successful worker safety and health campaigns in the workplace and in the community, policy advocacy strategies and methods, effectively reaching and working with immigrant workers, workplace violence, chemical hazards, and many other technical training topics.
- ❖ Several panels including some of the leading figures in workplace safety and health around the country.
- ❖ Several workshops on a variety of topics in Spanish; English/Spanish interpretation in all plenary sessions.
- ❖ Inspiring keynote speakers (to be announced).
- ❖ A pre-conference plenary panel on Tuesday evening, Dec 10.
- ❖ An awards banquet and program on Wednesday evening, Dec. 11.

For additional information, please visit www.coshnetwork.org/2013Conference.

Urban Waters Small Grants

<http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-small-grants>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is inviting proposals for its Urban Waters Small Grants. Programs that improve water quality while supporting community revitalization and other local priorities can apply to fund research, investigations, experiments, training, surveys, studies, and demonstrations. Find out if your geographic region is eligible here. Apply by November 25th for grants of up to \$60,000.

The GreatEST Institute—Act ASAP—Fills quickly

The Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) is accepting applications for enrollment in the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST). Annually, nineteen instructors are accepted to attend a no-cost, ten-day Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute that provides standards, curriculum, and hands-on methods for delivering Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response training. Your participation in the GreatEST Institute will provide you with:

- An annual CCCHST trainer certificate.
- A license to use and duplicate CCCHST curriculum.
- CCCHST technical assistance.
- CCCHST instructor support materials.
- National marketing for your program.

The GreatEST Institute will be held at Eastern Iowa Community College District, Davenport, Iowa, on June 2-13, 2014. To apply, please contact Patti Thompson at pattijthompson@gmail.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: November 20, 2013 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/>.