

PLC Session 297 - July 19, 2023

# Job Training Application Checkup



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*With only 2 weeks before FY24 Brownfield Job Training RFAs are due, this week's PLC presents suggestions for improving job training applications including common errors that cost evaluation points during the review process.*

## 1. Latest News Impacting Brownfield Job Training Programs

### The Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC) is Taking a Summer Break

With FY24 JT applications due August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the National Brownfields Conference beginning August 8<sup>th</sup> the PLC will be taking a summer break. We plan to return on Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. If you are on our PLC list, there is no need to reregister. Notices will be sent out when new sessions are announced. If you would like to invite a guest, feel free to forward this email.



### FY2024 Brownfields Job Training Grant Applications Close August 2

The FY2024 Brownfields Job Training Grants solicitation applications are due **August 2, 2023**. For more information and a copy of the RFA from EPA go to the following link:

[FY24 RFA Guidelines](https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/fy-2024-brownfields-job-training-jt-grants)

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/fy-2024-brownfields-job-training-jt-grants>

EPA has also prepared a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers to assist prospective applicants with preparing Job Training (JT) Grant applications. Go to the following link:

[FY24 FAQs](https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/frequently-asked-questions-about-brownfields-job-training-jt-grants)

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/frequently-asked-questions-about-brownfields-job-training-jt-grants>

You may also go directly to the Grants.gov website for a formal application package - click [here](#). Completed applications are due August 2, 2023, and must be submitted through the grant.gov website.

### 2023 Environmental Justice Caucus for Brownfields 2023

**Monday, August 7, 2023, 5:00 – 7:00 pm**

**Huntington Place,**

**Portside Ballroom, Room 260**

The EJ Caucus is a locally driven event where people and organizations involved in Environmental Justice convene, share ideas, build relationships, and communicate directly with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

[Click Here to Sign Up](#)

### Registration is Still 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. 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.

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

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

## Conference Housing Block Closed July 18th

The Brownfields 2023 housing block was closed on Tuesday, July 18th. Group-rate sleeping rooms are available in downtown Detroit with easy accessibility to Huntington Place outside the block at competitive rates.

## 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 of the exhibit will focus on EPA's network of Brownfields Job Training Grantees and opportunities for employers to hire BJT graduates. The booth will act as a "home base" to meet potential employers, display program materials, and network. Grantees are encouraged to bring business cards and informational handouts. For additional information and ideas, contact Steve Fenton, HMTRI at [sfenton103@aol.com](mailto:sfenton103@aol.com)

## Brownfields Job Training Grants Office Hours

Thursday, August 10, 2023

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Room: 252 A/B

Brownfields Job Training Grants Office Hours with EPA staff and EPA's job training technical assistance provider (HMTRI) provides current grantees and potential future grantees a chance to learn and ask questions regarding EPA's job training program and funding opportunities.



## Mark Your Calendar for this JT Panel at Brownfields 2023

Training for the EJ Terrain

3:15 – 4:15 Room 321

Thursday, August 10th, 2023

Abby Wolensky; Thomas Guentner; Gianna Rosati

### Track 5: Environmental Justice and Public Participation

Learn how two inspiring and unique Job Training Grantees work cooperatively to trek the diverse needs of the underserved Environmental Justice communities around the urban landscape of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Auberle Employment Institute (AEI) job training focuses on training individuals to assess and mitigate hazardous substances and contaminants at traditional brownfields. The U.S. Department of Labor twice named AEI as the number one workforce development program in the country. Within the same underserved community, Landforce takes a less traditional job training approach focusing job training on Environmental Stewardship that includes vacant lot stabilization, trail building and maintenance, and green stormwater infrastructure maintenance. AEI and Landforce use similar strategies to help prepare students to be leaders and have successfully leveraged multiple funding sources to achieve common goals.

## 2. Frequently Asked Questions



**Question:**

*My organization is registered at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). Should I check to make sure the account is active?*

**Response:**

Yes! You can only successfully submit an application package if your organization has an active account on [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). The registration must be renewed annually by the E-Business Point of Contact, so make sure the account does not expire before the application submission deadline. Allow yourself several days before the deadline to submit your application.

**Question:**

*The attachment section is limited to 15 pages, with one letter per page. What if we have more than 15 leveraged partners?*

**Response:**

Keep in mind that in addition to partnership letters, other information must be included in the 15-page attachment including the following.

- Documentation of applicant eligibility (not counted towards page limits)
- Milestone Schedule
- Documentation of Other Factors
- Partnership Letters identified in your application

Partnership Letters may only impact scoring of the sub criteria that directly cite and request letters and references. Letters and references will not impact scoring for other criteria. This will limit the number of support letters necessary to demonstrate the quality of your proposal.

**Question:**

*Our grant application will have several attachments. How should I upload them to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)?*

**Response:**

While not required, EPA recommends consolidating all grant application documents (the Narrative Information Sheet, Narrative, required attachments, etc.) into one pdf file. This ensures that EPA receives your entire submission, and the submission is in the order that you intended.

**Question:**

*If I have questions as our application is submitted, where can I go for assistance?*

**Response:**

For application submission tips review the fact sheet “Tips for Submitting Brownfields Grant Competition Applications”. Go to: [How to Apply Through Grants.gov \(pdf\)](#)  
For general questions about using the government’s grant portal go to the sites listed below. To get additional and emergency technical assistance regarding grant submission, [call the grants.gov Help Desk at 1-800-518-4726](#).

<https://www.grants.gov/support.html>

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>

### 3. Last Minute Job Training Application Submission Checklist

#### Application submission

- ✓ Verify that your grant submission process is up to date using grants.gov and SAM.
- ✓ EPA considers the party submitting the application package as the applicant and will not accept applications on behalf of other organizations.
- ✓ Check your account status by going to [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) and entering your organization's UEI, a 12-digit alphanumeric ID, assigned by [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) for your organization. If not, update or renew your entity registration.
- ✓ Make sure the person submitting the application is an authorized AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) designated by your organization's E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC).
- ✓ Check status of an entity registration. Make sure your password is up to date.
- ✓ You must use your account at least once per year for your account to remain active.
- ✓ Include letters of support from leveraging partners and employers referencing the specific commitment being offered.
- ✓ Do not exceed page counts for each section when assembling a single PDF application.
- ✓ Submit the application early to allow for any issues that may occur along the way.



#### Responding to evaluation criteria

- 👤 Deconstruct the RFA to ensure that every request for information is addressed in the proposal.
- 👤 Be as quantitative as possible. Avoid generalizations.
- 👤 Have a single individual edit and review the entire application to maintain consistency and continuity.
- 👤 Document meetings and public events.
- 👤 Research special programs in addition to those that can contribute to Other Factors.

### 4. Frequent Errors and Omissions That Weaken JT Applications

Below are evaluator notes that have resulted in lost points during the narrative evaluation.

- ✓ Budget numbers did not add up.
- ✓ Costs were unrealistic.
- ✓ Travel to Brownfields meetings were not included.
- ✓ A labor market assessment or employer survey was not presented.
- ✓ No contact was made with potential employers.
- ✓ Did not mention leveraging.
- ✓ Post employment tracking was not addressed.
- ✓ Target placement goals were not present.
- ✓ No discussion of specific population to be trained.
- ✓ Environmental Justice was not addressed.

- ✓ No mention of local Brownfields activities.
- ✓ Training cycles were unclear.
- ✓ Student retention was not addressed.
- ✓ Letters of support did not state roles and/or commitments, only support.
- ✓ Health and safety considerations were not addressed.
- ✓ No mention of drug testing in screening process or required minimum educational background prerequisites.
- ✓ Proposal was difficult to understand.
- ✓ The applicant did not follow guidelines and did not respond to criteria in sequence.

## 5. Comments from Regional Coordinators Resulting in Loss of Evaluation Points

### Application Submission

- The application was submitted with another organization's account information.
- Applicant used the wrong UEI.
- The submitter is not the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).
- The applicant did not have an active [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) account and had another party submit an application package on their behalf.
- Applicant response to sub-categories were not on point, and/or incomplete and were unclear.



### Community description

- Community involvement and notification regarding the proposed JT project was not discussed.
- No discussion of public meetings, attendance records, and community roles in the development and composition of the JT proposal.
- No discussion of social and public health issues.
- No discussion of the target population to be trained.
- Demographic data is provided but it is sporadic and did not relate to training.
- Environmental, social, and economic issues not linked to impact of the presence of Brownfields in targeted area.
- Demographic stats are provided but ineffective and is not drastically indicative of need.
- No discussion regarding outreach/recruitment to target specific populations, i.e., unemployed, underemployed, ex-offenders, etc. with justified need for training (unemployment stats).

### Labor market demand

- Applicant failed to link labor market assessment to curriculum.
- Missing direct coordination with local employers.
- Section does not refer to any direct surveys or polling of local employers. Job data by employment type sector concentration from table earlier years may not be current and relevant to year of application.



### Recruitment and screening

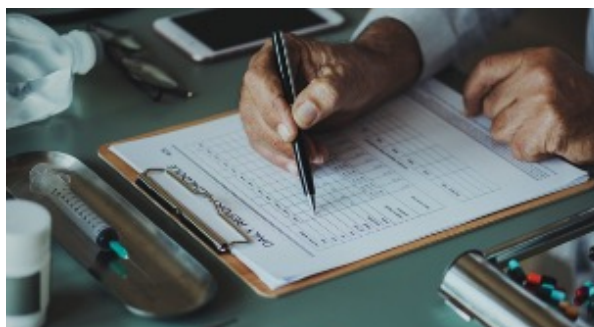
- Physical or vision screening associated with CDLs, or equipment operations were not discussed.
- Screening requirements were not discussed. Generally, 8<sup>th</sup> grade language and math skills are required for most programs, partner with the WIBs. No mention of drug testing in the screening process.

### Training

- Applicant's experience with delivery of training is vague and unclear. More detail is required about experience in training delivery.
- Applicant failed to discuss in detail delivery of life-skills and other non-environmental training (what partner will provide, where training will take place, how training will be funded (EPA funds cannot be used).
- Student health and safety issues were not addressed.
- Training cycles were unclear.
- Need more specifics on facility's health and safety procedures.
- Training and recruitment numbers were low in comparison with the projected placement rate. (Focus should not be on training but rather on job placement).
- Certifications were discussed but no breakdown as to what certs are programmatic, state, or federal.
- No explanation regarding associated training costs or if students will be burdened with any fees.
- Overall, the training numbers were too low, and no placement targets were provided.

### Partnerships

- Applicants list some community organizations but grassroots/ neighborhood organizations, labor organizations, fraternal organizations, public health, and medical community are not represented. (Must have community partners).
- Letters of support do not state roles and/or commitments, only support. When included in the proposal, ensure that key partners receive a copy of the proposal and letters of support, with project support, support role and level of commitment.



### Budget

- Fringe benefit cost is high.
- Mileage costs are stated but without substantive detail, more is needed to justify mileage costs.
- Personnel costs were too high.
- Travel to National Brownfields and Job Training conferences were not included.
- Budget numbers did not add up.
- The applicant made no distinction between EPA funds and non-EPA funds.
- If any, licensing/certificate fees, PPE, and incidental student expenses should be detailed and specific.
- Costs were not explained as to whether costs exist and what was covered or not covered with EPA funds.

### **Leveraging**

- No discussion of in-kind commitments with assigned monetary value.
- Very little leveraging with no discussion of plans for how applicant will generate additional funding.
- No value was given to in-kind commitments and no letters of support to substantiate claim for in-kind commitments.
- Leveraging was not addressed.

### **Outputs and outcomes**

- 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 will handle retention and attrition through case management.
- No discussion regarding training facilities, especially access to facilities and transportation options.
- The proposal did not have a targeted placement goal.
- Applicant did not address tracking program graduates.
- Program Sustainability after grant ends was not discussed.

### **Placement**

- Employers' commitment to hire was not discussed and no letters of support from employers (although employers were listed).
- No discussion regarding projected placement target.
- Hiring incentives were not discussed.

## **6. Online Zoom Calls**

### **EJScreen Training**

**July 26<sup>th</sup>**

**11:00AM Central**

EPA is holding virtual public training on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, hosted on EJScreen 2.2, the updated version of the Agency's environmental justice screening and mapping tool. Training includes information on the updates made to EJScreen, a demonstration of the available features, and tips on how to use the tool. Registration is not required. Go to.

[July 26, 2023, at 11:00AM CT EJScreen training link.](#)

### **For Those Who Missed the EJscreen Webinar**

**EPA hosted a webinar titled EJSCREEN 101: Mapping Tools and EPA Competitive Grants.**

EJSCREEN is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool that allows users to access environmental and demographic information for locations in the United States. Anyone can use this web-based tool to access high-resolution content about environmental justice, and compare data across state, EPA region, and national locations.

This webinar provides guidance on how to use EJSCREEN effectively, as well as how to tailor its usage to specific needs, like responding to competitive grants or other organizational needs. To learn more about EJSCREEN, please [visit the EJSCREEN website](#) and [access the EJSCREEN webinar here](#).





## **Environmental Justice Meetings and 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.

**August 15, 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>

## **Proactive Procurement West Virginia University**

**August 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

**11:00 AM to 12:30 PM (EST)**

For most EPA brownfields grantees, procurement is often looked upon with dread, trepidation, and confusion, and often frequently becomes one of the most time-consuming administrative tasks of their grant. While some recipients have procurement offices to help navigate the rules and regulations others are figuring it out themselves. For all, it is essential for all grantees to also know, understand and apply them to be successful grant administrators.

Join us in this two-part webinar as we discuss an array of topics including the tenets of procurement for EPA Brownfields Grant recipients, internal controls, differences, and uses of RFPs and RFQs, developing SOWs to meet your needs, vendor selection and the art of engaging and managing a contractor. Register now if you are ready to embrace procurement and make it work for you.

This two-part series will take place on Thursday, August 24, and August 31 from 11 AM to 12:30 PM (EDT). Registering will give you the link to join either or both sessions.

[Register Now to Get Webinar Link](#)

## **Recording and PowerPoint of EPAs Grant Guideline Outreach Webinar June 14<sup>th</sup>**

EPA hosted an outreach webinar for prospective applicants on **June 14, 2023**. A recording of the webinar is now available.

- [FY24 Brownfields Job Training Grant Guidelines Webinar Recording \(mp3\)](#)
- [FY 2024 Brownfields Job Training Outreach Webinar Presentation \(pdf\)](#)

## 7. Technical Assistance Resources

### EPA Technical Assistance Resources

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) Brownfields Amendments authorize EPA to provide funding to organizations to conduct research and to provide training and technical assistance to communities to help address their brownfields challenges. Information presented at this site lists past and current technical assistance and research projects EPA funds and resources that are available to all communities.

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-technical-assistance-and-research>

### KSU TAB Makes Available Past Example Job Training Applications

Using the Freedom of Information Act, KSU TAB has made available examples of previous successful brownfield job training applications. Note applications posted do not reflect RFAs posted after current revisions to the JT grant program. Use the drop-down menu under “Categories” to review successful proposals from previous funding years. visit:

<https://www.ksutab.org/resources>

Go to categories

Use pull down menu regarding sample successful job training applications

2022 (FY23) Example Job Training (Auberle, McKeepsport, Pennsylvania)	<a href="#">Download</a>
2022 (FY23) Example Job Training (Fortune Society Inc., Long Island City, New York)	<a href="#">Download</a>
2022 (FY23) Example Job Training (RACEJT, Anchorage AK)	<a href="#">Download</a>
2022 (FY23) Example Job Training (St. Nicks Alliance, Brooklyn, New York)	<a href="#">Download</a>
2022 (FY23) Example Job Training (Workforce, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana)	

### Training from EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment periodically hosts webinars for the EPA grants community. EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment is pleased to announce the availability of several new and updated training resources for grant applicants and recipients.

If you are interested in applying for EPA grants or are currently managing an EPA grant, please consider visiting one of these sites.

- NEW— Learn how to [Register in SAM.gov and Grants.gov](#) to apply for EPA grants. This webpage will help you register your organization in SAM.gov, create an applicant profile in Grants.gov, and get familiar with using Workspace.
- The [How to Develop a Budget training](#) was recently updated. This course will help you prepare work plans, budgets, and budget narratives for EPA grants.
- The [EPA Grants Management Training for Applicants and Recipients](#) course introduces key aspects of the grant life cycle starting with preparing an application through closing out a grant. The six modules can be completed individually.

**Additional webinars or completed webinars with recordings and powerpoints are available at the following sites:**

[Competition Process](#)

This webinar is intended for help grant applicants learn how to find and successfully apply for competitive EPA grants. EPA will also provide an overview of the competition process from application through evaluation and selection.

[Training for EPA Pass-Through Grant Applicants, Recipients, and Subrecipients](#)

This training is intended for EPA grant applicants and recipients that plan to use EPA funding to provide grants to other entities through “subawards.” This type of EPA grant recipient is considered a pass-through entity because the goal of the grant is to further award EPA funds. This training will focus on:

- Oversight responsibilities of EPA pass-through entities
- Federal regulations that govern pass-through entities and the recipients of subawards (subrecipients)
- EPA’s specific requirements for subrecipients

EPA pass-through entities are encouraged to share this training information with their subrecipients.

## **8. In-Person Meetings and Workshops**

**2023 West Virginia Brownfields and Main Street Conference**  
**September 12-14, 2023**  
**Wheeling, West Virginia**

The 2023 WV Brownfields & Main Street Conference will include sessions covering all aspects of brownfields redevelopment, interactive mobile workshops, two networking receptions, and the 2023 WV Brownfield Awards.

This premier redevelopment event attracts stakeholders including economic development professionals, environmental professionals, real estate developers, lawyers, state and local officials, EPA and other federal officials, entrepreneurs, planners, bankers, investors, and community redevelopment professionals.

Save the date. Registration to be announced.



**Northeast Sustainable Communities Workshop (NSCW)**  
**September 19-20, 2023**  
**Worcester, MA**

NSCW is the premier conference for brownfield professionals in the northeast. Brownfield Coalition of the Northeast (BCONE) are looking for professionals from throughout the region to share their experiences, best practices, and innovative ideas on ways to revitalize contaminated or underused properties. Their 2023 theme is "Reimagining Brownfields: Strategies for Successful Redevelopment."

[For more information visit the conference website.](#)

## The Pennsylvania Brownfields Conference

### Save the Date

**March 25-27, 2024**

**Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center in State College, PA**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Land Recycling Program is pleased to partner once again with the Engineer Society of Western Pennsylvania in presenting the 2024 Pennsylvania Brownfields Conference.

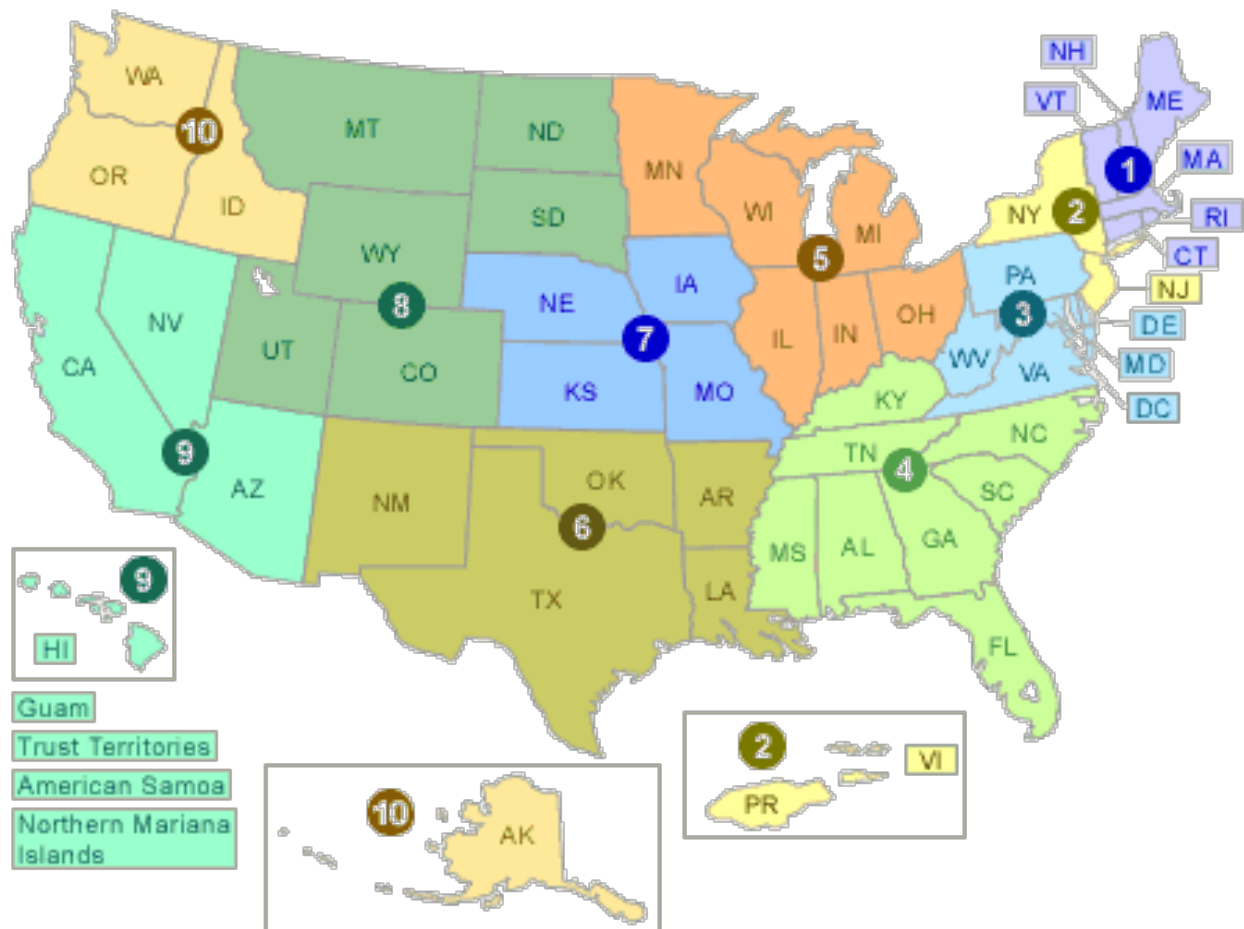
More details coming soon.

## 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 <b>William “Bill” Lariviere</b> Phone: (617) 918-1231 E-mail: <a href="mailto:lariviere.william@epa.gov">lariviere.william@epa.gov</a>	<b>EPA Region 2</b> NJ, NY, PR, VI <b>Schenine Mitchell</b> Phone: (212) 637-3283 E-mail: <a href="mailto:mitchell.schenine@epa.gov">mitchell.schenine@epa.gov</a>
<b>EPA Region 3</b> DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV <b>Gianna Rosati</b> 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 <b>Olga Perry</b> 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 <b>Linda Morgan</b> 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 <b>Rita Ware</b> Phone: (214) 665-3163 E-mail: <a href="mailto:ware.rita@epa.gov">ware.rita@epa.gov</a> <b>Emily Jimenez</b> Phone: (214) 665-2176 e-mail: <a href="mailto:jimenez.emily@epa.gov">jimenez.emily@epa.gov</a>
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## 10. The Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC) is Taking a Summer Break

With FY24 JT applications due August 2<sup>nd</sup>. And the National Brownfields Conference beginning August 8<sup>th</sup> the PLC will be taking a summer break. We plan to return again in September. If you are on our PLC list, there is no need to reregister. Notices will be sent out when new sessions are announced.

Join a conversation with EPA Brownfields Job Training grant recipients, alumni, and interested stakeholders. PLCs are scheduled on Wednesdays, same time, same PLC Zoom link.

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.*



*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), part of the Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC).*

