

TIPS ON WRITING A COMPETITIVE EPA JOB TRAINING PROPOSAL

THANK YOU for joining us for this webinar. We will get started in a moment.

Note: None of the statements made by KSU JT-TAB during this webinar constitute official EPA advice, interpretations, or positions.



Welcome to the Webinar Blase Leven, KSU TAB *Purpose:*

The objective of this webinar is to present tips and strategies for submitting a competitive FY25 Brownfields Job Training Grant Application; to fund local environmental work force training; in support of assessment, cleanup and sustainable re-use of brownfields in your community.







Technical Notes

If you experience technical difficulties with your connection:



Dial (309) 798-9732



Email tim@lucidway.com

Additionally, Please note:

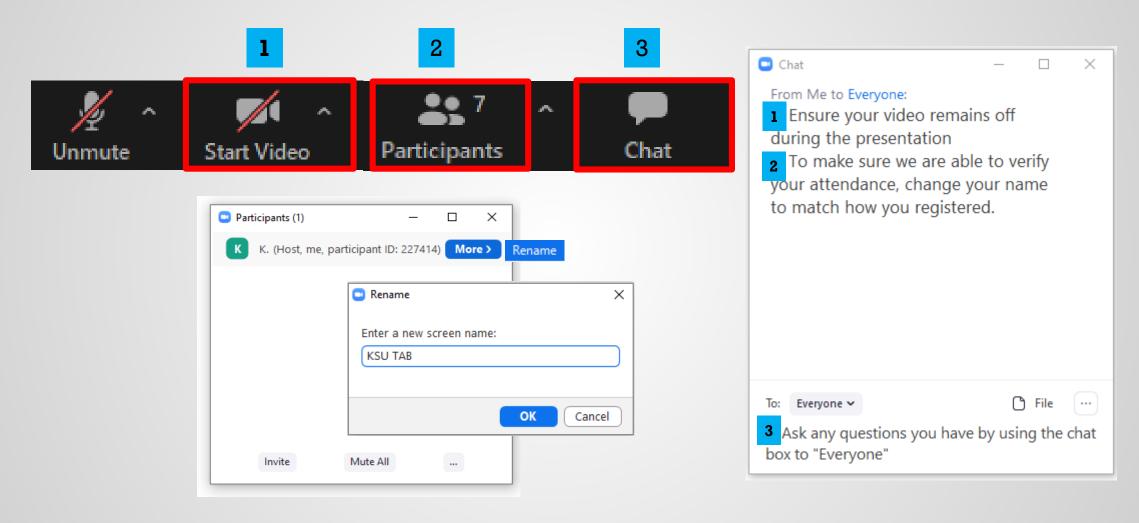


The presentation is being recorded and will be available on the website. The link has also been placed in the chat box.





Using Zoom -- The Basics







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Agenda

- Introduction
- Pre-Submission Tips for Consideration
- Writing the Application
- Before Submitting the Application
- Mistakes and Lessons Learned
- Q&A
- Critical Points to Remember
- Resources
- Webinar Evaluation





EPA Funding for Brownfields Job Training Programs

Recruit and provide workforce training to residents of solid and hazardous wasteimpacted communities with skills needed to assess, clean up, and prepare contaminated sites, including brownfields, for sustainable re-use, as a part of community-led revitalization efforts.







Brownfields

Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

For more information go to <u>www.epa.gov/Brownfields</u>



EPA Brownfields Resources Support:

- Identification
- Community Input
- Assessment
- Cleanup

For desired site reuses that benefits the community







The Importance of Community-Based Job Training Programs

Environmental training & certifications are particularly valuable to urban, rural and tribal communities with:

- Funding to address brownfields or other environmentally impacted sites
- Unemployed or underemployed populations
- Compelling environmental justice and other needs
- Existing workforce programs that need environmental health & safety, including radiation safety, environmental testing and monitoring, and other common certifications
- Revitalization needs involving green infrastructure, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other sustainable beneficial uses







EPA Job Training Application Basics

- Grant Size and Project Period: up to \$500,000 over 5 years
- Due date: August 15, 2024, at 11:59 PM ET
- Applications consist of:
 - Required Forms
 - Narrative Information Sheet (3-page limit)
 - The Narrative (14-page limit), seven ranking criteria sections (200 total points)
 - Narrative Attachments (15-page limit)
 - Threshold Criteria Responses & Attachments (Pass/Fail)
- Verify you meet Threshold Criteria first (EPA can help)
- Do your homework, start writing soon, and request review of your draft application (TAB can help)
- Submit through <u>www.grants.gov</u>; prepare & submit early!

View EPA's Application Guidelines, Webinar & Technical Assistance Resources, for more details

'The Narrative' is Where you Tell Your Story

Universal Good Writing:

<u>Structure</u> & Storyline I. <u>Introduction</u> (*Overview* of Problem, Plan & Expected Results)

2. <u>Body</u> (the *Details* of Plan to address the Problem, & expected Results)

3. <u>Conclusions</u> (*Overview* of Problem, Plan & Expected Results)

Reiterate, Reiterate, Reiterate your Storyline!

Scored Sections of Application	<u>Score*</u>
Community Need (Includes Community Description & Labor Market Demand)	45 pts
Training Program Description	25 pts
Budget	15 pts
Program Structure, Outputs, & Outcomes	50 pts
Partnerships	35 pts
Leveraging	5 pts
Programmatic Capability	25 pts

* See Guidelines Section V.A. *Evaluation Criteria*, as well as IV.D-H, to see exactly how to earn points for each scored section

Other Places to Reiterate your Story & to Provide Additional/Required Information

Universal Good Writing: Storyline (Continued)

- Another Storytelling Script: What, Why & Who

- The 'Who' is a very important part of explaining the Problem, the Plan, and the Expected Results

Other Suggestions

- Consider using sample tables in Guidelines

- Read the Guidelines, and note the text in bold & italics

Narrative Sheet*	Important for
- Includes Other Factors and Additional Considerations**	summary &
	final selection
Narrative Attachments*	Impacts
- Milestone Schedule	Scoring
- Partnership Letters ID'd in Narrative	
Threshold Criteria*	Pass/Fail
- Applicant eligibility info/documentation	(include a
- Coalition agreement or letters of commitment (if applicable)	response for
- Page #s for the Training Curriculum Chart	each one –
- Description of target area	don't skip any)
- Statement all trainees will receive OSHA 40-Hour	
HAZWOPER training	
- Other statements, demonstrations, and documentation*	

* See Guidelines Section IV.B Content and Form of Application Submission Section

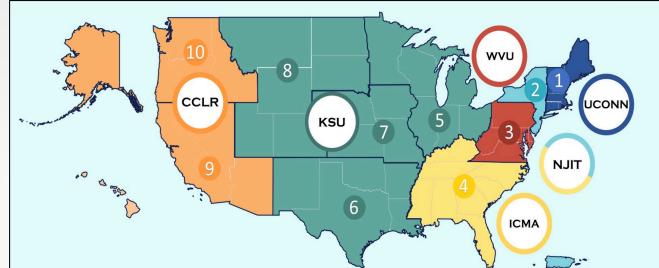
** See Guidelines V.B. Other Factors

Technical Assistance to Brownfields Program – TAB Providers

- Funded by EPA
- TA for communities and tribes revitalizing communities via brownfields redevelopment
- Services are free and tailored to meet specific needs

Includes review of draft JT Grant applications & <u>successful past</u> <u>applications</u>





University of Connecticut - EPA Region 1 New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) - EPA Region 2 and Region 4 The West Virginia University - EPA Region 3 The International City/County Management Association - EPA Region 4 Kansas State University - EPA Regions 5, 6, 7 & 8 Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR) EPA Regions 9 and 10



Meet the Presenters KSU JT-TAB Partners



Michael Senew

Nolan Curtis

Steve Fenton





POLL QUESTION #1 Demographic Distribution





Pre-Submission Tips for Consideration

Steve Fenton KSU JT-TAB







Background Information

FY 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grants webpage.

https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/fy-2025-brownfields-job-training-grants

This site provides information on the following links:

- Opportunity Notice at grants.gov
- Fiscal Year 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grant Guidelines (pdf) (674.3 KB)
- Fiscal Year 2025 Brownfields Job Training Guidelines Summary of Changes (pdf) (358.2 KB)





Background Information (Cont.)

- Frequently Asked Questions About Brownfields Job Training (JT) Grants
- Interested in Applying for Brownfields Job Training Funding?
- List of Eligible and Ineligible Brownfield Job Training Courses
- How to Register and Apply for Grants
- How to submit an application through Grants.gov





Background Information (Cont.)

Additional background information can be found at EPA's Technical Assistance Resources site:

https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-job-training-grants -technical-assistance-resources

At this site, the EPA Grant Application Tips Sheet can be downloaded as a PDF

Brownfields Job Training Grants Tip Sheet (pdf)





Background Information (Cont.)

Visiting the KSU Technical Assistance website provides additional information regarding the development and implementation of EPA job training programs including access to regional Job Training Technical Assistance Providers.

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





Start-Up Tips

 Read the RFA very carefully! (including the applicant eligibility paragraph)







Start-Up Tips

 Deconstruct the RFA to ensure that every request for information will be addressed in the application.

✓ Did you attend the EPA Application Review Webinar?

 If you were not able to attend the EPA Application Review Webinar on June 6th, download the recording, and recent FAQs from the FY 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grants webpage:
 FY 2025 Brownfields Job Training Grants | US EPA





Pre-Submission Checklist

✓ Verify that your grant submission process is up to date.

- EPA considers the party submitting the application package as the applicant.
- It's easy to check your account status by going to www.SAM.gov and entering your organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number.
- The organization's E-Biz Point Of Contact (POC) must authorize the individual as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).





Application Development

- Previous performance not a "slam dunk" or guarantee of continued funding.
- Returning grantees interested in continuing their program with a new grant must have closed out their previous grant or have disbursed at least 50% of the funds from that grant.
- ✓ Don't be deterred if your organization is a new applicant.
- If in doubt, submit a job training application even if more preparation could have resulted in a more complete response.
- Circulate program plans and progress reports to key partners during development of the application.





Defining Community Need - Community and Labor Market Assessments

- Use search engines, mapping tools, internet resources and surveys for initial background and demographic information.
- Begin community and labor market assessments early with as large a net as possible.
- ✓ Visit and "get to know" the neighborhoods under consideration.
- Do not restrict employment searches to environmental related industries only.





Defining Community Need - Community and Labor Market Assessments (Cont.)

- Involve governmental and municipal agencies in the community and labor market assessments.
- Communicate with employers about their interest in hiring job training graduates.
- Identify and note any of the 5 Other Factors Checklist that may exist in the target community.





Identifying Other Factors & Special Situations in the Community

Other factors include:

- ✓ Applicants that propose to serve a community population of 10,000 or less.
- Whether the applicant is new (i.e., has not received an EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant since 2015).
- Whether the applicant is a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory or is an organization that will primarily serve tribal or territorial residents.
- ✓ Applications that seek to serve veterans.
- ✓ Whether the target area is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.





Identifying Other Factors & Special Situations in the Community

- Search and identify other incidents or situations that can reinforce your selection of the target community.
- Other situations that may reinforce selection of a target community include:
 - Training in communities with unusually high crime rates
 - Training in communities with unusually high unemployment
 - Applications that seek to serve returning citizens
 - Applications that seek to serve special populations





Identifying Other Factors & Special Situations in the Community

✓ Do not overlook circumstances that could affect communities such as:

- Opportunity Zones
- Enterprise Zones
- Redevelopment Zones
- Community Development Projects
- Plant Closures, Chemical Spills, or Natural Disasters and Accidents.





Engaging the Community and Government

- Brief the Mayor's office, elected representatives, and City Council of the job training initiative.
- Engage public municipal and service agencies.
- ✓ Locate and contact state and federal brownfields project staff.
- Document a discussion of important public meetings and public events in the narrative section of the RFA.
- Develop connections with faith based and community organizations and integrate them into your job training program.
- Locate nonprofit and social service organizations in the target community that can leverage training program resources.





Partnership Development

- Recruit and commit partners to provide in-kind, service, facility, or financial support.
- Request letters of support referencing specific commitments being offered.
- Formalize and develop a *Memorandum of Understanding (*MOU) with key partners.
- Recruit advisory committee members and include them in the application submission.
- Engage advisory committee and key partners in the proposal review process.





Curriculum Development and Training

- When developing the curriculum start with employer needs (labor market assessment).
- ✓ When creating your training program, it is important to know which courses can be funded by Brownfields Job Training Grant Funds.
 - The <u>List of Eligible and Ineligible Brownfield Job Training</u> <u>Courses</u> webpage provides examples of what is and isn't eligible.
 - Training that uses Brownfields Job Training Grant Funds must have a direct connection to facilitating the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation.





Curriculum Development and Training

- Ensure that there is a clear distinction between supported and unsupported curriculum.
- Compete, screen, and select prospective trainers, contractors, and consultants early.
- ✓ Include advisors, employers, and trainers in curriculum development.
- Ensure that curriculum offerings are supported by the labor market assessment.





Employer Recruitment and Graduate Placement

 Obtain employer letters of support and commitment to consider program graduates.

 In addition to looking at program graduates, seek support and commitment to becoming a leveraging partner.





POLL QUESTION #2 Applicant Background Information





Writing the Application

Nolan Curtis KSU JT-TAB







Writing the Application

 Ensure your team has personnel or volunteers covering all the critical components of Job Training operation including:

- Community outreach
- Recruitment
- Training
- Retention
- Case management
- Partnership development
- Employer relationships.





Writing the Application (Cont.)

 Assign every request for information to the individual best suited to respond to each question.

✓ Write the Narrative first, and then the three-page summary.

✓ Be clear, concise, and address all criteria.

✓ The numbers must add up.





Writing the Application (Cont.)

✓ Do not use acronyms without defining them first.

- What is not written in the application does not exist in the eyes of evaluators.
- Remember someone in another part of the country might review your application.
- ✓ Conduct frequent progress updates.





Grant Writing Tips

✓ A single individual should be responsible for writing the final proposal.

✓ Send drafts of the proposal to advisors and key partners for review.

✓ Maintain consistency.

- Submit the application early to allow for any issues that may occur along the way.
- Call the www.grants.gov Help Desk for assistance at 1-800-518-4726.
 https://www.grants.gov/support.html
 https://www.grants.gov/support.html





Grant Writing Strategies

✓ Dissect the RFA and break out each section and deliverable.

- Assign every request for information to the individual best suited to respond to each question.
- ✓ Conduct frequent progress updates.
- ✓ As the narrative is constructed, avoid generalizations.





Additional Tips

- Previous performance is not a "slam dunk" or guarantee of continued funding.
- EPA is aware that existing Brownfields Grantees have an advantage over new applicants. They have established relationships with employers, partners, and experience in environmental workforce training.







POLL QUESTION #3 Experience with Submitting EPA Job Training Applications





Before Submitting the Application

Steve Fenton KSU JT-TAB







- Perform a quality check to make sure that each section is legible, succinct, and complete. (At each handoff stage)
- Circulate your draft application to key partners before final submission.
- Send your draft Application to the nearest TAB Office for an Application Review.
- Submit the application early to allow for any issues that may occur along the way.





 If in doubt, submit a Job Training application even if more preparation could have resulted in a better program plan.

Review tips and strategies <u>before</u> submission!

✓ Double check the numbers one more time!





✓ Do not exceed page counts.

- Narrative Information Sheets 3 pages, Narrative-14 pages, Attachments -15 pages. Extra pages will be discarded.
- Application Extra Page Formatting.
 - 8 ½ x 11 inches paper size, fonts should be limited to <u>Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri font, sized no</u> smaller than **12-point font**, single-spaced.
 - Submission is by a single PDF
 - No photos allowed.





Don't let this happen to you!



Submit application materials on time!





POLL QUESTION #4 Current Application Status





Mistakes and Lessons Learned

Nolan Curtis & Mike Senew KSU JT-TAB







General Mistakes

 The application was submitted with another organization's account information.

✓ Applicant used the wrong UEI number.

- ✓ Applicant did not pass the Threshold Criteria.
- ✓ The submitter is not the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).
- The applicant did not have an active www.SAM.gov account and had another party submit the application package on their behalf.





General Mistakes

- ✓ Applicant did not follow guidelines.
- ✓ The Proposal was difficult to understand.
- Applicant responses to sub-categories were not on point, and/or incomplete and were unclear.
- ✓ Application was submitted late.





Ranking Criteria Review Community Need (45 points total) Community Description (25 points)

 Environmental, social, and economic issues were not linked to the impact of the presence of Brownfields in the targeted area.

- Demographic stats were provided but no contrasting data (from state, county, city, or national statistics) to show the need.
- Community involvement and notification regarding proposed job training project, was not discussed in detail.





Ranking Criteria Review (Cont.) Community Need (45 points total) Community Description (25 points)

- There was no mention of public meetings, attendance records, and community roles in the development and composition of the job training proposal.
- There was no mention of social and public health issues.
- There was no mention of a specific population to be trained.
- Demographic data was provided but it was sporadic and not cohesive.





Ranking Criteria Review (Cont.) Community Need (45 points total) Community Description (25 points)

- Specific environmental concerns because of the presence of Brownfields in the Community were not discussed.
- Demographic stats were provided but ineffective and were not drastically indicative of need.
- ✓ The sensitive population was not discussed.
- There was no discussion regarding outreach/recruitment to target specific populations, i.e., unemployed, underemployed, exoffenders, etc. with justified need for training (unemployment stats)





Ranking Criteria Review (Cont.) Community Need (45 points total) Community Description (25 points)

Environmental Justice was not addressed.

✓ No mention of Brownfields.

 EJScreen or CEJST were not used to assist in locating the target community.





Ranking Criteria Review Community Need (45 points total) Labor Market Demand (20 points)

✓ Applicant failed to link labor market assessment to curriculum.

✓ The applicant missed direct coordination with local employers.

 A labor market assessment or employer survey was not presented adequately.







Ranking Criteria Review (Cont.) Community Need (45 points total) Labor Market Demand (20 points)

- There was no evidence of direct surveys or polling of local employers.
- Job data by employment type sector concentration from earlier years is not current.
- There was no evidence of contact with potential employers.





Ranking Criteria Review Training Program Description (25 points total)

Courses in core curriculum were not eligible for funding.

- There was no mention of training facilities, especially access to facilities and transportation option.
- ✓ There was no mention if students will be burdened with any fees.





Ranking Criteria Review Budget (15 points total)







Ranking Criteria Review Budget (15 points total)

✓ Fringe benefit cost was high.

 Mileage costs were stated but without substantive detail, more is needed to justify mileage costs.

✓ Personnel costs were too high.

 Travel to National Brownfields Conferences and JT conferences were not included in the budget.





Ranking Criteria Review (Cont.) Budget (15 points total)

✓ Budget numbers did not add up.

 The applicant made no distinction between EPA funds and non-EPA funds.

✓ Licensing/certificate fees problems.

 Expenditures were not explained as to whether costs exist and what is covered or not covered by EPA funds.





Ranking Criteria Review Program Structure, Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (50 points total) Outputs and Outcomes (10 points)

✓ No milestone or timeline was provided.

- Outputs and outcomes were not clear and did not easily link back to the proposed work plan.
- ✓ There was no discussion regarding retention and attrition.
- Applicant failed to discuss how it would handle retention and attrition though case management.





Ranking Criteria Review (Cont.) Program Structure, Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (50 points total) Outputs and Outcomes (10 points)

The proposal did not seem to have a targeted placement goal.

✓ The applicant did not address tracking program graduates.

✓ Student retention was not addressed.





Ranking Criteria Review Program Structure, Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (50 points total) Recruitment and Screening (20 points)

 Physical or vision screening associated with CDLs, or equipment operation was not discussed in detail, only mentioned.

Literacy screening requirements were not discussed.

✓ There was no mention if drug testing is part of the screening process.





Ranking Criteria Review Program Structure, Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (50 points total) Program Support (15 points)

- There were no letters of support and commitment from partners and governmental organizations for the Brownfields Job Training program.
- There were no letters from community organizations encouraging and promoting local Brownfields Job Training Program.





Ranking Criteria Review Program Structure, Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (50 points total) Program Sustainability (5 points)

Program Sustainability after grant ends was not discussed.







Ranking Criteria Review Partnerships (35 points total) Collaboration with Environmental Entities (5 points)

✓ No mention of Federal, State or Local Brownfields activities.







Ranking Criteria Review Partnerships (35 points total) Collaboration with Job Readiness/Life Skills (5 points)

✓ No mention of working with the local workforce investment board.







Ranking Criteria Review Partnerships (35 points total) Collaboration with Community (10 points)

- No engagement with community faith-based or nonprofit organizations.
- Applicant did not list community organizations





Ranking Criteria Review Partnerships (35 points total) Collaboration with Employers (15 points)

✓ There were no letters of support from employers.

Employers' commitment to hire was not discussed.

✓ No placement goals were stated.





Ranking Criteria Review Leveraging (5 points total)

✓ Did not mention leveraging.

 No discussion of in-kind commitments with and estimated assigned monetary value.

 Very little leveraging was presented with no discussion of plans for how applicant will generate additional funding.





Ranking Criteria Review Programmatic Capability (25 points total) Grant Management System (5 points)

✓ There was no evidence of grant management capability.







Ranking Criteria Review Programmatic Capability (25 points total) Organizational Experience (10 points)

✓ The applicant did not discuss or include an organizational structure.







Ranking Criteria Review Programmatic Capability (30 points total) Past Performance and Accomplishments (10 points)

✓ Little evidence was provided showing experience or capability.

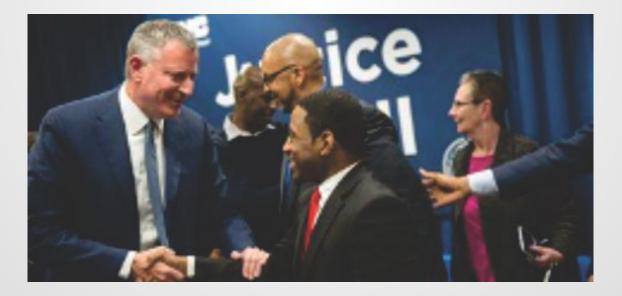






Attachments

- ✓ Applicant failed to provide letters of support from key partners.
- Letters of Support do not state roles and/or commitments, only support.







Q&A / FAQ - Tips on Writing a Comprehensive EPA Job Training Application

Q&A or Frequently Asked Questions



Please also begin providing feedback on todays event:







Critical Points to Remember

- □ Application Deadline August 15, 2024.
- Costs associated with the application process are not recoverable under the grant.
- □ Carefully read the RFA in its entirety.
- Select a Project Manager to oversee all content and deliverables.
- □ Follow all of the RFA guidelines.
- Respond to all sections and questions.
- Review your application. Is it understandable? Is it complete?
- □ Have TAB review your application.
- Submit the application on time (or preferably, several days early)!





RESOURCES - Tips on Writing a Comprehensive EPA Job Training Application

EPA Brownfields Job Training Coordinators



Threshold Criteria Questions

TAB Regional Directors



Technical Assistance / Review of Draft Applications





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Resources -- EPA JT Coordinator POCs

EPA Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT) William "Bill" Lariviere: Phone: (617) 918-1231: e-mail: <u>lariviere.william@epa.gov</u>

EPA Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, VI) Schenine Mitchell: Phone: (212) 637-3283: e-mail: <u>mitchell.schenine@epa.gov</u>

EPA Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV) Nancy Shannon: Phone: (215) 814-3175: e-mail: <u>Shannon.Nancy@epa.gov</u>

EPA Region 4 (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN) Olga Perry: Phone: (404) 562-8534: e-mail: <u>perry.olga@epa.gov</u>

EPA Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI) Linda Morgan: Phone: (312) 886-4747: e-mail: morgan.linda@epa.gov





Resources -- EPA JT Coordinator POCs (Cont.)

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EPA Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, NE) Alma Moreno Lahm: Phone: (913) 551-7380: e-mail: moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov

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EPA Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA) Angel Ip: Phone: (206) 553-1673: e-mail: <u>ip.angel@epa.gov</u>





Resources -- Regional TAB POCs

Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT) University of Connecticut Randi Mendes: <u>randi.mendes@uconn.edu</u>

Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, and VI) New Jersey Institute of Technology Sean Vroom: svroom@njit.edu

Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, and WV) West Virginia University Carrie Stanton: <u>carrie.staton@mail.wvu.edu</u>

Region 4 (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN) International City/County Management Association Chris Harrell: <u>charrell@icma.org</u>, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) Sean Vroom: <u>svroom@njit.edu</u>, New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)

Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, and WI) Kansas State University Blase Leven: <u>jt-tab@ksu.edu</u>





Resources -- Regional TAB POCs (Cont.)

Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, and TX) Kansas State University Blase Leven: <u>jt-tab@ksu.edu</u>

Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, and NE) Kansas State University Blase Leven: <u>jt-tab@ksu.edu</u>

Region 8 (UT, MT, WY, CO, ND and SD) Kansas State University Blase Leven: <u>jt-tab@ksu.edu</u>

Region 9 (AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, and GU) Center for Creative Land Recycling Claire Weston: claire.weston@cclr.org

Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, and WA) Center for Creative Land Recycling Claire Weston: claire.weston@cclr.org





We Want to Hear Your Feedback

Please provide feedback on today's event:

1. Click this link <u>https://memphis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0qQoHTqEpMuAQvk</u>

2. Click the link provided in the chat box

3. Scan this QR image from your smartphone







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THANK YOU.





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- Download this <u>Webinar and Companion Text</u>
- Request review of your draft application by TAB: Give 1 week notice; drafts received on or before Aug 7th will be reviewed and returned within several days
- Visit us at our website: <u>KSUTAB.ORG/Job-Training</u>





Tips on Writing a Competitive EPA Job Training Proposal



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