

CONNECT News

Community Support, Networking, and Assistance for Environmental Career Training

March 2017

The Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute (HMTRI) provides technical assistance to communities interested in developing and delivering environmental job training programs. HMTRI also provides technical support to Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) grantees funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These efforts are made possible with a cooperative agreement with the U.S. EPA.

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

LEVERAGING RESOURCES

Funding sources are vital to the establishment and operation of EWDJT programs. However, not all support comes in the form of currency. Equally important are leveraged, or in-kind, resources that often exceed the value of financial contributions. Services, facilities, equipment, etc. provided by others at no cost to the program are categorized as leveraged resources.

There are no regulatory or administrative responsibilities associated with leveraged contributions. Leveraged resources and partners may come into the program at any time.

Life skills training, remedial training, student support, and addressing legal and personal issues can be as important to student success as technical skills. Often, they are more important. These primary factors influence student retention and can be a pathway or a deterrent to student placement and employment success.

While the EPA EWDJT program supports job placement activities, it does not provide for these types of crucial support services.

This funding gap becomes a wake-up call for the importance of leveraged partners. Successful EWDJT programs create partnerships to fill this gap, and to strengthen and leverage available resources that contribute to the long-term sustainability of the program.

POTENTIAL LEVERAGING PARTNERS

Fortunately there are many potential partners that provide these types of services.

- Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
 - Provide transportation vouchers, training materials, recruitment, screening, testing, and placement.
- OneStop Career Centers
- Federal, state, and city government
 - Provide state and local block grants.
- Housing authorities
- Corporations, foundations, and nonprofit organizations
 - Check foundation's current funding priorities.
- Private philanthropy such as GoFundMe

- Private sector enterprise and consultants
 - Serve on advisory boards.
 - Recommend and/or conduct training.
 - Provide facilities and equipment.
- Educational institutions
 - Provide classrooms, instruction, and assist in designing curriculum.
- Faith-based and nongovernmental organizations
- Community-based organizations
 - Work with disadvantaged people in most communities.
 - Assist with recruiting and screening students.
- Advisory board members
 - Provide link to community organizations and potential supporters.
 - Guide direction of training.
 - Hire graduates.
- Training consultants
- Fire and first responder teams
- Goodwill Industries, Salvation Army, YouthBuild, Strive, Conservation Corps, and similar organizations
- U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)
 - Provide remedial education.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Local banks

TYPES OF LEVERAGED ASSISTANCE

Leveraged assistance comes in many forms.

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

Life skills are a necessary prerequisite for EWDJT program candidates who need to meet the challenges of the rigorous training. They are also necessary for a student to gain and hold employment after graduation. Goal setting, decision-making, time management, listening skills, and problem-solving are examples of life

skills that some students may not have had the opportunity to develop.

Life skills training supported by the federal government is usually part of a larger comprehensive program with block grants given to states. States, in turn, establish social service agencies and WIBs. States may also develop statewide programs passing resources down to counties and communities to support local programs. Each locality is different. It is important to search local, county, and state labor and social service programs for available assistance.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Financial literacy is becoming an essential part of an overall life skills education. There are numerous resources and training opportunities available from federal and nonprofit organizations as well as in-kind volunteer training opportunities with local banks. Local banks can become excellent leveraged partners providing instructors, guest speakers, and mentors for EWDJT participants.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION AND LITERACY ISSUES

Curriculum associated with EWDJT programs requires basic math and science skills. Poor math, English, and verbal skills can become major impediments for training and environmental employment. Remedial education is sometimes necessary before training can begin.

Student assessments should be included as part of the screening process to provide a clear characterization of each individual's knowledge and experience. Even the best students may have forgotten skills necessary as a foundation for environmental training that they previously had mastered.

Remedial education may occur in several ways. Programs that are part of larger training organizations may incorporate remedial training

courses as part of an overall comprehensive program. DOL programs may develop individual learning plans that include remedial education. When remedial education is needed but not available, it may be required to incorporate it into each environmental course.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a support service that is often overlooked and can become a major issue concerning student retention, placement, and sustained employment. EWDJT programs located in communities with an underdeveloped transportation infrastructure may need to include transportation between home and training as a condition of acceptance. Programs located in communities with a good transportation service allow for more flexibility.

EWDJT programs have leveraged transportation support in a number of ways. In rural areas, auto dealerships have provided discounts to EWDJT graduates. In urban communities, it is not uncommon for students to receive free or discounted public transportation passes to and from class.

SHARING FACILITIES

Sharing facilities is one way to stretch program dollars. Some organizations may see a public relations benefit by opening their doors to EWDJT programs for the use of meeting rooms, laboratories, hazardous materials practice facilities, or classrooms. If these facilities happen to be on the grounds of a potential employer, the benefit is two-fold.

IN-KIND STAFF SUPPORT

In-kind staff support is a common and valuable source of assistance for EWDJT programs. An employee from a partnering organization may be loaned as an advisor on marketing, public relations, curriculum development, management, or other areas where their expertise would be helpful.

CHILD CARE SERVICES / PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Funding for child care services is usually provided by the DHHS National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) through block grants to each state. The best place to start regarding child care assistance is the state or county Department of Human Services, Child Care Services, or Family Services.

If a student is on public assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a state and federal program that provides funds for support services and family assistance.

OTHER TYPES OF LEVERAGED ASSISTANCE

Other types of leveraged assistance used by EWDJT programs include:



- Equipment
- Recruitment and screening assistance
- Instructional materials
- Instructional assistance
- Student support
- Placement assistance
- Marketing/public relations
- Consultation and advice
- Job readiness training
- Construction skills
- Ex-offender programs
- Veteran's programs
- Personal and legal issues
- Counseling and advocacy
- Anger management
- Attitude adjustment
- Working in groups
- Proper presentation

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a popular vehicle for providing guidelines to in-kind partnerships, especially among governmental organizations. The MOU summarizes the nature of the partnerships and states in general terms the expectations of each party in achieving a common goal.

In-kind contributing partners may need formal partnership agreements similar to those of fiscal partners. For example, donated property may have controls that require tagging and tracking. Or they may choose to provide support on an informational, unrestricted basis.

ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL JOB DEVELOPMENT ALL-GRANTEE MEETING

Registration is now open for the 2017 *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting*. This year's meeting will be held August 9–10, 2017 at the Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria hotel in Alexandria, VA. Travel days are August 8 and 11. This meeting is open to:

- Present EPA-funded EWDJT grantees
- Past EWDJT grantees
- Members of HMTRI's Professional Learning Community (PLC)

There is no fee to attend. HMTRI will cover the cost of lodging for three nights for participants attending from out-of-town. The deadline for making hotel reservations at the group rate is Monday, July 17, 2017.

Contact Glo Hanne for more information at ghanne@eicc.edu.

HMTRI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance services for EWDJT grantees and prospective grantees provided by HMTRI include:

- Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting
- Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Update Webinar
- Grantee and Community Outreach listserv
- Environmental Workforce Development PLC
- MentorLink program
- grantee scans
- individualized technical assistance

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on HMTRI technical assistance services or to be added to our Grantee and Community Outreach Listserv, please contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

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