TIPS ON WRITING A COMPREHENSIVE EPA JOB TRAINING APPLICATION

June 12, 2024

A companion document to the webinar
TIPS ON WRITING A COMPREHENSIVE EPA JOB TRAINING APPLICATION
developed by:

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Kansas State University
Job Training – Technical Assistance to Brownfields
(KSU JT-TAB)
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Overview

Welcome & Purpose of the Webinar

The objective of this webinar is to present tips and strategies for submitting a competitive FY25 Brownfields Job Training Grant Application; to fund local environmental work force training; in support of assessment, cleanup and sustainable re-use of brownfields in your community.

The presentation is being recorded and will be available, with other resources, at the webinar's event website, as well as at KSU TAB’s Job Training website (scroll down to middle of page).

Agenda

▪ Introduction
▪ Pre-Submission Tips for Consideration
▪ Writing the Application
▪ Before Submitting the Application
▪ Mistakes and Lessons Learned
▪ Q&A
▪ Critical Points to Remember
▪ Resources

EPA Funding for Brownfields Job Training Programs

EPA Funding for Brownfields Job Training Programs recruit and provide workforce training to residents of solid and hazardous waste-impacted communities with skills needed to assess, clean up, and prepare contaminated sites, including brownfields, for sustainable re-use, as a part of community-led revitalization efforts.

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.

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.

The Importance of Community-Based Job Training Programs

Environmental training & certifications are particularly valuable to urban, rural and tribal communities with:

- Funding to address brownfields or other environmentally impacted sites
- Unemployed or underemployed populations
- Compelling environmental justice and other needs
- Existing workforce programs that need environmental health & safety, including radiation safety, environmental testing and monitoring, and other common certifications
- Revitalization needs involving green infrastructure, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other sustainable beneficial uses

EPA Job Training Application Basics

- **Grant Size and Project Period**: up to $500,000 over 5 years
- **Due date**: August 15, 2024, at 11:59 PM ET
- **Applications consist of**:
  - Required Forms
  - Narrative Information Sheet (3-page limit)
  - The Narrative (14-page limit), seven ranking criteria sections (200 total points)
  - Narrative Attachments (15-page limit)
  - Threshold Criteria Responses & Attachments (Pass/Fail)

- **Verify you meet Threshold Criteria first** (EPA can help)
- **Do your homework, start writing soon**, and request review of your draft application (TAB can help)
- **Submit** through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov); prepare & submit early!

View EPA's [Application Guidelines, Webinar & Technical Assistance Resources](http://www.grants.gov), for more details.
‘The Narrative’ is Where you Tell Your Story

**Universal Good Writing: Structure & Storyline**

1. **Introduction**  
   (Overview of Problem, Plan & Expected Results)

2. **Body** (the Details of Plan to address the Problem, & expected Results)

3. **Conclusions**  
   (Overview of Problem, Plan & Expected Results)

Reiterate, Reiterate, Reiterate your Storyline!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scored Sections of Application</th>
<th>Score*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Need (Includes Community Description &amp; Labor Market Demand)</td>
<td>45 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Program Description</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>15 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Structure, Outputs, &amp; Outcomes</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>35 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic Capability</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See Guidelines Section V.A. **Evaluation Criteria**, as well as IV.D-H, to see exactly how to earn points for each scored section

**Other Places to Reiterate your Story & to Provide Additional/Required Information**

**Universal Good Writing: Storyline (Continued)**

- Another Storytelling Script:  
  - What, Why & Who  
  - The ‘Who’ is a very important part of explaining the Problem, the Plan, and the Expected Results

**Other Suggestions**

- Consider using sample tables in Guidelines  
- Read the Guidelines, and note the text in bold & italics

**Narrative Sheet**

- Includes Other Factors and Additional Considerations**

**Narrative Attachments**

- Milestone Schedule  
- Partnership Letters ID’d in Narrative

**Threshold Criteria**

- Applicant eligibility info/documentation  
- Coalition agreement or letters of commitment (if applicable)  
- Page #s for the Training Curriculum Chart  
- Description of target area  
- Statement all trainees will receive OSHA 40-Hour HAZWOPER training  
- Other statements, demonstrations, and documentation*

* Important for summary & final selection

** Important for Impacts Scoring

** Pass/Fail (include a response for each one – don’t skip any)

* See Guidelines Section IV.B Content and Form of Application Submission Section  
** See Guidelines V.B. Other Factors

**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. The KSU JT TAB web site has successful past JT applications that are available for download.

**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

**Meet the Presenters**

**KSU TAB JT Consultants**

Those familiar with the previous HMTRI job training assistance program will recognize Mike Senew, Steve Fenton, and Nolan Curtis as additions to our KSU TAB program.

**Michael Senew**

Michael Senew served as an US Public Health Service officer assigned to the US EPA during its formation in the early 1970s. Mike has over 53 years of work experience in a variety of technical, policy and regulatory environments. His employers have included the US EPA, Argonne National Laboratory, and HMTRI. These have included assignments with EPA, DOE, NSF, state agencies, colleges and universities, and environmental and construction firms. Participating in over 60 studies related to environmental policy, control technology, remediation, and assessment, he has a historical perspective of environmental systems as they impact training, economics, regulation, and control. Mike’s Brownfields workforce experience dates to the first pilot assessment grant award in 1995. Mike holds degrees from Purdue University.
Steve Fenton

Steve Fenton has over 30 years of experience specializing in environmental, health and safety, Department of Homeland Security, energy, and Brownfields program development. He has served in private industry as a safety and environmental compliance officer and has also been an administrator at two community colleges. He served as the Associate Director of the Hazardous Materials Training and Research (HMTRI) Institute for the Eastern Iowa Community College District and the Director of the WorkSafe Institute of Washington. Steve has successfully managed numerous local, state, and federal grants, and has served as an independent evaluator on grant projects from NIEHS, Homeland Security, the Department of Transportation, and OSHA. Steve has also provided grant management training to Federally Recognized Tribes and U.S. Territories. An Air Force veteran, he holds degrees from Western Illinois University and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

Nolan Curtis

Nolan Curtis is an accomplished project and program management professional whose clients include Fortune 500, public agency, and private sector entities. Since the 1970s, Nolan has been involved with high profile design/communications, documentation, and management of public health and public science literacy issues both in the U.S. and abroad. For the past 25 years his career focus has been on strategy, development, operations, and assessment for internal and public facing high consequence projects. These projects involved sensitive environmental, political, and dynamic stakeholder engagement in the highly regulated and measured environment of nuclear waste remediation. Nolan has been a keynote speaker on Environmental Justice and diversity and has served on advisory boards for minority economic development, ATEEC, DOE-NIEHS, and PETE. He holds degrees from Stanford University and California Institute of the Arts.

Poll Question

We will be asking a few “Poll” questions throughout the webinar to help us gain a better understanding of who you are.

Results were given during the webinar.

Poll Question #1: DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

I plan on conducting Brownfield job training in the following type of target community (select all that apply). (Multiple Choice)

- [ ] Rural
- [ ] Urban
- [ ] Tribal
- [ ] We will not be submitting an application this cycle
- [ ] Not Applicable
Pre-Submission Tips for Consideration

Each organization has their own approach to organizing and responding to grant applications. In many cases, a single individual will write the entire grant. In other situations, grant writing will engage several individuals with specialized knowledge in training and community development. Today’s webinar presents tips and strategies suggested by successful EPA JT grantees and application reviewers that prospective applicants may wish to consider.

Background Information

Before we begin, let’s make sure we are familiar with background information provided by EPA regarding the FY25 Request for Applications (RFA) and the application process. To begin, we suggest visiting the FY 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grants webpage.

https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/fy-2025-brownfields-job-training-grants

This site provides information on the following links:

- Opportunity Notice at grants.gov
- Fiscal Year 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grant Guidelines (pdf) (674.3 KB)
- Fiscal Year 2025 Brownfields Job Training Guidelines Summary of Changes (pdf) (358.2 KB)
- Frequently Asked Questions About Brownfields Job Training (JT) Grants
- Interested in Applying for Brownfields Job Training Funding?
- List of Eligible and Ineligible Brownfield Job Training Courses
- How to Register and Apply for Grants
- How to submit an application through Grants.gov

Additional background information can be found at EPA’s Technical Assistance Resources site: https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-job-training-grants-technical-assistance-resources

At this site the EPA Grant Application Tips Sheet can be downloaded as a PDF Brownfields Job Training Grants Tip Sheet (pdf)

Visiting the KSU Technical Assistance website provides additional information regarding the development and implementation of EPA job training programs including access to regional Job Training Technical Assistance Providers.

https://www.ksutab.org/job-training

Start-up Tips

After reviewing background information and available technical assistance resources, it’s time to turn attention to the FY25 Request for Applications (RFA).

✓ Read the RFA very carefully (including the applicant eligibility paragraph).

   This should be first and foremost!

✓ Deconstruct the RFA to ensure that every request for information will be addressed in the application.

   Evaluators will deduct points if every request for information is not fully addressed.
If you were not able to attend the EPA Application Review Webinar on June 6th, download the recording, and recent FAQs from the FY 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grants webpage. FY 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grants | US EPA

Early in Application Development - Complete a Pre-Submission Checklist

Before getting too far into application development, it is important to ensure that when the application is completed, it will be properly submitted to Grants.gov for consideration.

- Verify that your grant submission process is up to date.
  Are you set up to submit and administer the proposal using Grants.gov and SAM.gov?
  Do you have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), Password, etc.?
  Make sure your password is up to date. You must use your account at least once per year for your account to remain active. Search for entity registration and exclusion records.

- EPA considers the party submitting the application package as the applicant.
  They will not accept applications on behalf of other organizations.

- It's easy to check your account status by going to www.SAM.gov and entering your organization’s Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number.
  If not, update or renew your entity registration.

- The organization’s E-Biz Point Of Contact (POC) must authorize the individual as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).

Application Development – Submit or Wait?

Committing to apply can be a daunting decision. Applications submitted this August will not be funded for about nine months, with training beginning in the Fall of next year. FY25 is an excellent year to apply or reapply for an EPA Job Training grant. The Grants.gov Notice of Funding Opportunities indicates 20 grants of up to $500K totaling $14 Million are available for acceptable applicants.

- Previous performance is not a “slam dunk” or guarantee of continued funding.
  Legacy programs need to demonstrate why their program deserves to be refunded or expanded. Because the Brownfields Job Training program was established as “startup funding” Proposal reviewers do not want to fund recycled applications. For this reason, relationships must be updated with new offerings, commitments of support and expanded partnerships.

- Returning grantees interested in continuing their program with a new grant must have closed out their previous grant or have disbursed at least 50% of the funds from that grant.

- Don’t be deterred if your organization is a new applicant.
  EPA is aware of existing job training grantees have an advantage over new applicants because they have established relationships with employers, partners, and experience in environmental workforce training. Special consideration is given to new applicants with well thought out program plans.

- If in doubt, submit a job training application even if more preparation could have resulted in a more complete response.
  Unsuccessful applicants will have opportunities to debrief and review their grant with suggestions for improvement. Unfunded applicants for this cycle will have a “head start”
in the next competition. Take advantage of debriefing sessions, additional mentoring, and technical assistance between grant cycles.

✓ Circulate program plans and progress reports to key partners during development of the application.

**Defining Community Need – Community and Labor Market Assessments**

Community and labor market assessments form the foundation and rational for developing a community-based Brownfields job Training Program. Demonstrating the need for a job training program to application reviewers is essential before moving forward.

✓ Use search engines, mapping tools, internet resources and surveys for initial background and demographic information.
  *This includes the use of EJScreen, CEJST and census data in your community assessments.*

✓ Begin community and labor market assessments early with as large a net as possible.
  *This activity takes time to complete and requires significant research into the local community and labor market.*

✓ Visit and “get to know” the neighborhoods under consideration.
  *This includes community influencers, social service, non-profits, and faith-based organizations.*

✓ Do not restrict employment searches to environmental related industries only.
  *There are many other industries that require environmental training and/or certifications.*

✓ Involve governmental and municipal agencies in the community and labor market assessments.

✓ Communicate with employers about their interest in hiring job training graduates.

**Identifying Other Factors & Special Situations in the Community**

Closely associated with characterization of the target community and the description of community need, It is important that applicants pay close attention to the Other Factors section of the RFA guidelines.

✓ Identify and note any of the 5 Other Factors Checklist that may exist in the target community.

Other factors are defined in the RFA as one of the following factors that exist in the community being served. Items identified must be referenced in the narrative including corresponding page numbers. Other factors include:

- Applicants that propose to serve a community population of 10,000 or less.
- Whether the applicant is new (i.e., has not received an EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant since 2015).
- Whether the applicant is a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory or is an organization that will primarily serve tribal or territorial residents.
- Applications that seek to serve veterans.
- Whether the target area is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.
✓ Search and identify other incidents or situations that can reinforce your selection of the target community.

✓ Other situations that may reinforce selection of a target community include:
  ▪ Training in communities with unusually high crime rates
  ▪ Training in communities with unusually high unemployment
  ▪ Applications that seek to serve returning citizens
  ▪ Applications that seek to serve special populations

✓ Do not overlook circumstances that could affect communities such as:
  ▪ Opportunity Zones
  ▪ Enterprise Zones
  ▪ Redevelopment Zones
  ▪ Community Development Projects
  ▪ Plant Closures, Chemical Spills, or Natural Disasters and Accidents.
    These should all be considered when addressing the community need.

### Engaging the Community and Government

The key to successful JT programs is early adoption of the program by elected officials and governmental agencies before the grant application is written.

✓ Brief the Mayor’s office, elected representatives, and City Council of the job training initiative.

✓ Engage public municipal and service agencies.
  Consider reaching out to public utilities, HUD, Emergency Response, Fire and Rescue, Public Safety, transportation, and social services.

✓ Locate and contact state and federal brownfields project staff.
✓ Document a discussion of important public meetings and public events in the narrative section of the RFA.
  Document all meetings with a list of participants, the date held and a summary of what was discussed.

✓ Develop connections with faith based and community organizations and integrate them into your job training program.

✓ Locate nonprofit and social service organizations in the target community that can leverage training program resources.

### Partnership Development

Don’t forget to consider partnership development and resource leveraging simultaneously. Your best partners will leverage available resources expanding program services.

✓ Recruit and commit partners to provide in-kind, service, facility, or financial support.

✓ Request letters of support referencing specific commitments being offered.

✓ Formalize and develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key partners.
  If partnerships are included in the application, establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is included in the Attachment section of the application.

✓ Recruit advisory committee members and include them in the application submission.
Advisory Committee members should include representatives from the following categories:

- Stakeholder Communities,
- Government Agencies,
- Training Organizations
- Potential Employers,
- Leveraging Partners
- Philanthropic Supporters

✓ Engage advisory committee and key partners in the proposal review process.

**Curriculum Development and Training**

✓ When developing the curriculum start with employer needs (labor market assessment).
✓ When creating your training program, it is important to know which courses can be funded by Brownfields Job Training Grant Funds.

- The [List of Eligible and Ineligible Brownfield Job Training Courses](#) webpage provides examples of what is and isn't eligible.
- Training that uses Brownfields Job Training Grant Funds must have a direct connection to facilitating the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation.

✓ Ensure that there is a clear distinction between supported and unsupported curriculum.
✓ Compete, screen, and select prospective trainers, contractors, and consultants early. Contractors and consultants receiving over $10,000 must be competitively selected. A minimum of three bids are required for competitive selection. If contractors are selected before the application is submitted, they may be included as part of the grant. Contractual commitments must be contingent on receiving EPA funding.

✓ Include advisors, employers, and trainers in curriculum development.
✓ Ensure that curriculum offerings are supported by the labor market assessment.

**Employer Recruitment and Graduate Placement**

Strong employer relationships result in high retention and placement rates. Successful graduates contribute to program awareness and enhance student recruitment.

✓ Obtain employer letters of support and commitment to consider program graduates.
✓ In addition to looking at program graduates, seek support and commitment to becoming a leveraging partner. In addition to hiring graduates, when appropriate ask potential employers to become leveraging partners, which could include contributing facilities and/or equipment.
Poll Question #2: APPLICANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Planning on writing an FY25 Job Training application (select all that apply): (Multiple Choice)
- We are planning to wait until next year before applying.
- We are planning to apply this year.
- We are familiar with available technical assistance resources.
- N/A

*Results were given during the webinar.*
Writing the Application

Writing the application

✓ Ensure your team has personnel or volunteers covering all the critical components of Job Training operation including community outreach, recruitment, training, retention, case management, partnership development and employer relationships.

✓ Assign every request for information to the individual best suited to respond to each question.

✓ Write the Narrative first, and then the three-page summary.

  The narrative will provide information required to complete the three-page summary.

✓ Be clear, concise, and address all criteria.

✓ The numbers must add up.

  Make sure those charged with budgets review costs and projected expenditures
doublecheck numbers across the narrative and compare them with the budget.

✓ Do not use acronyms without defining them first.

✓ What is not written in the application does not exist in the eyes of evaluators.

  Document extraordinary elements of your program.
  Work them into the narrative to receive the well-deserved credit for the extra effort.

✓ Remember someone in another part of the country might review your application.

  A good example would be the differences in Urban vs. Rural areas across the country including socio-economic, demographic, geographic, and environmental conditions.

  It is also possible that different people might review different sections of your application. They may be unaware of information you submitted in another section.

✓ Conduct frequent progress updates.

  Discuss the progress and direction of the proposal as a team. Meet regularly to report progress in responding to RFA information requests.
  Identify roadblocks and problems early.

Grant Writing Tips

✓ A single individual should be responsible for writing the final proposal.

  This ensures continuity and avoids piecemeal applications.

✓ Send drafts of the proposal to advisors and key partners for review.

  This allows multiple people to take one last look at the proposal and catch any possible errors.

✓ Maintain consistency.

  Maintain a consistent writing style. Do not make conflicting statements.

✓ Submit the application early to allow for any issues that may occur along the way.

  This allows for any problems that may occur with SAM.gov.

✓ Call the www.grants.gov Help Desk for assistance at 1-800-518-4726.

  https://www.grants.gov/support.html
  https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html

Grant Writing Strategies
✓ Dissect the RFA and break out each section and deliverable.
   *Identify every request for information.*

✓ Assign every request for information to the individual best suited to respond to each question.
   *Commit everyone to a deliverable and deadline for each activity.*
   *Ensure your team has personnel or volunteers covering all the critical components of the Job Training operation including community outreach, recruitment, training, retention, case management, partnership development and employer relationships.*

✓ Conduct frequent progress updates.
   *Discuss the progress and direction of the proposal as a team, meeting regularly reporting progress in responding to information requests. Surface roadblocks and problems early.*

✓ As the narrative is constructed, avoid generalizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poll Question #3: EXPERIENCE SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience with submitting EPA Job Training applications: (Single Choice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ This is the first time we will be submitting an EPA Job Training Application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ We have previously submitted an application that was not funded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ We will be submitting a new application to continue our JT program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Results were given during the webinar.*
Before Submitting the Application

Quality Review

✓ Perform a quality check to make sure that each section is legible, succinct, and complete. (At each handoff stage)
  
  Do this at each handoff stage.

✓ Circulate your draft application to key partners before final submission.
  
  This will provide you with one last opportunity to find any mistakes or inaccurate information before you send in the application.

✓ Have your application reviewed before final submission to Grants.gov.

FY25 Applicants interested in having their application reviewed by a Regional Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) Point of Contact (POC) before final submission should consider the following: (POCs are presented at the conclusion of this webinar).

  Do this early enough so that you still have time to act on any recommendations they provide.
  ▪ Notify your regional TAB Point of Contact that you are intending on submitting an application for review.
  ▪ Give the regional TAB Point of Contact a minimum of 3 days to review the application and provide feedback.
  ▪ For scheduling purposes, do not plan on sending an application for review within 10 business days of the application closing date.

✓ If in doubt, submit a Job Training application even if more preparation could have resulted in a better program plan.

  Unsuccessful applications will have opportunities to debrief and review their grant with suggestions for improvement.
  Those not funded during the current cycle will have a “head start” in the next competition with additional mentoring and technical assistance between grant cycles.

✓ Review Mistakes and Lessons Learned before submission

✓ Double check the numbers one more time!

  Budget numbers not adding up is a common mistake on applications, thus, checking the numbers one last time is important.

✓ Do not exceed page counts.

  All pages exceeding the page limit will not be reviewed.
  Extra pages will be discarded.


Application Extra Page Formatting.
  ▪ 8 ½ x 11 inches paper size, fonts should be limited to Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri font, sized no smaller than 12-point font, single-spaced.
  ▪ Submission is by a single PDF
  ▪ No photos allowed.
✓ Submit your application on time. Allow for submission “glitches” and unintended delays. Don’t be late!

Believe it or not, some prospective applications go through the application process, but fail to meet the deadline. Don’t let this happen to you!

**Poll Question #4: CURRENT APPLICATION STATUS**

Select one: (Single Choice)

- We are still determining if we will apply this year.
- We have met with the designated Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) who will submit the application and have been assured that logon credentials are up to date.
- We have already started writing the grant application.
- N/A

*Results were given during the webinar.*
Mistakes and Lessons Learned

The recent EPA Webinar, FY 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grants | US EPA, contains an excellent and detailed review of the grant application process with respect to how the various sections of your application are scored.

Over the past several application cycles, we have gathered critical feedback. Here are some examples of comments that have resulted in an early rejection of applications.

✓ The application was submitted with another organization’s account information.
✓ Applicant used the wrong UEI number.
✓ Applicant did not pass the Threshold Criteria

To find your UEI number, go to: https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/2021/09/14/how-to-find-an-applicants-uei-within-grants-gov/

✓ The submitter is not the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).
✓ The applicant did not have an active www.SAM.gov account and had another party submit the application package on their behalf.
✓ Applicant did not follow guidelines.
✓ The Proposal was difficult to understand.

  Applicant did not respond to criteria in sequence.
✓ Applicant responses to sub-categories were not on point, and/or incomplete and were unclear.

  Any criterion left unaddressed may result in zero points given for that criterion.
✓ Application was submitted late.

Ranking Criteria – Mistakes That Could Cost Evaluation Points

The sum of Ranking Criteria is 200 points. Each section has an assigned point total, with a total score providing an indication of the quality of the application. Presented are examples of issues that have resulted in point deductions during evaluation. (The list is illustrative, not to be represented as complete or as EPA guidelines for evaluation.)

Point totals are not the final determination of application quality.

Community Need (45 points total)

Community Description (25 pts)

✓ Environmental, social, and economic issues were not linked to the impact of the presence of Brownfields in the targeted area.
✓ Demographic stats were provided but no contrasting data (from state, county, city, or national statistics) to show the need.
✓ Community involvement and notification regarding proposed job training project, was not discussed in detail.
✓ There was no mention of public meetings, attendance records, and community roles in the development and composition of the job training proposal.
✓ There was no mention of social and public health issues.
✓ There was no mention of a specific population to be trained.
✓ Demographic data was provided but it was sporadic and not cohesive.
✓ Specific environmental concerns because of the presence of Brownfields in the Community were not discussed.
✓ Demographic stats were provided but ineffective and were not drastically indicative of need.
✓ The sensitive population was not discussed.
✓ There was no discussion regarding outreach/recruitment to target specific populations, i.e., unemployed, underemployed, ex-offenders, etc. with justified need for training (unemployment stats)
✓ Environmental Justice was not addressed.
✓ No mention of Brownfields.
✓ EJScreen or CEJST were not used to assist in locating the target community.

**Labor Market Demand (20 pts)**
✓ Applicant failed to link labor market assessment to curriculum.
✓ The applicant missed direct coordination with local employers.
✓ A labor market assessment or employer survey was not presented adequately.
✓ There was no evidence of direct surveys or polling of local employers.
✓ Job data by employment type sector concentration from earlier years is not current.
✓ There was no evidence of contact with potential employers.

**Training Program Description (25 points total)**
✓ Courses in core curriculum were not eligible for funding
  *All training must relate to facilitating the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation.*
✓ There was no mention of Training facilities, especially access to facilities and transportation option.
✓ There was no mention if students will be burdened with any fees.

**Budget (15 points total)**
✓ Fringe benefit cost was high.
✓ Mileage costs were stated but without substantive detail, more is needed to justify mileage costs.
✓ Personnel costs were too high.
✓ Travel to National Brownfields Conferences and JT conferences were not included in the budget.
✓ Budget numbers did not add up.
✓ The applicant made no distinction between EPA funds and non-EPA funds.
✓ Licensing/certificate fees problems.  
   _PPE, and incidental student expenses should be more detailed and specific._  
   _No student cost gives a stronger competitive edge._  
   _The collected fees are considered programmatic income and must be discussed as such._

✓ Expenditures were not explained as to whether costs exist and what is covered or not covered by EPA funds.

**Program Structure, Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (50 points total)**

**Outcomes and Outputs (10 pts)**

✓ No milestone or timeline was provided.

✓ Outputs and outcomes were not clear and did not easily link back to the proposed work plan.

✓ Applicant failed to discuss how it would handle retention and attrition though case management.

✓ There was no mention of Training facilities, especially access to facilities and transportation option.

✓ The proposal did not seem to have a targeted placement goal.

✓ The applicant did not address tracking program graduates.

✓ Student retention was not addressed.

**Recruitment and Screening (20 pts)**

✓ Physical or vision screening associated with CDLs, or equipment operation was not discussed in detail, only mentioned.

✓ Literacy screening requirements were not discussed.  
   _No test for minimum grade and skill level was mentioned._  
   _Generally, 9th - 10th grade language and math skills are required for most programs with a high school diploma or GED._

✓ There was no mention if drug testing is part of the screening process.

**Program Support (15 pts)**

✓ There were no letters of support and commitment from partners and governmental organizations for the Brownfields Job Training program.

✓ There were no letters from community organizations encouraging and promoting local Brownfields Job Training Program.
Program Sustainability (5 pts)
✓ Program Sustainability after grant ends was not discussed.

Partnerships (35 points total)
Collaboration with Environmental Entities (5 pts)
✓ No mention of Federal, State or Local Brownfields activities

Collaboration with Job-Readiness/Life Skills (5 pts)
✓ No mention of working with the local workforce investment board

Collaboration with Community (10 pts)
✓ No engagement with community faith-based or nonprofit organizations.
✓ The applicant did not list community organizations.

Collaboration with Employers (15 pts)
✓ There were no letters of support from employers.
✓ Employers’ commitment to hire was not discussed.
✓ No placement goals were stated.

Leveraging (5 points total)
✓ Did not mention leveraging.
✓ No discussion of in-kind commitments with and estimated assigned monetary value. 
  No value was given to in-kind commitments and there were no letters of support to substantiate claim for in-kind commitments.
✓ Very little leveraging was presented with no discussion of plans for how applicant will generate additional funding.

Programmatic Capability (25 points total)
Grant Management System (5 pts)
✓ There was no evidence of grant management capability.

Organizational Experience (10 pts)
✓ The applicant did not discuss or include an organizational structure.

Past Performance and Accomplishments (10 pts)
✓ Little evidence was provided showing experience or capability.
  Failure to indicate anything in response may result in zero points for this criterion.
Attachments

✓ Applicant failed to provide letters of support from key partners such as:
   Letters of commitment from partners and governmental organizations leveraging JT
   resources identified in the applications.
   Letters from community organizations encouraging and promoting the local job training
   program.
   MOUs from partners included in the proposal.
   Employer letters of support and commitment to consider program graduates.

✓ Letters of Support do not state roles and/or commitments, only support.
Critical Points to Remember

- Application Deadline - August 15, 2024.
- Costs associated with the application process are not recoverable under the grant.
- Carefully read the RFA in its entirety.
- Select a Project Manager to oversee all content and deliverables.
- Follow all of the RFA guidelines.
- Respond to all sections and questions.
- Review your application. Is it understandable? Is it complete?
- Have TAB review your application.
- Submit the application on time (or preferably, several days early)!
Resources

Below is a list of EPA and TAB resources.
Remember, EPA regional contacts can help with questions about Threshold criteria. However, EPA can’t help with strategy or ranking criteria type questions during the application period.

EPA JOB TRAINING COORDINATOR POINTS OF CONTACT

EPA Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)
William “Bill” Lariviere: Phone: (617) 918-1231: e-mail: lariviere.william@epa.gov

EPA Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, VI)
Schenine Mitchell: Phone: (212) 637-3283: e-mail: mitchell.schenine@epa.gov

EPA Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV)
Nancy Shannon: Phone: (215) 814-3175: e-mail: Shannon.Nancy@epa.gov

EPA Region 4 (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN)
Olga Perry: Phone: (404) 562-8534: e-mail: perry.olga@epa.gov

EPA Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)
Linda Morgan: Phone: (312) 886-4747: e-mail: morgan.linda@epa.gov

EPA Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)
Emily Jimenez: Phone: (214) 665-2176: e-mail: jimenez.emily@epa.gov

EPA Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, NE)
Alma Moreno Lahm: Phone: (913) 551-7380: e-mail: moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov

EPA Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)
Christine Michaud-Tilly: Phone: (303) 312-6706: e-mail: MichaudTilly.Christine@epa.gov
EPA Region 9 (AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU)
Amanda Pease: Phone: (415) 972-3068: e-mail: pease.amanda@epa.gov
Jasmine Williams: e-mail: Williams.Jasmine.A@epa.gov

EPA Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA)
Angel Ip: Phone: (206) 553-1673: e-mail: ip.angel@epa.gov

REGIONAL TAB POINTS OF CONTACT

Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT) University of Connecticut
Randi Mendes: randi.mendes@uconn.edu

Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, and VI) New Jersey Institute of Technology
Sean Vroom: svroom@njit.edu

Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, and WV) West Virginia University
Carrie Stanton: carrie.staton@mail.wvu.edu

Region 4 (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN) International City/County Management Association
Chris Harrell: charrell@icma.org, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)
Sean Vroom: svroom@njit.edu, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)

Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, and WI) Kansas State University
Blase Leven: it-tab@ksu.edu

Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, and TX) Kansas State University
Blase Leven: it-tab@ksu.edu

Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, and NE) Kansas State University
Blase Leven: it-tab@ksu.edu

Region 8 (UT, MT, WY, CO, ND, and SD) Kansas State University
Blase Leven: it-tab@ksu.edu

Region 9 (AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, and GU) Center for Creative Land Recycling
Claire Weston: claire.weston@cclr.org

Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, and WA) Center for Creative Land Recycling
Claire Weston: claire.weston@cclr.org
CONTACT US

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- Download this Webinar and Companion Text
- Request review of your draft application by TAB. Give 1 week notice. Drafts received on or before Aug 7th will be reviewed and returned within several days.
- Visit us at our website: KSUTAB.ORG/Job-Training

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