

PLC Session 291 - April 12, 2023



Establishing Community Need

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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 for 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

To subscribe for updates and conference news, go to:

<https://brownfields2023.org/about/conference-overview/>

Last Chance for the 2023 Phoenix Awards Nominations

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. Winners will be notified in June 2023 and recognized at Brownfields 2023 in Detroit, MI August 8-11, 2023. Yes you may nominate your organization for consideration.

Click the link to review the categories and [make your nomination](#).

BJT Grantees Will Have an Opportunity to Exhibit at Brownfields 2023

HMTRI is sponsoring booth 113 at Brownfields 23 in Detroit Michigan August 9th and 10th. The theme and focus of the exhibit will focus on the network of Brownfields Job Training Grantees and opportunities for employers to hire BJT graduates. The booth will be a place grantee can use as a "home base", a place 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

2. Questions from PLC Participants

Question: I missed the last PLC. Could you give me the links to last year's EPA Request for Applications (RFA) Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)?

Response: 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. The Request for Applications Guidelines can be found at the following link.

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

EPA has also prepared 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>

Question: As we finalize community assessments and select a target community are we required to inform the target community of our intention to apply for a Brownfields Job Training Grant as part of the application process?

Response: While not required, applicants are strongly urged to work with neighborhood groups in the proposed target community. Start early by attending town hall meetings, neighborhood advisory council meetings, and church functions. Be prepared to discuss your intentions to apply for an EPA Job training grant and would appreciate community support. Community based organizations can help with application development including

- Sources for non-environmental training (not covered under BJT)
- In-Kind contributions including potential training facilities
- Community awareness and recruitment assistance
- Insite related to local social, demographic, and economic conditions



Question: Where can I find BJT programs already funded by EPA who may be able to answer questions I may have about the program.

Response: BJT grantees have always showed a willingness to assist new grantees. A good place to start is contacting the EPA Regional Coordinator who is familiar with current BJT grantees in your region. HMTRI additionally maintains a contact list of grantees for use by potential employers. Located at the following address <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/certified-employee-finder/>. HMTRI maintains a “Certified Employee Finder” providing prospective employers and those interested in contacting BJT grantees the following information.

- Program contact information
- Curriculum offered to students
- Certificates and certifications students will possess upon graduation
- Life skills taught

3. Tentative PLC Schedule

Before FY24 Requests for applications are announced, the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC) intends to address critical issues associated with successful implementation of the BJT grant programs.

EPA does an excellent job describing guidelines for responding to the BJT Request for Proposals (RFA) posting frequently asked questions regarding specific content and format issues. The goal of the HMTRI PLC is to assist potential applicants develop strategies that can be incorporated into their individual applications. Below is a tentative schedule regarding subject matter for each PLC session. Notes and recordings will be posted to <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-sessions/> the week following each meeting.

Tentative PLC Schedule:

April 26	Session 292	Partnership development
May 10	Session 293	Student recruitment and assessment
May 24	No PLC	HMTRI All Grantee Meeting – Alexandria, VA
June 7	Session 294	Curriculum development and student retention
June 21	Session 295	Placement and tracking
July 5	Session 296	Tips and trips to consider before application submission

4. Establishing Community Need



Community and labor market assessments highly impact the success or failure of a Brownfields Job Training Program. In the end, the effectiveness, reputation, and credibility of a training program is determined by student retention and graduate placement. Likewise, lack of community support eventually strangles recruitment efforts resulting in apathetic participants neither motivated nor committed to establishing an environmental career. Both labor market and community assessments need to begin early, continue throughout program development, and should be revisited through the life of the program. Responsibility for these

assessments should be assigned early to individuals interested in working with governmental organizations, potential employers, and with the community.

- Begin community and labor market assessments early with as large a net as possible.
- Visit and “get to know” the neighborhoods under consideration.
 - *Walk the talk – Walk the block*
- Use search engines, internet resources and surveys for initial background information.
- Do not restrict searches to environmental related industries.

- Involve governmental and municipal agencies in community and labor market assessments
- “Drill down” to communicate with community leaders and employers exhibiting interest a local BJT program.
 - *Establish relationships. It’s not enough to know that they are interested. It is just as important to know why they are interested*
- Engage supporters and employers to become part of BJT.
- Always ask government officials, supporters, and potential employers for help in identifying additional program supporters
 - *Come away with 3 leads*
- Document meetings and supporters for possible inclusion in the grant application.

Community Need as Outlined in RFA Guidelines

When RFA guidelines are issued, evaluation criteria begin with a detailed statistical description of the proposed target community. Information requested includes demographic information that supports how the community was selected as a BJT target area. Example tables are provided in the guidelines with resources for gathering demographic data. The narrative accompanying the table demonstrates how the proposed program will benefit disadvantaged communities as identified in the Biden Administration’s Justice40 Initiative, the EPA Environmental Justice initiative, and how demographic indicators relate to current challenges in the target community including the following:

- Environmental issues
- Social and public health concerns
- Economic issues
- Disproportional impacts from environmental harms or risks
- Potential environmental justice concerns
- Disproportionate siting of polluting facilities
- Disproportionate number of brownfield sites

Rather than discuss responding specifically to the EPA grant application, today’s discussion addressed “best practices” in selecting target communities that will benefit most from a Brownfields Job Training Program. After completing a comprehensive labor market and community assessment, responding to the RFA will become a grant writing exercise using information and background collected as part of the program development process.

5. Labor Market Assessments

A prerequisite for viable training programs is the labor market assessment. While RFA guidelines combine community assessment and labor market assessment into a single ranking topic titled “community need”, HMTRI feels these assessments need individual attention and are critical to program success. For this reason, we have reordered labor market and community assessment as separate critical issues. Before potential BJT developers proceed with the selection of a target community, basic questions need to be addressed.

- Is the proposed training participants will receive useful to local employers?
- Will participants of the program find sustainable employment opportunities after graduation?

Answers to these simple questions determine if program development should continue. Labor market assessments provide answers to these questions. Understanding employer needs is the key to a successful Brownfields Job Training program.

Comprehensive labor market assessments go way beyond surveys projecting potential job creation. Properly conducted, labor market assessments identify community supporters, training needs, and potential leveraging partners. Rather than being an afterthought or justification for training, comprehensive labor market assessments serve as a foundation for planning and developing sustainable job development programs.

Conducting a labor market assessment for BJT occupations can be difficult and time consuming. A Department of Labor review of environmental occupations will not reveal the majority of environmental job opportunities. After an overview of general labor statistics, labor market assessments must identify additional employers who specifically need workers with environmental remediation, health, and safety training.

Many construction and deconstruction occupations require environmental remediation skills and certifications. Welders may need asbestos training, painters may require lead testing, remediation training and confined space certifications. Trades working with potential hazardous exposures are required to have 1910.120 certifications. Even workers directing the movement of hazardous materials may need flagger certifications in addition to hazardous materials training.

To create a meaningful labor market assessment, individual employers must be surveyed with environmentally directed questions related to the attributes of BJT graduates. In the context of BJT programs, the most productive employers are usually local organizations. A local effort best establishes the extent and type of education and training needed in the target community. Here is a partial list of employers who have employed BJT graduates having environmental remediation skills and certifications.

- Local unions and pre apprentice programs – check with the business manager
- Local government departments – streets and sanitation
- Manpower and temp firms – especially those specializing in cleanup and restoration
- Consultants—remediation and service providers
- Manufacturing firms – those requiring the use of potentially dangerous materials
- Chemical and refining facilities
- Power generating facilities – oil, gas, wind, solar and nuclear
- Municipal facilities and utilities – landfill and waste handling substations
- Water/wastewater facilities – private and public
- Pest control companies
- Hospitals and health care facilities
- Painting companies – particularly in older communities
- Railroad repair and maintenance facilities – workers with lead and asbestos training
- Construction and deconstruction companies
- Transportation and material handling operations
- Scrap, recycling, storage, and landfill operations

Online searches help identify potential employers including labor unions, consultants, service providers and large manufacturing firms. Seek out temp and manpower organizations for possible interest in environmental technicians. Contact local municipal agencies regarding possible stakeholder interest. This effort will later be useful in establishing a responsive curriculum.

Labor Market Assessment Strategies

Always leave employer discussions with an action plan, commitment, or closure. Conducting a comprehensive labor market assessment is daunting. The process needs to begin early and continue through the entire grant. Many of the strategies discussed will flow into partnership development, curriculum development and placement (discussed in future PLCs). Start now with labor market assessments. Document meetings and begin expansion of an employer contact file.



- When possible, utilize direct contact with potential employers (preferably visits) for specific labor needs.
- Use search engines to identify potential employers, manufacturing firms, and temp and manpower organizations.
- Work with the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to learn about general employment conditions.
- Use EPA mapping tools (discussed later in these notes) to identify potential remediation projects.
- Establish relationships with potential employers as part of the labor market assessment.
- Labor market assessment may also provide references from employers and a commitment to “look at BJT graduates” as possible job applicants.
- Ask if there is any interest from the potential employer to become an active partner.
- As potential employers are identified, bring them into the program development process as participants in training, on advisory boards and for curriculum guidance.
- Find out if the potential employer would be interested in participating in the program as a leveraged partner.
- Ask if there are additional contacts, programs or organizations that may be interested in the proposed BJT program.
- For the record always document personal visits, ask for references and introductions to other potential employers.
- If documentation can be obtained, plan on including it in the proposal.
- Develop an employer contact file which will be used later when placing graduates.



6. Community Assessments

The BJT target community is identified as a place where the training program will concentrate most of its effort. It is not to say that residents outside the target community cannot or would not participate in training.

A critical part of EPA’s Brownfields Job Training program is to further environmental justice by ensuring that residents living in communities historically affected by economic disinvestment, health disparities, and adverse exposures to



environmental contamination, have an opportunity to share economic benefits of revitalization and environmental cleanup. Community assessments identify locations where an environmental BJT program will have a positive impact on the economy and be received positively by residents and program participants.

Target communities may be as small as several underserved neighborhoods or expanded to include a city, county, special demographic, or geographic areas. As part of the EPA job

training application guidelines, applicants are asked to support their decision in selecting the proposed target community. As with the labor market assessment, selecting a target community is one of the most important decisions to be made during the earliest stages in program development. Additionally, a comprehensive community assessment can be time consuming and requires interaction with a variety of organizations. When completed it serves as a basis upon which recruitment and partnership development can be built.

Selecting Candidates to be Considered as A Target Community

BJT applicants have a wide discretion in selecting an area they intend to serve. Multiple dispersed communities cannot be selected; however, target areas can include a variety of geographical designations with common characteristics. Here are examples of candidates that have been considered as target communities.

- Cities
- Partnerships between U.S. cities located in different states
- Counties
- Rural communities that include a number of adjacent towns
- Neighborhoods
- Census tracts
- Designated redevelopment zones
- Watersheds

Aside from geographical characteristics, target communities that are impacted by the presence of brownfield sites can be considered underserved and disadvantaged. Currently the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is in the process of developing the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to identify environmental justice communities. EPA has a well-established mapping and selection tool (EJscreen) which is preferred for use in selecting BJT target communities with demographic and census tract information. (We will discuss mapping tools in the next section). Whether a specific community is disadvantaged, and underserved is based on a combination of variables that may include, but are not limited to, the following characteristics:

- Distressed communities
- Underserved communities
- Economical depressed communities
- Environmentally impacted communities
- Communities impacted by plant closures
- High crime communities
- Food and employer deserts



- Special situations and ongoing projects
- Formerly identified Empowerment Zones, Renewal or Enterprise Communities
- Identification of special factors and designations as outlined in the RFA guidelines
- Neighborhood assessments – location, demographics, and environmental justice considerations
- Stakeholder assessment and the potential for neighborhood partnership development
- Assessment of community interest and involvement
- Confirmation of resident support for participating in an environmental training program
- Leveraging opportunities associated with candidate target communities



Strategies for Selecting Potential Target Communities

Suggested first steps in locating potential target communities is coordination and consultation with the following local organizations. This strategy involves identifying existing grants and programs that can be leveraged and where ample amounts of data have already been collected. Often, existing grants and Federal programs have already identified target communities consistent with those requested by BJT guidelines. Brownfields assessment and cleanup grant recipients

- Mayor's offices of economic and community development
- City, county, and state environmental offices
- Local Workforce Investment Board offices
- Offices of housing, health, and human services
- Local social service organizations
- Coordination and consultation with local agencies and nonprofit organizations should be included as part of the community assessment process.

The final factor to consider when selecting the target community involves student participation in the program. Obtaining local interest in environmental training requires that program staff develop relationships with church leaders, community leaders, local schools, and law enforcement. BJT programs do not work when prospective students fail to enroll or have little desire to enter environmental occupations. Community influencers familiar with the pool of potential candidates for environmental jobs can provide insight in the following areas.

- Demographics of prospective applicants
- Social and nonprofit organizations working in the community
- Ex-offender, criminal background, and gang affiliations
- Specific underserved ethnic groups interested in environmental training
- Extent that remedial education and life skills education will be necessary
- Educational disparities among potential applicants
- Cultural disparities and age disparities among potential applicants
- Unemployment and underemployment demographics
- Motivation of community residents
- Local attitudes toward environmental restoration



7. Screening Tools to Assist in Labor Market and Community Assessments

Having engaged in “hands on” assessments of proposed target communities, a variety of analytical tools are available to provide data for final selection of a target community. The primary tools BJT program planners may find useful are EJScreen and Cleanups in My Community (CIMC).



Environmental Justice Mapping and Screening Tool (EJScreen)

EJScreen is an EPA environmental justice mapping and screening tool that provides a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators. EJScreen users choose a geographic area; the tool then provides demographic and environmental information for that area. EJScreen provides a way to display information and includes a method for combining environmental and demographic indicators into EJ indexes. If a target area is smaller than a city/town, EPA is requesting applicants to list the census tract number(s) in their target area. EJScreen can be used to complete the tables requested in the narrative information sheet of the RFA.

To access the tool, go to:

<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>

- Use the search bar at the top right to find an address or place on the map.
- Use the plus (+) symbol in the top left to zoom in, or the minus (-) symbol to zoom out.
- Click “Select Location” on the menu bar and click “Report on Known Geography.”
- In the pop-up that appears, select “Tract” from the dropdown menu.
- Click on any area of the map, and the area’s census tract number will auto populate in the pop-up.
- Click additional areas to highlight them on the map and add their census tract number to the pop-up box. You can remove a selected census tract by clicking on the highlighted area and selecting “Delete Site.” Click and drag your cursor to highlight the census tract numbers in the pop-up and copy and paste the numbers into the application Narrative Information Sheet.

Another EPA mapping tool that is useful in completing a labor market assessment as community assessment is Cleanup in My Community (CIMC)

Cleanups in My Community (CIMC)

Cleanups in My Community enables users to map and list hazardous waste cleanup locations and drill down to details about those cleanups, grants, and other, related information. In addition to characterizing pollution sources in a potential target area, Cleanups in My Community is a helpful tool in locating nearby grants and remediation activity.

<https://www.epa.gov/cleanups/cleanups-my-community>

P2 EJ Facility Mapping Tool

Another EPA tool similar to EJScreen is the The P2 EJ Facility Mapping Tool. While somewhat duplicative this tool also provides census tract data in addition to demographic and facility identification in or adjacent to underserved communities.

The P2 EJ Facility Mapping Tool helps prospective P2 grant applicants, grantees and interested stakeholders geographically target facilities in or adjacent to underserved

communities within the framework of the P2 program's five industrial sector-based National Emphasis Areas (NEAs). The tool allows users to identify industrial facilities that may be contributing to pollution levels in a selected area, including communities with environmental justice (EJ) concerns.

https://awsedap.epa.gov/public/extensions/P2_EJ/P2_EJ.html

Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

This tool was built by the Council on Environmental Quality to address the Justice40 Initiative as directed by Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. The goal of the Justice40 Initiative is to provide 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments to disadvantaged communities. The purpose of the tool is to help Federal agencies identify those disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. The current version of the tool provides socioeconomic, environmental, and climate information to inform decisions that may affect these communities. The tool identifies disadvantaged communities through publicly available, nationally consistent datasets. To explore CEJST, follow the link below.

[Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#)

For a complete list of available mapping tool, go to the following site:

<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/additional-resources-and-tools-related-ejscreen#other-maps>

8. Brownfields Training and Environmental Justice Related Virtual Meetings and Information Sessions



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, 2023, 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>

EPA Grants Financial Management Webinar

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment is pleased to confirm that materials from the EPA Grants Financial Management Webinar held on March 15, 2023, are now available on the [EPA Grants Financial Management Webinar webpage](#):

- Recording of the webinar with closed captions
- A list of Questions & Answers based on questions submitted by attendees during the webinar
- Presentation slides in PDF format.
- If you have questions about the posted materials or need more information on EPA grants, please email EPA_Grants_Info@epa.gov.

Register for EPA's Listserv Announcing Webinars and Funding Opportunities for Grant Applicants and Recipients

While the latest round of grant related webinars has passed, its not t late to register for future announcements and training. Go to the following link to be placed on the listserv.

<https://www.epa.gov/grants>

Participants attending grants training will hear from EPA staff about key aspects of the grants process and have the opportunity to submit questions. To receive session materials and recording of previous webinars, go to the following link.

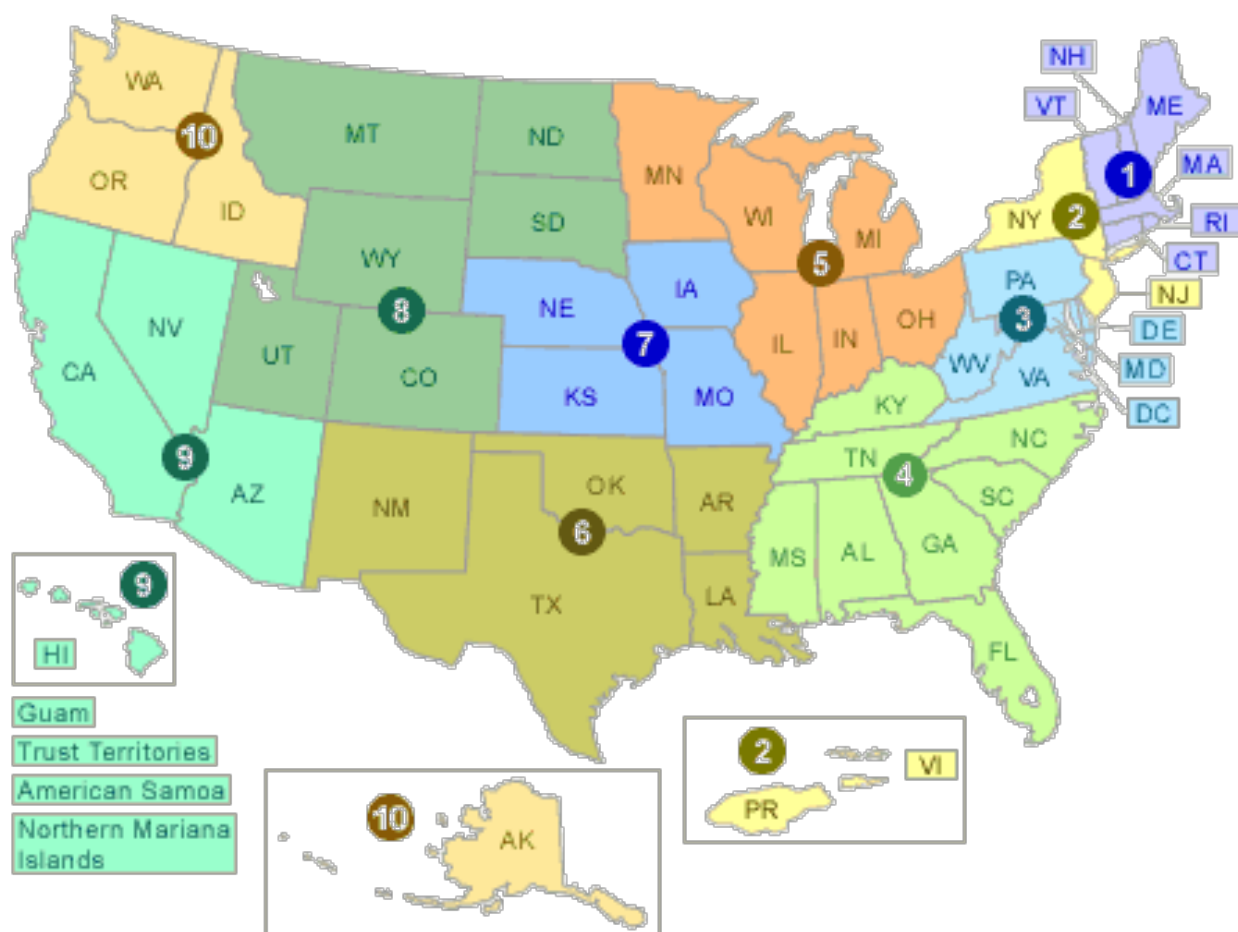
<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grants-webinars>

9. 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
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10. Join Us for the Next PLC April 26, 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).