

Civic Works

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Education, Skills Development, and Community Service

With Youthbuild, Urban Farming, Americorps, and Green Careers Programs, Civic Works strengthens Baltimore's communities through education, skills development, and community service. As an urban community service organization, Civic Works has a broad mission in a large community. Divided into several missions including job training, education, green homes, green spaces, and healthy communities, B'More Green is part of the Center for Green Jobs. Other notable activities as part of Civic Works include urban farming, community abandoned lots, Youth Build programs, college prep, and service opportunities for Americorps volunteers. B'More Green stands on its own, but adds to a critical mass allowing Civic Works to fill its mission of training, education, and community service.

The B'More Green EWDJT program received EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training awards in 2009, 2011, and again in 2014. While the EWDJT program has operated for over 5 years, the Civic Works parent organization has served community residents for over 20 years. Together they have learned to leverage programs creating an impressive community service organization helping underserved residents of Baltimore. B'More Green EWDJT combines volunteerism, strong employer support, and philanthropy to leverage available EPA funding.

Their two-year case management and tracking program after graduation is one of the best in the EWDJT program, resulting in a placement rate of 90% and a \$12–\$16 per hour starting wage.

Targeted Community

Unemployed and underemployed Baltimore residents living in impacted communities with a focus on:

- Ex-offenders
- Veterans
- People suffering from mental illness
- Recovering drug abusers
- Homeless individuals
- Minorities

Path to EWDJT for Community Residents

2009—Applied for and received the first EPA EWDJT grant

2011—Re-competed and awarded a second stimulus EPA EWDJT grant

2014—Re-competed and awarded its current EPA EWDJT grant

Leveraged Resources

B'More Green, unlike many EWDJT grantees, does not rely extensively on services provided by the local Workforce Investment Board. Instead, it leverages resources from employers, volunteers, donations, and philanthropic grants and services.

Key Partners

- Our Daily Bread Employment Center
- Baltimore Child Support Office
- Maryland New Directions
- Episcopal Community Services
- Baltimore Development Corporation
- Numerous community-based organizations
- Environmental employers

Program Challenges

As an EWDJT program in a large urban community, B'More Green must ration 20 available slots in each cycle of its training program. Finding the best fit for 20 participants from over 100 applicants is a major program challenge. This challenge is addressed by a rigorous application and screening process.

Core Training Program

- 146 hours of instruction over 4 1/2 weeks on intensive continuous training (daytime training)
- Civic Works and its partners are leveraging an additional 40 hours of life skills and job readiness training. Funding comes from leveraged sources.
- A total of seven state or federal certifications—depending on employer needs (Note that the training program is highly influenced by employer needs)
- HAZWOPER 40hr, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120
- OSHA confined space entry
- Maryland lead abatement worker
- OSHA hazardous site worker protection and emergency response
- EPA AHERA supervisor certification
- OSHA blood borne pathogens certification
- Fall protection certification

Student Recruitment

1. Tuesday nights provide information sessions, open house, and presentations.
2. Interested residents complete written applications.
3. Applicants undergo preliminary interviews.
4. Drug and background checks are performed.

5. A second and more extensive interview with staff, trainers, placement staff, and a case manager.
6. A group decision based on each of the above evaluations.

Training Delivery, Services, and Retention

1. Upon acceptance, a case manager reviews issues that may impede training and placement.
2. Impediments such as transportation, daycare, housing, probation, and legal issues are addressed.
3. Additional support agencies are brought into the process as required.
4. Case managers, trainers, and program staff monitor participant progress for the duration of the program.
5. Issues as they arise during training are resolved with case manager involvement.

As part of the ancillary training, personal development and job readiness skills are provided.

Graduate Placement and Tracking

Graduates receive a program diploma and numerous state and federal individual course certifications.

B'More Green has an exemplary placement and tracking program.

- Placement and tracking staff follow graduates on a monthly basis for two years.
- Contact is made by phone or in person.
- Case managers track issues and provide follow up services as needed.
- Graduate job performance is evaluated with frequent contact with employers and supervisors.
- Encouragement to follow a career path is part of every placement.

The process of placement, tracking, and evaluation is credited for the success of the overall program. Employers are impressed with the concern and attention given to each program graduate. Again, funding for this additional level of service is provided by private foundation and community donations.

Summary Notes

The two most important factors attributed to the success of B'More Green are:

1. Create an employer-driven EWDJT program. Employers must be on the advisory board and influence the technical curriculum as well as professional development services.
2. With cooperation from employers, the EWDJT program must address the labor needs of the community. Labor market assessments are essential and must be dynamic as employer needs may change from cycle to cycle.