

September 16, 2020



Notes from the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 23.

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. Latest from Washington
2. News from HMTRI
3. Questions from PLC participants
4. Grantee and partner news
5. Last minute considerations that can give EWDJT applications a boost
6. Things to remember after the EWDJT application has been submitted
7. Landmines to consider for those who have not yet submitted
8. Webinars, online resources, websites, recordings and 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

- The Request for Applications (RFA) closes on September 22, 2020. Please note, [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will be down for scheduled maintenance over the weekend from September 19-21, 2020 12AM ET to 6AM ET.
- For last minute EPA resources, FAQs, and a recording of the guidelines webinar go to: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/fy-2021-environmental-workforce-development-and-job-training-ewdjt-grants-0>

2021 National Brownfields Training Conference

EPA and ICMA are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will be adapting the conference experience in consideration of participants' health and safety. Keep your schedule open April 25-April 30th, 2021 and stay tuned for future developments. For more information, go to <https://brownfields2021.org/>.

2. HMTRI NEWS

All Grantee Meeting follow up – meeting links

For those interested in the 2020 All Grantee Meeting, chats and websites discussed in breakout sessions are posted on the following page <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/2020-grantee-downloads/>.

3. PLC QUESTIONS

Have you gotten any indication as to how other applicants this year are submitting two versions of their plans, without exceeding the 15 page limit?

We call this the "elephant in the room" and discussed it in session 238 of PLC. I would keep in mind that the training plan for EWDJT programs should be based on employer needs and the labor market assessment which should not change greatly under the two versions. What will change, however, is how that training will be delivered. Post session notes from PLC 238 can be found at the following page. <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-sessions/> which goes into more detail. Keep in mind that plan A and plan B will also influence other aspects of the program such as recruitment, screening and placement. Remember, applicants have 15 pages of narrative and 15 pages of attachments. It is important that each section does not exceed the 15 page limit as additional pages will be discarded from the application package.

Under training program description, what is meant by Level of Training and Type of Certification?

The only required certification is HAZWOPER. Having provided that certification, many programs provide as many as 10 state and federal certifications, such as Lead and Asbestos, Confined Space, CDL, etc. Your core curriculum is the most intensive training, the "meat and potatoes" of your program mostly related to solid waste, brownfields cleanup and other hazardous materials related courses. Awareness courses do not have the intensity of training and serve to round out the EWDJT program. Awareness training includes those that are not as highly supported by EPA funds, such as waste water treatment, emergency response, underground storage tanks and leveraged unsupported training. For a more comprehensive listing, explore the Certified Employee Finder, which presents training provided by current grantees. Go to <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/certified-employee-finder/>.

The grant proposal has several attachments. Should I upload them separately or submit as one file in www.grants.gov?

EPA recommends consolidating all grant proposal documents (the Cover Letter, Narrative, responses to the threshold criteria, required attachments, etc.) into one pdf file. This ensures that EPA receives your entire submission and the submission is in the order that you intended.

Questions?

Still have unanswered questions? Send them to hkballou@eicc.edu.

4. GRANTEE AND PARTNER NEWS

Coalfield Development

We here at Coalfield Development wanted to take a moment to say a big THANK YOU for joining us in celebrating 10 years of rebuilding the Appalachian economy from the ground up. We loved having the opportunity to look back and connect with the people who have been with us on this journey, and who have supported us in many ways. All we have accomplished has been because of people like yourself who strive for everyone to reach their full potential, power, and purpose. If you weren't able to join us for the celebration, or want to revisit your favorite moments, the full recorded event is here and also on our website at coalfield-development.org.

ENERGY COORDINATING AGENCY

2020 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY ENERGY CONFERENCE

Date: October 16th.

Join ECA to discuss how we can work together to meet the needs of the communities we serve within the ever-changing 'new normal' brought on by COVID-19. We will be joined by people and organizations sharing stories of resilience and adaptation, along with information about how we navigate the coming

year.

Throughout the morning, the panelists will be presenting on Housing Needs, a utility panel on COVID Response, Clean Energy Workforce Transformation, The New Normal of Energy Efficiency, and Concerns for Environmental Justice.

The conference will conclude with the presentation of Community Champion Awards. Nominations are OPEN! Please share with us the stories of individuals and organizations that inspire so that we might lift them up this October. We look forward to getting to know the incredible people whose work you highlight.

Location: Wherever you are!

Time: 8:00a - 12:30p

Format: Zoom

Registered attendees will receive a link along with guidance for accessing the webinar in early October.

[Registration](#)

[NIEHS Worker Training Program receives special COVID funding](#)

New funding through the [NIEHS Worker Training Program](#) (WTP) provides critical support to essential workers so they can respond and work safely when faced with exposure to the novel coronavirus. The funding came through the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020](#). **WTP grantees can make a big difference in protecting essential workers in numerous local communities.** The Worker Training Program already had a swift disaster responder training system in place, which paves the way for a strong COVID-19 response. Moving from their initial focus on essential and returning workers to a longer term sustainable response will be an ongoing challenge as the pandemic threats evolve. With the supplemental funding, grantees will be focusing on inventing new approaches for the contexts of social distancing and online work.

5. LAST MINUTE CONSIDERATIONS THAT CAN GIVE EWDJT APPLICATIONS A BOOST

Those participating in previous PLC discussions should be well prepared for the final stages of proposal submission. Here are some last minute ideas for those interested in boosting their FY21 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Applications:

- Communities considering establishment of an environmental workforce program but not yet ready to submit a proposal can continue the process by submitting a “starter” proposal. Submit a proposal even if it is not perfect “to get a spot at the table”. Even if rejected, applicants will have an opportunity to work with their Regional Coordinators to improve their program for the next RFA.
- EWDJT is an Environmental Justice and Brownfields program. Proper attention needs to address these priorities.
- The EWDJT program is all about providing jobs to local residents for environmental employment in underserved communities. Activities in the proposed plan should be targeted at environmental employment. This means relationships with local employers and the skills “in demand” drive the program plan. “Train and they will be hired” **does not** work unless training is “demand driven” by local employers.
- Participate and document public interactions such as meetings, church announcements or radio PSAs. Inform a local elected official regarding the grant application and note the announcements in the proposal.

- Curriculum must be consistent with needs of employers. Employer input also relates to recruitment, participant attitudes, expectations, and personalities. Excluding employers from an advisory role is a critical mistake in any EWDJT plan.
- Whenever possible, link training and job development to Brownfield and underserved communities.
- Almost every EWDJT grantee can provide “Special Factors”. Whether it is the target community, participant group, economic or geographic area, “Special Factors” can support funding consideration.
- If it is not in the proposal, it does not exist.
- **Respond to every question.**
- When activities and goals are not in the proposal, evaluators cannot expect that they will occur. Do not assume that good intentions or implied goals will result in a positive evaluation. Include every goal, outcome and expectation in the proposed plan. Do not over promise but clearly present all that can be expected from the program.
- Remember, this program centers on partnerships, environmental justice, jobs for underserved residents, Brownfields, hazardous materials and solid waste.

6. THINGS TO REMEMBER AFTER THE EWDJT APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED

Here are some suggestions as “follow up” to application submission.

- Organize and/or reorganize data files used to develop the submitted proposal. Questions may arise months from now with award announcements over five months away and work plan finalization even later.
- Keep those included and referenced in the RFA informed. They may be contacted by proposal reviewers for additional information.
- Inform partners and stakeholders of the schedule moving forward. In the event a proposal is not funded, build upon established partnerships and contacts for an expanded proposal.
- With about a third of applications selected for funding, it is important not to be discouraged if this year’s proposal is not accepted. Many applicants consider their first submission as a learning experience. Unfunded proposals are provided an opportunity for a critical review identifying deficiencies in the grant. With additional guidance from EPA, HMTRI, and successful grantees, proposals can be revised and expanded for the next competition less than a year away.
- We suggest distributing the proposal to key supporters and partners. Their involvement may attract additional leveraged support.
- Continue seeking letters of support from leveraged partners, potential employers, advisory committee members, and community supporters. It is important that they stay committed to the program.
- During preparation for this RFP, supplemental sources of “startup” funding may have been identified to begin planning an environmental workforce program before receiving EWDJT assistance. Consider seeking supplemental funding from governmental agencies, community colleges and existing nonprofit organizations interested in expanding their offerings to include environmental training.
- The EWDJT program is an annual competition with another request for applications less than a year away. It takes a good part of the year to assemble, coordinate and institute a working partnership team. Consider this a marathon rather than a “one off” grant opportunity.

Additional resources for those looking forward to the next RFA may wish to check out the following sites.

- CONNECT News <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/newsletter-archive/>
- The August/September CONNECT News presents a checklist for reviewing FY21 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training applications.
- Start a Program <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/start-a-program>
- Best Practices <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/brownfields-best-practices/>

7. LAST MINUTE LANDMINES TO CONSIDER FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET SUBMITTED

FYI, here are a few evaluator notes that have resulted in lost points during the Ranking Criteria evaluation:

- Budget numbers did not add up
- Costs were unrealistic
- Travel to Brownfields meetings were not included
- A labor market assessment or employer survey was not presented
- No contact with potential employers
- Did not mention leveraging
- Post employment tracking was not addressed
- Target placement goals were not present
- No discussion of specific population to be trained
- Environmental Justice was not addressed
- No mention of Brownfields
- Training cycles unclear
- Student retention was not addressed
- Letters of Support do not state roles and/or commitments only support.
- Health and safety considerations were not addressed
- No mention of drug testing in screening process or required minimum educational background prerequisites.
- Proposal is difficult to comprehend
- Applicant did not follow guidelines
- Applicant did not respond to criteria in sequence

For a more detailed checklist of evaluator suggestions, go to the following August/September issue of CONNECT News.

<https://bf-toolbox.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/09163220/08-CONNECT-RFA-checklist.pdf>

8. WEBINARS, ONLINE RESOURCES, WEBSITES, RECORDINGS, AND POWERPOINTS

NIEHS Webinars

In-Person Training under COVID-19: Protocols and Practices

Friday, September 18

3:00-4:00 p.m. EDT

Presenters will cover the basics of safely holding in-person training during the COVID-19 pandemic. Policies from organizations currently delivering in-person training will be discussed and trainers who are in the classroom will share lessons learned to help attendees understand and plan for the in-person experience.

[NIEHS WTP Essential and Returning Worker Online Training Course](#)

Now Available

As workplaces reopen, workers and employers are safeguarding against COVID-19. Vivid Learning Systems designed an online version of the NIEHS WTP Essential and Returning Worker Training course, which is now available from Vivid Learning Systems. This training includes an Introduction and modules on Assessing Exposure Risk to SARS CoV-2, Workplace Exposure Prevention, Cleaning and Disinfections, and Resilience. Access to this course is free of charge.

[Vivid Learning System LMS](#)

[Facilitating Reentry of Justice-Involved Individuals into the workforce](#)

This report is an addendum and update to the 2011 report, *Best Practices Guide for Green Re-Entry Strategies*, researched and written by UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability (IoES). Since 2011, governmental, academic, and nonprofit entities have expanded efforts to close the "revolving door" of recidivism via green reentry programs and initiatives. This addendum seeks to capture some of the key developments including: - Updates on policy developments and economic changes - Barriers and opportunities for employment for reentry populations - Best management practices for reentry within the framework of green infrastructure and provide a set of recommendations. - Experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals and case studies from organizations.

COVID-19 resources

Johns Hopkins University launched an influential [COVID-19 resource center](#). With continually updated data and separate global and U.S. maps, their [dashboard helps millions of worldwide users](#) track the novel coronavirus outbreak.

This online tool provides critical COVID-19 case and disease-spread information to the NIEHS [COVID-19 Pandemic Vulnerability Index](#) (PVI). [Alison Motsinger-Reif, Ph.D.](#), head of the institute's Biostatistics and Computational Biology Branch, and her collaborators from North Carolina State University and Texas A&M University [developed the index](#).

For every U.S. county, the PVI produces a scorecard that identifies how much an area is threatened by the coronavirus. A special pie chart displays 12 different health and environmental factors, such as infection and testing rates, population density, hospital beds, and others.

Now, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is incorporating the PVI into its [COVID-19 Data Tracker](#). The tracker shows the latest information on laboratory testing, transmission, school closures, and more.

[AIHA COVID19 Resources](#)

AIHA has joined efforts with CDC and NIOSH (National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health) to help educate the public about returning to work safely by hosting a series of free webinars by business sector.

Back to work resources from the AIHA link below offers specific, easy-to-follow, science-based recommendations for limiting the transmission of the coronavirus while operating a wide variety of businesses, including restaurants, retail outlets, and hair and nail salons. Guidelines were developed for smaller organizations that don't have readily available occupational health and safety resources. AIHA

encourages employers, employees, and customers to carefully read and implement as many of the recommendations contained in the guidance document as applicable.

9. CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS

6th Annual GBA Brownfield Seminar

Zoom webinar

Oct. 6 & 7, 2020

9 a.m. to 1 p.m

The health and safety of our members and partners has always been a top priority for our organization. After tremendous review and discussion, we have made the decision to pivot our 2020 Brownfield Seminar to a virtual format as a result of the increasing impact COVID is having in our state and beyond. Please plan to join our Zoom webinar on Oct. 6 & 7 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

While we will miss seeing you all in person and networking with you at the event, please know that we will present the same high-value content that was originally slated for earlier this year. In fact, we are excited to share a number of benefits to this format:

Extended reach - please consider inviting your contacts from all corners of the state (and beyond!) to join us. An online format will allow us to extend our reach and include those who may not typically be able to join in person due to travel restraints.

ENERGY COORDINATING AGENCY

2020 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY ENERGY CONFERENCE

October 16th, 2020

8:00a - 12:30p

Format: Zoom

Join ECA to discuss how we can work together to meet the needs of the communities we serve within the ever-changing 'new normal' brought on by COVID-19. We will be joined by people and organizations sharing stories of resilience and adaptation, along with information about how we navigate the coming year.

Throughout the morning, the panelists will be presenting on Housing Needs, a utility panel on COVID Response, Clean Energy Workforce Transformation, The New Normal of Energy Efficiency, and Concerns for Environmental Justice.

The 6th Annual GBA Brownfield Seminar

Full-day conference at Georgia Power

Monday, Oct. 19, 2020

Join us Monday, Oct. 19, 2020 for the sixth annual Brownfield Seminar. We are planning to present the same great event we had planned before coronavirus (COVID-19) rearranged all of our lives and schedules, 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. 19, 2020.

The 2020 Florida Brownfields Conference

October 29-November 6

Virtual

Keeping Our Community Safe While Staying Connected. Despite the challenges of our current climate, brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, environmental justice, community engagement and revitalization, and equitable development are as timely and important as ever. We are committed to bringing you a provocative, engaging virtual brownfields conference in 2020. For 2020, we are also working with our partners with U.S. EPA Region IV to include the Region IV New Brownfield Grantee Workshop and broader Southeast Regional themes in the virtual 2020 conference.

During the 2020 virtual conference, we plan (i) to hold the U.S. EPA Region IV New Brownfield Grantee Workshop virtually in coordination with U.S. EPA as part of the conference and (ii) to serve as a platform for provocative sessions that showcase both Florida and Region IV Brownfields issues, initiatives, and efforts, in order for participants throughout Region IV to come together, participate, collaborate, and to share. Virtual Conference Format -The 2020 Brownfields Conference will be an all virtual event.

Registrants will be emailed an access code to join the events a few days before the conference.

We will be offering creative events for participants to come together, network, collaborate, and share.

Registration Costs

PRIVATE SECTOR - \$125.00

PUBLIC or NON-PROFIT SECTOR - \$100.00

STUDENT - \$ 50.00

EPA NEW GRANTEES WORKSHOP - NO CHARGE (Not Including Other Conference Sessions)

Registration includes virtual access to all sessions, workshops, videos, and events hosted by FBA for the 2020 Florida Brownfields Conference. Participants will be required to login from their own network for access.

National Brownfields Conference

April 27-30, 2021

Oklahoma City, OK

The National Brownfields Training Conference is the largest event in the nation focused on environmental revitalization and economic redevelopment. Held every two years, the National Brownfields Conference attracts over 2,000 stakeholders in brownfields redevelopment and cleanup to share knowledge about sustainable reuse and celebrate the EPA brownfields program's success.

Whether you're a newcomer or a seasoned professional, Brownfields 2021 offers something for you!

The 26th Florida Remediation Conference & Exhibition (FRC 2020)

November 17-19, 2021

Omni Orlando Resort at Champions Gate

Champions Gate (Orlando), Florida

The Florida Remediation Conference (FRC) is one of the premier soil, air and water remediation conferences of the year. Though FRC started out as a Florida-centric event 25 years ago, it has developed a solid reputation for fostering the remediation and redevelopment industries across the Southeast. FRC attracts over 600 attendees comprised of a mix of industry representatives, developers, consultants and contractors, and over 100 exhibitors and sponsors from across the country. The Florida Remediation Conference & Exhibition is requesting individuals

that have an interest in presenting an oral or poster presentation at the 26th annual event which will now take place on November 17-19, 2021.

View this link to learn more:

<https://floridaremediationconference.org>

10. FUNDING AND LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES

[FY 2021 Supporting Equitable Development and Environmental Justice in Brownfields Communities Grant Guidelines](#)

Submission deadline - September, 21, 2020

This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible entities, including nonprofit organizations, to provide direct technical assistance to communities nationwide on the integration of environmental justice and equitable development when developing solutions to brownfields cleanup and revitalization challenges. EPA anticipates awarding one grant for an estimated \$600,000. The award is anticipated to be funded incrementally on an annual basis over three years, at approximately \$200,000 per year. The application submission deadline is September, 21, 2020.

See additional details on the [FY 2021 Brownfields Training, Research and Technical Assistance solicitation page](#) and apply at www.grants.gov.

EPA Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Grants

The Request for Applications for FY21 Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, and Cleanup Grants is now posted on grants.gov.

Applications are due October 28, 2020.

EPA anticipates to have a virtual information session for applicants on September 14th.

FY 2021 Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, and Cleanup Grant Application Resources

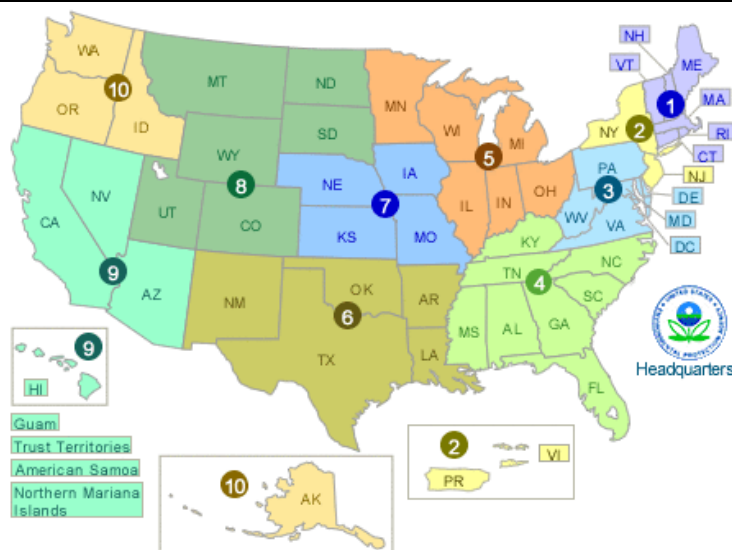
- [FY 2021 Multipurpose Grant Guidelines](#)
- [FY 2021 Assessment Grant Guidelines](#)
- [FY 2021 Cleanup Grant Guidelines](#)
- [FY 2021 Summary of Brownfields Grant Guideline Changes](#)

11. EPA REGIONAL JOB TRAINING COORDINATORS

Regional Coordinators are the first place to go regarding questions about EWDJT grants, extensions, budgets or work plans. For those thinking of submitting an application for FY21 funding, check in to express your intentions. Many Regions maintain a Listserv for past, current and potential grantees. It is important to be on their contact list for conference calls and newsletters.

EPA Region 1 Myra Schwartz	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT	Phone: (617) 918-1696 E-mail: schwartz.myra@epa.gov
EPA Region 2 Schenine Mitchell	NJ, NY, PR, VI	Phone: (212) 637-3283 E-mail: mitchell.schenine@epa.gov
EPA Region 3 Gianna Rosati	DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV	Phone: (215) 814-3406 E-mail: rosati.gianna@epa.gov
EPA Region 4 Wanda Jennings	AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN	Phone: (404) 562-8682 E-mail: jennings.wanda@epa.gov
EPA Region 5 Linda Morgan	IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI	Phone: (312) 886-4747 E-mail: morgan.linda@epa.gov

EPA Region 6 Elizabeth Reyes	AR, LA, NM, OK, TX	Phone: (214) 665-3163 E-mail: reyes.elizabeth@epa.gov
EPA Region 6 Rita Ware		Phone: (214) 665-6409 E-mail: ware.rita@epa.gov
EPA Region 7 Alma Moreno Lahm	IA, KS, MO, NE	Phone: (913) 551-7380 E-mail: moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov
EPA Region 8 Christina Wilson	CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY	Phone: (303) 312-6706 E-mail: wilson.christina@epa.gov
EPA Region 9 Nova Blazej	AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU	Phone: (415) 972-3846 E-mail: blazej.nova@epa.gov
EPA Region 9 Noemi Emeric-Ford		Phone: (213) 244-1821 E-mail: emeric-ford.noemi@epa.gov
EPA Region 10 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

- September 30

Missed a few of our PLC sessions? Post session notes are available on the 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.

Visit our [HMTRI Brownfields Toolbox](https://hmtri.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.

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.

