

Notes from the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC) – 3/24/2021

These are post session notes from the fifth call in this cycle of Workforce Development Professional Learning Community (PLC) conversations. The Environmental Workforce PLC meets every other Wednesday from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm Eastern time via conference call from any telephone. Each PLC session will include discussions related to the development of successful EWDJT programs. The next PLC will be April 7th – same time, place and call in number.

The objective of the (PLC) is to promote and share innovative strategies among Brownfields Job training communities and provide assistance to new communities interested in developing environmental job training programs.

This week's discussion points included.

- Updates from Washington
- Review of the FY21 EWDJT funding announcements.
- Funded/not funded? – Things to do now.
- Revisiting the March 10th in person training strategies webinar.
- Looking forward to the FY22 EWDJT Requests for Applications.

If you received these notes, you are on our list to continue receiving announcements and session notes. Return this email with subject “Remove” if you are no longer interested in receiving PLC notes and announcements.

If you or an associate would like to be added to the PLC participant list, send contact information to:

HMTRI@eicc.edu

Ideas presented during these sessions represent individual opinions. They do not represent EPA, state, local or organizational policy. Information presented should not be taken as such.

Post Session Notes Session 250, March 24th, 2021

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1. Latest from Washington

Brownfields 2021 is still scheduled for September 27-30, 2021

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Sing up for the latest information on the 2021 Brownfields Conference, including featured speakers, sponsorship opportunities, and more.

[Visit the conference website](#)

EPA Selects 18 Organizations to Receive \$3.3 Million in Brownfields Job Training Grants to Build a Skilled Environmental Workforce in Economically Distressed Communities Across the Nation.

On March 11th EPA announced this year's FY21 applications that have been recommended for funding. We will discuss this announcement later in today's PLC. The full text of the announcement can be found at the following address.

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-selects-18-organizations-receive-33-million-brownfields-job-training-grants-build>

2. News from HMTRI

Mark your calendar

HMTRI is planning the annual virtual All Grantee Meeting May 4th, 5th and 6th.

12:00 to 3:00 pm Eastern each day

This year's All Grantee Meeting will be a Zoom event with a format similar to last year's. Sessions are scheduled from 12:00 to 3:00 pm Eastern each day. The event will feature networking opportunities with EPA staff, Regional Coordinators, current, past and prospective grantees, student videos, break-out rooms for discussion and grantee tours. HMTRI has completed a scan to determine topics and talking points of interest. In the coming weeks, we will be recruiting presenters and collecting videos to showcase their program with meeting participants.

All Grantee Meeting topic scan

Thank you for your input regarding topics you would like to cover at this year's All Grantee Meeting. Currently we are planning 3 regional breakout sessions, 10 plenary sessions and 15 breakout sessions that will cover the topics and talking points suggested. Our after hour sessions will feature home videos and grantee tours.

3. Questions from PLC participants

Question: I just heard we got the grant! Do you know the start and end dates for the grants just announced?

Response: *Congratulations... but hold on.... Applications recommended for funding have been announced, however, there is still a ways to go before you can start spending money. Some awardees may have already been congratulated by their EPA Regional Coordinator (those who have been refunded and are on Regional contact lists). All selected organizations will receive*

official notice and a grant package package shortly. In some cases, there may be an official announcement and or a photo op with public officials. (We love photo ops). Make sure the individual submitting the grant is aware (principal contacts have been known to change jobs). Several dates are relevant to administration of the grant and ability to access funding.

- Date of the announcement– March 11th, 2021 [FY 21 EPA EWDJT announcements](#)
- Project period – Before September 31st
- Budget period – Usually same as Project Period

The project period and budget period are usually the same and scheduled about 2+ months after the announcements but before the end of the fiscal year (September 31). Work plans, terms and conditions, final negotiations and spending accounts need to be completed before authorization to spend funds can be made. We would suggest contacting the Regional Coordinator if you need to spend funds before final authorization to spend funds is given. EPA can grant permission (in special circumstances) to spend funds up to 90 days before a final authorization to spend funds is authorized. When the project period and budget period is set, the fun begins with milestones completed and quarterly reports every quarter. Best wishes... Each grant will have different dates, but here is a general timeline.

FY21 EWDJT timeline

The timeline for each grant depends on the official award date and authorization to spend funds. A hypothetical schedule might look like the time line presented below. The FY21 EWDJT grant cycle extends from the official start date for three years. The first two years should focus on program development and training delivery with a final year for additional training, placement, tracking and program sustainability.

Late Summer 2020

- EPA issues a Request for FY21 EWDJT Applications

Fall 2020

- Applicants have 60 days to write and submit their applications

March 11, 2021

- 18 proposals recommended for FY21 funding

April, 2021

- Regional Coordinators contact successful and unfunded applicants
- Grant packages are sent to successful applicants
- Award letter and acceptance by applicant
- All applicants have an opportunity to schedule a debriefing and review of their application

May –September, 2021

- Post award meetings with Advisory Board, partners, instructors and community stakeholder
- Work plans reviewed and approved
- Terms and Conditions finalized
- Grant accepted by submitting organization
- Funding authorized
- Official notice that funds are available for spending
- Program planning preparation for the first cohort under the new grant

October ++, 2021-2022

- Assessment, recruitment and first cohort under the new grant begins
- Quarterly and ACRES reporting due every quarter
- Training and curriculum adjustments from lessons learned

- *Recruitment and training continues*
- *Partnership and resource leveraging continues*
- *First and second year of the grant focused on training and placement*

2023

- *Preparation for program expansions, sustainability and grant refunding*
- *Partnership development continues*

2023-2024

- *Last year of the grant, training “windup” - placement, tracking*
- *Continued development of Federal and local funding for program expansion*

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4. FY21 EWDJT funding announcements

Congratulations to the 18 EWDJT programs recommended for EPA funding. Some applicants will be establishing new programs, others building on existing programs including returning alumni not funded in the last three years.

Keep in mind that funding recommendations are based on an objective evaluation of submitted written proposals applications. Many excellent and deserving programs may be overlooked using this process. Unsuccessful applications are not necessarily a reflection on the effectiveness or quality of a program but rather a reflection on the response to evaluation criteria in relation to other proposals submitted. For this reason, we strongly suggest those not considered for funding this cycle continue their efforts in establishing EWDJT in their community. We encourage organizations to continue participating in All Grantee Meetings, tuning into the PLC and attending Brownfield conferences and local events. This summer applicants will have another opportunity to apply for FY22 environmental workforce training support.

Including this year’s announcements, EPA has awarded more than 353 grants totaling over \$75 million. Over 18,700 individuals have been trained and 13,751 have been placed in careers related to land remediation, environmental health and safety. This year’s grantees will add another 900 graduates to that total. Here is snapshot of EPA funding awards over the past six years. Note EWDJT competition was suspended in FY19, only to resume with an early and expanded competition in 2020.

- 18 grantees - FY2021
- 26 grantees - FY2020
- 0 grantees - FY2019 – no competition this year
- 18 grantees - FY2018
- 6 grantees - FY2017
- 7 grantees - FY2016

New FY21 grantees recommending for funding

Again, Congratulations to the class of EWDJT for FY21. Here is a list of the FY21 EWDJT applications that have been recommended for funding. Here is the formal announcement from EPA

[FY 21 EWDJT grantees](#)

- City of East Point
- City of Worcester

- Energy Coordinating Agency
- Groundwork Denver
- Groundwork Rhode Island
- Kern County Builders Exchange
- Limitless Vistas, Inc.
- Nye County
- People United for Sustainable Housing Inc. (PUSH Buffalo)
- Pittsburgh Conservation Corps (Landforce)
- Santa Fe Community College
- Southwest Economic Solutions Corporation
- St. Nicks Alliance
- The HOPE Program, Inc.
- The Research Foundation of CUNY of the City College of New York
- The WorkPlace
- Vermont Rural Water Association
- West End Neighborhood House, Inc.

FY20 grantees in their first year

For a complete listing of active grantees, here is a listing of the 26 FY20 EWDJT grantees and the formal announcement from EPA

Active FY20 grantees

- Alaska Forum Inc.
- Auberle
- City of New Bedford
- City of Pittsburg
- City of Richmond
- City of Rochester
- City of Springfield
- Civic Works Inc.
- Colorado Department of Local Affairs
- Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa Inc.
- Cypress Mandela Training Center Inc.
- Earth Conservancy
- El Centro
- Full Employment Council
- Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps.
- Hunters Point Family
- Lorain County Board of Commissioners
- Lost Angeles Conservations Corps
- OAI Inc.
- PathStone Corporation
- Southern University at Shreveport
- St. Louis Community College
- The Fortune Society Inc.
- Training to Work an Industry Niche
- Workforce Inc. dba RecycleForce
- Zender Environmental Health and Research Group

Between FY20 and FY 21 grantees the active EWDJT family includes 44 organizations. Another 4 FY18 and 4 FY17 grantees will hopefully return in the next competition.

Following the tradition of past EWDJT grantees, those who have made their mistakes and found successful strategies moving forward can be of great assistance assisting new grantees with the challenges and issues faced by new programs. Additionally, as a group, the EWDJT community can assist each other by exchanging best practices and sharing critical issues necessary for program success.

FY18 and FY17 grantees

- Essex County Division of Training and Employment
- King County
- Sustainable South Bronx
- Tacoma, City of
- Florida State College at Jacksonville
- Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board
- Oregon Tradeswomen Inc.
- Salish Kootenai College

With a renewed emphasis on Environmental Justice and workforce development, we are anticipating increased interest this summer with new, existing and legacy programs applying for FY22 Funding.

5. Funded/not funded? – Things to do now

Funded – now what?

Remember... Successful proposals have been recommended for funding but funds are not yet available to spend.

Before the formal award is made and drawdowns begin, several important milestones must be completed.

- Terms and Conditions with approved work plans should be the primary focus during the months ahead.
- It's time to spread the good news and alert management of the tasks ahead.
- Time to pull out the grant, reviewing commitments and deliverables made in the proposal.
- Regional Coordinators will contact and send a package or templet with all the information the EPA grants office needs to process the grant.
- This is the time to refine budgets and work plan with revisions if necessary.
- After the award letter has been received, the principal grant recipient must acknowledge acceptance of the terms and conditions. In the case of governmental organizations, acceptance may need approval by City Council. Community colleges, nonprofit and tribes may need approval from the Board of Directors, Tribal Council or Director. Don't assume these approvals will be automatic.
- After contacting the Regional Coordinator, it is wise to set up a meeting with partners and stakeholders with an active role in the program.

- After grant processing has been completed and payment accounts established, grantees will receive authorization spend funds.
- Note: under special circumstances (such as budgeting for Brownfields 2021 Regional Coordinators may allow expenditure of funds up to 90 days prior to final authorization with special permission. It is important to work with the Regional Coordinator on this matter.

Unfunded programs

As previously noted, many excellent and deserving programs have likely been overlooked. Unsuccessful applications are not necessarily a reflection on the effectiveness or quality of a program but rather a reflection on the response to ranking criteria in relation to other proposals submitted. As demonstrated in the past, first time applicants often need a second try before submitting a successful application. Alumni grantees often need to rethink their partnerships and expand the scope of their proposals. In each case, we offer the following advice.

- Continue expanding the existing proposal – the FY22 RFA is only months away.
- Update labor market and community assessments.
- Relate program objectives to labor market and community needs.
- Maintain coordination with partners expanding the scope of their involvement.
- Revisit curriculum offerings and delivery based on current needs and public health concerns.
- Contact Regional Coordinators for a critical proposal review.
- Stay engaged with HMTRI meetings, the PLC, national and local brownfield conferences.

6. Revisiting the HMTRI March 10th in person training webinar

As discussed in this week’s PLC call, In-person training appears to be the primary method for environmental workforce training delivery as public health concern over virus transmission begins to abate. On March 10th HMTRI facilitated a Mid-Year Webinar panel of EWDJT grantees to explore lessons learned during the global pandemic. Thanks go out to the panel which included Elizabeth Cornell from Limitless Vistas in New Orleans, LA, Ken Alexander from RecycleForce in Indianapolis, IN, and Rene Dulle from St. Louis Community College, St. Louis, MO. A recording of the webinar will be posted on the Brownfields Toolbox. To explore this topic in more detail, the January issue of CONNECT News discusses public health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies for continued operation of EWDJT programs.

https://bf-toolbox.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/08154346/CONNECTNews_January_2021.pdf

7. Upcoming Webinars



GBA Members Only: Sign up for Early Bird Registration for the 2021 Brownfield Seminar and you'll receive discounted registration of only \$135! If you have not joined or renewed your membership for 2021, click here to join or renew and enjoy all of our great member benefits - including discounted admission to the Brownfield Seminar!

And, thank you to those of you who submitted abstracts for this year's Brownfield Seminar. We are thrilled to have so many inspiring, informative topics to present during our virtual event on June 22-23.

Click here to learn more
[REGISTER NOW!](#)

Addressing the role of the vaccine in workplace COVID-19 prevention

Check out the recording of the NIEHS webinar on Addressing the role of the vaccine in workplace COVID-19 prevention: How to weed through misinformation, mistrust, and improve worker protections. You can access the recording here
<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=2592>

Upcoming webinars in this series are listed on the following page.
[WTP Meetings & Workshops page](#)

8. Funding, leveraging and outreach opportunities

EJ grant opportunities

Request proposal packages on or before May 7

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced the availability of up to \$6 million in grant funding under The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program and The Environmental Justice Small Grants (EJSG) Program.

“These grants are crucial to supporting vulnerable and overburdened communities disproportionately affected by environmental health risks,” said Office of Environmental Justice Director Matthew Tejada. “With renewed leadership to address environmental justice under the Biden-Harris Administration, we are excited to support community efforts to address historically challenging issues.”

EPA will be giving special consideration to the following focus areas:

- Addressing COVID-19 concerns faced by low-income communities and communities of color
- Climate Change and Natural Disaster Resiliency outreach and planning
- New applicants to either opportunity
- Ports Initiative to assist people living and working near ports across the country
- Small non-profits

The EJCPS Cooperative Agreement Program’s total estimated funding for this opportunity is approximately \$3,200,000. EPA anticipates awarding two cooperative agreements of \$160,000 each within each of the 10 EPA Regions.

To learn more about pre-application assistance calls and how to apply for funding, please visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmental-justice/environmental-justice-collaborative-problem-solving-cooperative-agreement-0>.

The EJSG Program estimates approximately \$2,800,000 will be awarded to approximately five applications per EPA region in amounts of up to \$50,000 per award. This includes the EPA’s Ports Initiative program which anticipates funding up to six additional projects that address clean air issues at coastal and inland ports or rail yards. To learn more about pre-application assistance calls and how to apply for funding, please visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-small-grants-program>

Applicants interested in either opportunity must submit proposal packages on or before May 7, 2021 to be considered for the available funding. Applicants should plan for projects to begin on October 1, 2021.

For more information on environmental justice grants, funding, and technical assistance visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-grants-funding-and-technical-assistance>

**CPWR is now accepting applications for funding from the Small Study Program
Open applications accepted**

CPWR's Small Study Program provides seed money of up to \$30,000 to investigate promising new research initiatives. Many major research projects began with a Small Study to demonstrate its viability or test the approach, and other studies have resulted in important stand-alone projects. A survey of researchers funded under this program found that more than 60 percent had published their findings in peer-reviewed journals.

How to apply for a Small Study Grant

Researchers interested in funding should review the Small Study Guidelines, which explain the requirements and process in detail. Applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis and can come from investigators from a wide range of disciplines, including applied computer sciences, communication sciences, construction management, consumer marketing, economics, engineering, psychology, and work organization. We also welcome innovative proposals from occupational safety and health researchers, ergonomists, epidemiologists, researchers partnering with industry practitioners, and others.

Learn more from reviewing the list of Funded Small Studies, go to:

[Additional information](#)

10. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators

Regional Coordinators are the first place to go regarding questions about EWDJT grants, extensions, budgets or work plans. 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

CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT

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EPA Region 2

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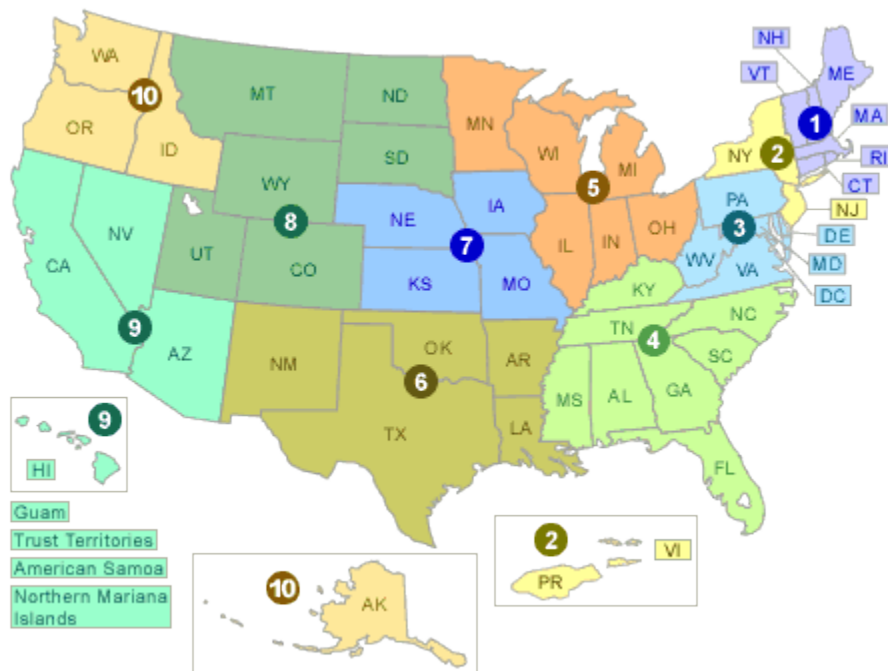
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Susan Morales

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11. Join us for the next Professional Learning Community call

Missed a few of our PLC sessions? Post session notes are available on the brownfields-toolbox.org. Go to the PLC corner.

The objective of the (PLC) is to promote and share innovative strategies among those interested in establishing community based environmental job training programs. Our sessions allow participants to stay in touch with EWDJT happenings, ask questions, showcase their programs and help others. The Environmental Workforce PLC is open to all and there is no cost or obligation to attend. Join us when you can.

[Next PLC call – Wednesday, April 7th, 2021 – Same time and “call in”](#)

Email questions or to be placed on the PLC register send contact information to:
HMTRI@eicc.edu

To participate in our Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community session call:

(319) 527-3513

Use access code **550105** followed by # to be connected to our session.

Sign up a friend – no cost – no obligation

Join us for helpful hints & open discussion

Call from any phone at: 1:55 pm Eastern time (5 minutes early) Discussions last about 30 minutes.

-- PLC notes and recordings of past sessions are also uploaded to our website at:

<http://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-sessions/>.

If you would like to invite a guest, feel free to forward this email.

HMTRI is part of Eastern Iowa Community Colleges and has provided environmental workforce development technical assistance since the inception of EPA's Brownfields Initiative.

PLC notes presented represent individual opinions and ideas from Professional Learning Community participants and EWDJT grantees. They do not represent EPA policy, guidance or opinions and should not be taken as such.

For more information on HMTRI technical assistance services or to be added to our Grantee and Community Outreach Listserv, please contact:

HMTRI@eicc.edu

