

Limitless Vistas, Inc.

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When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, levy failures inundated the city with fuel, sewage, chemicals from oil spills, pesticides, and hazardous waste. Hurricane Rita and the BP oil spill added to the environmental degradation. BFA Environmental responded to these disasters by training and employing over one hundred local residents to assist in cleanup efforts.

BFA Environmental's interest in training in association with environmental cleanup led them to Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana, Inc. where together they received an EWDJT grant in 2008. Recognizing the value this program brought to community residents, a partnership was formed of community, governmental, and private stakeholders to submit a revised EWDJT proposal in 2010. Limitless Vistas Inc. has been training and placing strong ever since.

Limitless Vistas Inc. is special because of its origins and close relationship to private sector and municipal employers. The use of leveraged stipends, training, and internships with hands on student experiences make Limitless Vista, Inc. stand out among EWDJT programs. Their approach to placing water/wastewater graduates is especially noteworthy.

Targeted Community

- Unemployed and under-employed residents of Gert Town and Central City (two of the most vulnerable neighborhoods impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita). An estimated 94.5 percent of Gert Town residents are African-American, and 48.6 percent of the residents live in poverty.
- Disadvantaged youth
- Ex-offenders
- Veterans
- Low-income minorities

Path to EWDJT

- 2008—Partnered with Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana, Inc. to receive the initial EWDJT grant.
- 2010—Applied for and received the first EPA EWDJT grant under Limitless Vistas, Inc.
- 2012—Re-competed and awarded a second stimulus EPA EWDJT grant.
- 2014—Re-competed and awarded its current EPA EWDJT grant.

Leveraged Resources

- AmeriCorps

- 21st Century Conservation Corps
- “My Brother’s Keeper”
- Private remediation and consulting organizations
- Training from remediation consultants
- Leveraged stipends and internships
- Life skills training from other nonprofit organizations

Key Partners

- New Orleans Workforce Investment Board
- Regional Brownfields Commission
- New Orleans Mayor's Office of Workforce Development
- New Orleans Office of Coastal and Environmental Affairs
- The Corps Network
- Community-based organizations
- Environmental employers

Program Challenge

Limitless Vistas plans to train and place 50 students under the current grant, placing graduates in sustainable, long-term employment.

Core Training Program

The core training program includes 370 hours of instruction. Participants who complete the core training will earn eight state or federal certifications in addition to life skills training.

- HAZWOPER 40-hr, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120
- Water/Wastewater
- Emergency Response
- Environmental Site Assessment
- Wetlands and Coastal Restoration
- DOT Hazardous Waste
- Asbestos Contractor Supervisor
- Lead Paint Awareness
- Solid Waste Management and Cleanup
- OSHA 10-hour Construction
- Alternative Energy Sources
- Underground Storage Tank Remediation
- Life Skills (leveraged)

Student Recruitment

Recruitment using flyers and referrals provide a pool of qualified applicants. Graduates and reputation provide the best vehicle for student recruitment.

Training Delivery, Services, and Retention

Training includes hands-on experiences with opportunities for leveraged stipends and internships.

Graduate Placement and Tracking

Close relationships with employers and opportunities for internships provide the best vehicles for placing graduates in entry-level water/wastewater jobs. Limitless Vistas works with municipal water/wastewater organizations to provide internships for program participants.

Summary Notes

The greatest need creates the greatest opportunities. Potential EWDJT programs need to seek out and identify local needs.