

PLC Session 290 - March 29, 2023

FY24 Grant Cycle



Contents:

1. News Impacting Brownfield Job Training Programs
2. Questions from PLC Participants
3. Tentative Timeline for the FY24 Grant Cycle
4. What to Expect when the FY24 Brownfield Job Training RFA is Issued
5. FY23 Application Guidelines Summarized
6. Things to do Now to Prepare for the FY24 RFA
7. Funding Opportunities
8. Brownfields Training and Environmental Justice Related Virtual Meetings and Information Sessions
9. In-Person Conferences and Seminars
10. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators
11. Join Us for the Next PLC Wednesday, April 12

1. News Impacting BJT Programs

Please Join Us for the 2023 In-Person Annual All-Grantee Meeting - May 24 & 25, 2023

(Travel May 23 and 26)

Hilton Alexandria Old Town - Alexandria, Va.



Topics that will be covered during the 2 Day All-Grantee Conference include:

- Grants Management: Federal regulations impacting BJT program implementation
- Grantee Partnerships: Employers/advisory boards, social services, working with WIBS and trainer resources
- Challenges and Minefields for BJT Grantees: Transportation, childcare, cultural/gender issues, and demographic disparities
- EJ Tool: Locating demographic and environmental information when establishing target service areas
- ACRES tool for Brownfield Job Training Grantees
- Rural Grantee Issues: A panel of selected programs located in rural communities
- Tips and Strategies for Recruiting, Screening, and Assessing Populations: Successful recruiting strategies used by BJT grantees
- Working with Diverse Populations: Including returning citizens and temporarily housed and/or homeless applicants
- Plus, networking lunches, briefings from breakout discussions, open forums, and plenty of opportunities to meet, mingle, and network.

Don't miss this unique opportunity!

Mark your calendars and make your conference and hotel reservations now!

HMTRI will cover the cost of three nights lodging (Checking in on Tuesday, May 23, and Checking out Friday, May 26). We have secured a block of rooms at the **Hilton Alexandria Old Town hotel**.

Note, there is a two-step process for attending the meeting:

First - Register for the meeting (limit two people per organization). Click on this link:

Conference Registration

<https://forms.gle/JbyZeYeq2hUAoGAK8>

Second - Reserve your room.

RESERVE YOUR ROOM NOW!

The hotel reservation cutoff for the HMTRI block of rooms is Monday, May 1. Unfortunately, HMTRI will not be able to cover the cost of conference lodging outside of the block of rooms or at another hotel.

Hotel Reservation by Phone:

- Phone 703-837-0440 or call 1-800-Hiltons (800-445-8667)
Select "Reservations". The Group Code for the reservation is **HMTRI**.
- Be prepared to provide a credit card for incidentals not covered by HMTRI.

What is covered?

HMTRI will be providing two continental breakfasts and two lunches on the two days of the conference (May 24 & 25). If you are driving, discounted parking is available.

What is not covered?

Transportation, transfers, and incidentals.

If you have any questions, please contact: Steve Fenton, HMTRI at sfenton103@aol.com

Brownfields 2023 National Conference

August 8 - 11, 2023

Detroit, MI

The conference is a partnership between ICMA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and one of ICMA's longest running grant funded programs. EPA and ICMA will hold the 2023 conference in Detroit, Michigan, August 8 through 11, 2023.

Educational sessions and registration will be announced later in the year.

Brownfields Job training grantees will have an opportunity to exhibit at Brownfields 2023

HMTRI is sponsoring booth 113 at Brownfields 23 in Detroit Michigan August 9-10. The focus of the exhibit will be on the network of Brownfields Job Training Grantees and opportunities for employers to hire BJT graduates. The booth will be a place grantees can use as a "home base" and to meet potential employers and display program materials. Grantees are encouraged to bring business cards and informational handouts about their programs. For additional information and ideas, contact Steve Fenton, HMTRI at sfenton103@aol.com

2023 Phoenix Awards Nominations are Open

Nominations due April 17, 2023

The premier awards program for brownfields redevelopment is coming to Detroit at the 2023 National Brownfields Training Conference. This year's awards will once again celebrate exemplary projects in brownfields redevelopment from across the country and recognize the people that make them happen.

Click the link below to review the categories and make your nomination.

Nominations are due on April 17, 2023. All winners will be notified in June 2023 and recognized at Brownfields 2023 in Detroit, MI August 8-11, 2023.

[Click Here to Nominate](#)

Yes you may nominate your organization for consideration.

Region 3 Quarterly Open Discussions Begin this Week

Friday, March 30, at 2:2:30

Region 3 has announced a quarterly Zoom call as an opportunity to meet with Regional Brownfield stakeholders, including EPA Brownfield Project Officers, technical assistance providers as well as current and prospective Brownfield grantees. Open discussions will address challenges and provide input on topics that impact the community. The first session will begin with an introduction and extension of the 2022 Open House. For more information, session recordings, notes and registration for future events, check out section 6 of these PLC notes. For more information, contact adams.sydney@epa.gov.

2. Questions from PLC Participants

Question: How long will I have to respond to the EPA Request for Applications after it is posted?

Response: Applicants only have 60 days to write and submit their applications. This is not enough time to properly establish partnerships required for a comprehensive BJT program. HMTRI strongly suggests beginning preparation immediately.

Question: Will the FY24 Request for applications be the same as the FY23 Request for Applications?

Response: FY24 Request for Applications will not be available until posted on Grants.gov. Indications are that the FY24 competition will be similar to FY23's. While we expect minor changes, using the available FY23 guidance materials would be a good strategy in preparing for the grant. Links to those materials are discussed later in today's notes.

Question: How do I submit a BJT application?

Response: All EPA grant applications are submitted online. Organizations must be registered in two government systems to apply for EPA grants:

1. The System for Award Management (SAM.gov) registers organizations to conduct business with the U.S. Government.
2. Grants.gov is the official system for managing all federal grant applications.

To apply through www.grants.gov, organizations must:

- Have a unique entity identifier (UEI)
- Have an active System for Award Management (SAM) account in www.sam.gov.
- Be registered in www.grants.gov
- Be designated as your organization's Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).

For more detailed instructions on registering to apply for a BJT grant, go to:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/how-register-apply-grants>

For more detailed instructions on submitting through

www.grants.gov

3. Tentative Timeline for FY24 Grant Applicants



The FY24 grant cycle timeline for each grantee will depend on the actual award date and when applicants are authorized to spend funds. For the FY24 grant cycle, the first four years will focus on program development, training delivery and placement. A final year (5) has been added for additional training, placement, tracking and program sustainability. Milestones for the FY24 grant cycle may change but might look like the schedule below.

Winter/Spring 2023

- Begin program planning, stakeholder, and partnership development

Spring / Summer 2023

- Requests for Applications (RFAs). - estimated posting in June on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)
- Applicants have 60 days to write and submit applications. New grantees should begin developing their proposals several months in advance
- Application deadline submitted to grants.gov. - August

Fall / Winter 2023

- Applications not passing threshold criteria are notified within 15 days of grant closure - September
- Evaluation criteria reviews continue. - Fall and Winter 2023

Early 2024

- Applications will be recommended for funding - First Quarter 2024
- Grant packages are sent to successful applicants
- Award letters and acceptance by selected applicants returned to EPA

Spring and Summer 2024

- Work plans and grant administration is completed prior to final award (60-90 days after submitting grant package)
- Funds available for training are released before September 31, 2024

2024- 2029

- Training cohorts continue with program refinements, partnership development and placement improvements based on experience
- Training and placement progress with ACRES reporting quarterly
- Consideration regarding program expansion, improvement and sustainability continue
- Placement, funding development and program continuation is considered as the completion date of the grant approaches
- Final placement, tracking, program continuation plans, and grant wrap up – through 2029

4. What to Expect when the FY24 Brownfield Job Training RFA is Issued

With the increase in funding available to the EPA Brownfields Program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), EPA's Brownfields Job Training Grant Program has dramatically increased funding during the FY23 and FY24 funding cycles. For grantees funded prior to last year's FY23 funding cycle, the following changes have been made.

- Beginning in FY 2023, the maximum dollar value for the Job Training Grant awards increased from \$200,000 to \$500,000
- The grant performance period increased from 3 to 5 years
- Transportation stipends, reasonable stipends to compensate trainees for participating in training, and reasonable child-care subsidies are eligible uses of grant funds
- Applicants that were selected in previous competitions are eligible to apply for additional funding by applying for a new grant
 - In some cases, existing grantees may be maintaining two grants concurrently



- Due to funding restrictions associated with (CERCLA) and (BIL) the following services must continue to be supported with leveraged partnerships
 - Funding for life skills training
 - Funding for wrap around and support services
 - Restrictions on the type of environmental related training supported

Links to FY23 Guidance Materials

As previously noted, using the available FY23 guidance materials would be a good strategy in preparing for the FY24 application guidelines. It is not anticipated that evaluation criteria will change dramatically. On June 15th, 2022 EPA hosted an outreach webinar for prospective FY23 EPA Brownfields Job Training Applicants. The Request for Applications Guidelines can be found at the link below and are summarized in the next session of these notes.

<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-06/FY23%20BF%20JT%20RFA.pdf>

EPA has also prepared Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers to assist prospective applicants with preparing FY23 Brownfields Job Training (BJT) Grant applications.

<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-06/FY23%20BF%20JT%20FAQs.pdf>

For general information about FY23 BJT program grants, check out the home page at the following link.

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/fy-2023-brownfields-job-training-jt-grants>

5. FY23 Application Guidelines Summarized

It is important to note that the FY24 Request for Applications remains in the draft stage and may change as it proceeds through the review and approval process. Presented is a summary of the FY23 guidelines (available to the links just noted) which may be helpful in preparing for the release of the final FY24 Request for Applications. Guidelines can be divided into three components, a Narrative Information Sheet, the Narrative (sometimes referred to as the ranking criteria), and an attachments section.

A. Narrative Information Sheet (3-page limit, single-spaced)

The Narrative Information sheet confirms that applicants are qualified to proceed to the more detailed evaluation. Items below are requested in this section. Other than insuring eligibility to apply for the grant, this section is usually addressed later in the grant writing process.

- Applicant identification
- Threshold eligibility criteria
- A training curriculum chart indicating the cost of each course
- Target area being considered
- Project Directors contact information
- Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Official's contact information

B. The Narrative (12-page limit, single-spaced)

The Narrative, sometimes called ranking criteria, includes responses to seven criteria. Point values are assigned to each criterion as a guide in ranking applications. This section is key in presenting the program for which funding is requested. Each criteria should stand on its own merits and a response to every request for information must be given. After scoring each criterion, a total score provides reviewers an objective ranking of each application. Evaluations

are compared to select proposals recommended for funding by the review panels. Final awards additionally take into account special considerations that assist in “leveling the playing field”.

Ranking criteria include the following

1. Community Need

- Community description and demographic Information
- Labor market demand- certifications being offered to address labor market demands

2. Training Program Description

- Description of the proposed curriculum
- Detailed information regarding the proposed curriculum
 - o The cost of each course
 - o Number of times that given course will be offered
 - o Percentage of the grant budget that is allocated for each training course

3. Budget

This section of the application provides a description of the proposed program’s budget and planned usage of EPA funds. This section does not address funds or services provided by stakeholders or partners. The budget is presented as a chart with the following costs.

- Personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Travel
- Contractual Supplies
- Other (Participant support costs such as stipends)
- Total EPA funds being requested

4. Program Structure, Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes

- Outputs and Outcomes provides detailed information in chart form with the following information.
 - o Expected participant enrollment
 - o Expected number of students anticipated to graduate
 - o Expected placement rate of graduates in environmental employment
- Recruitment and screening strategies
- Program support
 - o Job search support and resources available for participants
 - o How long graduates will be tracked after graduation
 - o First-source or local hiring ordinances, tax incentives, wage subsidies, etc.) that can increase the likelihood of employment
- Program sustainability
 - o Describe a plan for sustaining and continuing your environmental job training program once EPA funds are exhausted.

5. Partnerships

This section provides detailed information with contact information, anticipated deliverables, and support letters. Leveraged partners need to address the support they are providing.

- Environmental - Organizations supporting environmental cleanup work
- Job-Readiness - Organizations providing life skills and other job-readiness tools that are not eligible for funding under the RFA
- Community and local organizations providing outreach and community support of the program
 - o Collaboration with environmental entities
 - o Collaboration with job-readiness/life skills
 - o Collaboration with community
 - o Collaboration with employers
- Employers - Organizations with commitments to consider hiring graduates

6. Leveraging

This section demonstrates how applicants will leverage additional funds or resources beyond grant funds awarded by EPA. Leveraged funding and in-kind support illustrates how leveraging will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the project.

7. Programmatic Capability

This section demonstrates that the applicant has the capability or ability to obtain the capability to ensure successful completion of the proposed program.

- Grant Management System - A brief description of the project manager and staff with their qualifications and experience
 - o If the expertise is not available, how will it be obtained
- Organizational experience
 - o Experience in working with the target community
 - o Experience in the employment and training field
- Audit Findings - Explain any adverse audit findings
- Past Performance and accomplishments

EPA Brownfields Job Training Grants within the last 10 years

C. Attachments, (15-page limit)

The third section of the application is intended to present reference materials presented in the narrative section. Items include the following.

- Documentation of applicant eligibility
 - o For entities other than cities, counties, tribes, or states, documentation of eligibility, such as non-profit status
- Milestones schedule
- Start times and completion dates of significant tasks under the proposed program
 - o Outreach, procurement of a contractor, recruitment, frequency of classes to be offered and length, instruction, placement, and tracking
- Documentation addressing Other Factors
 - o A summary on the applicable other factors
- Partnership letters
 - o Partnership letters that impact scoring of the narrative criteria

EPA does an excellent job in describing the RFA just summarized and posting frequently asked questions regarding the specific content and format of the application. In future PLCs, HMTRI will not dwell on the specifics of the FY64 Request for Applications. The goal of the HMTRI PLC is to assist potential applicants develop strategies and ideas that can be incorporated into their individual proposals.

6. Things to do now to prepare for the FY24 RFA

Should we apply for the FY26 Brownfields Job Training Grant?

When in doubt, we encourage organizations to apply rather than waiting for the next grant cycle even if your organization feels it is not ready at this time.

- Unsuccessful applicants will be considered as potential applicants in FY25.
- Unsuccessful applicants are given an opportunity for a debriefing to identify issues with their application.
- Many first-year applicants are unsuccessful only to receive funding with a new expanded proposal in the next competition.

- Unsuccessful applicants have an opportunity to expand their program, develop additional partnerships and leveraged resources between competitions.
- Rejected or unsuccessful applications will not reflect negatively or influence next year's submission.
- Committing and announcing intentions to develop a BJT program often attracts funding from other sources.

If our organization decides to consider establishing a Brownfields Job Training Program, what should we be doing now?

At this stage in program development, discussions need to take place among the principal organizer, staff, and potential supporters. Although organizations are encouraged to apply, certain issues should be addressed before committing the additional effort required to develop a competitive BJT application.

- Do we have sufficient staff and facilities to initiate a BJT program?
- Do we have community support?
- Do we have governmental support?
- Can we find partners willing to contribute to the program?
- Is there sufficient demand in our community to employ our graduates?

If answers to the above questions are positive, it's time to begin the program development process.

Below are time intensive activities that BJT applicants should address to make their application process less stressful and more productive.

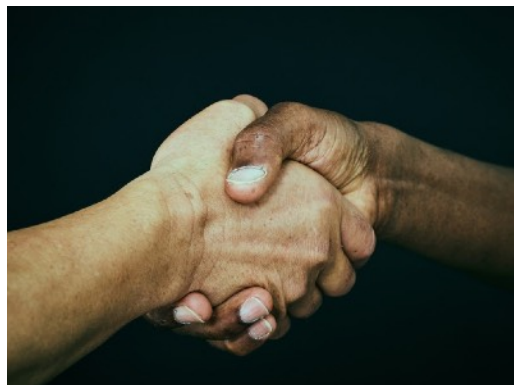
- Search for partners who may provide specific contributions to the program.
- Become acquainted with local communities that may be candidates for training.
- Search for programs that may become leveraging partner candidates.
- Recruit an ad hoc working team willing to commit to BJT program development.
- Identify local community organizations that will support the program.
- Begin searching for candidates to form the beginnings of an Advisory Board.
Board members should include representatives from the community, government, training organizations, employers leveraging partners and supporters.
- Begin searching for prospective local trainers as part of a curriculum development team.
- Discuss with local employers supporting the program and to consider graduates for employment.

For new potential grantees the action items above can be a slow and daunting task. Now is the time to begin visualizing how environmental training can be established in the community. For established grantees and those reapplying for an FY24 grant, it is time to reexamine the program in place. The question becomes, how can the existing program be expanded with additional training and services provided?

7. Funding Opportunities and EPA Requests for Information (RFI)

EPA's Environmental Justice (EJ) initiative

With the dramatic increase in EPA's Environmental Justice (EJ) funding as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL), grantees need to be aware of EJ programs that will be coming to their community.



The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program

Applications packages due April 10, 2023

This program provides financial assistance to eligible organizations working to address local environmental or public health issues in their communities. The program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders (e.g., local businesses and industry, local government, medical service providers, academia, etc.) to develop solutions to environmental or public health issue(s) at the community level. [Learn More Here](#)

To apply for this opportunity, [view the RFA on Grants.gov](#).

Applications packages must be submitted on or before April 10, 2023

Applicants should plan for projects to begin on October 1, 2023.

8. Brownfields Training Related Virtual Meetings



National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Calls

The purpose of these calls is to inform communities about EPA's environmental justice work and enhance opportunities to maintain an open dialogue with environmental justice advocates. As environmental justice continues to be integrated into EPA programs and policies, the Agency hopes that these calls will help reaffirm EPA's continued commitment to work with community groups and the public to strengthen local environmental and human health outcomes.

April 18
2 - 4 p.m. Eastern

EPA environmental justice initiatives

Listening Session and Dialogue:

Q&A about ongoing EJ initiatives.

For more information and registration, go to:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/national-environmental-justice-community-engagement-calls>

Register for EPA's Upcoming Series of Webinars for Grant Applicants and Recipients

Participants will hear from EPA staff about key aspects of the grants process and have the opportunity to submit questions. Additional information about each webinar and instructions

for how to register is provided below. **Advance registration is required, and you must register for each webinar separately.**

Presentation materials and a list of helpful links will be available before each webinar on EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grants-webinars>.

After the webinars, a recording and transcript will be posted to the same webpage. For more information on how to prepare for EPA OGD grants webinars, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/tips-attending-grants-webinars>.

Quarterly Region 3 Brownfield Community Zoom Calls

Region 3 hopes to build a rich, experienced, and inspiring support network.

An opportunity to meet once a quarter with the Region 3 Brownfield Community, including EPA Brownfield Project Officers, Technical Assistance to Brownfield (TAB), as well as current and prospective Brownfield grantees, and a platform to elevate successes, challenges, and provide input on topics that impact the community.

Each session will be themed based on a topic the region would like to discuss.

Some current ideas:

- Looking for Inspiration for Projects?
- Navigating the EPA Grant System
- Strategies for Leveraging Money
- Public Health and Brownfields
- Engaging your Communities During Redevelopment

This first session was an introduction and extension of the Open House where we asked...

1. What have been some challenges in launching your Brownfield Program?
2. What are some resources that would help your Brownfield Program?
3. What are some topics that could be beneficial to discuss with your R3 community colleagues?

If you have any questions regarding post session notes or recordings, please reach out to: adams.sydney@epa.gov

9. Brownfield Conferences and Seminars

Registration & Sponsorships for the 2023 GBA Brownfield Seminar are Open!
Tuesday, April 11, 2023





Early Bird Registration is Open:

Register for GBA's 2023 Brownfield Seminar Now

GBA 2023 members: save on registration for the 2023 Brownfield Seminar with our early bird discount. Still need to renew for 2023? [Click here for membership information](#) and take advantage of this opportunity to save on one of the year's most valued events.

When: Tuesday, April 11, 2023, beginning at 8 am. Content will conclude around 5 pm, but we hope you'll plan to stay for our reception - always a great time with fantastic networking!

Where: Back by popular demand, we're returning to the Georgia State University Knowles Law Center located at 85 Park Pl. NE, Atlanta, GA 30303.

For those who cannot attend in person, we are presenting this as a hybrid event once again this year, so feel free to register for virtual attendance as well.

What: A full day of programming and networking that once again will offer up to 8 hours of CE & CLE credit.* Now its ninth year, GBA's Brownfield Seminar has sold out in person every year, with virtual participation eclipsing those participation levels.

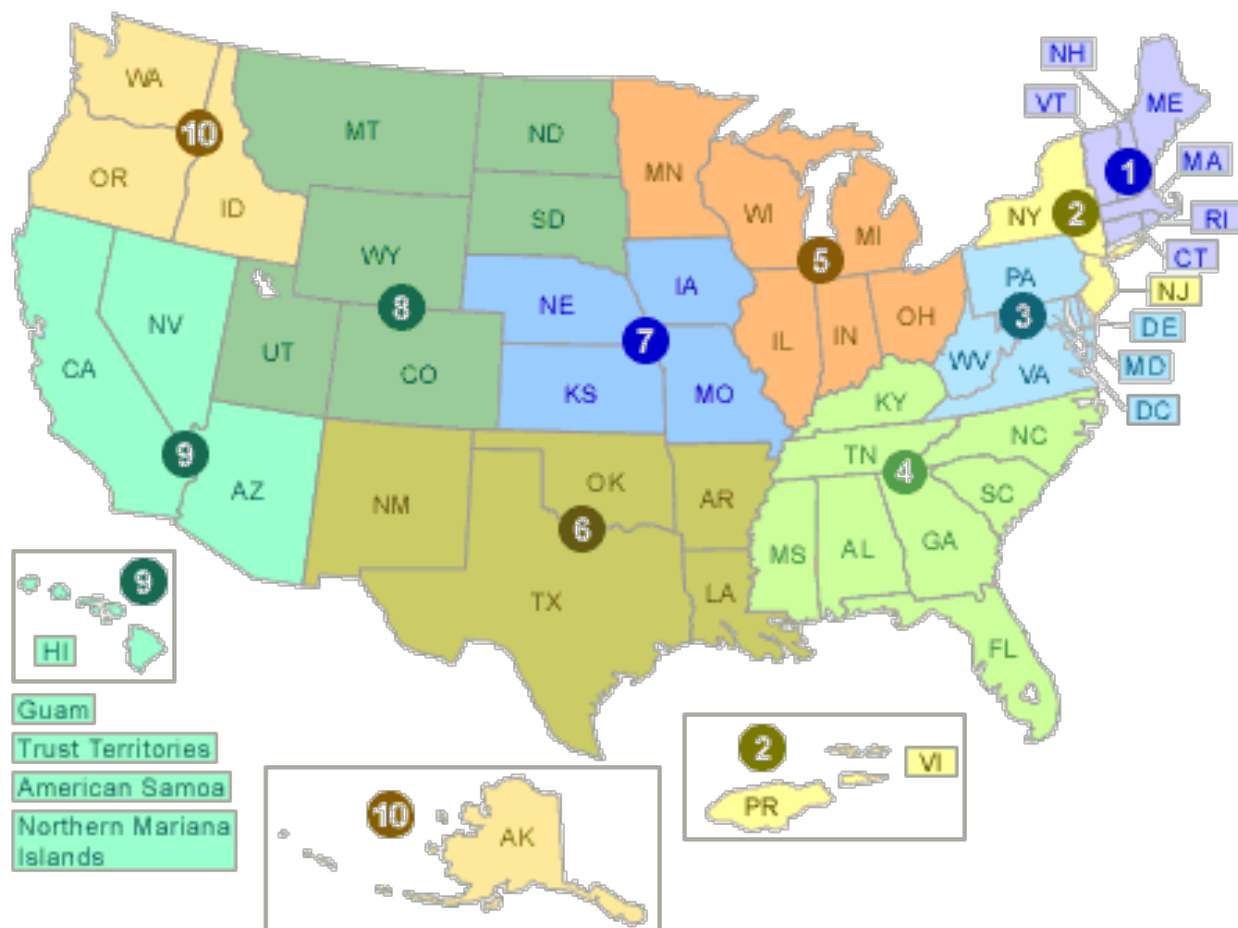
Click here to [REGISTER NOW](#)

10. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators

Regional Coordinators are the first place to go regarding questions about BJT grants, extensions, budgets, or work plans. Many Regions maintain a Listserv for past, current, and potential recipients.

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 Gianna Rosati Phone: (215) 814-3406 E-mail: Rosati.Gianna@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 Elizabeth Reyes Phone: (214) 665-3163 E-mail: reyes.elizabeth@epa.gov

<p>EPA Region 7 IA, KS, MO, NE Alma Moreno Lahm Phone: (913) 551-7380 E-mail: moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov</p>	<p>EPA Region 8 CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY Christine Michaud-Tilly Phone: (303) 312-6706 E-mail: MichaudTilly.Christine@epa.gov</p>
<p>EPA Region 9 AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU Nova Blazej Phone: (415) 972-3846 E-mail: blazej.nova@epa.gov</p> <p>Noemi Emeric-Ford Phone: (213) 244-1821 E-mail: emeric-ford.noemi@epa.gov</p>	<p>EPA Region 10 AK, ID, OR, WA Angel Ip Phone: (206) 553-1673 E-mail: ip.angel@epa.gov</p>



11. Join Us for the Next PLC April 12, 2023



Join a conversation with EPA Brownfields Job Training grant recipients, alumni, and interested stakeholders. PLCs are scheduled bi-weekly on Wednesdays at 2:00pm (EST).

To Join PLC Zoom Meetings, go to:

<https://zoom.us/j/93598658578>

Meeting ID: 935 9865 8578

On the road - Computer not available?

You can phone in using the nearest location

- +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 935 9865 8578

The objective of the (PLC) is to promote and share innovative strategies among those interested in establishing community based environmental job training programs. Our sessions allow participants to stay in touch with BJT happenings, ask questions, showcase their programs, and help others. The Environmental Workforce PLC is open to all and there is no cost or obligation to attend. Join us when you can. If you would like to invite a guest, feel free to forward this email.

Showcase your program – Biweekly, the PLC will hear from one of our grantees, discuss opportunities or exchange ideas related to environmental job training. HMTRI is inviting you to participate in the next cycle of Professional Learning Community ZOOMs. If you would like to present at an upcoming PLC contact:

Mike at:

msenew@gmail.com/

PLC notes presented represent individual opinions and ideas from Professional Learning Community participants and BJT recipients. They do not represent EPA policy, guidance or opinions and should not be taken as such.



The Brownfields Training PLC is sponsored under Cooperative Agreement with The US Environmental Protection Agency in association with the Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute (HMTRI) of the Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC).