

PLC Session 306 - September 18, 2024

Moving *Forward*



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1. Welcome to Today's Professional Learning Community (PLC)

This is the final Professional Learning Community Call hosted by KSU JT-TAB. The FY25 Brownfields JT RFA is now closed. This month the Professional Learning Community is looking forward to new training cohorts and graduate placement and is anticipating a new crop of Brownfield Job Training Grantees to be announced later this year.

Today's call will also introduce the new technical assistance provider for Brownfield Job Training Grantees, Tetra Tech/Adaapta. Although this is the last KSU JT-TAB PLC call, it is not the last PLC call. Tetra Tech/Adaapta, will continue to host the calls for grantees on the same schedule for at least the rest of the year.

If you are on the PLC participant list, you receive reminders and links to scheduled events. If you did not receive reminders to today's PLC, please send your contact information to: JT-TAB@KSU.edu. If you would like to be removed from the PLC list, please return this email with "remove" in the subject box.

Statements made by KSU JT-TAB during this webinar or in post session notes do not constitute official EPA advice, interpretations, or positions.

2. Introduction to Tetra Tech/Adaapta and The Transition of Job Training Technical Assistance

After Eastern Iowa Community College returned their EPA job training technical assistance grant last November, the Kansas State University TAB program accepted responsibility for providing JT technical assistance until EPA could secure a replacement.

In the midterm, Tetra Tech/Adaapta has been selected to continue JT technical assistance support until March when a long-term award can be competed.

Tetra Tech/Adaapta plans to continue and build upon efforts of Eastern Iowa and KSU including monthly Professional Learning Community Calls.

Work has already begun expanding EPA's Brownfields Job Training Home page and instituting a form for requesting JT technical assistance.

See the new Brownfields Job Training Grants Homepage: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-job-training-grants>

Here is a link to request JT technical assistance:

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/forms/brownfields-job-training-program-technical-assistance-inquiry-form>

Resources offered by KSU will continue to be posted at the KSU JT-TAB Homepage until it is transitioned to EPA's JT Homepage at <https://www.ksutab.org/job-training>

Tetra Tech/Adaapta Job Training Technical Assistance Providers may also be contacted at the following address:

Mary Hashem or Danielle Getsinger at brownfieldsjobtraining@adaapta.com

3. Brownfield Job Training News

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Quantifies The Benefits Of Training Underserved Populations

The study compares outcomes of approximately 3,800 Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP) graduates with the outcomes of non-graduates and non-trainees who have similar demographic characteristics. The study was funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP). The study was funded by

the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP). NIEHS ECWTP provides a path to financial stability through environmental, health and safety training after homelessness, unemployment, or incarceration. The study shows how the training program increases employment opportunities for individuals, addresses occupational health disparities, and contributes to the environmental and economic revitalization of disadvantaged communities. Notable findings covering the period from 2014-2022 include:

- ECWTP graduates earn \$841.1M more compared to non-graduate peers
- 28x return on the government's investment
- Savings of \$7.3M in injury-related costs through training

To download the report, Go to:

[report](#)

To learn more about the NIEHS Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP), Go to: [ECWTP webpage](#).

EPA has announced the FY25 Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup Grant Guidelines

Application are due November 14, 2024

EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization is soliciting applications from eligible entities for Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund and Cleanup Grant funding. These Brownfields Grants allow vacant and abandoned properties to be turned into community assets that attract jobs and promote economic revitalization. EPA anticipates awarding approximately 200 grants nationwide this cycle. Applicants are required to incorporate community involvement into their grant including community notification that they are planning to apply for a brownfields grant. Applicants are encouraged to begin working with communities early. Engagement and coordination with EPA JT Brownfields job training programs is encouraged especially with assessment and cleanup grants.

To learn more about FY25 Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup Grant Guidelines go to the MARC resources homepage. [the OBLR MARC Grant Application Resources](#)

2025 National Brownfields Training Conference - Chicago, IL August 5-8, 2025

The National Brownfields Conference (held every 2 years) attracts over 2,000 stakeholders from government, industry, and the community to share knowledge and best practices on the remediation and redevelopment of contaminated properties. The conference features a range of sessions, workshops, and networking events that cover topics including workforce development, community engagement, sustainability, and environmental justice with the goal of promoting the cleanup and revitalization of contaminated sites across the United States. Learn more about the conference and how to get involved at:

<https://gobrownfields.org/>



The Brownfields 2025 Call for Ideas is Open

The Call for Ideas will close on December 20, 2024

Submit your ideas for dynamic educational sessions that explore the latest and greatest tools, methods, trends and case studies in brownfields redevelopment and revitalization.

Conference Topic Areas (Tracks):

- Brownfields Financing
- Housing, Equity, and Minimizing Displacement
- Climate Change and Resiliency
- Future Economic Trends and Transformation
- Environmental Justice, Public Participation, and Outreach
- Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Approaches
- Forging Effective Partnerships with Tribal Governments

[Click here to submit your idea](#)

4. Summary of the KSU JT-TAB Virtual All-Grantee Meeting

August 21st. KSU JT-TAB hosted this year's virtual All-Grantee Meeting titled "Exploring Training Resources" for current, new and prospective job training grantees. The event explored current and cutting-edge resources available to JT grantees as they implement their training programs. Here is a summary of the meeting with links to resources presented as part of the annual event.

Session 1 – Defining Environmental Technology - Steve Fenton reviewed a National Science Foundation-funded EARTH Center project, *Defining Environmental Technology*, which includes a National Report and Occupational Chart. These resources provide valuable environmental career information that can be shared with Brownfields Job Training students. For the report and chart go to: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jOK4CpFtmDzpaQX4-74Dr0ZkaDjOwHkV>
To learn more about the EARTH Center, go to: <https://earthcntr.org>.

In addition, he also explained the facilitated brainstorming process called, Developing a Curriculum (DACUM), that can be used to develop and evaluate training programs. Those interested in researching DACUMs further are referred to The Ohio State University DACUM International Training Center <https://cete.osu.edu/programs/dacum-international-training-center/>

Session 2 – National PETE Resources - Kirk Laflin discussed Train-the-Trainer opportunities available to EPA Brownfields Job Training grantees through the National Partnership for Environmental Education (NPETE). These include the GreatEST Institute and the Disaster Site Worker courses. Both programs are available at no cost. Additionally, Kirk introduced the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST), an excellent training and networking opportunity. For additional information about PETE and CCCHST training opportunities, go to: <https://nationalpete.org/>

Session 3 – NIEHS Clearinghouse Resources - Deborah Weinstock and Dr. Eric Persaud presented the numerous resources housed at and available to JT Grantees from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences' (NIEHS). Links to those resources include the following:

- NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) landing page: https://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat/about_wetp
- National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training: <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/>
- Clearinghouse Disaster Preparedness and Response Training Tools: <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=556>

- The NIEHS Building Blocks for a Heat Stress Prevention Training Program (English and Spanish version) is available on the Extreme Heat and Climate Resilience page:
<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=2558>
- NIEHS Clearinghouse webinars page: <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=2627>
- Subscribe to the NIEHS WTP News brief! Each issue provides the latest worker health and safety news and relevant resources: <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/newsbrief/currentissue.cfm>
- Access the NIEHS WTP Curricula Catalog here: <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=603>

Session 4 – Environmental Justice Clearinghouse - Stacey Lobatos from EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights summarized Resources available from the Environmental Justice Clearinghouse and are available at:
<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/forms/ej-clearinghouse>

Session 5 – Brownfields National TAB Resources - Blase Leven, KSU JT-TAB reviewed resources available to Brownfields JT grantees at <https://www.ksutab.org/job-training> including Brownfields JT grant application review offered by EPA TAB technical assistance providers.

Session 6 – Artificial Intelligence - Part 1: The Emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Job Training Programs - Zach Schnell, from Pamlico Community College, NC discussed the Emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its application in Job Training Programs with an overview of how AI is becoming an important part of environmental, health and safety training with demonstrations.

Session 7 – Artificial Intelligence - Part 2: Career Exploration Using Virtual Reality Headsets - Mileidy Soto, Director, Training & Employment, PathStone Corporation, Puerto Rico wrapped up the meeting with a discussion of how environmental training program participants are able to practice in different types of careers using virtual reality headsets.

After Hours Q&A

KSU JT-TAB Virtual All-Grantee Meeting recordings and PowerPoints available for download at:
<https://www.ksutab.org/job-training>

5. Things to Consider Moving Forward

From 1998 to 2022, EPA awarded over 350 Brownfields Job Training Cooperative Agreements previously called Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training EWDJT grants. EWDJT grants included two years focused on environmental remediation training with a third year for graduate tracking, placement, and closeout.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure [Law](#) (BIL) authorized funds for EPA to expand the Brownfields Job Training program with a renewed commitment to environmental justice and community engagement. Subsequent appropriations allowed EPA to increase Brownfields JT awards to \$500 thousand over a 5-year period. The newly expanded Brownfields JT grants extended training from 2 to 4 years with an additional year to complete graduate tracking, placement, and closeout.

In FY23 EPA awarded 29 - 5-year grants with BIL funding. In FY24, EPA funded an additional 14 Brownfields JT grants under the same authorization. Applications recommended for funding in FY25 will be made later this year. It is anticipated that application requests for FY26 Brownfields JT programs will be posted in June 2025.

For those not familiar with the Federal Fiscal Year and EPA's Brownfields JT grant cycle, Federal fiscal years extend from October 1st to September 30th of the following year. EPA traditionally requests applications each summer for grants awarded in the next calendar or Fiscal Year. For example, EPA requested applications for Brownfields JT Grants beginning in the Fall of calendar year 2025 last August. It takes approximately a full year from the Request for Grant Applications (RFAs) to the date when applicants are authorized to spend funds.

Currently some of the grants awarded prior to FY23 are in the final stages of their grant. Many of those organizations have closed out their grants and are among the 43 applicants awarded new 5-year grants in FY23 and FY24. Others may be among those applying in the FY25 cycle now being considered for funding.

Here are some ideas to consider during the fall and winter period. A detailed list is discussed in CONNECT News #49 at the KSU Job Training Homepage.

<https://www.ksutab.org/job-training>



FY25 Applicants submitting applications last August 15th

The long wait until December or January...

- It is important not to be discouraged if a proposal is not accepted. Many applicants consider their first submission as a learning experience.
- Those not passing Threshold Criteria have been notified and should contact their EPA Regional Job Training Coordinator to see what they can do moving forward.
- Organize and/or reorganize data files used in constructing the submitted application. Questions may arise months after submission and award announcement. Well organized files will facilitate processing a finalized work plan and budget after the grant has been recommended for funding.
- Alert and keep in touch with individuals associated with the application submission (especially if individuals leave or change their current position). EPA may require additional information or clarification of items submitted as part of the application.
- Inform partners and stakeholders of the application's progress and schedule as the grant moves forward.

FY24 JT Grantees

Fourteen grantees are in this cohort of 5-year JT programs with 4 years of training and a final year of wrap-up. Work plans and implementation strategies have been developed and authorization to spend funds granted. Fall and Winter marks the beginning of initial recruitment, training and placement cycles. Newly funded programs have an opportunity to fine tune and enhance the effectiveness of their program delivery.

- Screen potential applicants carefully. Programs that lower admission standards often experience increased dropout rates and lower placement outcomes.
- Host multiple orientation sessions including tryouts and team building exercises to motivate and screen candidates. If classes are not filled, consider delaying training.
- New grantees need to cast as wide a net as possible when recruiting potential applicants. A large pool of candidates entering the screening process will result in a cohort of deserving students most likely to succeed. Consider presentations at religious and town hall meetings, social media postings and public announcements to generate maximum program awareness and interest.
- Check with the local WIB or Job Center to determine if benefits are available for disadvantaged or handicapped incoming students.
- Each JT participant should have an assigned case worker or student advocate.
- Formulate placement strategies as the first training cohort begins.
- Engage potential employers to participate in training activities.

FY23 JT Grantees

EPA was able to award twenty-nine 5-year Job Training grants in FY23. This cohort is one of our most experienced groups of JT grantees. EPA

- A new training cycle provides an opportunity to recruit alumni as guest speakers and participants in scheduled events.
- Graduates should be contacted and encouraged to attend training and social events.
- Consider offering refresher and recertification training to alumni to improve tracking.
- Review acceptance, retention and placement rates to determine if new or revised recruitment and retention strategies are needed.
- Seek out new services and assistance that can be offered to program participants in order to increase retention rates.
- Review training to ensure it is relevant to employer needs.
- Student and graduate placement records from previous cohorts should be organized, updated, and preserved for future use.
- Fall and Winter provide an opportunity to refresh and expand potential employer connections. Graduate placement activity should start as training begins.

Organizations Considering Applying for a FY26 Brownfields JT Grant

EPA's support of Brownfields Job Training Grants will continue with a FY26 RFA expected next June. Applicants who received a Brownfields JT Grant before FY23, and have closed out their grants, are eligible to apply for funding in the FY26 competition next Summer. Since grants prior to FY23 were funded for 3 years at \$200 thousand it is likely that these grants will have been closed or have disbursed 50% of their award by next June (when the next RFA is announced). For communities and organizations having a history with EPA's Brownfields JT, this may be an opportune time to reconsider or continue a Brownfields JT Program.

- Identify and contact active state and local brownfields project managers. While governmental brownfield project managers may not become prospective employers, they can provide insight on active projects and remediation contractors.
- Search for individuals interested and available on a volunteer basis to assist with Brownfields JT grant development. Effort associated with organization, planning and writing of Brownfields Job Training Applications is not reimbursable or funded by EPA. Such an effort must be supported by voluntary and in-kind contributions from multiple sources.
- Initiate conversations with employers who could be interested in considering Brownfields JT graduates for employment. Ask for their support and possible involvement in the proposed effort.
- Contact EPA Regional Job Training Coordinators requesting available technical assistance. EPA Regional Job Training Coordinators can suggest technical assistance providers and resources, as the job training program progresses.
- Begin to identify communities that would welcome an environmental job training program. Brownfields JT applications will require the identification of a community where activities will be focused.
- Search for nonprofit organizations familiar with training, employment programs having experience submitting Federal grants. Experienced programs are excellent partners as they often have resources and organizational structure that could complement a Brownfields JT program.
- Participate in public meetings - While not required, JT applicants are encouraged to participate in public meetings. To supercharge JT applications, prospective grantees may want to consider informing the community about the EPA job training grant. Public announcements at City Council, discussions regarding the possibility of developing a local JT program at church meetings or informational sessions at community events should be documented and included in the narrative proposal.

6. Closing Remarks

From our first brainstorming meeting in what was the Old Post Office Annex over 400 grants ago it became evident that workforce development in underserved communities was going to be a learning process. Brainstorming with the original job training pilots and exchanging ideas formed a foundation for a path forward. Twenty-five years later the PLC is still sharing best practices and training strategies among experienced, new and prospective grantees.

I'm happy to hear that PLCs will be continuing. Where programs with a common goal can learn and exchange ideas. I think I speak for Steve, Nolan and Tim. It's been great to be a part of Brownfields Job Training and thank you for working with us. Additional thanks go to Blase Leven and Matt Wosje for allowing us to continue serving such a fantastic group of individuals committed to making their communities a better place.

Going forward, the KSU JT-TAB team consultants may be contacted directly at the following emails:

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Nolan Curtis	nolan.curtis@stanfordalumni.org
Tim Hunter	tim@lucidway.com

7. Online Meetings and Webinars

Office Hours Session

August 21st

11:00 A.M. CST

OEJECR will be holding an office hours session to talk with EPA EJScreen experts about many topics including how to use and apply the tool, technical issues, and address any other questions. To join the office hours session: [Click here to join](#).

Registration is not required for training or office hours.

More information can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/ejscreen-office-hours-training>.

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

Each year, the Worker Training Program (WTP) holds technical webinars, meetings, and workshops. These events address scientific, administrative, and regulatory issues related to training workers who work with and clean up hazardous materials and who respond to emergencies involving hazardous substances. Visit the NIEHS Webinar home page for links to recordings of past webinars.

<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/index.cfm?id=2627>

Expanding the
Conversation



working for
environmental
justice

Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR)
National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Calls

Next Call: October 15th, 2024 (2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern)

EPA invites EJ advocates to participate in its National EJ 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. For more information and meeting materials from previous sessions, Go to:

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

Storymaps: promoting your brownfields story

Hosted by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

Looking for an effective way to communicate your Brownfields Program to community groups, elected officials and other Brownfields stakeholders? Join our dynamic panel discussion with three successful Brownfield Programs that have effectively employed StoryMaps to engage their community and promote their programs. Learn how this tool can help build momentum for your Brownfields Program and market your resources to developers and community organizations to facilitate the reuse of blighted properties.

The recording of the webinar hosted by LDEQ is now available.

[Click here](#) to view the recorded webinar.

8. In Person Events



The Georgia Brownfield Association (GBA)

The Georgia Brownfield Association is a nonprofit advocacy and education organization supporting economic development in Georgia through responsible and sustainable redevelopment of environmentally impacted properties.

Celebrating Pullman Yards

Thursday, Oct 10, 2024

- Thursday, Oct 10, 2024, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm
- Pullman Yards - Meet us in Brick & Mortar restaurant
225 Rogers St NE, Atlanta, GA
- Free for GBA 2024 Members
 - \$30 nonmembers
 - \$15 government & students

A limited number of sponsorships are available for this special event. [Register Now](#)

GBA Brownfield Seminar

Join hundreds of industry leaders for a full day of timely, relevant presentations along with premium networking opportunities.

- April 16, 2025
- Georgia Power Headquarters building at 241 Ralph McGill Boulevard Atlanta, GA

[More Information](#)

9. JT Related Technical Assistance

EJScreen is EPA's environmental justice mapping and screening tool that provides EPA with a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and socioeconomic indicators.

EPA is committed to protecting the environment and public health in low-income, tribal and other overburdened communities by integrating environmental justice in all programs, policies and activities. [Learn more about Environmental Justice at EPA.](#)

National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training

The National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training is a national resource for hazardous waste worker curricula, technical reports, and weekly news on hazardous materials, waste operations, and emergency response. Funded by the NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP), the National Clearinghouse provides technical assistance to WTP staff, grant recipients, and the general public. Go to: <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/>

Website to Support the Development of Climate-Resilient Projects

EPA has launched a new website, the [Climate Resilience and Adaptation Funding Toolbox](#). CRAFT is a user-friendly resource for technical assistance providers working with federal funding applicants and recipients to develop, apply for and implement climate-resilient investments. The website

provides simple, easy-to-understand resources that can help users consider climate adaptation and resilience before, during and after applying for EPA funding opportunities. For more information, go to: <https://www.epa.gov/resilient-investments>

EPA Office Of Grants and Debarment Training Resources

Every year, EPA awards more than \$4 billion in funding for grants and other assistance agreements. From small non-profit organizations to large state governments, EPA works to help many visionary organizations achieve their environmental goals. With countless success stories over the years, EPA grants remain a chief tool to protect human health and the environment. Get started with [EPA Grants Overview for Applicants and Recipients](#).

EPA Office of Grants and Debarment has announced the availability of several new and updated training resources for grant applicants and recipients.

- Learn [How to Register in SAM.gov and Grants.gov](#) to apply for EPA grants. 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.

Re-Powering Mapper Adds Inflation Reduction Act & Energy Community Tax Credit Bonus Layers

EPA's RE-Powering Mapper, an interactive web application, allows users to identify contaminated lands, landfills, and mine sites for renewable energy development. Using renewable energy criteria developed in collaboration with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, EPA has pre-screened over 190,000 sites for their renewable energy potential. The RE-Powering America's Land Initiative has updated the [RE-Powering Mapper](#) to include Inflation Reduction Act Energy Community Tax Credit Bonus Layers.

The American Horticultural Therapy Association

Steps to Creating a Community Garden or Expand Urban Agriculture at a Brownfields Site

EPA and The American Horticultural Therapy Association has developed a guide for programs involved with the development of community gardens on potential brownfield sites.

[Steps To Create a Community Garden Or Expand Urban](#)



10. Funding Opportunities

Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Funds, and Cleanup Grants Application Submission Deadline Is November 14, 2024

EPA's Brownfields Program began in 1995 and has provided nearly \$2.7 billion in Brownfield Grants to assess and clean up contaminated properties and return blighted properties to productive reuse. Prior to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this program made approximately \$60 million in grant funding available each year. Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA increased that yearly investment nearly four times over.

Copies of the FY25 Brownfields Grants Guidelines and other application resources are available on the [Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup \(MARC\) Grant Application Resources](#) webpage.

Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR) Community Change Grants Deadline to Apply: November 21, 2024

EPA is accepting applications on a rolling basis for \$2 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funding available to support community-driven projects that build capacity for communities to tackle environmental and climate justice challenges. The Environmental and Climate Justice Program (ECJ Program), created by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) under Clean Air Act (CAA) Section 138, provides funding to carry out environmental and climate justice activities to benefit underserved and overburdened communities. These grants provide funds in environmental and climate justice activities to benefit disadvantaged communities through projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to address environmental and climate justice challenges.

[Learn more about the Notice of Funding Opportunity for Community Change Grants Program \(Community Change Grants\)](#)

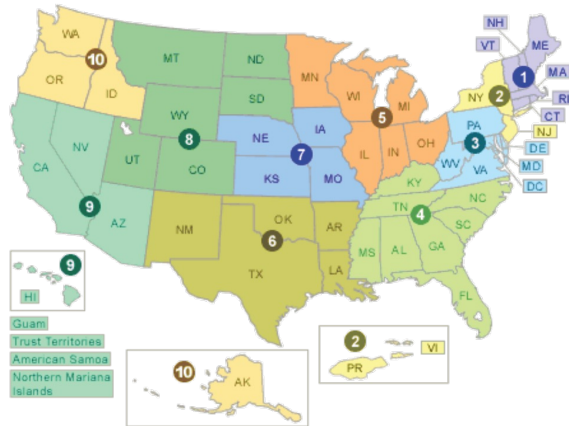


11. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators

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

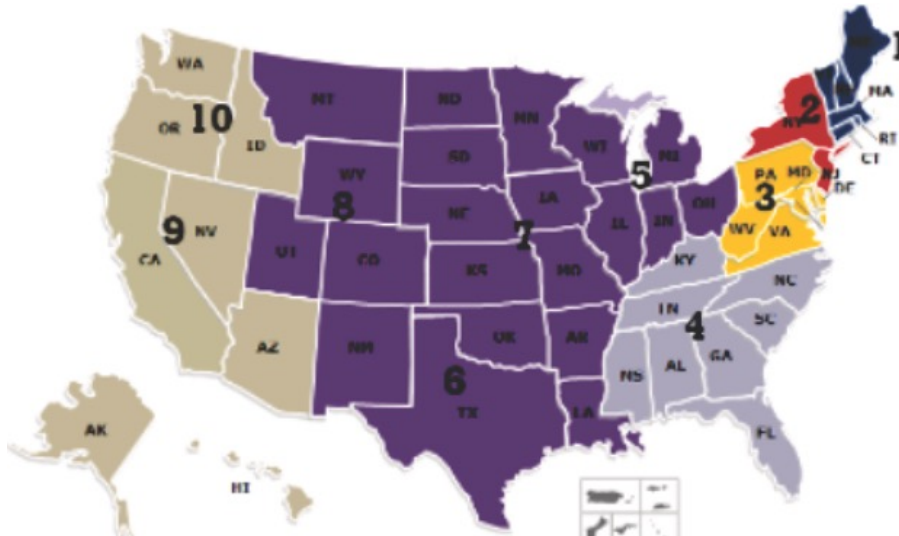
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Claire Weston: claire.weston@cclr.org

**12. PLCs Will Continue with Tetra Tech/Adaapta as host
Third Wednesday Each Month - 2:00 P.M. Eastern**



Thank you for the memories!

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