

August 7, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 9, Session 3 (session 91)

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of 8/7/13
Cypress Mandela Training Center, Inc., Oakland, CA
Opportunities

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of 8/7/13

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.

Future funding for Brownfields and environmental workforce development

Two issues we are all watching with concern relate to the future of environmental workforce development and training, and the future funding of Brownfields. Below is an update...

Currently the House and Senate are \$91 billion apart in budget negotiations. Neither is moving or compromising. As far as the EPA budget, Senate appropriations call for increases in the EPA budget, and house bills call for a reduction.

An alarming note regarding the House bill was a markup that called for the elimination of funding for the EPA Brownfields programs. Brownfields share wide support from both parties, governors, mayors, and the administration. While the House eliminated funding, the Senate increased the Brownfields budget by \$6 million. It is expected that funding (a question of how much?) will be included in final appropriation bills.

Another bill that has passed the House relates to H.R. 803, the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills (SKILLS) Act, as a reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. While all believe the Workforce Investment Act requires reauthorization, the issue of concern is in the details. The House bill would take training authority away from multiple federal agencies including EPA and bundle it into packages that states would control via WIB block grants.

While the House passed this bill (on an all Republican vote), the Senate has opposed it on the grounds that it would eliminate special programs like the EPA workforce development and job training program. Additionally, many other cost-efficient, targeted programs would also be in jeopardy. Currently, followers of this bill give it about a 9% chance of going anywhere. However, any new workforce reauthorization bill must allow for special targeted programs like the EPA Environmental

Workforce Development and Job Training Program.

We should not be intimidated by these efforts but should be aware that they exist.

As grantees impacted by congressional actions, our best approach is to continue the good work of putting community residents back to work and demonstrating the value of our programs and their cost effectiveness to our elected leaders. These accomplishments send a proper message to our mayors, governors, and legislators who hopefully are looking after our best interests.

Cypress Mandela Training Center, Inc., Oakland, CA

Many thanks go out to Art Shanks, Executive Director of the Cypress Mandela Training Center, Inc. Thank you, Art!

Cypress Mandela Training Center organized after the 1989 earthquake caused major damage just a few blocks from the current training center. The need for trained community workers precipitated the formation of the Cypress Mandela Training Center.

Cypress received its first \$125,000 in EPA funding in 1998 as one of the early Brownfields Job Training Pilot programs. The initial pilot cooperative agreement was then with the Oakland Private Industry Council (PIC) using Cypress Mandela for training. The successful pilot project was funded again in 2004.

In 2008, Cypress Mandela branched out on its own receiving a \$200,000 Brownfields job training grant. Demonstrating they could exceed expectations, Cypress Mandela was awarded a stimulus \$500,000 grant in 2009. With among the highest graduation and placement rates, Cypress competed and was awarded another Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grant in 2012.

What makes Cypress Mandela's program sustainable? It requires about \$1.5 million per year to sustain the Cypress Mandela Training Center. Funds are constantly being sought after from numerous partners and supporters. Leveraging – combining resources from multiple sources – remains the key to sustainability. In addition to being independent of any single funding stream, leveraging raises the quality and effectiveness of the entire program. Leveraging eliminates duplication by combining and sharing limited resources, and establishing a “critical mass” needed for training and student support.

Art's advice for sustainability: “Provide employers with well trained, disciplined employees who have the skills needed for employment.” Provide the community with a solid, well-run organization where everyone is “on the same page.” Keep close to your graduates, supporters, and employers.

How does it work? At Cypress Mandela, everyone is “on the same page.” Maintaining funding requires constant attention to quality training and graduate performance after employment. Cypress Mandela operates on a Boot Camp model with intensive training from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. five days per week. No stipends are provided. All participants must demonstrate a positive attitude and discipline. In addition, physical training is required. Participants must remain drug free.

What are their placement strategies? Placement and tracking efforts are intensive at Cypress Mandela. Not only are graduates tracked through their apprenticeship, they are tracked for the five years required to reach Journeyman. Extensive use of alumni as mentors and recruiters contributes to the public awareness of the program, as well as marketing and recruitment efforts.

Below is a quick rundown of Cypress Mandela Training Center's environmental workforce program.

Demographics:

- The target area for this grant is the city of Oakland, CA with a population of 411,755.
- The target community has an unemployment rate over 20 percent.
- Over 55 percent of the residents live below the poverty level.
- 94 percent are minorities.
- Manufacturing jobs have significantly declined, and former industrial sites are now Brownfields.

Cypress Mandela targets economically disadvantaged residents of Oakland, San Leandro, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Richmond, including women, minorities, veterans, and ex-offenders.

Objective:

- 3 training cycles per year
- 45-55 participants per cycle

Key partners include:

- Oakland Housing Authority
- Alameda County Workforce Investment Board
- East Bay One Stop Career Centers
- California Department of Transportation
- Peralta Community College District
- Multiple union organizations
- Numerous additional contractors & private sector employers

Curriculum is guided by employers:

- 190+ hours of instruction including construction trades
- General construction
- Life skills
- First aid and CPR

As with the Oregon Tradeswomen model, Cypress Mandela supplements construction training with additional environmental training.

Core environmental training program (includes EPA mandatory training):

- 40-hour HAZWOPER
- Emergency response and chemical spills
- Disaster site worker
- Advance HAZMAT specialist
- 32-hour lead abatement
- Mold inspection
- Mold abatement
- 32-hour asbestos abatement
- Incident command

Certifications:

- Twelve state or federal certifications are provided

Placement & tracking:

- Track graduates for 5+ years.
- Extensive use of alumni and mentoring job clubs.

- Extensive use of Project Labor Agreements (PLA's).
- Extensive use of Direct Entry and 1st hire agreements on city projects.

Student recruitment:

- Extensive use of graduates and alumni nights.
- Well known in the community for high starting wages at \$15/hr.+.

Student screening and support:

- Graduates of the 16-week pre-apprenticeship training program apply for the supplemental environmental training program.
- 7th-8th grade math and reading.
- Drug and alcohol free.
- Fitness test.

Art would be happy to discuss his program, including use of first hire and PLA's.

Art Shanks, Executive Director
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Opportunities

Last chance.....

Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

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Fracking – Environmental, Health and Safety Training opportunities

Workers' Silica Exposure at Fracking Sites Far Exceeds OSHA Limit, NIOSH Study Finds.....

The concentration of silica in the air workers breathe exceeded occupational health criteria at all 11 hydraulic fracturing sites tested by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), announced the American Industrial Hygiene Association. Researchers measured the silica levels of more than 100 personal breathing zone samples at fracking sites in five states, finding levels above the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)'s permissible exposure limit (PEL), NIOSH's recommended exposure limit (REL), and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists threshold limit value (TLV).

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/>.