

## PLC Session 292 - April 26, 2023



# Partnership Development

### **C**ontents:

1. News Impacting Brownfield Job Training Programs
2. Questions from PLC Participants
3. PLC Sessions Addressing the FY24 BJT Request for Applications
4. Partnership Development is an Essential Part of Brownfields Job Training
5. Incorporating Partners as Part of the Brownfield Job Training Grant Application
6. Strategies for Partnership Development
7. Environmental Justice - Meetings and News
8. Funding Announcements and Funding Competition Awareness
9. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators
10. Join Us for the Next PLC Wednesday May 10

## 1. News Impacting Brownfield Job Training Programs

Registration for the 2023 All-Grantee Meeting on Wednesday and Thursday, May 24 & 25, 2023 at the Hilton Alexandria Old Town in Alexandria, Virginia is now closed.



## Registration is Open for Brownfields 2023

**Brownfields 2023 National Conference**  
**August 8 - 11, 2023**  
**Detroit, MI**

With over 180 educational sessions, exciting mobile workshops, and inspirational speakers, this event offers a unique opportunity to learn about the latest trends and best practices in brownfields remediation, redevelopment, environmental justice, and sustainability. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting out in the field, there's something for everyone.

In addition to the incredible learning opportunities, the conference also offers unparalleled networking opportunities with other like-minded professionals. You'll have the chance to connect with peers from across the country and forge new relationships that could lead to future collaborations and projects.

To subscribe for updates and conference news, go to:  
<https://brownfields2023.org/about/conference-overview/>

To register, go to:  
<https://brownfields2023.org/registernow/>

## 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 and 10. 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", and a place to meet potential employers, display program materials and network. 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](mailto:sfenton103@aol.com)

## 2. Questions from PLC Participants

**Question:** How do community-based organizations contribute to the BJT program?

**Response:** *Community-based organizations can help in a variety of supporting roles including the following.*

- *Accepting BJT training in the community*
- *Promoting environmental training as part of the*



- recruitment process*
- *Providing educational services, such as GED classes and life skills training*
- *Assisting with in-kind contributions including staff time, supplies, transportation, and daycare*
- *Providing facilities and equipment for training in the target community*

*Representatives from community-based organizations should be considered as valued members of the advisory board.*

**Question:** Should potential employers be considered as partners or customers?

**Response:** *Potential employers should be treated as customers, but also as contributing partners. Employer partners can provide the following contributions to a BJT program in addition to employing graduates.*

- *Help with the selection and development of the training curriculum*
- *Provide on-the-job training or internships to trainees*
- *Provide financial resources covering costs of special events including lunch or refreshments*
- *Provide facilities and equipment for training*
- *Volunteer mentoring and career guidance to program participants*

*Potential employers should also be considered as valuable members of the advisory board.*

**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>

### 3. PLC Sessions Addressing the FY24 BJT Request for Applications



Before FY24 Requests for applications are announced, the Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC) has been addressing 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. If you were not able to attend a session, Notes and recordings are posted to <https://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-sessions/> the week following each meeting.

**Tentative PLC Schedule:**

March 29	Session 290	Introduction to the FY24 EPA Requests for Applications
April 12	Session 291	Needs Assessments
April 26	Session 292	Partnership Development
May 10	Session 293	Student recruitment and Assessment
May 24	HMTRI All Grantee Meeting – No PLC	
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. Partnership Development is an Essential Part of Brownfields Job Training**

Community and labor market assessments determine if BJT is a good fit for a community. Partnership development fills gaps in the training program not funded by the Brownfields Job Training Grant. Partnerships established as part of the development process often influence the location of the target community in addition to employment opportunities for BJT graduates. Now is the time to develop and strengthen partnerships to fill resource gaps in the training program.

### **Partnership Development as Outlined in RFA Guidelines**

When RFA guidelines are issued, threshold eligibility criteria screens applications eligible to continue for funding consideration. Evaluation criteria provide an objective way to rank the merits of each application.

EPA recognizes that successful applicants need a variety of partners that are actively involved in the project and commit to supporting the project in specific ways. As part of the narrative evaluation EPA is looking for these types of partners.

- Organizations supporting environmental cleanup work.
- Organizations providing life skills and other job-readiness tools that are not eligible for funding under BJT guidelines.
- Local organizations providing outreach and community voice to the project.
- Organizations with market insight and commitments to hire graduates.

Experience has demonstrated that unless a BJT grantee has developed relationships with the organizations just presented successful execution of the program will be difficult.

Many BJT programs share program staff who wear multiple hats to undertake additional responsibilities not funded by the BJT grant within the existing organization. Leveraging partners identified in the grant application fill resource gaps not available “in house”. leveraging partners may include government agencies, other nonprofits, volunteers, contractors, stakeholders, and former graduates to fill programmatic gaps. In some cases, partners

supplement administrative activities. Here are examples of “outside” resources used to address issues faced by job training grant recipients.

- Staff dedicated to guiding program development, promote community awareness, and represent the proposed job training program.
- Individuals responsible for conducting and maintaining community and labor market assessments.
- Partners assisting in participant recruitment, screening, assessment, and case management.
- Training partners
- Organizations and staff responsible for environmental, safety, soft skills and remedial training when required.
- Individuals dedicated to graduate preparation, placement, and tracking.
- Staff responsible for program administration, reporting, and sustainability.

As previously noted, some or all these responsibilities are available within the organization. However, when they are not, partnership development must continue until program gaps are filled.

## 5. Incorporating Partners as Part of the Brownfield Job Training Grant Application

From a grants management perspective, partners can be subdivided into one of four administrative categories.

- Sub grantees
- Fiscal partners
- In-kind partnerships
- Philanthropic supporters and volunteers

A fifth and important type of partnership is the Advisory Board. Advisory Board members and the pool of prospective employers should be considered as special partners.



### Sub Grantees

Sub grantees are written into the grant and are subject to all the terms and conditions of the primary grantee. Because partnering as a sub-grantee often involves the exchange of EPA funds, sub grantees have the same qualifying criteria as the primary grantee and are subject to audit on the same terms as the primary Job Training Grantee. Partnering as sub grantees does not require a competitive bid. If a sub grantee is part of the grant, they need to be “signed up” before the proposal is written. Any change in sub grantee status requires EPA approval and a revision of work plans. The sub grantee must also be a governmental agency or nonprofit. Community colleges and governmental agencies are often written into BJT applications as sub grantees.

### Fiscal Partners or Contractors

Fiscal partners are simply identified and those partners where grant money exchanges hands. Trainers and consultants are the most common fiscal partners. Fiscal partners need to be vetted and selected by competitive bid (minimum 3 bids required). Fiscal partners may be for profit or nonprofit organizations. Contractors are required to comply with standard Federal contractor rules and regulations. If a contractor is not already employed by the prospective

grantee, he may be selected prior to the grant development process and included in the BJT application. It should be noted that Requests for Quotes (RFQs) for prospective consultants should be contingent on receiving Federal funding, training schedules and work plans.

### **In-Kind Leveraged Partners**

The third type of partner provides in-kind goods and services. This type of partner is less restrictive as Federal grant money does not exchange hands. In-kind partners may vary from community service workers to employer staffing contributions, training providers, support service providers, infrastructure, and financial supporters. The important aspect of in-kind partners is that Federal grant money is not exchanged. If contractors or in-kind partners are written into the grant, an MOU should be developed and changes in those relationships should be noted to the EPA Regional Coordinator. In-kind partners not written into the grant often “come and go” but can be a valuable resource during implementation of the grant. In-kind trainers may come from employers, other nonprofits, governmental agencies such as fire and EMS departments.

### **Philanthropic Supporters, Stakeholders, and Volunteers**

For some BJT grantees, philanthropic supporters, stakeholders, and volunteers become major contributors to their program. Since no Federal money exchanges hands, philanthropic partners are treated as In-kind partners. Without philanthropic partners and volunteers, BJT programs would not be able to provide special services to their participants including the following retention supporting activities.

- Student stipends and scholarships
- Work study opportunities
- Free lunch
- Transportation services
- Legal Aid
- Childcare
- Special employment programs
- Cash contributions
- Special event sponsorship
- Internship opportunities

### **Potential Employers and Advisory Committee Members as Partners**

The best environmental job training programs consider their Advisory Board members and pool of prospective employers as special partners. As such, they recruit and maintain close relationships with these partners throughout the grant. Both prospective employers and Advisory Board members guide the direction and scope of the BJT program. In many cases, potential employers serve as Advisory Board members. Here are a few types of representatives that BJT grantees should consider when recruiting Advisory Board members.

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



It is also important to understand how Advisory Board members can benefit and leverage program activities. These attributes include the following.

- Are potential advisors interested in the program?
- Will they provide positive contributions to program management?
- Do they have a relationship with the community?
- Can they introduce BJT managers to additional resources?
- Will they attend events such as graduation?
- Will they attend regularly scheduled Advisory Board meetings?

Advisory Board members should be recruited as part of the partnership development process before the Request for Application (RFA) is written. Successful applicants include the advisory board as part of the application.

## 6. Strategies for Partnership Development

The partnership development process needs to begin in the earliest stages of program development and continue throughout the grant. Here is a summary of strategies to consider as RFA partnership development continues.

- Partner relationships are time and labor intensive. Start as soon as possible.
- From the labor market assessment, define the types of training the BJT program needs to deliver.
- Determine if the training requested will be funded by the BJT grant.
- Identify and recruit leveraged partners to provide unfunded instruction.
- Recruit partners with the appropriate credentials to deliver funded training.
- Based on the community assessment determine the need for additional social services, remedial education, and life skills training.
- Review in-house capabilities for recruitment and placement efforts.
- Establish long-term relationships with leveraged partners and contractors.
- Ensure potential partners are interested and committed to the goals of the program.
- Determine if there is interest from the potential partner to become a major contributor or remain in the background as a supporter.
- Determine the extent a potential partner will participate in the program (networking, training, student support, meetings, recruitment/placement, etc.).
- Establish the leveraged resources potential partners can provide at no cost to the program.
- If A partner is essential to program operation, establish a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be included as part of the application.
- Are volunteers available that can serve on an advisory board?
- Are there additional contacts, programs or organizations that may be interested in partnering with the BJT program?



## 7. Environmental Justice - Meetings and News



### 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.

**May 16, 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>

## 8. Funding Announcements and Funding Competition Awareness

### Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (EJ TCTACs)



EPA announced the selection of 17 Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (EJ TCTACs) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy that will receive \$177 million to help underserved and overburdened communities across the country access funds from President Biden's Investing in America agenda, including historic investments to advance environmental justice.

Each of the technical assistance centers will receive at least \$10 million to remove barriers and improve accessibility for communities with environmental justice concerns. With this critical

investment, these centers will provide training and other assistance to build capacity for navigating federal grant application systems, writing strong grant proposals, and effectively managing grant funding. In addition, these centers will provide guidance on community engagement, meeting facilitation, and translation and interpretation services for limited English-speaking participants, thus removing barriers and improving accessibility for communities with environmental justice concerns. Each of the technical assistance centers will also create and manage communication channels to ensure all communities have direct access to resources and information.

EPA has selected the following 14 organizations to serve as Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers, along with their partners:

- University of Connecticut
- West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.
- Inter-American University of Puerto Rico-Metro Campus



- National Wildlife Federation
- Deep South Center for Environmental Justice
- Research Triangle Institute
- Blacks in Green
- University of Minnesota
- New Mexico State University
- Wichita State University
- University of Arizona
- San Diego State University
- Willamette Partnership
- University of Washington

In addition, EPA has selected three national EJ TCTACs that will provide additional assistance across the country, with capacity to assist Tribes, including:

- International City/County Management Association
- Institute for Sustainable Communities
- National Indian Health Board

[Learn more about the selectees, their partners, and the EJ TCTAC program.](#)

[Learn more about environmental justice at EPA.](#)

### EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment is pleased to confirm that materials from the EPA Competition Process Webinar held on March 28, 2023, are now available.

Go to:

[EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar webpage:](#)

- Recording of the webinar with closed captions
- Helpful web links from the presentation
- A list of Questions & Answers based on questions submitted by attendees during the webinar
- Presentation slides in PDF format

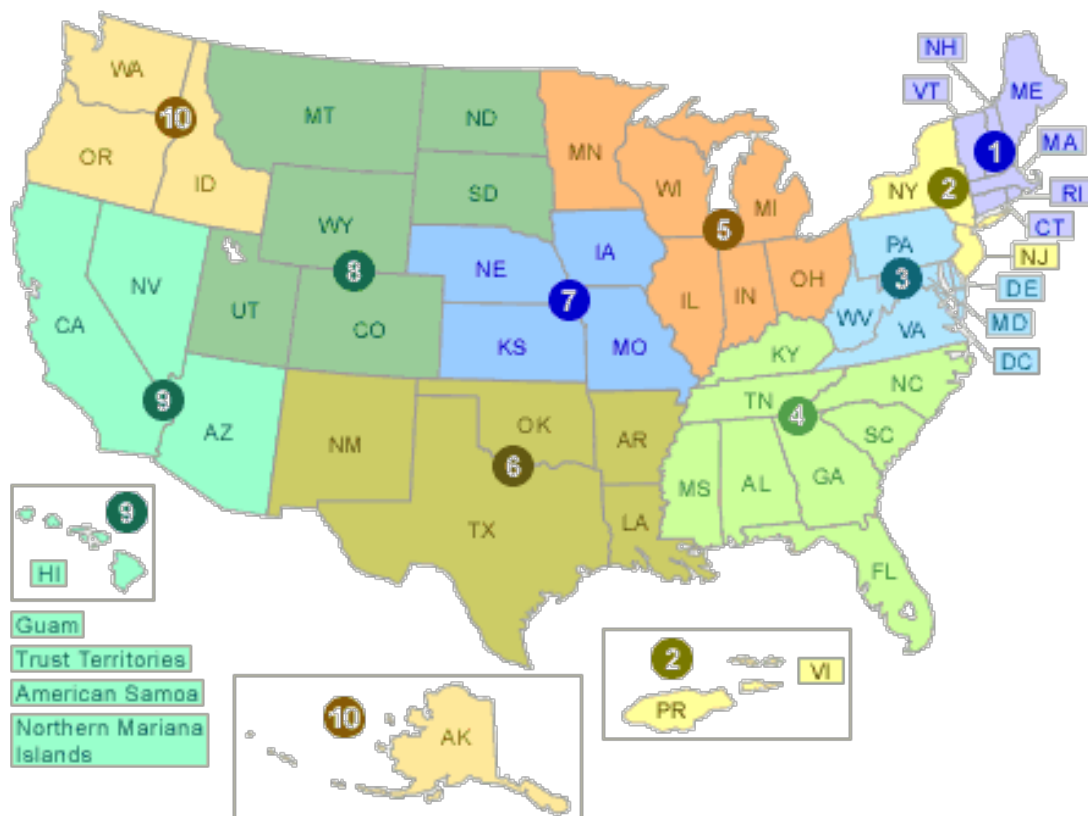
If you have questions about the posted materials or need more information on EPA's grants award process, please email [EPA\\_Grants\\_Info@epa.gov](mailto:EPA_Grants_Info@epa.gov).

## 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.

<b>EPA Region 1</b> CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT William "Bill" Lariviere Phone: (617) 918-1231 <a href="mailto:lariviere.william@epa.gov">E-mail: lariviere.william@epa.gov</a>	<b>EPA Region 2</b> NJ, NY, PR, VI Schenine Mitchell Phone: (212) 637-3283 E-mail: <a href="mailto:mitchell.schenine@epa.gov">mitchell.schenine@epa.gov</a>
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<b>EPA Region 3</b> DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV Gianna Rosati Phone: (215) 814-3406 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Rosati.Gianna@epa.gov">Rosati.Gianna@epa.gov</a>	<b>EPA Region 4</b> AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN Olga Perry Phone: (404) 562-8534 E-mail: <a href="mailto:perry.olga@epa.gov">perry.olga@epa.gov</a>
<b>EPA Region 5</b> IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI Linda Morgan Phone: (312) 886-4747 E-mail: <a href="mailto:morgan.linda@epa.gov">morgan.linda@epa.gov</a>	<b>EPA Region 6</b> AR, LA, NM, OK, TX Elizabeth Reyes Phone: (214) 665-3163 E-mail: <a href="mailto:reyes.elizabeth@epa.gov">reyes.elizabeth@epa.gov</a>
<b>EPA Region 7</b> IA, KS, MO, NE Alma Moreno Lahm Phone: (913) 551-7380 E-mail: <a href="mailto:moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov">moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov</a>	<b>EPA Region 8</b> CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY Christine Michaud-Tilly Phone: (303) 312-6706 E-mail: <a href="mailto:MichaudTilly.Christine@epa.gov">MichaudTilly.Christine@epa.gov</a>
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## 10. Join Us for the Next PLC May 10, 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/](mailto:msenew@gmail.com/)

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*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.*



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