

December 11, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 9, Session 11 (session 99)  
(This was a special wrap-up PLC session in this cycle of ten 30-minute conference calls held every other Wednesday. While this was the last PLC of this series, in the coming weeks we will be sending out reminders and notes to PLC and Listserve members regarding environmental workforce development issues.

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of December 11, 2013

Short summary of nine successful environmental workforce development programs  
2014 Request for Proposals and Guidelines for Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants  
Opportunities

### **Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of December 11, 2013**

The 2014 Request for Proposals and Guidelines for Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants has just been issued. This funding is for nonprofit organizations and eligible entities to deliver environmental workforce development and job training programs. Training focuses on hazardous and solid waste management, assessment, and cleanup associated activities, chemical safety, and wastewater management. The due date February 13, 2014. Submission may be made by hard copy or through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

EPA will likely schedule a webinar to discuss the guidelines and answer questions. We will remind PLC members when dates are released. A guideline summary appears later in these post session notes.

### **Short summary of nine successful environmental workforce development programs**

During PLC Cycle 9, we heard presentations from nine of our best environmental workforce development and job training programs. The programs represented a diversity of organizational structures and some common themes. Each has advantages, with each using differing approaches to partnership and outreach.

#### Organizational structure of grantees featured in the PLC

Nonprofit organization as primary grantee

- Often expand existing recruitment, life skills, and training functions to include environmental training.
- Require development of new relationships with environmental trainers and employers.
- Must develop visibility and awareness of environmental activities.
- Must develop new governmental relationships related to environmental remediation.
- Must provide revised nonprofit mission and goals to include environmental training.
- Requires WIB as a key partner for support services and student benefits.
- Requires additional effort to integrate into governmental programs.
- Must remain alert for leveraging and funding opportunities.

City, county, or state government

- Must delegate most operational functions to other organizations.
- Primary grantee has less control over day-to-day activities.
- Must rely heavily on the quality and commitment of partners.

- Requires close relationships with training and life skills providers.
- Requires organizational visibility (not buried in a large institutional program).
- Must provide visibility priority for special needs created by environmental workforce programs.
- Has the advantage of incorporating program costs into ongoing governmental activities and budgets.
- Has access and communications with other governmental resources.

#### College-based programs

- Must connect with community organizations.
- Requires WIB as a key partner for support services.
- Requires additional effort integrating into governmental programs.
- Must search for leveraging and funding opportunities within and outside the college.
- Needs to have organizational visibility (not a low priority extramural program).
- Requires working with target populations not familiar with academic culture.
- Must be able to serve community and demographic needs.
- Sometimes hindered by college administration, culture, mission, and objectives

#### Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

- Must recognize special needs of environmental training.
- Must understand the mission and goals of the environmental program.
- Requires a close relationship with training providers.
- Must have organizational visibility (not integrated into other workforce programs)
- Must provide visibility within government for linkages to other resources.
- Has the ability to leverage program costs.

#### Partners common to most grantee programs

- Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
- Local Brownfields projects and programs
- Local Veterans programs
- Local housing authority (for lead and asbestos)
- Local academic institution or environmental training organizations
- Local organized labor organizations (mostly in urbanized areas)
- Local community/tribal/religious organizations

#### Advisory Board members

- Local employers
- Community leaders (formal and informal)
- Training providers
- Governmental staff
- Consultants close to governmental agencies, legislation, and programs

#### Popular offerings

- OSHA 40-hour HAZWOPER 1910.120 (required)
- OSHA Construction (as it pertains to environmental remediation)
- OSHA Confined Space (as it pertains to environmental remediation)
- EPA Lead

- EPA Asbestos
- Solid Waste and Recycling (where applicable)
- Forklift Training (as it pertains to environmental remediation)
- Wastewater (where applicable and non-duplicative)
- Underground Storage Tanks (where applicable)
- Mold Remediation (where applicable)

### **2014 Request for Proposals and Guidelines for Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grants**

While this PLC is not a grant preparation activity, its purpose is to provide communities with information they can use to establish sustainable environmental workforce development and job training programs. As part of that discussion, we have open conversations regarding the EPA request for proposals. Issues discussed are only opinions and do not represent EPA policy or guidance.

Those interested in submitting or resubmitting proposals need to begin now. EPA regional coordinators are available to assist regarding RFP clarification but not about your specific grant proposal. A list of EPA regional coordinators appears in the RFP available at <http://epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm>. Additional clarification will likely also be available during a soon-to-be-announced EPA webinar.

If a proposal was submitted last cycle, contact your EPA regional coordinator for a briefing. See if you can still get evaluation scores for each review criteria. Low criteria scores will indicate where your proposal needs additional work.

Do not go into the new RFP cycle “blind.” Touch base with your regional coordinator. Regional coordinators like to learn who will be submitting proposal. Just touch base with them indicating your intention to submit.

Keep in mind that the EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training program has been an annual, reoccurring funding opportunity. Applicants rejected with their first submission often are better prepared and funded with improved proposals submitted in subsequent years.

#### RFP Guideline Overview

- Due date: February 13, 2014
- \$200,000 over 3 years
- Cooperative Agreement (grantees deliver programs with EPA guidance)
- Must have 70% placement goal
- Participation goal—50 graduates
- Mandatory HAZWOPER training (CFR 1910.120) (worker health and safety training)
- Track graduates for 1 year
- Curriculum may include awareness and/or comprehensive training in the following (different from previous RFPs in that it is not mandatory)
  - Solid Waste
  - Emergency Response
  - Wastewater
  - Alternative Treatment Technologies
  - Environmental Health and Chemical Safety

#### Approximate notification schedule

- Notified in 15 days if threshold criteria were not sufficient
- Grant evaluation could take up to 90 days for selection
- Work plans must be submitted and reviewed before final award
- Anticipated that awards will be made in summer 2014 (July/August)

#### Paperwork requirements

- Proposals may be submitted via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or hard copy.
- Many new applicants not familiar with submitting grants online use hard copy submission.
- If [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) will be used, allow ample time to establish accounts and extra time for submission.
- The method you use will not impact your review. However, strict enforcement of page limits can severely impact your proposal if not followed.

#### Page limitations

- Transmittal letter—3 page limit
- Narrative—15 page limit
- Ranking criteria
  - Attachments—15 page limit
- Support letters
  - 2 past graduates
  - 2 community-based organizations
  - 2 employers involved in program development
- Applicant eligibility documents—no limitation

As discussed in the PLC, community interaction, partnership building, and employer relationships represent essential activities for sustainable workforce programs. The relationships just described require long lead times and must begin immediately if not already established.

Below is a summary of EPA evaluation criteria for funding environmental workforce development and job training programs. As discussed by experienced grantees during the PLC, it is wise to dissect every request for information...ANSWER EVERY QUESTION...be redundant when necessary. Assume every response must stand alone on its own merits.

- Community Need—20 points
- Description—10 points
- Labor market assessment—10 points
- Program Description—23 points
- Structure (curriculum & certifications) —8 points
- Output (enrolled/completed/placed) —5 points
- Recruitment and screening (student assessment) —4 points
- Program/student support (tracking & placement assistance) —6 points
- Program capabilities—24 points
- Grant management (contracting systems) —4 points
- Experience (previous environmental training/selection process) —8 points
- Audit findings (previous funding experience) —2 points
- Past performance (neutral score for no experience) —10 points
- Community/employer partnerships—25 points

- Involvement in local projects (remediation & assessment) —4 points
- Community partnerships (WIBS/public meetings/support letters) —8 points
- Employer involvement (as part of the proposal development) —13 points
- Budget resources—8 points
- Budget (chart) —5 points
- Leveraging (life skills etc.) —3 points

In the coming weeks, we will send out reminders and tips from past PLC presentations.

## **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/](http://www.greenjobsconference.org/).

### EPA Announces Request for Applications for the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Office of Environmental Justice announces the opening of its Request for Applications (RFA) for the 2014 Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program. The (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and/or public health issues within an affected community. Awards will be made in amounts of up to \$120,000 per award for a two-year project period. Interested applicants are invited to participate in conference calls with EPA to address questions about the EJCPS Program and this solicitation.

<http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/ej-cps-grants.html>

### EPA Seeks Environmental Education Grant Applications

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently accepting applications for environmental education projects under the Agency's Environmental Education Grant Program. The program works to engage communities across the country through a wide variety of educational projects that have a lasting impact on people's health by facilitating environmental stewardship. Projects in the past have engaged students in stream monitoring, created sustainable mentoring communities, and provided professional development to teachers on subjects including science, technology, engineering and math.

Eligible organizations include local education agencies, colleges or universities, state education or environmental agencies, tribal education agencies, 501(C)(3) nonprofit organizations, and noncommercial educational broadcasting entities working in education.

This competitive grants program will total \$2.77 million. Each of the ten EPA regional offices will award two or three grants and one or two grants will be awarded from EPA's headquarters in Washington, DC. Each award will be an estimated \$75,000 to \$200,000. EPA expects to award between 22 and 32 grants nationwide.

For more information about the program and how to apply, please visit <http://www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>.

### Webinars

The US EPA will host two webinars to assist applicants with applying for the FY14 Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup grants. Webinar 1 will review the TABEZ tool which can be used to build an assessment or cleanup proposal. Webinar 2 was rescheduled due to inclement weather and will assist applicants in understanding what information is necessary to apply for the Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund and/or Cleanup grants.

#### Webinar 1:

Name: Using the TABEZ Tool  
Date: Friday, December 13, 2013  
Time: 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm EST  
Adobe Link: <https://epa.connectsolutions.com/fy14arctabez/>

#### Webinar 2:

\* Rescheduled from December 10th  
Name: FY14 National Outreach Webinar  
Date: Tuesday, December 17, 2013  
Time: 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm EST  
Adobe Link: [https://epa.connectsolutions.com/fy14\\_arc/](https://epa.connectsolutions.com/fy14_arc/)

### Grant Funding Guidance for State and Tribal Response Programs

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 2014 section 128(a) funds. The application deadline is January 31, 2014.

[http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/state\\_tribal/fund\\_guide.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/state_tribal/fund_guide.htm)

### **PLC INFORMATION**

We will continue sending announcements. If you wish to remain on the distribution list, do nothing. If you wish to be removed from the distribution list, please contact Mike Senew at [msenew@aol.com](mailto: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/>.