

July 24, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 9, Session 2 (session 90)

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of 7/25/13
Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., Portland, OR
Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of 7/25/13

Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

PLC members and EPA-funded job training grantees (past, current, and new) are invited to attend this year's *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* to be held in Alexandria, VA on September 18-19, 2013. As in past years, the agenda will include both small- and large-group sessions. EPA Headquarters and Regional staff will be there to work with us. Join us for discussions on grant policy, sustainable practice, do's and don'ts, and much more.

The cost of the conference, two nights lodging, and two working meals are covered. Participants pay travel expenses, additional meals, and incidentals.

If you are interested in starting a workforce development program and are a PLC participant, you are invited to this special event.

For questions or for more information, please contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu, or by phone at 563.441.4081 or toll-free at 1.866.419.6761.

EPA Survey Shows \$384 Billion Needed for Drinking Water Infrastructure by 2030

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released results of a survey showing that \$384 billion in improvements are needed for the nation's drinking water infrastructure through 2030 for systems to continue providing safe drinking water to 297 million Americans.

EPA's fifth Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment identifies investments needed over the next 20 years for thousands of miles of pipes and thousands of treatment plants, storage tanks and water distribution systems, which are all vital to public health and the economy. The national total of \$384 billion includes the needs of 73,400 water systems across the country, as well as American Indian and Alaska Native Village water systems.

"A safe and adequate supply of drinking water in our homes, schools and businesses is essential to the health and prosperity of every American," said EPA Acting Administrator Bob Perciasepe. "The survey EPA released today shows that the nation's water systems have entered a rehabilitation and replacement era in which much of the existing infrastructure has reached or is approaching the end of its useful life. This is a major issue that must be addressed so that American families continue to have the access they need to clean and healthy water sources."

The survey, required under the Safe Drinking Water Act to be submitted to Congress every four years by EPA, was developed in consultation with all 50 states and the Navajo Nation. The survey looked at the funding and operational needs of more than 3,000 public drinking water systems across the United States, including those in Tribal communities, through an extensive questionnaire. In many cases, drinking water infrastructure was reported to be 50-100 years old.

The assessment shows that improvements are primarily needed in:

- Distribution and transmission: \$247.5 billion to replace or refurbish aging or deteriorating lines
- Treatment: \$72.5 billion to construct, expand or rehabilitate infrastructure to reduce contamination
- Storage: \$39.5 billion to construct, rehabilitate or cover finished water storage reservoirs
- Source: \$20.5 billion to construct or rehabilitate intake structures, wells and spring collectors

EPA allocates Drinking Water State Revolving Fund grants to states based on the finding of the assessment. These funds help states to provide low-cost financing to public water systems for infrastructure improvements necessary to protect public health and comply with drinking water regulations.

Since its inception in 1997, the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund has provided close to \$15 billion in grants to all 50 states and Puerto Rico to improve drinking water treatment, transmission and distribution. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program has also provided more than \$5.5 billion to protect drinking water in disadvantaged communities.

EPA is committed to utilizing the tools provided under the Safe Drinking Water Act to assist states and to better target resources and technical assistance toward managing the nation's drinking water infrastructure. In addition to Drinking Water State Revolving Fund grants, EPA awarded nearly \$15 million in funding in 2012 to provide training and technical assistance to small drinking and wastewater systems – those serving fewer than 10,000 people – and to private well owners to improve small system operations and management practices and to promote sustainability. EPA also works with states, municipalities and water utilities to strengthen the resiliency of drinking water systems against the potential impacts of severe weather events and climate change.

More information: http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/dwsrf/index.cfm

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., Portland, OR

Many thanks go out to Amy James Neel with Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. in Portland, OR for sharing information about the program at Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. during today's session.

We would also like to share Samantha Stallybrass's comments from Green Navigator, AAWDC, regarding Amy's presentation:

"Thank you for including us in these PLC meetings. I was in attendance on the call today, and found Amy James Neel and her organization, Oregon Tradeswomen, to be more than informative, but downright inspiring! What a great program they have there in Portland. I have ready emailed Amy to thank her, and request the resources she offered us."

Thanks, Samantha.

Oregon Tradeswomen first received EPA funding in 2004, then again in 2007, 2009, and 2012. What makes their program unique? How does it work? Are there special issues to consider when placing women in environmental jobs?

Below is a quick overview of Oregon Tradeswomen's environmental workforce program.

Objective

- Enrolled 94 students
- Graduated 76 students
- Placed 64 graduates (over 84%)

Key partners

- Portland Brownfields Program including river & harbor cleanup, Superfund cleanup, and bridge repair & upgrade.
- Groundwork Portland
- Portland Development Commission
- Verde and Worksystems, Inc.
- Numerous additional contractors & private sector employers.
- Organized labor construction trades.
- Numerous partners and customized placement with contractor network.

Curriculum

- Oregon Tradeswomen is unique in that it provides primary general training in construction trades.

Pathways to Success

- A 7-week, women-only, pre-apprenticeship class to help women prepare for a high-skill, high-wage career in the trades.
- Three days per week – (Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. is also beginning an evening program.
- Intensive attention is provided to students (4 to 1 instructor student ratio).
- Basic training for the first 7 weeks.
- Day 1 – Classroom – Safe skills.
- Day 2 – Industry awareness – Working with tools.
- Day 3 – Fieldwork – Trips to local sites of interest, cleanup, employers, and construction sites.
 - A key objective of the basic program is to establish student interest and motivation in a specific trade.
- Additional life skills training includes strength training and presentation skills.
- The goal of the basic tool use course is to provide those proceeding to environmental training extensive tool and safety skills.
 - Basic life skills, strength training, and safety training is provided prior to the start of the environmental core curriculum.

At this point, students will have:

- OSHA 10-hour safety
- Numerous OSHA construction trade safety certifications

Select students are then invited to apply for additional environmental training. Environmental training provides supplemental environmental credentials in addition to traditional basic construction skills and credentials.

The core environmental training program includes EPA mandatory training, 40-hour HAZWOPER. Additional environmental curriculum is dynamic depending on employer needs, and may include:

- RRP

- Solid waste management and material recycling
- Innovative and alternative treatment technologies
- Environmental health and chemical safety
- 16-hr asbestos operations and maintenance worker
- Training related to cleanup activities at the Portland Harbor Superfund site
- Certified erosion control
- Certifications
 - Multiple state and federal certifications including asbestos and RRP

Placement and tracking

- Graduates are tracked for two years.
- 84% placement rate.
- 42% enter apprenticeship programs.
- One-on-one placement program with graduates and employers.
- Extensive emphasis placed on preparation for employment and placement.

Oregon Tradeswomen takes full responsibility in matching graduates with employers, relying less on outside organizations.

Student recruitment

- When recruiting a diverse participant population including women, insure that marketing materials, including instructional staff, are shown to be diverse. All male graduate class pictures and all male staff do not attract serious female participants.
- Oregon Tradeswomen is targeting unemployed and under-employed women.
- Women veterans are a special target group with additional coordination with partner organizations.
- Unique student recruitment process.
 - Similar to a “tryout” recruitment strategy.
 - Students first complete a basic construction skills and safety program.
 - Students demonstrating interest and aptitude are invited to apply for environmental supplemental training.

Student screening and support

- Graduates of the 7-week basic training program must apply for the supplemental environmental training program.
- HS Diploma or GED.
- Driver’s license with clean driving record.
- Drug and alcohol free. (testing during program)
- Fitness test.
- Basic English.
- Serious about a construction career.

Additional programs and services provided by Oregon Tradeswomen

- [Building Girls](#) – educates middle and high school girls about careers in the building, construction, mechanical, and utility trades.
- [Tradeswomen Organized for Outreach, Leadership and Support \(TOOLS\)](#) – builds the leadership skills of tradeswomen to advocate for equal representation for women in the trades.

- [Tradeswomen Social Hour](#) – last Tuesday of each month from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Lucky Labrador Tap Room.
- [2013 Building Girls Summer Camps](#) – week-long camps for middle and high school girls in Grants Pass and in Portland.
- [Pathways to Success Information Sessions](#) – first and third Thursday of each month from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in Portland and Vancouver.

Amy would be happy to discuss her program including encouraging women in the trades.

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Opportunities

Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

Please see above in **Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of 7/25/13** for an invitation to this year's All-Grantee meeting for PLC members.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: August 7, 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/>.