

November 18, 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. Oregon Tradeswomen - Kelly Kupcak, Executive Director, OTI
6. Strategies used recruit, train and retain women in environmental technology
7. Webinars, online resources, websites, recordings and PowerPoints
8. Conferences, workshops and meetings
9. Funding and leveraging opportunities
10. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators
11. Join us on future Professional Learning Community calls

1. NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

[National Brownfields 2021 Conference](#)

September 27-30, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

To keep posted on the latest information on the 2021 Brownfields Conference, including featured speakers, sponsorship opportunities, and more, go to the following sign up [form](#).

EPA will be reopening the Call for Ideas between January 11 and February 28, 2021

“Due to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, Brownfields 2021 has been rescheduled from its original April dates to September 27-30, 2021. It is still being held in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Previously submitted session proposals are still under review and no decisions have been made at this time. However, we understand that projects and practice continue to evolve. We will be reopening the Call for Ideas between January 11 and February 28, 2021 and are currently looking to have sessions selected and posted on the website by late March/April 2021. We will be making some small changes to the Call for Ideas when it reopens, but the most important thing to know is that all participants are free to submit additional ideas when it reopens.”

EPA FY 2021 Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, and Cleanup Grants

The MAC Grant applications were submitted October 28, 2020. Nationally, EPA received approximately 430 submissions. EWDJT grantees are encouraged to coordinate with MAC grantees both during proposal development and program implementation. The selection announcement is expected in Spring 2021. For more information on MAC grants, Go to:

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/fy-2021-multipurpose-assessment-and-cleanup-grant-application-resources>

2. HMTRI NEWS

Remaining PLCs this cycle and next year' schedule

With two PLCs remaining in this cycle, the next PLC call will be **Wednesday, December 2nd**. After a holiday break, a brand new cycle will begin **January 13th**.

HMTRI is planning a mid-year virtual All-Grantee Meeting

As a result of the Brownfields 21 rescheduling, HMTRI is planning a mid-year virtual All-Grantee Meeting towards the end of April or early May. We are currently looking for open dates to maximize EPA and grantee participation. If the September 27-30, 2021 Oklahoma City conference remains as scheduled, HMTRI is planning a face to face preconference All Grantee Meeting to supplement the Spring virtual meeting. Additionally, HMTRI plans to have a booth representing and available to all EWDJT grantees. Return these notes with your suggestions and ideas.

3. QUESTIONS FROM PLC PARTICIPANTS

Can you give us an update on EWDJT training in the “era of COVID”

Our last scan of EWDJT grantees occurred during the height of the crisis. Essentially training came to a halt along with social distancing, office closures and little experience on how to proceed as public health agencies placed ever stricter restrictions on face to face training. Since then, grantees have adopted and expanded the use of distance learning, hybrid learning, blended learning, limited class size and face to face instruction with PPE. Currently, the ability of grantees to provide instruction ranges from limited to moving forward. The extent that an EWDJT grantee is currently able to deliver instruction per their work plan depends on numerous issues.

- *Curriculum offerings*
- *Local public health guidance*
- *Training schedules*
- *Class size*
- *Access to facilities and equipment*
- *Participant capabilities and resources*
- *Organizational public health policy and restrictions*
- *Instructor capabilities*

It appears that one approach, teaching method, curriculum or program plan will not be applicable for all grantees. Rather, as in the past, each EWDJT program will respond individually to local conditions.

Questions?

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

4. GRANTEE AND PARTNER NEWS

[NIEHS Worker Training Program \(WTP\) Toolbox](#)

The NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) has been tracking information about the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as it pertains to protecting workers involved in emergency response and cleanup activities performed in the United States. This page contains health and safety resources for workers who may be at risk of exposure to COVID-19.

[E-Newsbrief of the National Clearinghouse](#)

The E-Newsbrief of the National Clearinghouse is a free weekly newsletter focusing on new developments in the world of worker health and safety. Each issue provides summaries of the latest worker health and safety news from newspapers, magazines, journals, government reports, and the

Web, along with links to the original documents. Also featured each week are updates from government agencies that handle hazmat and worker safety issues such as DOE, EPA, OSHA and others. The National Clearinghouse Newsbrief is the best way to stay on top of the worker health and safety news.

[National Partnership for Environmental Technology Education \(NPETE\)](#)

Disaster Site Worker Response Virtual Institute for Trainers

National Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (NPETE) is offering a Disaster Site Worker Response Virtual Institute for Trainers. Programming will be delivered virtually in multiple segments over the Zoom Platform during the month of January 2021 and is limited to 30 participants. NPETE has opened this special opportunity up for EWDJT grantee trainers.

The deadline for applications is November 30.

Prerequisites for this Disaster Site Worker Training are listed below.

If you have any questions, reach out to Patti Thompson.

(319) 721-1509

pattijthompson@gmail.com

Requirements and Prerequisites:

- You must have access to a computer/tablet or phone with a camera that will allow access to the internet with adequate bandwidth to participate in a Zoom Meeting.
- It will be a requirement to have your camera on at all times during the training sessions.
- You must be able to attend both the OSHA DSW and the NPETE Disaster Site Worker Awareness sessions at a minimum and meet the prerequisites or complete the OSHA 10 session.
- Completion of the 10- or 30-hour OSHA Construction or General Industry Outreach Training Program is a prerequisite.
- Being a current OSHA outreach trainer for General Industry or Construction will also be accepted.
- NPETE is offering the OSHA 10 Class virtually for those who do not meet the OSHA prerequisite.
- If you meet the prerequisite then you do not have to take the January 4 & 5 OSHA 10 course.
- Applicants must provide a copy of their 10/30 or current trainer card with their application, or complete the NPETE sponsored OSHA 10 Course.

The deadline for completing the application is November 30th, 2020. Candidates will be notified by December 9th, 2020 if they have been accepted. This Institute will be limited to 30 attendees.

5. OREGON TRADESWOMEN - KELLY KUPCAK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OTI

Thanks Kelly for today's presentation.

Training women for participation in the environmental workforce

While most EWDJT programs have made it a priority to include women as part of their mission to bring underserved community residents into a diverse environmental workforce, few have had the success that Oregon Tradeswomen has experienced. Oregon Tradeswomen has successfully completed six EWDJT grants since 2004. It should be noted that this year OTI has taken a break from EWDJT to pause and reorganize before moving forward. As an EWDJT alumni, OTI has provided insights to grantees working with women entering nontraditional trades such as environmental remediation.

From their inception in 1989, OTW has been guided by the principle that women deserve and can attain economic self-sufficiency by pursuing careers in nontraditional trades. As EWDJT grantees diversify their programs, what can be learned to promote success among women through recruitment, training, and mentorship? Today we discussed the following issues with Kelly:

- Opportunities for women in the green economy.
- Breaking traditional gender stereotypes.
- Women and environmental justice.
- Is your program gender neutral?
- Recruiting women for EWDJT.
- Retention and teambuilding.
- Challenges and advantages placing women into the green workforce.
- Apprenticeship opportunities.

About Oregon Tradeswomen

The best way to learn about OTI is to visit their [website](#) and especially their [Facebook](#) page. Their Facebook page demonstrates the mentoring and partnerships OTI has established among its participants and alumni.

<https://www.tradeswomen.net/>

In a non-COVID year, OTI would typically enroll about 120 women pursuing careers in the construction, manufacturing, mechanical, and utility trades. This year, that number has dropped to about 60 participants participating in virtual training. Using a model similar to Cypress Mandela, EWDJT instruction follows extensive training in the construction trades, job readiness and familiarity with equipment and work attire. Graduates of the EWDJT program have the added benefits of having construction skills, working with tools and workplace readiness.

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. targets low-income women, including single mothers, women of color, women veterans, and women ex-offenders in the Columbia/Williamette Industrial Corridor, including Portland and surrounding communities.

During their last EWDJT grant cycle, about 53% of the cohort was nonwhite, 40% single parents, 15% re-entry with 73% receiving TANIF benefits. OTI achieved their placement goal with 87% placement and 93% retention. These impressive numbers were the result of extensive mentoring, team building and social interaction supporting program participants.

Key partners include

- Portland Brownfields Program - including river & harbor cleanup, superfund cleanup and bridge repair & upgrade
- Groundwork Portland
- Portland Development Commission
- Verde
- Worksystems, Inc.
- Numerous additional contractors & private sector employers
- Organized labor construction trades
- Urban League, and several environmental and community-based organizations
- Native American Youth and Family Association
- **Numerous partners and customized placement with contractor network**

EWDJT provides supplemental environmental credentials in addition to traditional basic construction skills and credentials. Before entering EWDJT, students will have OSHA 10-hour safety and numerous OSHA construction trade safety certifications including job readiness skills. Select students are invited to apply for EWDJT.

The environmental curriculum is dynamic depending on employer needs....

Portland is in the process of a major harbor cleanup in addition to a massive bridge repair and upgrade cycle. Lead, asbestos, and harbor cleanup activities provide significant employment opportunities and are offered as electives.

The EWDJT portion of the training program included the following instruction

- 40-hour HAZWOPER
- OSHA 10-hour safety
- Solid waste management
- Innovative and alternative treatment technologies awareness
- Awareness of environmental justice
- Brownfields in the community
- Portland Harbor Superfund curriculum
- Environmental career planning
- Elective courses in asbestos abatement
- Elective courses in lead renovation, repair, and painting
- Participants who complete the training program will earn five state or federal certifications
- In addition, all students will receive 112 hours of in-kind job readiness and life skills training

As noted, basic life skills, strength training and safety training is provided prior to the start of the environmental curriculum. The goal of the basic tool use course is to provide those proceeding to environmental training extensive tool and safety skills. Extensive emphasis placed on preparation for employment and placement

Student recruitment and screening

Oregon Tradeswomen has a unique student recruitment process, similar to a “tryout” recruitment strategy. Students first complete a basic construction skills and safety program. Those students demonstrating interest and aptitude are invited to apply for environmental supplemental training. Oregon Tradeswomen is targeting unemployed and underemployed women. Women veterans are a special target group with additional coordination with partner organizations.

Student screening requirements

- HS Diploma or GED
- Driver’s license- with clean driving record
- Drug and alcohol free – (testing during program)
- Fitness test
- Basic English
- Serious about a construction/environmental remediation career

Student retention

The emphasis OTI places on student engagement and retention is demonstrated in their 93% retention rate. Teambuilding, student bonding and pride in program all contribute to the positive attitude held by OTI students. Strategies for student retention are discussed in the next section.

Placement & Tracking

Oregon Tradeswomen take full responsibility in matching graduates with employers relying less on outside organizations. Graduates are encouraged to dress for the trades, removing issues associated with gender discrimination. Placement is approached as a “one on one” placement program matching graduates with employers. Here are the results of the last cohort.

- Track graduates for two years.
- 87% placement rate
- Average starting wage \$20.31/hr.
- 42% enter apprenticeship programs
- Graduates become part of an extended family serving as mentors and role models for those who follow

[Support OTI](#)

Please join us in changing the face of the construction skilled trades

<https://www.tradeswomen.net/donate/>

Contact Information:

Kelly would be happy to discuss her program and provide recruitment materials developed encouraging women in the trades.

Kelly Kupcak

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. -- Portland Oregon

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3934 NE MLK Jr. Blvd., Suite 101

Portland, OR 97212

tradeswomen.net

503.335.8200 x139

6. STRATEGIES USED RECRUIT, TRAIN AND RETAIN WOMEN IN ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

After recruitment, retention and student engagement are the most important factors contributing to successful EWDJT programs.

Student Recruitment

- When recruiting a diverse participant population including women – insure that marketing materials including instructional staff are shown to be diverse.
- All male graduate class pictures and all male staff do not attract serious female participants.
- Employ female trainers.
- Include referrals and testimonials from female alumni.
- Recruit in locations women frequent (laundries, apartments, health clubs, grocery and clothing stores).
- Feature women speakers as part of awareness events.
- Showcase successful women in nontraditional trades.

Additional programs and services provided by Oregon Tradeswomen to interest women in nontraditional trades include the following programs.

- [Building Girls](#)
Building Girls educates middle and high school girls about careers in the building, construction, mechanical, and utility trades.
- [Tradeswomen Organized for Outreach, Leadership and Support \(TOOLS\)](#)
Builds the leadership skills of tradeswomen to advocate for equal representation for women in the trades.
- [Building Girls Summer Camps](#)
Week long camps for middle and high school girls in Grants Pass and in Portland
- [Pathways to Success Information Sessions](#)
Pre-apprenticeship training program

Screening

The goal of screening students is to get those who are serious about a career as an environmental worker. Students who approach EWDJT with professionalism and curiosity because they have to work really hard to get in. “Scarcity” of seats in the OTI program and the knowledge that there is a waiting list to get those seats tends to set the tone of dedication from the start. Women need to know they are part of an elite group setting the stage for others to follow.

Training

Regimented training and student expectations are modeled after industry. Those not engaged are not modeling the behavior that the industry expects. All participants are coached on job readiness. OTI asks them to treat training like they would treat a job. Trainers are key to setting the culture in the classroom.

- Dynamic instructors create relevant and interesting training.
- Teaching through involvement, not just lecture.
- Respect that women are not “classroom” people, they are TRADES people.
- Let students move around.
- Let participants talk and feel welcome in their future occupation.
- Take time for discussion and conversation to make students feel connected to the training, and guide the experience.

Retention

The key to successful retention outcomes combines mentorship, leadership and team building

- Women need to have ownership in the program not just participation.
- Camaraderie among students keeps the group together.
- Establish regular social events attended by current students and alumni. In the “era of COVID”, these events are held virtually.
- A strong support/empowerment component is essential.
- Open discussion and sharing of ideas cultivates ownership of the training, and responsibility to pull each other up.
- Leadership development promotes empowerment and retention.
- Make every women feel part of a special team.

Placement

Successful placement at OTI involves one-on-one graduate to employer matchups. OTI offers the best training possible making it relevant to the needs of local employers. The industry demand for women workers in trades is high. If students are screened for suitability for the industry and only graduate when ready, then the OTI reputation facilitates placement. Graduates are tracked for two years and encouraged to attend social events and participate in peer to peer mentoring.

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

[Socially Distant Engagement Ideas for Grant Applicants](#)

Community engagement is a requirement for applicants seeking EPA Brownfield MARC Grant funding. EPA recently released a guide of virtual tools and other approaches to continue to perform outreach during COVID-19. When face-to-face meetings or in-person interactions can't happen, consider using virtual tools alongside non-digital approaches.

Creating the Water Workforce of the Future: Webinar Series

[Technology Adoption: It's All About the People](#)

December 9, 2020

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Moderator - Jim Horne, U.S. EPA

Every day, water service providers tackle complex challenges, such as aging water infrastructure, extreme weather events, water shortages, rising costs, increasing customer demands, and cyber security. Water sector utilities serve as "anchor institutions" in their communities and are implementing new and exciting technologies to address these pressing challenges. As utilities adopt these new technologies, they also need to invest in their most important resource: their staff. It is critically important that employees receive training and support to ensure the water workforce remains efficient and resilient.

Please join EPA and speakers from two leading organizations as they discuss the motivations, challenges, and benefits they are experiencing as they work with their own employees and others to ensure their people get the best support possible to meet the technology and water quality challenges of the 21st century.

This webinar is part of an ongoing webinar series sponsored by EPA, with support from other leading water associations. More information on this series is available at <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-waterinfrastructure/water-sector-workforce>

8. CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS

[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>

9. FUNDING AND LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES

EPA Office of Land Revitalization

Contractor support to provide technical assistance (TA) directly to communities

The EPA Land Revitalization Program is offering contractor support to provide technical assistance (TA) directly to communities who wish to incorporate sustainable and equitable approaches to their locally-driven land revitalization projects. Each TA will offer \$30,000 to support site reuse for a brownfield or other contaminated property, and must be completed by Dec 2021.

Types of TA's work include:

- Market analysis, labor market and economic research
- Site design and revitalization plans, green infrastructure
- Reuse assessment of potential assets and barriers to implementing revitalization plans
- Identifying next steps and actions needed for implementing a redevelopment project
- Incorporating sustainable, equitable and/or resiliency practices into reuse

For more information please contact Tish Corbett at corbett.patricia@epa.gov, 215 814-3173.

[Superfund Hazardous Substance Research and Training Program \(P42\)](#)

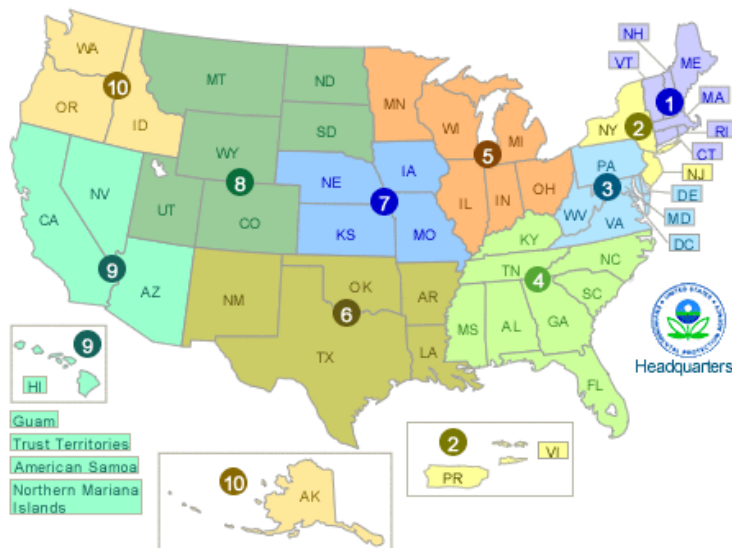
Application deadline: February 15, 2021

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) is continuing the Superfund Hazardous Substance Research and Training Program, referred to as Superfund Research Program (SRP) Centers. SRP Center grants will support problem-based, solution-oriented research Centers that consist of multiple, integrated projects representing both the biomedical and environmental science disciplines. The Center cores are tasked with administrative (which includes research translation), data management and analysis, community engagement, research experience and training coordination, and research support functions.

10. 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.

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|--|--------------------------------|--|
| 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

11. JOIN US ON FUTURE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CALLS

Upcoming PLC calls

- December 2
- December 16

Note: Cycle 34 will start January 13, 2021.

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 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.

