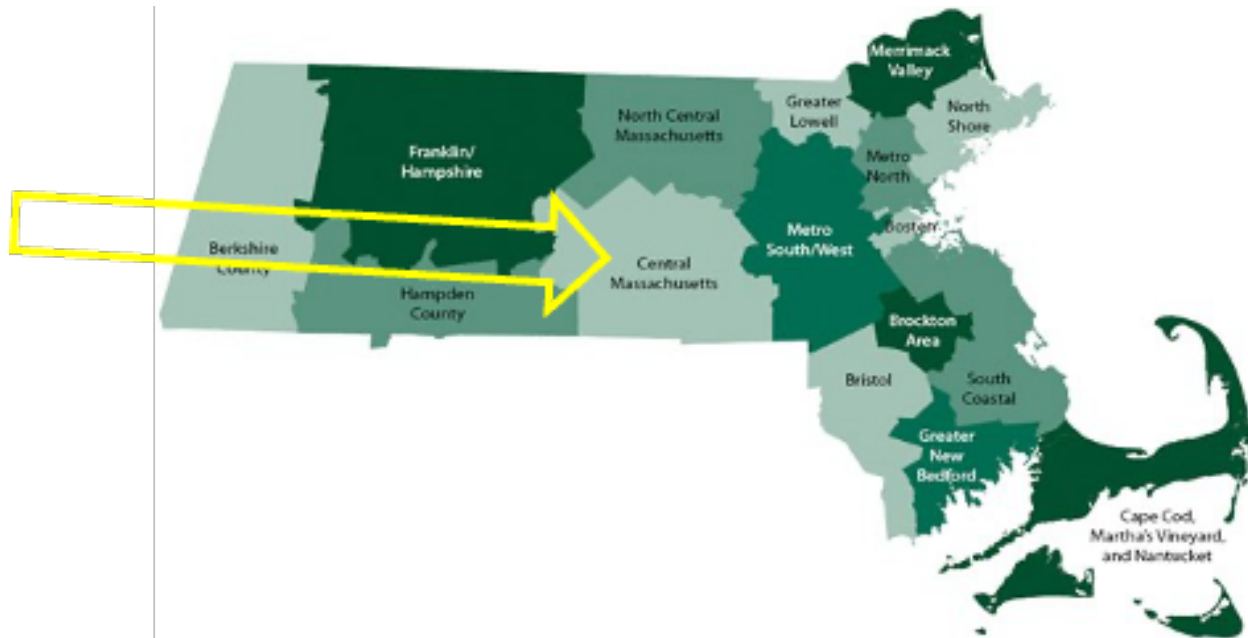


PLC Session 299 - September 27, 2023



Worcester MassHire

Contents:

1. Latest News Impacting BJT Programs
2. Frequently Asked Questions
3. City of Worcester/MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
 - Bruce Mendelsohn, Maria Sanchez, Antonia Vaughan
4. Moving Forward
5. Online Events
6. In Person Meetings and Workshops
7. Funding Opportunities
8. Technical Assistance Resources
9. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators
10. Join Us for an Open Forum PLC Session October 11

1. News Impacting BJT Programs



The All-Grantee Meeting has passed as has the National Brownfield Conference. Fall is a great time to review program plans, prepare for the next training cycle and anticipate the next round of Brownfield Job Training Requests for Applications. Depending on each organization's situation, fall activities may vary as illustrated below:

Existing Grantees Funded prior to FY23 – Grants awarded prior to FY23 were funded for \$200k over 3 years. Organizations in this group have experienced the positives and issues associated with brownfields job training. If maturing programs are interested in continuing their program it is important to renew partnership relationships and consider how they plan to expand their program in anticipation of resubmitting an FY25 application next summer for \$500k over a 5-year period.

New FY23 Grantees – New FY23 job training programs have received their authority to spend funds and are now anticipating their first training cohorts. Special attention needs to be given to community awareness, recruitment, and student assessment. The first training cohort is the most difficult and reveals unintended issues not previously expected.

FY24 Job Training Applicants – FY24 applicants who have just submitted their applications in August are experiencing the “long wait” before funding announcements are made in January. Fall is an excellent time to review and organize work plans and project milestones. It is important to maintain contact with partners and supporters, keeping them updated on a regular basis.

Prospective Job Training Applicants – Often potential applicants consider developing a job training program but procrastinate until it is too late to develop a credible program plan with partner support. Now is the time to begin “testing the water”. Begin contacting potential governmental and nonprofit organizations regarding an interest in developing a local job training program.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

If my organization is successful in obtaining EPA funding, can we charge the costs we incurred for the consultant who helped prepare our grant application?

Response:

No. Costs for preparing your application are not an allowable cost.

Question:

How soon after my JT application is recommended for funding can I begin charging expenses to the grant?

Response:

After FY24 job training grants are recommended for funding (expected in January) there are still a number of milestones that need to be completed before grantees are given the authority to spend funds. Acceptance of the award, finalization of terms and conditions, and the work plan

can drag out until late summer but must be made before September 30th the end of the fiscal year.

Question:

In special situations like attending an All-Grantee Meeting, is it possible to charge expenses to the grant before the final authority to spend funds is approved?

Response:

In special situations, an applicant must obtain prior EPA approval to incur pre-award costs. Applicants can usually charge pre award costs 90 days prior to the final award with their EPA Project Officer's formal approval.

Question:

Can an applicant submit more than one application during each grant cycle to serve different communities through each application?

Response:

Applicants cannot submit multiple applications, even if the applicant proposes to serve a different target area.

3. City of Worcester/MassHire Central Region Workforce Board (MCRWB) - Bruce Mendelsohn, Maria Sanchez, Antonia Vaughan

Thanks go out to Bruce Mendelsohn, Maria Sanchez, the new Job Training Program Manager, and Antonia Vaughan, for sharing their work at The City of Worcester/MassHire Central Region Workforce Board Brownfield Job Training Grant.

MassHire Central Region Workforce Board (MCRWB)

The [MassHire Central Region Workforce Board](#) is one of 16 workforce boards in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MCRWB serves the City of Worcester and 38 surrounding towns and communities: with offices in Worcester and Southbridge. The City of Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development and the Massachusetts Department of Career Services delegates the implementation of the Brownfields Job Training Grant to the MassHire Central Region Workforce Board. Today, AntoniaVaughn introduced the PLC to her experiences as a MassHire student. Bruce Mendelsohn followed with an approach he used in developing and refining the organizations Brownfields Job Training Program.

Creating confidence and resilience among new JT participants

The presentation began with a video presentation from former student and current environmental entrepreneur Antonia Vaughan with experiences and values obtained from MassHire. Antoina shared her thoughts from a program participant's perspective. She gave special credit to the "Bounce" life skills and work readiness curriculum used by MassHire. "Bounce" provides self-assurance, confidence and skills to new students making them feel they can complete the JT program successfully. Before technical training, new participants begin in "Bounce". Students are introduced to environmental remediation, but for the most part, work readiness provides a gateway to the more intensive technical curriculum. The

Bounce Program uses simple assessment tools to determine each participant's level of work-readiness and helps to identify potential barriers that may be getting in the way. Students work through the program content with support from Bounce Coaches and Trainers, to build confidence, develop resilience, and create a plan with clear goals to continue JT training. More information can be found about Bounce at the following site:

<https://www.thebounceprogram.com/>

MCRWB's Methodology for Developing and Refining Their JT Grant Application and Work Plan

MassHire employs a "5 Rs" approach to refining and implementing the Brownfields JT program. "5Rs" stands for reach, resources, relationships, reputation, and results. MassHire staff maintain connections to City departments and people who "make stuff happen". Referrals to employers are made using an online directory of men and women owned businesses. MassHire works closely with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce with the objective of connecting employer workforce needs to program graduates. Here are the components Bruce suggests when applying a "5Rs" approach.

Reach

- Identify and leverage organic (internal) resources to add value to your grant
- Research and (where feasible) leverage/incorporate other, related grants

Resources

- Prioritize the training and identify all resources necessary to deliver it
- Focus on basics (e.g., training you will offer/provide)
- Find and contract with service providers for necessary support services (transportation, drug testing, mask fit testing, Asbestos Physical, etc.)
- Contingency plans (backup training locations, online training, etc.)

Readiness

- Be flexible (and ask for flexibility) within the rules and regulations of the grant
- Include in your budget "incentives" for program participants AND employer partners

Relationships

- Get feedback from partners & participants; change the plan when it makes sense

Results (success metrics)

- Recruit and commitment of partners including the local Workforce Board, employers, CBOs, trainers, etc.
- Track & Update Application, Enrollment, Completion, & Job Placement and Retention numbers
- Collect and share program success stories & testimonials

Tips for programs developing a new Brownfield Job Training program

In addition to using a "5Rs" approach, the following suggestions were presented to potential Brownfield Job Training applicants.

Use all available resources

- Labor Market Info sources
- Workforce Boards and Career Centers
- Technical Assistance: HMTRI, Online events, In-person meetings, EPA Regional Coordinators, Experienced grantees, UConn TAB, Groundwork USA
- State/Municipal Vendor Directories: MBE, WBE, VOB, etc.

When writing a JT application

- Follow RFA guidelines step-by-step
- Succinctly share *your* region's story
- It doesn't need to be Hemingway, but it better be the EPA way
- Respond to RFA prompts & stay within application guidelines
- Finish your application early & submit it on time

When implementing your workplan

- Be flexible
- No workplan survives the first shot
- If your workplan isn't working, change it
- Ask for feedback before, during, and after implementation

Attached is Bruce's PowerPoint used in today's presentation.

Bruce and Maria would be happy to discuss their program or suggestions when working with Workforce Investment Boards. They can be reached at the following email addresses:

MendelsohnB@masshirecentral.com
sanchezm@masshirecentral.com

4. Moving Forward

We Make This Announcement with Profound Regret...

Effective October 15, 2023, it is our understanding that the Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC) will no longer manage the EPA Brownfields Job Training Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement grant.

This decision and attendant circumstances are outside of our control. As such, we will not be able to continue with professional technical support services to you, the EPA BJT Grantees. Although efforts to continue our program and services are ongoing, we feel it appropriate to communicate our program status to you as we now know it.

Without program management and funding, we anticipate that our final Professional Learning Community (PLC) zoom call will be held on Wednesday, October 11. We anticipate that all HMTRI Brownfields-Toolbox.org documents, services, and activities (including the web site) will be unavailable after Friday, October 15.

We can only share with you our profound disappointment at this outcome after more than 30 years of service.

We are deeply appreciative of the support and confidence placed in us over many years by US EPA, EICC, and most of all, all of you. We encourage you to continue your important work unabated and to continue to network with and support each other.

Mike, Steve, and I are hopeful that we may be able to offer our services in the future and have communicated that desire to US EPA. **It has been our distinct honor and pleasure to work with each of you.**

Mike Senew, Steve Fenton, and Nolan Curtis

5. Online Events



National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Call October 17th (2 - 4 pm Eastern) EPA Environmental Justice Initiatives

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.

For more information and registration, go to:
<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/national-environmental-justice-community-engagement-calls>

Register for DOE's Justice Week 2023 Oct. 30 through Fri., Nov. 3

The U.S. Department of Energy's **Justice Week 2023 | Equity Empowered** is a five-day hybrid event dedicated to empowering each other to move toward a more equitable, clean, and just energy future. Join us Monday, October 30th through Friday, November 3rd to learn more. Here's what you need to know.

- Hybrid Events | Online and In-Person
- Registration is required
- Free and open to the public

To register and learn more, Go to:

https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/justice-week-2023-equity-empowered-2281589?aff=odclrlmctfte&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment webinars

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment periodically hosts webinars for the EPA grants community. If you are interested in applying for EPA grants or are currently managing an EPA grant, please consider attending one of these webinars. [Subscribe to the EPA Grants Update Listserv](#) to receive updates about these webinars.

EPA recently hosted a series of three webinars for assistance agreement (grant) applicants and recipients. During each webinar, EPA staff reviewed key aspects of EPA's grants processes and requirements. Please visit and bookmark the [EPA Grants Webinars](#) page where you will find tips for preparing for EPA webinars, presentation materials, helpful resources, and webinar recordings. We also invite you to visit and bookmark the [Community Library of Frequently Asked Questions](#) to find answers to questions about EPA grants that were asked by previous webinar participants.

For Those Who Missed EJScreen 101 Training

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](#).

6. In Person Meetings and Workshops

2023 LOUISIANA BROWNFIELD CONFERENCE

October 25-26, 2023

Alexandria, LA

Save the date for the 2023 Louisiana Brownfield Conference, October 25-26, 2023, at the Convention Hall in Alexandria, LA. To register, please click [here](#). For hotel accommodations, please click [here](#).

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.

7. Funding Opportunities

EPA Seeks Applicants for 2023 Environmental Education Grants

30-40 grants nationwide

\$50,000-\$100,000 each

Application deadline November 8, 2023

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced that up to \$3.6 million in funding for locally focused environmental education grants is now available under the 2023 Environmental Education (EE) Local Grant Program.



EPA will award grants in each of EPA's 10 Regions, between \$50,000-\$100,000 each, for a total of 30-40 grants nationwide. The program includes support for projects that reflect the intersection of environmental issues with climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, preventing future water quality and human health issues, in addition to other environmental topics.

Funded projects will increase public awareness of those topics and help participants to develop the skills needed to make informed decisions. Each of the 10 EPA Regions published a solicitation notice with their respective regional details. Applicants must apply to the Regional NOFO that corresponds with the location of their proposed project. Through this grant program, EPA intends to provide financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or

disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques, that will serve to increase environmental literacy and encourage behavior that will benefit the environment in local communities, especially underserved communities. This grant program recognizes underserved communities as high-poverty areas, persistent poverty counties, communities the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool identifies as disadvantaged communities, and Title I schools.

Visit the new [EPA Grants Community Library of Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) and the [EE grant FAQ](#) webpages to learn more about the current competition and the federal grant process. Find out background information on the EE Grants Program and resources for applicants on EPA's [EE Grant Homepage](#).

Applications are due on November 8, 2023, and the Notice of Funding Opportunities are now posted on www.grants.gov and the [EE Grant Solicitation Notice webpage](#).

The Office of Environmental Education will also host at least one webinar during the open solicitation period on how to write a competitive application and to address commonly asked questions. Once confirmed, webinar registration details will be available on <https://www.epa.gov/education/grants#webinar>. Stay up to date on all EE grant information, including announcements related to upcoming webinar registration, by subscribing to the [EE Grants Listserv](#).

Technical Assistance (TA) to Tribal Nations and Entities **\$4 million over a 5-year period** **Application deadline November 13, 2023**

This solicitation is anticipated to be \$4 million over a 5-year period of performance for one grant recipient under a cooperative agreement. The application deadline is **November 13, 2023**. The purpose of this grant is to provide specialized technical assistance to increase the capacity of Tribal governments and entities to build sustainable brownfield programs and strengthen capacity to manage successful brownfields reuse.

Please find below information on the **FY 2024 Technical Assistance to Tribal Nations and Entities Addressing Brownfields Grant** Guidelines and application resources.

- [Opportunity Notice at grants.gov](#)
- [FY 2024 Technical Assistance to Tribal Nations and Entities Addressing Brownfields Grant Guidelines \(pdf\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Technical Assistance to Tribal Nations and Entities Addressing Brownfields Grant \(pdf\)](#)

Grants to Create Career Opportunities in the Water Workforce **Applications must be received by EPA by November 17, 2023**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing the availability of over \$20 million in grant funding to support training for workers who protect and treat our nation's drinking water and provide critical wastewater services. Through the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant program, EPA will support training and career opportunities in the water sector. With the Biden-Harris Administration's historic investment in water infrastructure, growing and sustaining the water sector workforce is more important than ever for ensuring clean and safe water for generations to come.

The focus of the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant program is to build a strong pool of skilled and diverse workers in the water and wastewater utilities sector. This grant program supports collaboration among federal, state, and local governments and institutions of higher education, apprentice programs, labor organizations, high schools, and other community-based organizations to provide access to workforce opportunities and build career pipelines in the water sector

Applications must be received by EPA by November 17, 2023.

[Learn more about the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant program.](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$10 Million to Expand Access to Clean Energy Workforce Training Programs

The Department of Energy (DOE) is now accepting applications for competitive funding to expand energy efficiency workforce training programs. Authorized by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Career Skills Training program will provide up to \$10 million in competitive grants for nonprofit partnerships between public or private industry and labor organizations to deliver programs that provide both energy efficiency classroom instruction and on-the-job training. For more information.

<https://www.energy.gov/articles/biden-harris-administration-announces-10-million-expand-access-clean-energy-workforce>

8. Technical Assistance Resources

New Resource: EPA Grants Community Library of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment is excited to announce a new tool for grant applicants and recipients! The [Community Library of Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) is a comprehensive resource based on questions asked by participants of EPA's grants webinars. Use the library to quickly find answers to questions about applying for grants, executing grants, and complying with EPA grants policies and requirements. In many cases, the answers provide links to more details and additional training materials.

You can filter questions by topic (for example, Budget, Certification and Compliance, Drawdowns, among others) or use the search control to find questions based on a keyword. The library of FAQs will be updated with new questions and answers as EPA grants webinars are held. If you have questions or feedback regarding the Community Library of FAQs or EPA grants, please send an email to EPA_Grants_Info@epa.gov.

Training from EPA 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 to 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:

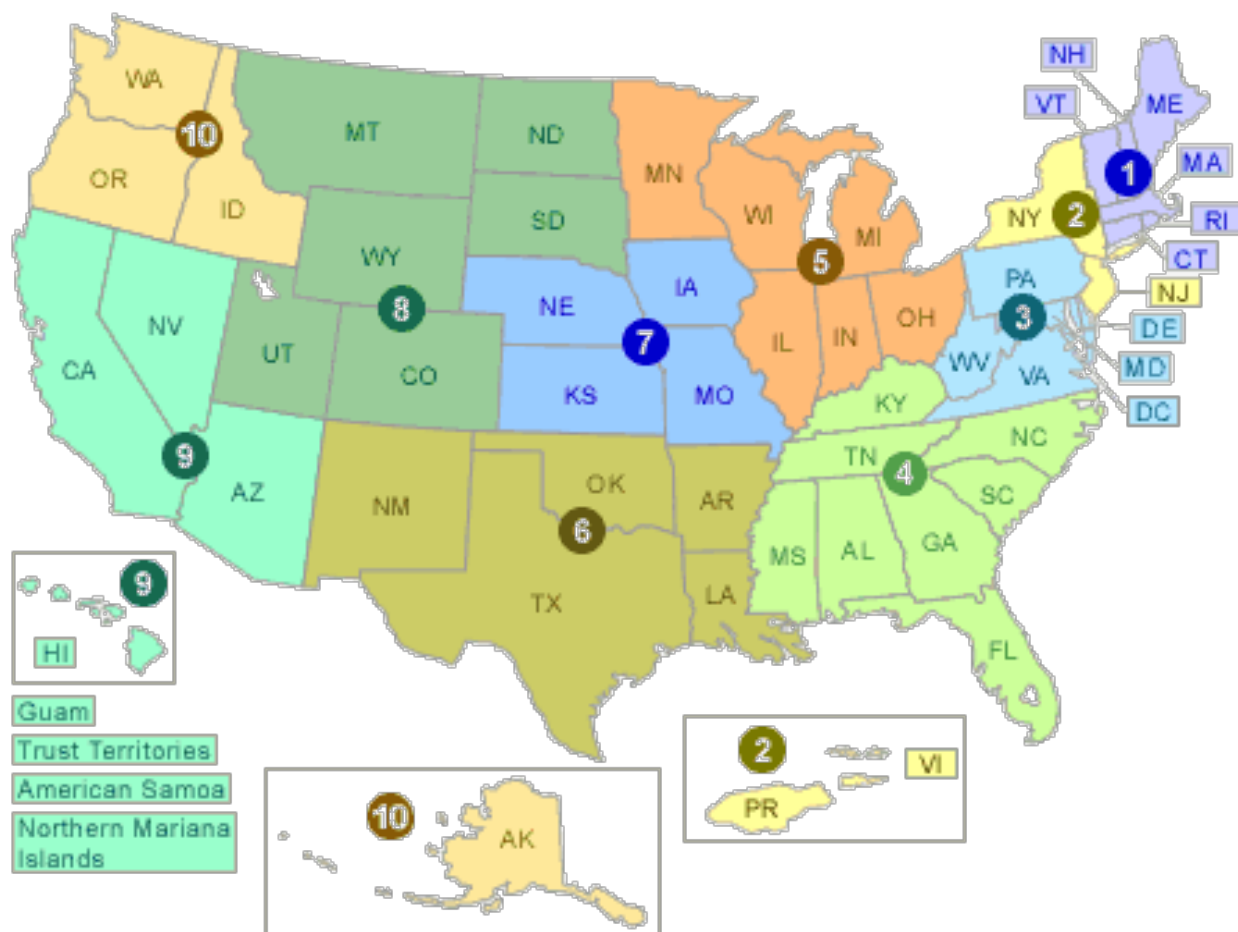
- Oversight responsibilities of EPA pass-through entities
- Federal regulations that govern pass-through entities and the recipients of subawards (subrecipients)
- EPA’s specific requirements for subrecipients
- EPA pass-through entities are encouraged to share this training information with their subrecipients.

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
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
EPA Region 7 IA, KS, MO, NE Alma Moreno Lahm Phone: (913) 551-7380 E-mail: moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov	EPA Region 8 CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY Christine Michaud-Tilly Phone: (303) 312-6706 E-mail: MichaudTilly.Christine@epa.gov
EPA Region 9 AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU Nova Blazej Phone: (415) 972-3846 E-mail: blazej.nova@epa.gov Amanda Pease Phone: (415) 972-3068 e-mail: pease.amanda@epa.gov	EPA Region 10 AK, ID, OR, WA Angel Ip Phone: (206) 553-1673 E-mail: ip.angel@epa.gov



10. Join us for an open forum Professional Learning Community Call October 11th

Join an open conversation with EPA Brownfields Job Training grant recipients, alumni, and interested stakeholders.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://eicc-edu.zoom.us/j/93456883911>

Meeting ID: 934 5688 3911

Dial by your location

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

Find your local number: <https://eicc-edu.zoom.us/j/93456883911>



The objective of the (PLC) has been 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 JT happenings, ask questions, showcase their programs, and help others.

Mike at:

[msenew@gmail.com/](mailto: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.



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