

CONNECT News

Community Support, Networking, and Assistance for Environmental Career Training

January 2016

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 assistance to EPA-funded Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) grantees. These efforts are performed through cooperative agreements with the U.S. EPA. HMTRI, part of Eastern Iowa Community Colleges, has been providing workforce development technical assistance since the inception of the Brownfields program.

HMTRI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES OVERVIEW

Brownfields Toolbox Website

The Brownfields Toolbox website is the HMTRI repository and archive for all things related to environmental workforce development and job training. Some of the resources available include:

- EPA and HMTRI announcements and events
- Environmental training resources and events
- Grant and leveraging opportunities
- Professional Learning Community (PLC) post-session notes and audio recordings
- *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* resources and downloads
- Program components needed to start a job training program
- Interactive map of EWDJT locations
- EWDJT grantee contributions
- Grantee photos and milestone events
- EWDJT awareness materials
- Certified Employee Finder

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



Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting

The *Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting* provides a unique opportunity for EWDJT grantees to share a variety of approaches to Brownfields job training and workforce development. At the two-day meeting, participants exchange information and ideas in small groups and with EPA regional and headquarters representatives. The goal of the meeting is to assist grantees to develop and deliver their best possible job training program. All EPA-funded EWDJT grantees are strongly encouraged to attend.

Information shared may include:

- Program guidelines, expectations, & legal issues
- Initiatives that support and interact with Brownfields activities
- Technical assistance resources and sources
- EWDJT health and safety awareness
- Strategies for:
 - Recruitment, placement, and tracking
 - Partnering
 - Student services and retention
 - Project plans, implementation, and reporting

Active PLC members are invited guests to learn first-hand from EWDJT grantees and EPA job training regional coordinators and headquarters staff.

There is no fee to attend this meeting. Lodging costs for three nights are covered by HMTRI through a cooperative agreement from EPA.

Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Update Webinar

An Annual Update Webinar is held approximately six months after the All-Grantee meeting. This webinar gives grantees an opportunity to exchange and share information, ideas, and best practices. The forum allows grantees to network as a group more than once a year, and reminds them of the importance of networking throughout the year. The objective of the mid-year webinar is to identify program issues and explore alternative solutions.

Grantee and Community Outreach Listserve

The Grantee and Community Outreach Listserve is used to post information, announcements, and inquiries related to workforce development. Examples of posts include:

- Professional Learning Community (PLC) announcements and session reminders
- Funding announcements including EWDJT and related grant opportunities
- Annual All-Grantee meeting and webinar announcements
- EPA and HMTRI activity announcements

Members also use the listserv as a networking tool and a resource where they can post a request for information to fellow grantees.

Environmental Workforce Development Professional Learning Community (PLC)

The objective of the PLC is to promote and share innovative strategies among Brownfields job training communities, and to provide technical assistance to new communities interested in developing job training programs. The PLC is open to everyone.

Every other Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. ET, HMTRI facilitates a 30-minute PLC conference call. Each cycle, consisting of ten sessions, features presentations from current and past EWDJT programs. Post-session notes and audio recordings of each session are housed on the Brownfields Toolbox website at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/> under the “PLC Corner” tab.

MentorLink Program

The MentorLink program fosters mentor/grantee bonds. Expert mentors are individuals who have demonstrated experience and expertise in specific activities of environmental workforce development programs such as student recruitment, assessment, or placement. Mentors consist of current and past grantees including some from outside the EWDJT program. Expert mentors have been recruited as volunteers to provide coaching to those requesting assistance. HMTRI maintains a roster of individuals interested in participating in the MentorLink program.

Grantee Scans

Annual requests are sent to all EPA-funded EWDJT grantees to provide information about their programs that includes:

- Organization name and contact information
- Graduation dates
- Certificates and certifications held by graduates
- Core competencies

Responses are compiled into the *Certified Employee Finder* to assist employers in finding screened workers with EPA and OSHA certifications in health, safety, and environmental technology.

The *Certified Employee Finder* is distributed through the Brownfields Toolbox website, at the annual All-Grantee meetings, and at national and regional conferences. Additional postings appear on the Grantee and Community Outreach Listserve, and shared with EPA regional and headquarters staff to distribute as needed.

Individualized Technical Assistance

Individualized technical assistance is provided to existing, new, and prospective grantees to address specific workforce development issues. Technical assistance may be provided face-to-face at meetings and conferences, over the telephone, or through email.

2016 ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND JOB TRAINING GRANTS

Proposals for EPA's FY2016 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training (EWDJT) were due January 14, 2016. Successful applicants will develop job training programs that recruit, train, and place local, unemployed, and under-employed residents with the skills needed to secure full-time employment in the environmental field. EPA anticipates awarding approximately 17–18 EWDJT cooperative agreements at amounts up to \$200,000 each over a three-year period.

Tentative schedule:

- Awards announced—April/May 2016
- Administrative/work plan approvals—July/August 2016
- HMTRI Annual Environmental Job Development All-Grantee Meeting—August 2016
- Execution of work plans—September 2016
- Program reporting—Ongoing throughout funding cycle

Those not awarded a cooperative agreement for FY2016 should not be discouraged. EPA's funds are limited—it is not possible to fund all of the proposals submitted. Start now to prepare for the next cycle tentatively scheduled to be issued around November 2016.

- Schedule a debriefing with the EPA regional job training coordinator to identify proposal deficiencies and areas to strengthen.
- Revisit community and employer needs.
- Identify and confirm partnerships.
- Make associations and contacts.
- Connect with prospective employers.
- Take part in HMTRI's Professional Learning Community sessions to receive informative tips from experienced EPA-funded grantees.

For more information:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#tab-6>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on HMTRI technical assistance services, contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

To be added to the Grantee and Community Outreach Listserve, contact Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu.

To be added to the Professional Learning Community (PLC) distribution list, contact Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com.

HMTRI
Eastern Iowa Community Colleges
201 North Harrison Street
Suite 101
Davenport, IA 52801

