ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL BROWNFIELDS JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

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ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL BROWNFIELDS JOB TRAINING PROGRAM
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Note: None of the statements made by KSU JT-TAB in this document constitute official EPA advice, interpretations, or positions.
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Overview

**Welcome & Purpose of the Webinar**

The goals of this webinar are to help you:

i) understand the benefits of Brownfields Job Training Programs to communities revitalizing brownfields;

ii) Identify, compare, and interpret BJT Program components and help you

iii) Evaluate and determine appropriate path forward if you are considering pursuing an EPA BJT grant

**Agenda**

After a brief introduction, our speakers will present the eight components of Starting, Conducting and Sustaining a successful Brownfields Job Training Program.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Key terms that illustrate how Job Training Programs benefit communities who are redeveloping brownfields:**

**Brownfields**

Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. For more information go to [www.epa.gov/Brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/Brownfields).

The photos in the slides show a former VA Hospital boiler plant that was identified as a priority brownfield by a community in Little Rock, AR, in an area of high homeless rates, and after assessment and cleanup of asbestos, lead-based paint and petroleum contamination, a non-profit redeveloped the site into Our House, a temporary home and support services provider for up to 150 homeless children. The environmental technicians that assist with the Assessment and Cleanup of brownfields like this are a foundational focus of EPA Job Training Programs.
Environmental Justice: Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment. For more information go to www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice.

Situations where people, through economic and/or social issues, are disproportionately exposed to pollution, say, by living in close proximity to pollution sources and environmentally impacted land, such as brownfields, is an environmental justice issue. Assessing and cleaning up brownfields into community assets (with the community involved) is one way to address environmental justice issues.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) & Inflation Reduction Act (IRA): The BIL and IRA are once-in-a-generation investments to help communities across the country implement infrastructure, clean energy, climate resilience, and other projects, while creating good paying jobs, addressing environmental justice, and boosting local economies. You can learn more about the BIL & IRA at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/build/technical-assistance-guide/

An example of an infrastructure project in an EJ area involving brownfields revitalization is in one of the historical downtown core areas of Springfield, MO. Dense rail and automobile infrastructure, and a corridor of failed commercial and industrial properties along the Jordan River, are adjacent to low income, minority residential areas. Prior to the BIL & IRA era, the City led a community planning process that determined to create a 3-mile-long linear park with attractive amenities and lakes/wetlands to accommodate periodic floods, and catalyze redevelopment of the area into prosperous, cleaner uses that meet community needs. For the west extension of this project, KSU helped collect community input, and summarized the layout of the site once it was cleaned up and revitalized. The removal of contamination, the recreation trails, and a pedestrian bridge for access, were features requested by citizens in the EJ neighborhood to the south.

Community-Based Brownfields Job Training: A railyard maintenance facility was located on the west end of the Springfield project and environmental technicians, and drilling crews, heavy equipment operators and landscapers, which needed environmental certifications, were involved with the soil and water sampling, excavation, and disposal of contaminated soils on and off site, and re-planting the area.

With the availability of BIL and IRA funding, many more resources are available to support a much higher number and scale of community-led brownfield revitalization projects, and this provides a greater-than-ever opportunity to train and employ local citizens to meet environmental workforce needs. Job Training grants do that.

Springfield now has a Brownfields Job Training Grant that provides 15 environmental worker certifications that are prerequisites for many trades beyond environmental technicians, including construction, transportation, solar energy, remanufacturing and recycling, facility operations, and other trades associated with the construction and end uses of brownfields. Brownfields Job Training programs truly help meet a large variety of workforce needs that actually lead to sustainable community revitalization efforts.

The Technical Assistance to Brownfields Program – TAB Providers

The TAB Program is funded by EPA. Five regional service organizations provide free technical assistance to communities and tribes who are revitalizing communities via brownfields redevelopment. Services are free and tailored to meet specific needs. This includes assistance with Job Training Program topics, such as reviewing and providing constructive comments on
draft Brownfields Job Training grant applications. Web sites for each TAB Regional Service Provider are below, and points of contact for help reviewing JT applications for the May 17 – August 15, 2024, application period are at the end of this document.

University of Connecticut - EPA Region 1
New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) - EPA Region 2 and Region 4
The West Virginia University - EPA Region 3
The International City/County Management Association - EPA Region 4
Kansas State University - EPA Regions 5, 6, 7 & 8
Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR) - EPA Regions 9 and 10

History and Background

Since 1998, when the first eleven job training pilots, EPA has recognized the importance of community participation when revitalizing abandoned, contaminated properties. It made little sense to invest in infrastructure and economic development when surrounding communities continued to experience high levels of poverty, crime, and a lack of employment opportunities.

- **1998:** EPA awards its first 11 Brownfields Job Training Pilots to entities including cities, community colleges, universities, and non-profits.
- **As of March 2024:** EPA has funded 414 Job Training Grants totaling approximately $105.5 million.
  - Approximately 21,700 individuals completed training
  - Over 16,200 obtained employment in the environmental field,
  - Average starting wage of over $15 an hour.
    - Over the last 5 years, the average starting wage was approximately $21 an hour
  - Cumulative placement rate since inception = 75%
Goals and Objectives Associated with the Brownfields Job Training

▪ The Brownfields Job Training program was designed to recruit, train and place unemployed and under-employed residents from communities impacted by brownfields.

▪ The program also promotes environmental justice (EJ) by ensuring that residents who live in the community benefit from the revitalization efforts in their communities.

▪ Helps graduates develop wider skill sets that improve their ability to secure full-time, sustainable employment in various aspects of hazardous and solid waste management and within the larger environmental field, including water quality improvement and chemical safety.

Brownfields Job Training Program Requirements

▪ Must target unemployed and under-employed individuals that are residents living in or near an area adversely impacted by the presence of brownfield sites

▪ Must be an eligible entity

▪ Must not duplicate other federally funded environmental job training programs

▪ Must provide OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 40-Hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response to all trainees

▪ Must meet all other threshold criteria as outlined in Section III.B of the RFA

ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL BROWNFIELDS JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

This document discusses eight components of establishing a successful Brownfields Job Training (BJT) program:

▪ Starting Your Program
  1) Starting Your Program
  2) Community and Labor Market Assessment
  3) Partnerships and Leveraging Program Resources

▪ Conducting and Sustaining Your Training Program
  4) Screening and Selection of the Student Cohort
  5) Student Safety, Training Curriculum, Facilities, and Trainers
  6) Student Support - Support Services and Student Retention
  7) Graduation, Placement, and Tracking
  8) Program Sustainability

The Opportunity: EPA Brownfield Job Training Grant Request for Applications (RFA)

▪ EPA Brownfield Job Training grant - up to $500,000 for 5 years

▪ Request for Applications (RFA) issued May 17, 2024 (EPA-I-OLEM-OBLR-24-02)

▪ Application deadline is August 15, 2024

For more information go to www.epa.gov
Before You Start a Program

- Identify essential program partners
- Establish a JT working group
- Consider workloads and time frame
- Establish a roadmap for developing your job training program (timeline and template)

The decision to apply for EPA Job training assistance can be daunting. Unlike many grants, the EPA application requires considerable effort for program planning, data collection, partnership development, and community interaction before the grant can be written. While this year’s funding announcement provides ninety days to write and submit the application -- background effort required to respond to evaluation criteria can take months to assimilate. Communities interested in establishing an environmental job training program need to begin planning their program as early as possible. After submission, communities can expect to wait three to four months for the good news that their application for assistance has been funded and another twelve months before their first training cohort begins. Despite long lead times and a detailed application process, communities have found the benefits associated with establishing an EPA Job Training Program reach far beyond their first grant.

- Brownfield Job Training Programs facilitate the cleanup of local brownfield sites.
- Community job training facilitates economic development and environmental justice in underserved neighborhoods.
- Brownfield Job Training Programs create a pool of vetted, qualified technicians providing a workforce for local contractors.
- Once established, job training programs can unite communities and provide services to residents that would otherwise be unavailable.
- Job training programs attract additional investment opportunities for underserved communities.
- Successful programs attract previously non-existent partnerships and leveraging opportunities.
- Job training funding can act as a “starter grant” leading to additional federal, state, and local funding opportunities.
- Program graduates become mentors and role models to local residents.
- Community based job training programs demonstrate a commitment to environmental justice and community development.

Building a JT Development Team

- Find a Project Manager
- Demonstrate Community Need
- Establish a Working Committee
The first step before a decision is made to move forward with a Brownfields Job Training Program, is finding a project manager, demonstrating the community need for such a program and establishing an “ad hoc” or working committee.

- A champion or advocate is the individual who serves as program organizer, task master and perhaps project manager as the job training effort develops. Every job training program begins with a project advocate. Initially, project advocates may be the only team member “selling” the Brownfields Job Training Program. If he or she is successful, candidates will come forward offering support, identifying potential resources and introductions to potential partners. As community support grows for establishment of a job training program.

- Once a project manager has been recruited, his initial task will be convincing others of the benefits associated with a job training program for the communities that might be served.

The next step is the identification of resources that will be required to implement a successful job training program. Those resources include:

- Governmental support
- Partnership and leveraging opportunities
- Community involvement and support
- The availability of project staff familiar with critical components of job training programs

Having identified program resource requirements, the project manager needs to begin identifying and recruiting an “ad hoc” working committee. Development partners will be part of a “founders working group” responsible for program planning and resource acquisition and leveraging.

- It should be noted that many organizations applying for EPA Job training assistance are small and do not have staff available to develop the initial proposal. It is not unusual for a single person to fill many if not all of the positions. Larger nonprofit and governmental organizations can use a combination of partners working part time to develop and administer the program.

- **Note:** Grant application development is not an allowable cost when considering Federal assistance.

- When individuals are available, an ad hoc group is formed in the early stages of the program and usually goes on to participate in and support the program as it matures. When necessary, team members may need to assume multiple responsibilities, such as:
  - Project coordination and project management
  - Community outreach
  - Governmental outreach
  - Partnership development and leveraging opportunities
  - Employer and advisor outreach
  - Student recruitment and assessment
  - Graduate placement & job development
  - Technical training
  - Student services and case worker support
  - Grant writing
  - Administration and legal support

- Because of the unfunded nature of proposal development, efforts need to be supported with in-kind contributions. For this reason, it is important that roles, responsibilities, and time
commitments are made clear as program development proceeds. An underestimation of the
time and effort needed by team members can easily derail the entire project.

- With a working group in place, milestones and commitments from each working partner
  need to be established. As previously noted, the Request for Applications (RFA) for the
  Brownfields Job Training Program was issued May 17 with applications closing
  August 15, 2024.

Once a development team is in place, it’s time to begin addressing the critical issues associated
with successful job training programs.

Community & Labor Market Assessments

Community and labor market assessments are two of the most important components of a Job
Training Program. When programs fail to meet their intended goals, it is often because the
community and labor market analysis did not adequately identify student and employer needs.
Careful selection of a target community combined with an assessment of employer needs
should be the first step in job training program development.

Two questions need to be answered when selecting a community in which to operate:

1. Are prospective participants, community residents, and governmental organizations willing
to support a job training program?
2. Is there sufficient employer interest in considering graduates for employment?

Properly conducted community and labor market assessments will answer these questions and,
in addition, guide recruitment, training, retention, and placement strategies throughout the life of
the job training program.

Community and labor market assessments updated on a regular basis are essential for
operational programs. When placement rates begin to drop, employers’ needs begin to shift, or
community interest begins to dwindle, periodic assessments can realign program, industry, and
community needs.

Community and labor market assessments are much more than simple information gathering
efforts. When done properly, they form a solid base upon which to direct and implement the
entire job training program.

Identifying Target Communities

Community Assessments begin with a search for potential target communities. These reports
will begin to provide generalized information about the economics and demographics of the
community. There are several tools that will help to identify candidate target communities:

a) EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN). This massive
database combines environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports.
EJSCREEN identifies and locates Superfund sites and major emitters in the community.
b) EPA’s Cleanups in My Community screening tool. This database provides detailed information on potential remediation sites and remediation activity.

c) The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) is a geospatial mapping tool that identifies areas across the nation where communities are faced with significant burdens. These burdens are organized into eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development.

*Each EPA Region has specific people in the local Environment Justice Offices that can help you navigate EJScreen and CEJST to do a data pull for your own area. So, if you need help, contact them to get assistance.*

Comprehensive community assessments also include additional activities such as:

- Assess neighborhoods to consider participant interest, lack of employment opportunities, lack of training opportunities, possible environmental justice issues, and evidence of strong community pride.
- Identify community stakeholders interested in environmental remediation.
- Locate community organizations willing to participate in and promote the JT program.
- Identify and establish leveraging opportunities for the selected target community.
- Secure training locations and access to transportation options for both training and employment.
- Determine special factors and designations attributed to the selected target community.

After addressing geographic issues and community interest, attention needs to shift toward demographics. In addition to traditional demographic data, looking at prospective applicants will influence program services and offerings. Successful JT programs recruit and graduate students with varying backgrounds for example:

- Women
- Minorities and underserved ethnic groups
- Veterans
- Native Americans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Any or all the above.

**Conducting Community Assessments**

Community assessments can be superficial or more extensive—a fair question is where and how to begin. Begin by researching potential stakeholders and neighborhood organizations in the proposed target community. This information can be obtained from city government offices beginning with the mayor’s office of economic and community development. Request contact information and introductions to other applicable city offices and city council members.

Do not overlook other programs that may affect community residents such as opportunity zones, enterprise zones, redevelopment zones, community development projects, plant closures, chemical spills, or accidents. These programs should be considered as part of the community assessment. Since they are public and newsworthy issues, they are easy to identify.

**Labor Market Assessments**

Labor market assessment is a broad term that includes general economic development data, detailed surveys of organizations, neighborhood studies, and specific one-on-one interviews with potential employers. It provides the first step needed to develop long-term relationships.
with potential employers. Comprehensive labor market assessments are essential because they address several detailed issues, such as:

- The demand for workers in specific locations.
- The skills and certifications associated with available jobs.
- Education and training requirements associated with available jobs.
- Restrictions and constraints associated with entry into available jobs.
- Organizations that need graduates with environmental remediation skills and certifications.
- Information and data for the reduction or expansion of the environmental workforce in a specific community.
- Future workforce expansion plans for specific projects.
- Identification of local, regional, and national employment opportunities.
- Determination if travel or relocation is required for the available jobs.

Comprehensive labor market assessments take considerable time and effort but, when conducted correctly, provide guidance for several critical job training activities, such as:

- Recruitment and screening of applicants.
- Curriculum and certificate offerings.
- Additional skills that will facilitate employment.
- Timing of the training schedule to maximize placement opportunities.

Proper labor market assessments also build a partnership database, which include:

- Program supporters
- Advisory board members and participants
- Potential partners and leveraging resources
- Guest speakers and student mentors
- Potential employers
- New funding opportunities
- Pathways to legislative or other governmental support

**Conducting Labor Market Assessments**

There are many types of employers who look for job training graduates with environmental remediation skills and certifications including:

- Local unions
- Local government organizations
- Temporary employment firms
- Consultants—remediation and service providers
- Manufacturing firms
- Chemical and refining facilities
- Municipal facilities and utilities
- Asbestos and lead abatement firms
- Construction and deconstruction companies
- Transportation and material handling operations
- Scrap, recycling, storage, and landfill operations
- Current city and municipal contractors

In addition to guiding the curriculum and graduate placement, labor market assessments provide several other benefits, including:
- Promoting business and industry ownership in the job training program.
- Assuring employers that graduates meet their job criteria and performance standards.
- Serving as a public relations tool to show the effectiveness of the business/job training programs partnership.
- Providing a source of workers for contractors negotiating first-hire and project labor agreements, when applicable.

Labor market assessments may be done on a large or small scale. In the context of job training programs, the labor market assessment is usually a local effort and is essential to determine the extent and type of education and training needs of local employers.

To complete a comprehensive labor market assessment, several activities should be considered:

1) Distribute a survey instrument to potential employers. The survey can be sent to either all the potential employers identified or a representative sample. Keep in mind, the return rate is usually low, and identifying employers who should receive the survey and their addresses can be time-consuming. Because of this, surveying is best handled by partners that can provide administrative support. In addition, don’t forget to include a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey as well as a self-addressed, stamped envelope to return the completed survey.

2) When possible, convene a focus group of potential employers and city contractors to collect information through a strategic group interview.

3) Conduct one-on-one, and face-to-face meetings with individual employers. This will demonstrate commitment to the job training program and can often result in leveraging opportunities.

There are several issues to discuss with potential employers, such as:

- Type and size of the organization as well as its products and/or services.
- Wage for entry-level personnel.
- Minimum level of education, skills, knowledge, and certifications required for employment.
- Restrictions or constraints that would prevent employment.
- Required work experience for employment.
- Employer’s interest/ability to provide leveraged resources.
- Other organization referrals that may also be interested in hiring well-trained graduates.
- Gauge the interest of employers to serve on the Advisory Committee.

Always leave with an action plan, commitment, or closure. Always invite the employer to attend classes, graduations, and social events.

As details are discussed regarding community and labor market assessments, it becomes clear how integral this effort becomes to the success and continued operation of job training program. It also becomes clear that selection and assessment of the target community in which to operate can be complicated and needs to begin early as the first step in developing a sustainable environmental workforce program.
Partnerships - Leveraging Program Resources

Since the inception of the Brownfields Job Training Program, EPA has recognized the value of partnerships to leverage limited resources and expand services provided by the job training program. Successful job training programs leverage as much as possible maximizing EPA support. Partnerships contribute to virtually every program activity, including applicant recruitment, screening, student services, training, and placement. Additionally, partners provide valuable technical, in-kind, and financial assistance contributing to the long-term sustainability of the program. Five categories of partners are often used in leveraging job training resources. They include the following:

- Subgrantees
- Fiscal partners or contractors
- In-kind leveraging partners
- Philanthropic supporters, stakeholders, and volunteers
- Employer and Advisory Board partners

Subgrantees
Subgrantees are written into the grant and are subject to all the terms and conditions of the primary grantee. Because partnering as a subgrantee often involves the exchange of EPA funds, subgrantees have the same qualifying criteria as the primary grantee and are subject to audit on the same terms as the primary job training grantee. Partnering as a subgrantee does not require a competitive bid. Subgrantees need to be included as part of the grant application. Any change in subgrantee status requires EPA approval and a revision of work plans. The subgrantee must also conform to the same organizational restrictions as the primary grantee. The primary grantee may be a governmental agency or a nonprofit. Often a governmental agency will be the primary grantee, while the community college, tribe or nonprofit will be the subgrantee providing administration and training. Under FY25 Brownfield Job Training Guidelines, EPA suggests that tribes and rural communities may be interested in submitting a coalition grant proposal with a prime grantee and disbursed like-minded communities joining the coalition as subgrantees.

Fiscal Partners or Contractors
Fiscal partners are organizations where grant money exchanges hands. Trainers and consultants are the most common fiscal partners. Fiscal partners need to be vetted and selected by competitive bid (minimum three bids required for contracts over $10,000). Fiscal partners may be individuals, for profit, or nonprofit organizations. Contractors are required to comply with standard Federal contractor rules and regulations. If a contractor is not already employed by the prospective grantee, they may be selected prior to the grant development process and included in the job training application. It should be noted that Requests for Quotes (RFQs) made before grant applications are submitted, should be contingent on receiving Federal funding, training schedules and work plans.

In-Kind Leveraging Partners
The third type of partner provides in-kind goods and services. This type of partner has fewer restrictions as Federal grant money does not exchange hands. In-kind partners vary widely from community service workers, individuals donating time and effort, training providers, support
service providers and donators of facilities. If in-kind partners are written into the grant, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be developed and any change in those relationships should be noted to the EPA Regional Coordinator. An MOU is a popular method for providing guidelines to in-kind partnerships, especially among governmental organizations. The MOU summarizes the nature of the partnership and states, in general terms, the expectations of each party in achieving a common goal. When in-kind assistance is not written into the grant, MOUs are not required. In-kind assistance comes in many forms including:

- Facilities
- Equipment
- Recruitment and screening assistance
- Instructional materials
- Instructional assistance
- Student support
- Placement assistance
- Staffing
- Marketing and Public relations
- Consultation and advice

**Philanthropic Supporters, Stakeholders, and Volunteers**

For some job training grantees, philanthropic supporters, stakeholders, and volunteers become major contributors to their program. Philanthropic partners can be a source of unrestricted funds to provide for expanded services or training. Some philanthropic partners provide financial support with little or no active involvement or control over operations. Others may require detailed progress reporting, fulfillment of promised deliverables, or restrictions on the use of funds. Each partner relationship is unique and has individual terms, expectations, and deliverables. Since Federal money does not exchange hands, philanthropic partners do not need to be written into the grant application. Without philanthropic partners and volunteers, job training programs would not be able to provide special services to their participants including retention supporting activities, such as:

- Student stipends and scholarships
- Work study opportunities
- Free lunches
- Transportation services
- Legal Aid
- Childcare
- Unrestricted cash contributions
- Special event sponsorships
- Internship opportunities
- Administrative support

Successful job training programs use a combination, or all the partnership approaches to leverage their program. Partnership relationships increase services available to students and reduce a financial burden which might otherwise be placed on the grant. Every hour, a service, or facility donated by working partners leverages limited funds provided by EPA. In every case, partners need to be recognized and appreciated for the effort they are contributing to the community. It is important to develop a management and tracking system to capture the contributions made by various partnerships.
Employer and Advisory Board Partners

A fifth and important type of partnership is the development and continued relationship with potential employers and the creation of an Advisory Board. Prospective employers and Advisory Board members are special partners. Throughout the grant, prospective employers and Advisory Board members provide guidance and direction to the job training program. In many cases, potential employers serve as Advisory Board members. Here are a few types of representatives that job training grantees consider when recruiting Advisory Board members:

- Prospective employers
- Trainers- both technical and life skills
- Influencers from the target community
- Local environmental agency representatives
- Faith based organization members from the target community
- Local environmental consultants
- Mayor’s office and municipal agency representatives
- Social service, nonprofit, and employment agency staff
- Local union administrators
- EPA assessment, and cleanup grant staff
- Current or former program participants

Both Advisory Boards and employer relationships should be involved in the development of and written into the grant application. When possible, it is recommended that Advisory Boards are established before the grant is submitted.

Identifying and Recruiting Leveraging Partners

Identification and recruitment of potential leveraging partners begins in the earliest stages of program development and continues throughout the grant. As community and labor market assessments are underway careful attention should identify the following:

- Training facilities that may be available in the target community
- Nonprofit organizations operating nearby
- Construction and deconstruction projects in the surrounding area
- Local business within communizing distance
- Faith based organizations in the target community
- Municipal activity including police, fire, and public service facilities near the target community
- Public housing located in the target community

The objective of identifying facilities just noted is to find and recruit managers and owners of those facilities as potential leveraged partners. Faith based, municipal, nonprofit, or governmental organizations are likely to support organizations located in their community. Once introduced to the benefits of having a job training program nearby, representatives of these organizations should be invited to be on the advisory board and as a leveraging partner. Organizations with facilities such as construction firms, community centers, fire, or police stations should be approached as potential training sites. Social service organizations should be considered for wrap around services. Local businesses should be recruited as potential employer partners and a source of funding for special projects and student support.
Screening and Selection of the Student Cohort

Selection and screening of incoming students is a critical component of successful job training programs. A primary reason for program failure is often attributed to a lack of attention to student recruitment and screening. Unsuccessful training cohorts often result from rushing the recruitment process or beginning student recruitment unprepared. This is especially true when training is scheduled to begin, and classes have not been filled. Program managers, rather than delaying or cancel the beginning of training allow improperly vetted and screened applicants into the program. Uninformed or misinformed candidates may not be ready for the challenges presented by a rigorous training schedule. Recruitment of unmotivated or disinterested applicants often results in high dropout rates early into the training program. Difficulty finding potential student candidates often is the result of a program not sufficiently marketed to community residents.

Ensuring the largest pool of job training applicants, program managers need to begin community awareness early, marketing the benefits of job training to the widest possible audience and have a clear recruitment and screening plan in place. Components of the recruitment and screening plan include the following.

- Community awareness
- Best practices to reach and attract potential applicants
- Applicant orientation
- Candidate screening strategies
- Applicant assessment and registration
- Applicant acceptance and student contracts

Community Awareness

Community awareness is the foundation of a program interested in establishing acceptance of a Brownfields Job Training Program in the target community. Articulating the benefits of environmental job training should begin as early as possible after the grant has been awarded and long before the first student candidate is approached for consideration. Community awareness informs the community, potential partners, and employers of the proposed training program. Informing stakeholders should be integrated into community and labor market assessment efforts. Awareness begins with presentations announcing a new EPA Brownfields Job Training Program at City Council meetings, community meetings, church gatherings, social and public media announcements. Selling Brownfields Job Training Programs to local government interests, community groups, service providers and employers early will contribute to recruitment success as student selection begins. Properly communicating the benefits of environmental training to community influencers before student recruitment begins filters down to the pool of potential applicants.

Best practices to reach and attract potential applicants

A variety of strategies can be used when recruiting community residents interested in environmental remediation careers. Those methods include:

- Referrals from employment centers
- Direct recruitment
- Referrals from community organizations and nonprofits
- Recommendations from program graduates

Working with the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) or Career Centers as an initial recruitment and placement resource are an excellent step but not the final solution to applicant recruitment. Career Centers or WIBs are state and local employment centers directly or indirectly supported by the US Department of Labor with the purpose of expanding the nation’s employed workforce.

Career centers can provide job training recruiters with a supply of interested and sometimes vetted applicants. Job Centers may also provide a multitude of services including initial screening, applicant assessment, financial incentives, and employment counseling. WIBs can qualify applicants for benefits that may include training materials, transportation, equipment, and other support services. Every job training program should work with the employment center to determine if applicants qualify for benefits.

Direct recruitment or marketing relies on public service announcements, social media postings, radio shows and print media campaigns. Marketing should be directed to audiences and locations frequented by prospective applicants. For example, posters in laundromats, grocery stores and bus stations. Social media, public service press announcements, and radio advertising should appear in media frequented by the demographic being recruited.

Faith based organizations and community social service organizations provide an excellent source for applicant referrals. It is important that applicant awareness and marketing materials be provided to these organizations. Promotion of community job training by trusted community influencers leverage applicant recruitment efforts. For those programs oriented towards returning citizens, prison release staff, parole managers and case workers may refer potential candidates interested in starting a new career in environmental remediation. In addition, military counselors providing guidance to exiting service members, and case workers from social service agencies assisting individuals exiting foster care, should also be considered as a source of applicants.

Perhaps the most powerful source for applicant recruitment are referrals from current and former students. Graduates provide firsthand information on program expectations, challenges, and rewards. Former students with good jobs provide evidence-based affirmation of the value environmental job training can bring to formerly unemployed or underemployed residents. Sisters, brothers, and friends often apply to job training programs after a relative or acquaintance successfully completes the program finding meaningful employment. It is important that graduates stay involved and maintain ownership in the job training program. Graduates should be encouraged to attend classes, graduation, and graduate refreshers. Recertification opportunities can be used as a way of bringing graduates back to the classroom and at the same time tracking their career progress.

** Applicant orientation **

Examples of topics covered at orientation and applicant awareness sessions include:

- Requirements to enter the program.
- Program specifics (training details and time requirements)
- The application process.
- The applicant selection process.
- What program participants can expect upon graduation.
- Expectations of accepted applicants.
- Anticipated dates (acceptance, training, and graduation dates)
Following the first orientation, those not serious about beginning a new career will not exert the effort to attend a second orientation or complete a detailed application. Applicants completing the orientation and completing required forms should receive a phone call or email to schedule an interview by phone or in person. They should be informed that a literacy test and physical/drug test may be required for acceptance into the program. Individuals successfully completing these steps provide a vetted pool of motivated candidates for the upcoming cohort and perhaps subsequent cohorts.

**Candidate screening and assessment strategies**

Ideally, every cohort should begin with the largest pool of training candidates possible. From that pool, the most deserving, motivated, and capable of completing the job training program should be selected. The selection process begins with orientation sessions followed by application submission. When a large number of applicants apply for job training the candidate pool can be narrowed with additional tryout sessions. The objective of orientation, application and tryouts is to continue narrowing the number of prospective applicants to the most motivated and deserving candidates. As the pool of potential applicants narrows, group and one-on-one interviews help program managers subjectively assess the motivation and seriousness of applicants. Final screens often include literacy assessment tests and interviews with candidate families to determine if the candidate has the background and family support needed to complete the program.

Literacy tests ensure that screened candidates can successfully complete academic requirements associated with the proposed curriculum. Assessment tests are often administered by Career Centers. Types of assessment tests may include Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), WorkKeys, or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS). Each type of assessment has advantages and drawbacks. Each can provide certificates for potential employers and provide a measure of a student’s knowledge of reading, math, and informational skills. While TABE tests are most common among environmental Job Training Programs, a variety of tests are being used depending on local preferences. Standards for accepting students into the environmental training program vary from 9th to 10th grade in math and science. Some job training grantees substitute assessment tests with evidence of a high school diploma or GED.

**Applicant acceptance and student contracts**

Following orientation, application completion, tryouts, interviews and literacy tests, the final pool of deserving and qualified students has been narrowed. Unfortunately, most programs only have 15-25 openings per cohort. Every applicant not selected, but completed the requirements should be given a chance to be placed on a priority waiting list for future training or when possible, referred to other programs as screened and vetted training candidates. Some job training programs provide life skills training first which allows candidates on a waiting list to fill openings created by dropouts. The final step in recruitment and screening is the student contract. Student contracts, while not binding legal documents, provide a clear understanding of what students can expect from the job training program and what is expected of program participants. Student contracts clearly present conditions for suspension and expulsion from the program. They emphasize the seriousness of the program and establish a firm foundation on which to begin training. After all this planning and student selection, it is now time to begin job training.
Student Safety, Training Curriculum, Facilities, and Trainers

Health and Safety during Job Training

It is essential that job training programs promote safety and health standards, both in the classroom, as part of the curriculum and after graduation. This is applicable whether the training is being conducted by program staff or a contracted trainer. When seeking potential employers, it is vitally important that they follow appropriate safety and health procedures.

Before remediation training begins grantees often provide a list of safety and health policies for students. Both students and trainers are asked to sign and date this document stating that they agree to comply with all safety policies and procedures. When environmental remediation, health, and safety courses are provided, students are required to provide a medical waiver or undergo a physical examination. Note that HAZWOPER and some other courses require program participants to sign a Participant Liability Waiver and Release of all Claims form. This is especially true if a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is used during training.

There is no single curriculum best suited for every Brownfields Job Training Program. Demand for workers with specific skill sets vary by community and over time depending on the local economy, environmental issues, deconstruction activity and active remediation projects. Staying responsive to employer needs for skilled workers requires the Brownfields Job Training Program curriculum to remain flexible. Employer and Advisory Board guidance along with regular labor market assessments can help ensure that training is relevant and addresses workforce needs.

Training Supported with Brownfields Job Training Program Funds

Brownfield Job Training Grantees are given wide latitude to develop training programs as they see fit so long as the courses offered align with EPA’s funding priorities. Those priorities are associated with the mission and goals of the EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR). The only required training is OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 (40-hour HAZWOPER). Aside from HAZWOPER training, additional training topics supported by Brownfield Job Training Grants can involve the following areas if appropriate.

- Assessment and cleanup of solid and hazardous waste
- Chemical risk management
- Stormwater management relating to site cleanup
- Planning and site preparation for low impact development activities
- Planning and site preparation for green infrastructure installation and maintenance
- Vulnerability assessment and contamination mitigation planning

While the job training program will not be able to prepare graduates for every environmental job, graduates can be provided with a basic set of skills and recognized certifications. Most job training grantees provide between five and ten State or Federal certifications as part of their technical curriculum. A partial list demonstrates the diversity of technical curriculum offerings that have been delivered by job training programs over the years.
▪ OSHA 40 Hazardous Site Worker Protection and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER)
▪ OSHA 30 Construction Safety
▪ OSHA 10 Hour General Construction
▪ OSHA Confined Space Operations
▪ OSHA Fall Protection Certification
▪ EPA Asbestos AHERA Worker Certification
▪ Forklift Driver (Hazardous materials handling)
▪ Commercial Driver’s License (CDL- DOT HAZMAT)
▪ Disaster Site Worker / Spill Response
▪ Underground Storage Tank Operations
▪ Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management
▪ 40-hour Lead Remediation (RRP)
▪ Basic First Aid & Adult CPR
▪ Chemical Safety and Awareness

EPA has published an extensive list of eligible and ineligible training courses under the grant. Go to: List of Eligible and Ineligible Brownfield Job Training Courses | US EPA

Incorporating Life Skills and Remedial Education as Part of a Complete Job Training Curriculum

Program managers have found that many graduates require more than the technical training provided by the EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant. Unfortunately, life skills and remedial education, while essential to graduate success, are not supported by the EPA grant. Even with selective recruitment and screening, refresher instruction may be necessary to bring the classroom to a literacy standard where training can be successful. As with life skills training, EPA does not support remedial education. Fortunately, many leveraging partners provide life skills and remedial instruction. Those organizations include faith-based organizations, financial institutions, and nonprofits such as Goodwill and the YMCA. In addition to remedial math and science, here are examples of life skills training provided as part of the job training life skills curriculum.

▪ Teambuilding
▪ Financial literacy
▪ Career management
▪ Family living
▪ Work readiness training
▪ Anger management
▪ Application and report writing
▪ Personal appearance and presentation

Unsupported training is often front-loaded in the training schedule providing participants not able to continue with technical training to exit the program with helpful life skills.

Finding Qualified Trainers, Facilities, and Equipment

Training facilities, qualified instructors, and equipment are critical components of environmental job training. Grantees unable to secure facilities and qualified trainers and necessary instructional materials may need to adjust curriculum offerings until those components are secured. Potential sources of facilities, equipment, and instructors include the following.

▪ Trainers and facilities from a local college (as leveraged partners, sub grantees or contractors).
Instructors from other grant supported programs offering training and/or services to underserved and/or unemployed community residents.

Facilities, trainers, and equipment from local governmental agencies or social service organizations.

Local businesses, religious organizations and community centers donating facilities that can be used for training.

Potential employers providing facilities, equipment, and instructors as leveraged partners.

Contractors and training organizations providing specialized technical training.

Fire Departments are an excellent source of trainers and can potentially bring equipment or use their facilities as an in-kind donation to the program.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
Go to: https://www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/outreach_trainers.html

Large and mature training organizations have found that developing an “in house” staff of qualified instructors provides the most flexible and efficient way to deliver instruction. Several commercial and grant funded organizations train trainers and provide direct technical training to Brownfields Job Training Programs including:

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**
Congress created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 1970 to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance. To make certain that regulations are enforced uniformly, OSHA established a quality control or certification system authorizing instructors to issue OSHA cards to individuals receiving training from an authorized instructor. OSHA training centers have published a database of individuals receiving “train the trainer” certificates authorized to issue OSHA cards. This list will help locate OSHA-authorized trainers conducting 10- and 30-hour Outreach Training classes in construction, general industry, maritime, or disaster site worker. The Department of Labor/Occupational Safety and Health Administration lists only those trainers who have requested that their contact information be made public. Go to: https://www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/outreach_trainers.html

**National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)**
The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences provides extensive resources related to health and safety training. NIEHS funds eighteen non-profit organizations dedicated to worker protection training. Go to the following site for a listing of NIEHS grantees and training opportunities. https://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat

Many EPA Job Training grantees are familiar with the Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) https://nationalpete.org/ including and the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST). The CCCHST is one of eighteen model worker training programs recognized and funded by the NIEHS. Each summer CCCHST invites Brownfield Job Training grantees to a Train-the-Trainer Program called the GreatEST (Great Environmental Safety Training) Institute. For more information, go to: https://nationalpete.org/ccchst/

**EPA, State, and Other Non-OSHA Certificate Training**
Multiple trainers from different organizations may be necessary to deliver a complete curriculum. Instructors for HAZWOPER, asbestos, lead, or any of the OSHA certificate courses require certified instructors and an approved curriculum. Some private sector organizations offer certificates that employers are interested in having their workers obtain. Examples of non-OSHA training certifications that are regulated include the following.
Brownfields Job Training that does not require OSHA, EPA and State certifications can come from a variety of sources. An Internet search for “trainers in my community” can provide a list of organizations available for the type of instruction being searched. A word of caution regarding internet searches. When certification is involved, instructors must show proof they comply with local, State, or Federal certification requirements. Often State departments of health, environment or safety will issue lists of trainers authorized to provide certification training that is regulated.

In summary, here is a checklist (in systematic order) for establishing a curriculum, locating facilities, recruiting trainers, finding equipment, and ensuring the safety of students during training.

- Determine employer needs first. Curriculum should be driven by employer needs first then other factors need to be considered. Let the labor market assessment and employer advisors guide the curriculum.
- Ensure EPA will support training to address those needs. Only specific types of assessment, remediation, cleanup, health, and safety training are supported by EPA.
- Provide a broad enough curriculum to provide awareness training for a variety of workforce skills.
- Life skills training and student services are essential but must be supported with leveraged funding.
- Begin early, recruiting qualified trainers, facilities, and equipment.
- Make the health and safety of students and graduates a top priority.

For more examples of curriculum, and life skills being offered in training programs, please review the following document: Certified Employee Finder: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-10/2023-certfied-employee-finder.pdf

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**Student Support –**

**Support Services and Student Retention**

**Student Retention and Support Services**

As previously discussed, attention to student recruitment, screening, and assessment is a major factor in keeping students engaged throughout training until graduation. Recruitment and screening strategies by themselves will not guarantee 100 percent student retention rates. Personal issues play an important role in the ability of students to attend classes, focus on learning new skills, and maintaining a positive attitude. Student support can assist with student's
personal issues and at the same time maximize participant retention rates from entry to graduation. Student support includes activities and policies that help to mitigate external issues that keep students from participating in training. Examples of external issues include:

- Child and dependent care obligations
- Financial burdens
- Personal and legal issues
- Transportation issues
- Housing issues
- A need for remedial education

Support services are not supported by the EPA Job Training Grant, but can be provided by social services, religious, corporate, and nonprofit organizations as leveraging partners. It is likely that many students will not have the issues presented, however each student has his or her individual situation. Each student should have a case worker or counselor they can work with regarding their individual issues. It is also important that job training programs coordinate with job centers to determine if benefits may be available to job training participants. Services not provided by job centers can sometimes be obtained from partners that provide services usually as in-kind program support. Potential partners that leverage program resources may include:

- Local banks – providing in-kind financial counseling
- Health and human services – providing child and dependent care services
- Department of transportation – providing reduced or free transportation to training
- Legal aid and re-entry nonprofit organizations – providing legal assistance
- Faith based support services – providing childcare services
- Corporate and foundation support – providing stipends during training
- Prospective employers and corporate partners - providing part time jobs and internships during training
- Local community centers and fast-food restaurants – providing free lunches during training

Included among EPA Brownfields Job Training Grantees are social service organizations that can provide wrap around services providing support for many of the issues encountered. Grantees not associated with a social service organization may wish to consider partnering with one to provide wrap around student support when required.

**Peer-to-Peer Student Support**

The importance of team building, and relationship development should not be overlooked as a key component of student support and retention. Program applicants may come from different backgrounds and life experiences, but program participants share a common goal. Developing new skills and beginning a new career is a common interest of all program participants. That common interest sets the stage for team building and friendship development. Team building begins during the applicant screening process when tryouts are used to observe applicants’ ability to work with others in groups. Teambuilding is important in environmental remediation as most projects are team efforts. Crew members must develop a trust in their partner during project set up, remediation and decontamination. The same teambuilding and friendship development strategies can be used to provide support to students with personal or academic issues. Examples of peer-to-peer student support strategies include:

- **Dress and exercise routines** – Uniforms for program participants emphasize the uniqueness and status of those participating in environmental remediation training. When
students are dressed for success, they identify with an elite group of individuals. Exercise routines prior to training reenforces that idea and begins preparing students for classwork. Group workouts also serve as a teambuilding strategy.

- **Circles and mentorships** – Each day, participants form a circle to discuss issues not necessarily related to the training program. Circles is a group mentoring strategy to share life experiences among program participants. Circles give older participants a chance to share their life experiences with younger participants.

- **Peer-to-peer counseling** – Students are paired with working partners (sometimes mature participants with younger participants) when demonstrations and exercises are performed. Peer-to-peer mentoring relationships often endure long after graduation.

- **Peer-to-peer training** – Instructors are not always as effective as peers in getting concepts across to students. Thus, peer-to-peer training allows students who understand training concepts to explain those concepts to other students. This approach is particularly valuable when there is a large socio or demographic difference between instructor and students.

- **Peer-to-peer encouragement** – When used properly an effective student retention strategy, is encouragement among students especially for those uncertain about their ability to complete the job training program. Encouragement by a team member goes a long way in convincing a challenged student to stay with the program.

- **Graduate Lessons learned and encouragement** – Graduates of the job training program are in a unique position to encourage and mentor students about the possibilities moving forward after graduation. Additionally, they can provide insight on the lessons learned, and obstacles confronted during and after training.

**Additional support and retention challenges faced by participants preparing for reentry**

With almost 10,000 citizens released from incarceration every week, job training programs working with underserved community residents are likely to recruit reentering citizens as part of their target cohort. Depending on their background, recently released individuals face issues requiring student support that most other students will not have. Food and housing are the first and second highest priorities faced by returning citizens. In most cases, these individuals return to their home communities, hoping for support from family and friends. No job, no money, a bad reputation, and a return to peer groups that brought them to prison are just the beginning of a difficult road to productive citizenship. Among the reentry population almost 25% of these individuals return to prison within the first three years. Consequences these individuals must confront include:

- Some participants are homeless with no transportation.
- In addition to mental issues, PTSD from incarceration is becoming more prevalent.
- Some participants have persistent health issues.
- Certain states require reentry candidates to bear all costs of administration and tracking such as court costs, restitution, and ankle bracelets.
- Without employment basic life skills and personal hygiene are sidelined.
- Collateral consequences limit the ability of people convicted of crimes to obtain employment and occupational licensing.

When addressing student populations with special needs such as returning citizens, program managers need to be aware of these questions:

- Can the job training program serve participants with special needs?
- What level of offense will restrict entry into the training program?
• Can returning citizens put former behavior and lifestyle behind?
• Will housing and transportation be an issue in attending classes?
• Are program offerings flexible enough to accommodate participant absences?
• Will participants with special needs disrupt schedules, training, and certification?
• Can training be flexible enough to allow a path for reentering the program if circumstances are beyond applicant control?

The pathway to higher retention rates begins with careful recruitment and screening practices. It is also highly dependent on the support given to students once they enter the training program. Student support can take many forms that include individual counseling, teambuilding, and mentoring strategies.

Graduation, Placement, and Tracking

Graduation, placement, and tracking are essential components of Brownfield Job Training Program and are funded by the EPA Job Training Grant. It is expected that grantees will place at least 70 percent of their graduates and track them after employment. Employment expectations are not unreasonable considering program participants completing the course of study have demonstrated reliability and determination. They are vetted, screened, and carry with them as much as $5,000 worth of certifications. It is important that program managers begin planning graduation, placement, and tracking at the beginning of each cohort rather than the end.

Student Graduation

Student graduation is the culmination of a career building path starting with acceptance into the Brownfields Job Training Program, completing challenging instruction and successfully obtaining certification credentials is a “big thing”. Graduation from this program is perhaps the most important academic event since high school graduation or getting a GED. Graduation should be a celebrated event with the following individuals on the invitation list.

• Local elected officials
• Family and friends
• Former graduates
• Potential employers

In the past, EPA Regional Coordinators have attended graduations as well as the EPA Administrator, the Mayor, and members of congress. Recordings should be made available to students and guests with certificates awarded for special accomplishments. Graduations are often broadcast over Zoom or social media for relatives and other interested guests who can’t be present for the ceremony.

Placement

Job training graduates have demonstrated their desire to begin a new career. It’s a responsibility of program managers to assist successful graduates in obtaining meaningful
employment. Developing employer partnerships is an effective way to align the job training program with the community need for a trained and certified workforce.

While not the only placement strategy, relationships with potential employers are key to job placement success. Graduate placement works best when employers have established relationships and interact with students before graduation. Employers can utilize federal and local hiring incentives, including first-source or local hiring ordinances, tax incentives, and wage subsidies to find a trained and certified workforce. Most successful grantees establish ongoing relationships with employers who have hired graduates and been impressed with their performance. It is in the best interest of employers benefiting from brownfields job training to support and improve this valuable resource. Here are some examples of ways placement staff can establish lasting relationships with potential employers:

- Seek guidance from employers regarding curriculum development.
- Include employers in job training social events.
- Conduct employer informational meetings where they can interact and learn about current job training events.
- Engage potential employers in the grant writing and review process.
- Seek volunteer employers to work as mentors and advisors.
- Ask potential employers to volunteer as instructors or guest speakers.
- Request letters of support referencing a commitment to consider job training graduates for employment.

Employer partnerships should not be the only strategy when finding meaningful jobs for program graduates. Examples that can contribute to a multifaceted placement strategy include:

- Additional program job placement activities such as open house events, participation in public meetings, job fairs, and cold calls to human resource personnel may uncover new employers that otherwise would have fallen through the cracks during the normal placement process. Close relationships with state and local governmental agencies often result in a variety of state and municipal job opportunities.
- CareerOneStop Centers provide job placement services with staff and resources allocated to placement. Governmental employment services should be used only as a supplement—not a replacement—for in-house placement efforts.
- Internships, pre-apprenticeship programs, and company visitations can assist in establishing co-op programs which can be an effective strategy for placing graduates. Work-study, internship, job shadowing, and formal pre-apprenticeship programs can lead to direct employment after graduation. Occasionally, job training programs have been able to leverage stipends and scholarships which bring donors and students together.
- Professional employment services locate and employ candidates with specialized, high-demand skills. Instances often exist when firms must quickly ramp up environmental remediation capabilities to fulfill contract terms or respond to natural disasters. For that reason, job training program staff should establish long-term relationships with national remediation contractors, professional employment, and temporary staffing services specializing in environmental workers. Even though they are referred to as “temporary staffing,” many jobs can last for years and lead to full-time employment and permanent sustainable careers.
- Personal networking has always been an effective approach for identifying employment opportunities. Networking can take many forms but is essentially connecting those interested in employment with those looking to expand their workforce. Encouraging
graduates to attend environmental conferences and public meetings are opportunities that can bring employers and graduates together. Throughout the year, many state and regional Brownfields associations convene workshops and conferences. Students are usually given special consideration regarding membership and conference fees. Members attending these events are contractors who often bring with them new employment opportunities.

- Many communities and employment service organizations sponsor periodic job fairs. Job fairs address a variety of occupations, so they become excellent opportunities for networking and identifying companies not normally recognized for employing environmental technicians. Larger job training programs have organized their own open house and job fair while others may participate in larger, community-wide events.

Graduate Tracking

Student tracking complements graduation and placement providing feedback for program improvement, advocating for future job training graduates, and serving as a source for role models encouraging students currently enrolled in the program. Maintaining relationships with students after graduation is difficult and takes extra effort. Because it is challenging, tracking is often neglected. All too often, program managers think of graduate tracking as an administrative effort required by EPA rather than a proactive activity to enhance student and program success. Alumni tracking is an activity that can last years after students graduate. Student tracking is much more than an administrative activity. Tracking provides valuable information regarding the effectiveness of brownfields job training. Additional reasons for maintaining close relationships with former students include:

- Successful graduates can be excellent resources in guidance, placement, and mentoring of current students. Graduates often become role models and advocates regarding the value of the program.
- Graduates with certifications may need refresher or recertification to keep credentials current. Some grantees offer free refresher and recertification training to help track former graduates.
- Graduates may become a resource for training as instructors or guest lecturers.
- When expectations of employment are not fulfilled, job training programs can assist former students with placement assistance and/or additional training.

Strategies for Tracking Students

To effectively track graduate employment, tracking programs require a commitment from program managers, students, and employers. To make graduate tracking effective, program managers and instructors have a responsibility to make graduates feel welcome, encouraging them to participate in post-graduation events, and give them a reason to maintain contact. This often-overlooked strategy can bring graduates back into the current training cohort. Integrating graduates with current trainees takes little effort but has many benefits. Relationships developed during training can last a lifetime.

An additional tool used by some grantees to track “lost graduates” taps into a database maintained or supported by local Workforce Investment Boards. While unable to provide detailed information, statewide data files can verify the employment status of individuals when given their social security number. In some states, this service is free to nonprofits. Contact the local employment office on the availability of this service for job training grant recipients. Other strategies that can be used to track graduates include:

- Establishing alumni nights and other social events.
- Sending invitations to program graduates to become guest speakers.
▪ Providing job search and counseling services to former graduates.
▪ Maintaining current contact list for past program participants and including them in program announcements.
▪ Tracking progress of former graduates including pre-apprentice candidates entering union employment.
▪ Offering incentives including refreshers and professional development activities to all graduates.
▪ Asking former students to be advocates for the program and serving on the advisory board.
▪ Hiring former graduates as program staff.

In most cases, brownfields job training graduates are happy to assist a program that made a difference in their life.

Program Sustainability

Program Sustainability

EPA permits prior grantees to recompete for additional grants. Partnership development, resource leveraging, and sustainability considerations remain an essential part of the program with the possibility of continued EPA support.

As part of the Brownfields Job Training Application evaluation, EPA is interested in the extent to which applicants have a plan to continue their environmental training program beyond their first round of funding. Partnership development, resource leveraging, and sustainability considerations remain an essential part of the training program with the possibility of continued EPA support. Program sustainability is a best practice when a job training program includes a plan for continued operations.

Below are some example strategies for maturing programs interested in continuing the job training program after the current EPA grant comes to an end.

▪ **Consider resubmitting another application for EPA job training assistance** – EPA currently allows grantees that have disbursed fifty percent of their remaining grant funds to apply for new grant. Applications must demonstrate how the community will benefit with continued Federal support.

▪ **Seek funding related to the EPA Job Training program from other governmental agencies** – Other governmental agencies such as the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), The Department of Transportation (DOR), Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Energy (DOE), and Health and Human Services (HHS), have training programs that could complement EPA job training. Seeking grants offered by these organizations can supplement or replace EPA support.

▪ **Pursue philanthropic funding sources** – Job training programs may already be leveraging training with philanthropic donations. Sources of philanthropic donations include individuals,
foundations, family trusts and corporations. Consider approaching leveraging partners to become primary supporters of a sustainable environmental job development initiative.

- **Seek state legislative and other governmental support** – State funding can replace Federal assistance providing legislative support on a reoccurring basis. Additional resources might also include funds from environmental permits and fines, lottery proceeds or workforce development budgets.

- **Operate as a social enterprise** – A public/private partnership is a non-profit organization paired with a profit-making enterprise. Like Community Development Corporations (CDCs), job training programs can become entrepreneurial providing services for a fee and performing community service at the same time.

- **Merge with other training and social service organizations** – Some job training programs exist as standalone nonprofit organizations and others are part of a much larger organization. Incorporating environmental job training into community college business and industry programs allows training to continue and at the same time, receive operational support from the college. Smaller job training programs might also consider merging with larger social service or training organizations providing environmental workforce training as part of a comprehensive workforce development program.

In conclusion, sustainability is closely related to partnership development and resource leveraging. When addressing program sustainability, grantees should always consider developing relationships with organizations capable of continuing their involvement with environmental job training into the future. This will ensure that programs are considering the issue of sustainability when federal assistance ends.
RESOURCES

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