

October 10, 2012

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) – Cycle 7, Session 4, (session 73)

Topics: Updates from Washington  
JFY Networks, Boston, MA  
Upcoming events / Reminders

### **Updates from Washington**

It is likely that the next Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant Request for Proposals (RFPs) will be released in December with awards announced in late spring early summer. This year, look for changes in curriculum requirements. Environmental programs and topic concentrations are expanding in such a way it is difficult to address all program areas with limited training hours. We may see a change in curriculum requirements allowing for emphasis on specific topics depending on community needs. We will keep PLC members informed with updates.

EPA has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup grants. Proposals are due November 19, 2012. Find out who in the community may be submitting proposals. Partner and coordinate early. Call the Mayor's office or the office of economic development for contacts. This effort is an excellent start in developing a "stakeholder network." The RFP can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/applicat.htm>.

### **JFY Networks, Boston, MA**

Many thanks go out to Paula Paris, Deputy Director of JFY Networks, for her presentation.

Jobs for Youth was founded in 1976 with support coming primarily from fundraising activities, philanthropic, and foundation sources. The original mission of the organization was to help high school dropouts in the Boston area find entry-level jobs through job-readiness and basic English and math. As the organization grew, Jobs for Youth "evolved" into JFY Networks, keeping true to its original mission but expanding its scope in Boston's disenfranchised community.

JFY became one of the early Environmental Workforce Development and Training Program's stars receiving EPA funding in 1998, followed with successful awards in 2003, 2006, and 2010. In early 2012, they chose to "morf" again into a more contemporary, forward-thinking organization.

During this PLC session, we examined the challenges, benefits, and issues grantees face transitioning from a funded environmental workforce development program to a new program no longer supported by EPA.

### **Paula's Observations**

1. After the stimulus, limited resources (particularly DOL funding) began to shift toward community colleges and large national organizations at the expense of smaller community organizations.
2. As the recession began to impact communities, workers flooded the market, and greater emphasis by employers was placed on certificate programs requiring community college participation.
3. Community college participation requires student testing (such as compass assessments) before credit programs can begin.

4. Organizations such as JFY Networks and most EPA grantees serve populations not able to score well on these assessment tests.
5. Required to take additional remedial education without credit and at additional expense, disenfranchised populations are effectively filtered out of community college participation.

JFY Networks has chosen to build upon the experience, networks and knowledge established during its 10-year participation in the EPA environmental workforce development program to address this issue facing Boston's disenfranchised community. Without federal funding, JFY in some respects is returning "full circle" to their original mission and funding approach, still serving the disenfranchised Boston community.

Examining the pros and cons of accepting EPA training funds becomes a question to be addressed.

#### PROS

1. Three years of secure predictable funding upon which to build comprehensive programs.
2. A solid base to establish credibility in the community.
3. An opportunity to network and establish relationships with government, industry, and civic stakeholders.
4. Resources to recruit quality staff and create program infrastructure.
5. A chance to develop name recognition in the community, government, and industry.
6. Experience and reference credentials for additional funding proposals.

#### CONS

1. Federal support ends with no reassurance it will be re-established.
2. Without partner support, programs are unsustainable.
3. Small community-based programs find difficulty in attracting national resources.
4. Even with training and certificates, placing disenfranchised populations in an overpopulated job environment is difficult.
5. Funding constraints and mandatory program requirements limit flexibility.
6. Economic recession, relaxed enforcement of regulations, and shifting environmental issues can quickly make programs obsolete or irrelevant.

#### Summary

The Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program can provide excellent opportunities for networking, program enhancement, and capacity building. It should be tempered, however, in that support will cease. JFY continues in a different form with a different approach – but with the same commitment to their community.

Contact Paula Paris, JFY Networks, Boston, MA, at 617.338.0815 or [pparis@jfynet.org](mailto:pparis@jfynet.org). Visit the JFY Networks Web site at [www.jfyboston.org](http://www.jfyboston.org).

#### **Upcoming Events / Reminders**

Shared by Ann Black from Santa Fe Community College:

Back by popular demand, NGA will be hosting job placement guru Ray Gooch for a series of intensive Webinars on increasing your job placement rates. Ray has done great work with ARRA grantees, and we encourage you and your sub-grantees to attend these highly effective trainings. In particular, Ray helped the Bioworkforce Training Partnership, an OEI grantee in Ohio, achieve placement rates 20% above what other community colleges were doing. Bill Tacon of BioOhio says, "We are extremely pleased with Ray's work and are now using his services across the Partnership helping ensure that we make outstanding

placement numbers.” Ray also presented to the OEI grantees at a very well received session at the July 2012 ARRA Institute.

Friday, November 2, 1-3 pm

This is the first of two sessions for ARRA Grantees that wish to gain more insight into applying the principals utilized by recruiters in Extreme Candidate Preparation. Additionally, methods will be covered that are employed in surfacing the openings in the “Hidden Job Market”, which according to the DOL is comprised of approximately 80% of all job openings and are never advertised. The event address for attendees is <https://nga.webex.com/nga/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=592826984>. Dial 800-749-9945, and use the passcode 5166171.

Thursday, November 8, 1-3 pm

This is the second of two sessions for ARRA Grantees that explore the effective methods for connecting with employers that have advertised jobs and those in the “Hidden Job Market.” We will demonstrate how candidates can get an edge on the competition by applying techniques unknown to those who merely apply for positions online or through company HR portals. Additionally, the finer points of the interviewing that set a candidate apart from their competition will be discussed. The event address for attendees is <https://nga.webex.com/nga/onstage/g.php?d=258561013&t=a>. Dial 800-749-9945, and use the passcode 5166171.

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.

The program committee welcomes original contributions or ideas for workshops or panels. Programs are encouraged that highlight collaboration between different constituencies, including business and industry, government agencies, labor unions, community groups, and the environmental community. Proposals that provide tangible tools and are interactive are preferred. All submissions must be received by November 13, 2012, and are entered online. Please visit [www.greenjobsconference.org/2013](http://www.greenjobsconference.org/2013).

*National Brownfields 2013 Conference*, Atlanta, GA, May 15-17, 2013. For more information, please visit <http://www.brownfieldsconference.org>.

#### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Next PLC Session:       October 24, 2012  
                                      2:00pm EDT

Topics:                       Establishment, implementation, and sustainability of programs

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to 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.