

January 23, 2013

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 8, Session 2 (session 80)

Topics: Updates from Washington

Planning Perspectives

Allowable and disallowable costs

Upcoming environmental workforce related conferences/workshops

Regional Training Coordinators

Updates from Washington

As of January 24, the RFP is in process for release and may be published within the next two weeks. We will send PLC members a pdf of the RFP when it is issued. RFP issuing delays are not unusual and come without notice as do awards.

Important note

We are encouraging those interested in submitting a grant to contact their EPA Regional Coordinator before the RFP is issued. (See the listing of Regional Coordinators below.) Even if you decide to submit at a later date, it is a good idea to touch base with the Regional Coordinator now. This does not commit or obligate you in any way, and is only informational in nature. After the RFP is issued, EPA staff will not have the flexibility to work with individual organizations on issues related to their specific program.

Planning Perspectives

Thanks go to Coleen Kokas with the New Jersey DEP. Coleen provided us a link to a document that lists state Brownfield programs and contacts.

State contacts are important because information relating to Brownfield projects in each state will pass by these individuals. The publication provides a review of statewide voluntary response program activities including Web sites and Brownfield conferences. It's a good resource for finding out what is happening in your state (for example, job creation tax credits and ongoing cleanup activities).

For Brownfields activities and contacts, download the following publication:

State Brownfields and Voluntary Response Programs: An Update from the States

http://epa.gov/brownfields/state_tribal/update2011/bf_states_report_2011.pdf

For additional information, contact Coleen at:

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For those who missed the last PLC, check out the session notes for the eleven "Big picture planning perspectives" suggestions as work begins on the next Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training cycle.

Allowable and disallowable costs

We thought it would be helpful to review allowable and disallowable expenses associated with EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training funding.

Allowable costs are those expenses for which EPA will reimburse grantees during the execution of their grant. The basic "rule of thumb" allows expenses directly associated with the recruitment, training, and placement of unemployed community residents in environmental jobs.

Environmental training is emphasized in that only activities associated with environmental training and placement are fundable under the EPA grant. The program has been established this way because this federal assistance comes only from EPA. This is not a Department of Labor program, but rather a program specific to environmental technology. As such, expenses associated with activities other than environmental technology jobs must be funded by other appropriate agencies. (Think of "smokestack funding.") Costs associated with life skills training, for example, is not an acceptable expense to be paid with EPA funds because it has no relationship to environmental education.

To demonstrate allowable costs, here are some examples:

1. Participant recruitment, screening, and assessment.
2. Environmental curriculum: development, refinement, and customization.
3. Health and safety exams for performing environmental activities.
4. Rental of training equipment or facilities.
5. Participant transportation to and from training activities.
6. Environmental training, instructors, and materials.
7. Environmental job placement and tracking activities.

Disallowable costs include the following examples:

1. Indirect, administrative, and overhead costs. Most universities require the application of indirect costs to their grants, so this is important to note.
2. Life skills training.
3. Stipends, scholarships, etc.
4. Food or refreshments.
5. Activities where program participants are paid, such as clean-up activities.
6. Fund raising expenses.

Additionally, grant funds cannot be used as matching funds for other federal grants.

When the new RFP is issued, allowable and disallowable costs will be defined and examples will be presented as they are above. While many expenses are clear as allowed or not allowed under grant guidelines, "the devil remains in the details." Over the years, numerous gray areas have emerged. Questions regarding specific expenses should be addressed to your EPA Regional Coordinator. Caution should always be taken when writing the proposal's budget section. Clearly define those items to be funded by others. When in doubt, contact your EPA Regional Coordinator for guidance, and document your activities.

Funding gaps associated with the EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training program demonstrate the importance of finding partners who are able to support activities necessary to deliver a comprehensive workforce development program. Demonstrating the ability to leverage program

resources is an integral part of successful grant proposals, and should clearly stand out as part of the planning and proposal process.

Community partners: volunteers, contractors, and subgrantees

Along with allowable and disallowable costs, grantees need to be cautious regarding relationships with their community partners. Partners are used in all aspects of workforce development including recruitment, training, placement, and tracking. Supplemental resources required to deliver sustainable workforce development and job training programs come from the following types of community partners:

1. Donated resource providers and volunteers.
2. Leveraged partners.
3. Contractors and consultants.
4. Subgrantees.

Donated resource providers, volunteers, and leveraged partners

Donated resource providers, volunteers, and leveraged partners fill gaps and supplement Environmental Workforce Development programs with no strings attached. Payment for donated goods and services is not required. No financial transactions take place. Donated resources, volunteers, and leveraged partners are essential to every sustainable program. No special cautions relate to these partners other than keeping in mind that if partnering with other organizations receiving federal funds, EPA grant funds cannot be used as matching funds for other federal grants.

Contractors and consultants

When using contractors and consultants, remember the following:

1. Contractors and consultants must be competitively bid. The lowest bid is not required, but you need to document why the selection was made, and note and file your documentation.
2. Contractors and consultants who assist in writing grants cannot assume they will receive the work after the award unless they have been previously competitively selected.
3. Simple contractor/consultant requests can be made locally, and vendors previously selected through a competitive bid can be used.
4. If a vendor is identified in the grant proposal, insure that they have been selected in a competitive process.
5. Contractors and consultants are responsible for their own individual administrative and fiscal policies and regulations. These cannot be in violation of federal law.

Subgrantees

Subgrantees fall into the following regulatory arena:

1. Subgrantees do not have to undergo a competitive bid process.
2. All of the rules and regulations imposed by the grant also apply to subgrantees.
3. Subgrantees are subject to audits as part of any audit process.
4. Subgrantees should be identified as part of the grant proposal process.
5. EPA grant funds cannot be used as matching funds for subgrantees' federal grants.
6. Treat subgrantees as an extension of the principle grantee.

As with allowable and disallowable expenses, contact your EPA Regional Coordinator for guidance and document activities when questions arise regarding partner relationships.

Upcoming environmental workforce related conferences/workshops

2013 Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference

April 16-18, 2013

Washington Hilton, Washington, DC

The 2013 conference will focus on 1) how to grow the clean economy to scale; 2) the role of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors in solving the country's pressing economic and environmental challenges; 3) the role of regulations in creating new markets; and 4) how people in every part of the U.S. are working collaboratively for social, economic and environmental justice, while building an economy with good jobs. Please visit www.greenjobsconference.org/2013.

National Brownfields 2013 Conference, Atlanta, GA, May 15-17, 2013. This is the most important environmental workforce related conference of the year attended by over 4,000 participants in Brownfields-related fields. Registration and housing is now open. It's important to get your hotel reservation early as the closest hotels will fill up fast. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

HMTRI will conduct a workshop discussion/roundtable on May 17, 2013, 11:15 AM - 12:30 PM as part of the Marketplace of Ideas. The session is called *Environmental Workforce Development Programs: How Can a Community Build a Success?* Paula Paris from JFY, Lena Miller from Hunters Point Family, and Mike Senew will be hosting this open discussion. Earmark the workshop or go to <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org/en/Session/1974?returnurl=%2fen%2fsessions>.

It's important to get your hotel reservation early as the closest hotels will fill up fast. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

OSHA Health and Safety Train-the-Trainer, Davenport, IA, June 3-14, 2013. Each year the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST) provides a no-cost intensive "boot camp" for instructors. Scholarships covering travel, tuition, lodging, and meals are available. Space is limited. For additional information and the application forms, go to <http://nationalpete.org/downloads-resources/>.

EPA Regional Job Training Coordinators:

- Region 1 – Kathleen Castagna, 617. 918.1429, castagna.kathleen@epa.gov
- Region 2 – Schenine Mitchell, 212. 637.3282, mitchell.schenine@epa.gov
- Region 3 – Jeff Barnett, 215.814.3246, barnett.jeff@epa.gov
- Region 4 – Kathleen Curry, 404.562.8660, curry.kathleen@epa.gov
- Region 5 – Linda Morgan, 312.886.4747, morgan.linda@epa.gov
- Region 6 – Amber Perry, 214.665.3172, perry.amber@epa.gov
- Region 7 – Ina Square, 913.551.7357, square.ina@epa.gov
- Region 8 – Christina Wilson, 303.312.6706, wilson.christina@epa.gov
- Region 9 – Wallace Woo, 415.972.3270, woo.wallace@epa.gov
- Region 10 – Susan Morales, 206.553.7299, morales.susan@epa.gov

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: February 6, 2013
2:00pm EDT

Topics: Third session of PLC Cycle 8

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.