

May 27, 2020



Notes from the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 22.

This series of bi-weekly phone calls examines effective Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) strategies from experienced grantees. PLC calls share ideas among successful grantees and prepare interested organizations for the next EPA Request for Proposals. Calls will be a mix of open discussion, workforce development news, resources, and presentations from current grantees.

Topics:

1. News from Washington
2. News from HMTRI
3. Questions from PLC participants
4. Shout out to EWDJT grantees on this week's PLC call
5. The status of EWDJT May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020
6. Touring Grants.gov
7. More Coronavirus and COVID-19 Resources
8. Webinars and presentation PowerPOints
9. Conferences, workshops, and meetings
10. Funding and leveraging opportunities
11. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators
12. Join us on future Professional Learning Community calls

## **1. NEWS FROM WASHINGTON**

### **EPA Happenings:**

#### **Moving forward on proposal development**

The latest "best guess schedule" (nothing official) puts new urgency on planning and preparation for the FY21 grant cycle. If an RFA (request for proposals) is issued in June, applicants might anticipate the following schedule for application submission, award and program implementation:

- Proposal planning and team building - ongoing
- Community relationship and partnership development - ongoing
- EPA request for proposals – June-July, 2020
- Proposals due – August – September, 2020
- Proposal evaluations – Fall - Winter, 2020
- Awards, finalization of work plans and authorization to spend funds –Spring, 2021
- Community awareness, student recruitment, and screening – Summer, 2021
- First year training cohorts – Summer, Fall, 2021

#### **2021 National Brownfields Training Conference**

EPA is going ahead with the next National Brownfields Training Conference. Offered every two years, the event will be held on April 26-30, 2021, in Oklahoma City. This conference is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing former commercial and industrial properties. EPA co-sponsors this event with the International City/County Management.

**2. HMTRI NEWS:**  
**2020 Annual All-Grantee Meeting**  
**August 11 - August 13**  
**12:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern**  
**Virtually via Zoom**

**PLC participants ---Save the Date!**

This year's 2020 All-Grantee Meeting will be held virtually via Zoom August 11 - 13 from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. eastern. As in the past, the Annual All-Grantee Meeting will provide an opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and explore innovative ideas regarding the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program. The All-Grantee Virtual Meeting will be a mix of plenaries, breakouts, and networking opportunities. Participants will include alumni, prospective and current grantees, PLC members, EPA Regional Coordinators, and headquarters staff.

We would like your input in establishing agenda topics that are relevant and of interest. Please take a moment to fill out our 3 question scan at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GTFVLTK>.

The next step will be to establish a tentative agenda and begin recruiting mentors interested in co-facilitating breakout sessions. At the same time, we will send out a conference schedule and registration link. As always, there is no registration fee to attend the All-Grantee Meeting. If you have any questions or additional ideas, contact Heather at [hkballou@eicc.edu](mailto:hkballou@eicc.edu)

**Call for Photos**

HMTRI is in the process of updating the [brownfields-toolbox.org](http://brownfields-toolbox.org) website, and we are in search of photos to post on the website. We would love to see the following:

- Students receiving training
- People performing on-the-job employment activities
- Students in work environments
- Photos that demonstrate impact

If you currently have access to those types of photos and are willing to share, please send them to Heather Ballou at [hkballou@eicc.edu](mailto:hkballou@eicc.edu).

**3. PLC QUESTIONS**

In this week's PLC, Sharon Beard from NIEHS spoke about NIEHS COVID-19 training resources. Could you please provide a link to those resources?

*NIEHS is on the forefront of health and safety training especially as it pertains to protecting workers involved in emergency response and cleanup activities. The following website contains an extensive catalog of health and safety resources for workers who may be at risk of exposure to COVID-19. The NIEHS training Tool and associated reference materials will be updated with new information as the situation evolves.*

<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/covid19worker/>

*Sharon is an Industrial Hygienist with the Worker Education and Training Program of the Division of Extramural Research and Training (DERT) at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). She is responsible for coordinating, evaluating, and improving the nation-wide worker education*

and training program including the Minority Worker Training Program (MWTP) initiative. Here is her contact information: [beard1@niehs.nih.gov](mailto:beard1@niehs.nih.gov).

### Questions?

Still have unanswered questions? Send them to [hkballou@eicc.edu](mailto:hkballou@eicc.edu).

### 4. SHOUT OUT TO EWDJT GRANTEES ON THIS WEEK'S PLC CALL

Thank you Ronike, Jake and Abby for contributions to this week's PLC call. Here is a little background information about these two awesome programs.

#### West End Neighborhood House

Ronike Haynie

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West End is committed to the safety and well-being of customers, staff, volunteers and broader community. The organization has helped overcome disasters, tragedies and epidemics since the Spanish Influenza of 1918. During the current crisis, West End is focused on 2 primary goals: (1) Serving the community; and (2) Ensuring the financial stability and health of employees.

Located in the city of Wilmington's historic 'Little Italy' district, West End Neighborhood House has been improving the lives of an ethnically, economically and culturally diverse community since 1883. In 2018, the agency served over 10,000 individuals.

#### A quick look at West End's EWDJT program

- West End Neighborhood House, Inc. plans to train 55 students and place at least 45 graduates in environmental jobs
- West End Neighborhood House, Inc. is targeting residents of communities that have been historically affected by pollution, disinvestment, and solid/hazardous waste in Wilmington, Delaware
- The core training program includes 123 hours of instruction
  - 40-hour HAZWOPER
  - OSHA general industry
  - OSHA forklift operator
  - EPA lead renovation, repair, and paint
  - Asbestos worker
  - Mold and microbial worker
  - OSHA confined space entry
  - Soil sampling
  - Participants who complete the training will earn twelve certifications
- Key partners include
  - Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
  - BrightFields, Inc.
  - Guardian Environmental Services
  - Environmental Staffing
  - Environmental Alliance, Inc.
  - East Coast D.E.S
  - ASTEC Environmental

West End is currently working on placing previously trained graduates and working with their training provider on strategies for delivering the next cohort.

To check out their COOVID-19 action plan, go to the following [fact sheet](#).

### **Pauline Auberle Foundation**

Jake Markosky

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Abby Wolensky

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Auberle was founded through the legacy and generosity of Pauline Auberle, a McKeesport resident, who upon her death willed money and land to the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh to start a "home" for boys. In 1948, the Pauline Auberle Memorial Foundation was incorporated and in 1952 the realization of Pauline's dream took place when Auberle was constructed and opened its doors.

Auberle became a home for adolescent males and was known as the "Boystown of the East." For years, Auberle was dedicated exclusively to providing care to boys. The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the planned growth of Auberle into new service areas. In addition to our residential programs for boys and the launch of adolescent male group homes, there was a new focus on keeping families together and providing services to girls and young women.

Today, programming continues to evolve to meet critical needs in the community such as foster care, workforce development, mental health and drug and alcohol counseling, school-based therapy, housing and shelter. The Employment Institute offers 13 nationally recognized certification programs, employment opportunities, life skills and work readiness training, education services and employment exposure/search services. With 102 employing partners and 89 referral agencies throughout the region, Auberle is a highly respected and award-winning workforce development program that helps individuals find a good paying and sustainable career.

When individuals graduate from one of the Employment Institute's programs, they are prepared to take on the real world of work and have the training to succeed.

A quick look at Auberle's EWDJT program

- Auberle plans to train 50 students and place at least 35 graduates in environmental jobs
- Auberle is targeting unemployed, underemployed and at-risk individuals in Allegheny County
- The training program includes 102 hours of instruction
  - 40-hour HAZWOPER
  - 32-hour asbestos abatement
  - Confined space entry
  - OSHA-10 safety
  - OSHA 30
  - Asbestos Awareness
  - Lead Awareness
  - Confined Space
  - Flagger
- Training will take place in both a classroom setting and at hands-on worksites, and will include mock remediation tests (a strategy in progress)

- Participants who complete the training will earn five federal certifications
- Key partners
  - o University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
  - o Partner4Work
  - o Employment Institute,
  - o Disaster Restoration Services
  - o Arete Construction
  - o Gumpher Electric
  - o Professional Training Associates Inc
  - o Landforce Pittsburgh

As the COVID-19 crisis has closed many grantees, Auberle has been able to continue working with numerous partners, employers and program participants. The nature of their community service charter requires Auberle to remain open with strict public health guidance including daily temperature checks.

To learn more about Auberle, go to their website at [auberle.org](http://auberle.org)

## 5. THE STATUS OF EWDJT MAY 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

EWDJT programs are more important today than ever before. The EWDJT program provides Environmental Justice opportunities for community residents disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation, the pandemic and resulting recession. Unfortunately, EWDJT programs are centered around, networking, teambuilding, hands on and peer-to-peer learning. With most programs either suspended or proceeding with muted activity, here are the situations in which EWDJT grantees find themselves.

- Organizations interested in starting or continuing a program and are planning on responding to the next RFA
- Grantees receiving funding during the FY20 cohort and are planning the first round of training
- EWDJT programs that have been interrupted due to COVID-19 and public health guidelines
- Programs between training cohorts, in the process of placing graduates or assisting laid off graduates seeking re-employment

Organizations interested in starting an EWDJT program or expanding an existing program are beginning preparations to leverage the upcoming EPA environmental workforce development FY21 funding cycle. The new round of funding is expected this summer for training to begin during the summer of 2021. While the current COVID-19 crisis may be under control by then, rethinking EWDJT may provide an opportunity for new and innovative approaches to environmental training..

Grantees receiving funding during the FY20 cohort are planning the first round of training. New grantees are looking for guidance on transitioning to distance learning, smaller training cohorts, maintaining physical distance, team building strategies, student recruitment, screening, peer to peer learning and classroom safety.

Programs disrupted in the middle of training have the biggest challenge. Keeping students engaged. Often, students may not have access to computers, Internet, phones or cell service. During a recent HMTRI scan, a grantee noted the following. *“Many do not have reliable phone service, especially now that many have been laid off and can't pay their phone bills. Many use a Wi-Fi number instead of traditional phone service, but the only reliable places to get free service are downtown in public areas which may be closed (government buildings and libraries which are currently shut down in our city, cafes*

*which you can't sit down in) or which people may be avoiding due to social distancing precautions, and that at the least aren't conducive to learning. This is our biggest hurdle with distance learning - it isn't very accessible to the vulnerable population we serve..."* Maintaining student retention, services and student resources are of major concern.

Programs between training cohorts, in the process of placing graduates or assisting laid-off alumni seeking re-employment can continue during the COVID-19 crisis. For those in the middle of placement, job availability during the pandemic can be challenging but new jobs are also being created. Rethinking potential employers and marketing skill sets are activities to explore and expand.

## **6. TOURING GRANTS.GOV**

### **Grant writing proficiency**

If this is the first time submitting an EWDJT proposal, applicants may want to consider working with an organization or individual experienced in submitting Federal grants. Grant writing and submission is perhaps the one area where experienced applicants may have an advantage over organizations that have never submitted an EWDJT proposal. Applicants need to understand that reviewers evaluate programs based on the written content of the application. The best, most comprehensive program is not likely to be funded unless the quality of that program is expressed in the written application. As the early stages of program development begin, careful consideration needs to be given to the grant writing and submission process.

Prospective grantees and those who have been away must re-learn their way around Grants.gov. Fortunately, everything a grantee needs to know is at this site. The objective of grants.gov is to provide a common website for federal agencies to post discretionary funding opportunities and for grantees to find and apply to them. Grants.gov is an E-Government initiative operating under the governance of the Office of Management and Budget. Grants.gov houses information on over 1,000 grant programs including EPA grants. In the grants learning center users can find tutorials on the following topics:

- [Grants 101](#)
- [Grant Policies](#)
- [Grant Eligibility](#)
- [Grant Terminology](#)
- [Grant-Making Agencies](#)
- [Grant Systems](#)
- [Grant Programs](#)
- [Grant Careers](#)
- [Grant Reporting](#)
- [Grant Fraud](#)

## **7. MORE CDC CORONAVIRUS AND COVID-19 RESOURCES**

### **Workplace Decision Tool**

#### **Workplaces Considerations for Reopening During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The purpose of this tool is to assist employers in making (re)opening decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially to protect vulnerable workers. It is important to check with state and local health

officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/workplace-decision-tool.html>

#### **CDC resources and guidance for cleaning, disinfecting and reopening buildings**

- [CDC/EPA guidance for businesses, public spaces, workplaces, schools, and homes](#)
- [Additional guidance for cleaning and disinfection, including when someone is sick](#)
- [Disinfecting your non-emergency vehicle](#)
- [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Shutdown](#)

#### **Printable Materials**

- [CDC/EPA guidance for cleaning and disinfecting pdf icon](#)[PDF – 9 pages]
- [Cleaning and disinfecting decision tool pdf icon](#)[PDF – 2 pages]

### **8. WEBINARS AND PRESENTATION POWERPOINTS**

#### **Preparing for the Cascade of Federal Funding**

Did you miss our webinar last week featuring some of the industry's foremost redevelopment financing experts? Not to worry, you can watch the recording, download the full presentation, and view supplemental resources discussed in the broadcast. See below!

Over 750 land reuse practitioners attended last week's Federal Funding webinar (a CCLR record!) and you flooded us with questions. We weren't able to address all of these inquiries during the broadcast so we're working on addressing them now and will send out a full update in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!

Slides and supplemental resources:

[Presentation Slides](#)

[COVID-19 Local Government Resource Matrix](#)

[EPA Brownfields Redevelopment Resources and Guides](#)

### **9. CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND MEETINGS**

#### **2020 Georgia Environmental Conference**

**August 26-28, 2020**

**Jekyll Island, GA**

The Annual Georgia Environmental Conference is the largest and most comprehensive professional environmental education conference serving Georgia and the Southeast region – across the public and private sectors.

Mission: To meaningfully and significantly present Georgia Environmental Conference's diverse slate of topics and featured speakers focusing on providing fresh, new, high value, well-balanced, diverse, and relevant educational content with a positive impact on current and future practitioners and the environment of Georgia and the Southeast region.

The Conference hosts an elite group of environmental professionals seeking knowledge and sharing ideas around environmental concerns in Georgia and the Southeast region. GEC anticipates an estimated 700 attendees, including Attorneys, Consultants, Engineers, Business, Industry, Federal, State, and Local Government Officials, Planners and Developers, Landowners and many, many others with a

strong interest in environmental programs in Georgia and the Southeast. Sponsorships enable more diverse groups and individuals to participate at the Annual Georgia Environmental Conference. Through continued participation in this program, we may continue to offer course registration fees far below that charged for comparable events and learning opportunities, while providing a top-notch Conference experience.

### **The WV Brownfields Conference**

**September 15-17**

**Huntington, WV**

The WV Brownfields Conference & Main Street/ON TRAC Training is West Virginia's premier redevelopment event that combines educational programs with networking opportunities between communities, local governments, development professionals, and service providers. The conference features expert panels, interactive workshops, technical training, and project case studies.

The Conference Planning Committee is currently seeking mobile workshop and breakout session ideas to fill limited slots for the 2020 Conference in Huntington, WV on September 15-17. We are looking for session ideas focused on downtown development, remediation and site preparation strategies, re-use planning approaches, and redevelopment funding opportunities. Creative session formats, such as town hall or roundtable discussions and interactive workshops, as well as traditional panel presentations, are encouraged.

The deadline for session ideas is March 16, 2020. Interested entities can submit up to two presentation proposals. Speakers will be required to register at the reduced speaker rate of \$50 by August 3, 2020. Questions can be directed to Carrie Staton at [carrie.staton@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:carrie.staton@mail.wvu.edu).

### **The 6th Annual GBA Brownfield Seminar**

**Rescheduled for Oct. 12, 2020**

Out of an abundance of caution and sensitivity to coronavirus COVID-19 concerns, the Georgia Brownfield Association has rescheduled the Brownfield Seminar to Oct. 12, 2020 to better serve attendees, speakers and sponsors of this important conference and conversation. The event will proceed on this new date in its originally planned format, as a full-day conference at Georgia Power.

Those who submitted abstracts - thank you, we will be in touch with you directly regarding your submission.

[Registration](#) is open and sponsorships are still available! If you're already registered, don't worry - we have transferred your registration to the new event date on Oct. 12, 2020.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting brownfield redevelopment in Georgia. We look forward to seeing you there!

## **10. FUNDING AND LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **U.S. Department of Health and Human**

COVID-19 Funding Available to Minority, Rural and Socially Vulnerable Communities for Linkages to Services, Information and Education

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health (OMH) announced a competitive funding opportunity to invest up to \$40 million for the development and coordination of a strategic network of

national, state, territorial, tribal and local organizations to deliver important COVID-19-related information to racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

#### **USDA: National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

##### **Community Food Projects Program**

**Submission Deadline: June 3, 2020**

The primary goals of the Community Food Project are to: Meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach, and improving access to food; Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities; Promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; and more. For the grants.gov solicitation go to:

#### **EPA Provides Grant Funding to Support Environmental Justice Communities Impacted by COVID-19**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working to improve the environment and public health conditions of low-income and minority communities through our daily efforts to ensure all Americans have clean air, safe water, and access to information to make decisions to protect personal and public health. In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, EPA is making \$1 million in grant funding available to states to help local environmental justice communities address COVID-19 concerns faced by low-income and minority communities. Through the State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Program, EPA will provide funds to states, local governments, tribes and U.S. territories to work collaboratively with environmental justice communities to understand, promote and integrate approaches to provide meaningful and measurable improvements to public health and the environment.

“Environmental justice grants aim to support public education, training, and emergency planning for communities across the country impacted by COVID-19, regardless of their zip code,” said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. “These grants are part of EPA’s effort to actively fight the COVID-19 pandemic that is having a disproportionate impact on low-income and minority communities.”

The grant funding will be used to support public education, training, and emergency planning for communities impacted by COVID-19. Projects could include sharing information related to EPA-approved disinfectants to combat COVID-19; addressing increased exposure of residents to in-home pollutants and healthy housing issues; and training community health workers.

EPA anticipates awarding five grants of approximately \$200,000 each for up to a two-year funding period. The agency encourages applicants to develop innovative plans and processes to conduct effective outreach to underserved communities, especially in places where Internet access may not be readily available to all residents.

Interested applicants must submit proposal packages on or before June 30, 2020 to be considered for the available funding.

For more information on EPA’s Environmental Justice program go to:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/state-environmental-justice-cooperative-agreement-program>

#### **Superfund Research Program**

##### **Occupational Health and Safety Education Programs on Emerging Technologies**

The NIH Research Education Program (R25) supports research education activities in the mission areas of the NIH. The overarching goal of this R25 program is to support educational activities that complement and/or enhance the training of a workforce to meet the nation’s biomedical, behavioral, and clinical research needs. The deadline to apply is Aug. 3 by 5:00 p.m. local time.

## [Susan Harwood Training Grants for Nonprofit Organizations](#)

### **Worker Safety and Health Training Grants**

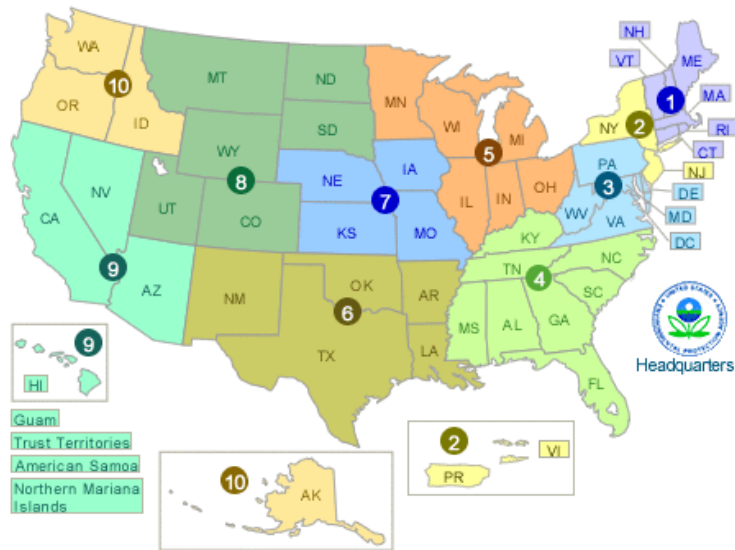
U.S. Department of Labor Announces Availability of \$11.5 Million In Worker Safety and Health Training Grants  
The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced the availability of \$11.5 million in Susan Harwood Training Grants for nonprofit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations, employer associations, labor unions, joint labor/management associations, Indian tribes, and colleges and universities. For information, go to the link below.

## [Guide to Finding Federal Assistance and Resources for Environmental Justice Efforts](#)

This EPA guide offers general guidance and tips on searching for funding opportunities, as well as information on tools, trainings and other relevant resources that are available to help address community needs. The Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG) includes several federal agencies and White House offices that increase local community capacity to promote and implement innovative and comprehensive solutions to environmental justice issues.

### **11. EPA REGIONAL JOB TRAINING COORDINATORS**

<b>EPA Region 1</b> Danny Rodriguez	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT	Phone: (617) 918-1060 E-mail: rodriguez.danny@epa.gov
<b>EPA Region 1</b> Myra Schwartz		Phone: (617) 918-1696 E-mail: schwartz.myra@epa.gov
<b>EPA Region 2</b> Schenine Mitchell	NJ, NY, PR, VI	Phone: (212) 637-3283 E-mail: mitchell.schenine@epa.gov
<b>EPA Region 3</b> Gianna Rosati	DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV	Phone: (215) 814-3406 E-mail: rosati.gianna@epa.gov
<b>EPA Region 4</b> Wanda Jennings	AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN	Phone: (404) 562-8682 E-mail: jennings.wanda@epa.gov
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<b>EPA Region 7</b> Alma Moreno Lahm	IA, KS, MO, NE	Phone: (913) 551-7380 E-mail: moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov
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<b>EPA Region 9</b> Nova Blazej	AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU	Phone: (415) 972-3846 E-mail: blazej.nova@epa.gov
<b>EPA Region 9</b> Noemi Emeric-Ford		Phone: (213) 244-1821 E-mail: emeric-ford.noemi@epa.gov
<b>EPA Region 10</b> Susan Morales	AK, ID, OR, WA	Phone: (206) 553-7299 E-mail: morales.susan@epa.gov



Map of EPA Regions

Credit: [epa.gov](https://www.epa.gov)

## 12. JOIN US ON FUTURE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CALLS

### Upcoming PLC calls

- June 10

Missed a few of our PLC sessions? Post session notes are available on the [brownfields-toolbox.org](https://brownfields-toolbox.org). Join our 30-minute discussion with EPA EWDJT grantees, alumni and new interested stakeholders. PLCs give grantees a chance to highlight their programs and an opportunity for others to learn from their experience. For questions or to be placed on the PLC register, send your contact information to [hkballou@eicc.edu](mailto:hkballou@eicc.edu).

Visit our [HMTRI Brownfields Toolbox](https://brownfields-toolbox.org) website for more information on Brownfields Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training programs. All [PLC session notes and recordings](#) are also located on the website. For those interested in providing content or suggestions, please contact Heather Ballou at [hkballou@eicc.edu](mailto:hkballou@eicc.edu).

**NOTE:** The PLC brings together ideas and opinions of individuals interested in environmental workforce development and job training. Ideas and opinions are not those of EPA or its policy and should not be taken as official guidance.

