



Brownfields Job Training Programs Best Practices Guide

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Cover photos, clockwise from the top: Region 2 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training, Future Build Cohort 26, Job Training Richmond, and Richmond Build Training

Introduction

This guide presents best practices and strategies used by successful grantees to develop sustainable BFJT programs¹.

About the EPA’s Brownfields Job Training Program

The [EPA Brownfields Job Training \(BFJT\) Program](#) facilitates the recruitment, training, and placement of unemployed and under-employed residents of solid and hazardous waste-impacted communities by providing them with the skills needed to obtain full-time, sustainable employment. The program promotes the facilitation of activities related to assessment, cleanup, community involvement, or preparation of contaminated sites, including brownfields, for reuse, while simultaneously building a local workforce with the skills needed to perform remediation work that is supportive of environmental protection, health, and safety. Brownfields are properties in which the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants may complicate redevelopment efforts. A critical part of EPA’s BFJT program is to further sustainable community and land revitalization by ensuring that all residents living in communities affected by economic disinvestment, health disparities, and disproportionate and adverse exposures to environmental contamination, which may include low-income, Tribal, and Indigenous communities, have an opportunity to reap the benefits of revitalization and environmental cleanup.

By equipping local workers with the skills needed for environmental cleanup and remediation jobs, the program not only fosters economic growth but also ensures that those most impacted by brownfield sites have access to sustainable employment opportunities. Through partnerships with local organizations, workforce agencies, and educational institutions, BFJT grantees provide technical training in areas such as hazardous waste removal and environmental health and safety.

EPA BFJT Grants

Workforce training for brownfields assessment and cleanup activities can be funded by an [EPA BFJT grant](#). This grant provides funding to attract, train, and retain a skilled local workforce. Unemployed and under-employed residents of communities impacted by a variety of waste facilities, blighted properties, and contaminated sites are prioritized throughout the training program and receive job placement support after graduation.

Typically, EPA BFJT grants are used in conjunction with already established workforce development programs. Funds can be used to create or expand the environmental health training curricula and certification opportunities.

Training programs funded by EPA BFJT grants provide graduates with the opportunity to obtain environmental jobs that contractors may otherwise fill from outside the affected community. See the EPA’s BFJT Program website for a [list of courses that are eligible and ineligible](#) to deliver with EPA BFJT grant funding.

¹ Links to external, non-EPA resources are provided for informational purposes only. References to external resources do not constitute an endorsement by EPA, and EPA does not take any responsibility for their content. Additionally, EPA does not endorse the products, services or enterprises of non-federal entities.



Students from Future Build Cohort 26 Participating in Hands-on Training.

EPA BFJT grants help residents take advantage of jobs across a spectrum of brownfield related activities, including the assessment, cleanup, remediation, and site preparation for the revitalization of brownfields. This can involve the assessment and cleanup of solid and hazardous waste, chemical risk management, stormwater management relating to site cleanup, site preparation for green infrastructure installation, vulnerability assessment, and contamination mitigation planning.

Program History

The EPA's BFJT Program was established in 1998 to support unemployed and under-employed residents in communities affected by brownfields. Over the years, the BFJT Program has evolved to meet the changing needs of the environmental sector, playing a crucial role in revitalizing communities by creating a skilled workforce for site remediation and redevelopment. In FY 1998, EPA funded 10 grants BFJT Grants totaling approximately \$2.1 million, and in FY 2025, EPA funded 16 BFJT Grants for approximately \$7.7 million. As of March 2024, the EPA has funded 414 BFJT Grants totaling approximately \$105.5 million, enabling approximately 21,700 individuals to complete training, with over 16,200 securing employment in the environmental field—achieving a strong cumulative placement rate of 75%.

By prioritizing local hiring and workforce development, the program ensures that brownfield redevelopment directly benefits the communities it serves. The program has helped thousands gain certifications and secure employment, often in their own neighborhoods, while also adapting to industry trends by integrating emerging environmental technologies and expanding training opportunities. With an increasing average starting wage—approximately \$21 an hour over the past five years—the program reinforces its commitment to both economic and environmental sustainability, ensuring long-term benefits for workers and communities alike.

Using this Guide

This guide presents best practices and strategies used by successful grantees to develop sustainable BFJT programs. Effective partnering, leveraging, community and labor market assessments (LMA), curriculum development, student recruitment, participant retention,

placement, and tracking are just a few of the many essential activities that program developers must address to ensure long-term program success and positive impact.

Due to the structure and limited funding of the EPA's BFJT grants, it is critical that local organizations develop efficient, leveraged programs with dual objectives of maximizing participant placement and becoming sustainable workforce development programs.

Technical Assistance

- The EPA provides a wide array of technical assistance resources aimed at supporting BFJT applicants and grantees. These resources are designed to help organizations create impactful environmental job training programs. Among these offerings are [Webinars](#) and [Professional Learning Community \(PLC\) Calls](#), hosted by EPA and its technical assistance providers. These regular sessions serve to share best practices, clarify the latest Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), and support the development of successful job training programs. Recordings of past webinars and information on upcoming sessions are available to assist both current grantees and prospective applicants and support the development of successful job training programs.
- For specific inquiries or to request additional technical assistance, organizations can use the EPA BFJT's [inquiry form](#) to connect with subject matter experts who can provide tailored support at no cost.

The [EPA Brownfields Program website](#), and specifically the [BFJT web pages](#), also provide several additional resources for those interested in starting or growing a BFJT program, including:

- [Eligible Types of Training](#)
- [EPA Brownfields Grant Fact Sheet Search](#)

These resources aim to equip BFJT grantees and applicants with the knowledge and tools necessary to establish and maintain effective environmental job training programs, ultimately fostering workforce development and environmental stewardship in communities impacted by brownfield sites.

Key Components of a BFJT Program

BFJT Program design typically includes the following key elements:

- Community and Labor Market Assessments.
- Building partnerships.
- Leveraging additional support.
- Student Recruitment, Screening, and Retention.
- Developing a Curriculum
- Student Placement and Tracking
- Program Sustainability

Community and Labor Market Assessments

Thorough and timely community and labor market assessments are two of the most important components of a successful BFJT application and program. When programs fail to meet their intended goals, it is often because the initial community and labor market assessment did not adequately identify community, student, and employer needs. Careful selection of a target community, combined with an assessment of employer needs, should be the first steps in BFJT program development.

There are two critical questions when assessing the viability of a community for a brownfields job training program:

1. Are prospective participants, community residents, and governmental organizations willing to support a BFJT program?
2. Is there sufficient employer interest in considering BFJT graduates for employment?

Properly conducting a community and labor market assessment will answer these questions and also help guide recruitment, training, retention, placement, and partnership strategies throughout the life of a BFJT program.

Note

It is important to update community and labor market assessments on a regular basis. When program graduate placement rates begin to drop, employers' needs begin to shift, or community interest begins to dwindle, an updated assessment can realign the program to meet changing industry and community needs.

Community Assessment and Selection of a Target Community

Comprehensive community assessments include several activities, such as:

- Identifying communities associated with the assessment and cleanup of brownfields.
- Assessing neighborhoods with consideration to the lack of employment opportunities, the lack of training opportunities, possible sustainable community revitalization issues, evidence of strong community pride, and interest in a job training program.
- Identifying community stakeholders interested in environmental assessment, cleanup, and remediation.
- Locating community organizations willing to participate in and/or promote a BFJT program.
- Identifying leveraging opportunities for the selected target community.
- Identifying potential training locations and access to transportation options for both training and employment purposes.
- Identifying special factors and designations attributed to the selected target community.

After addressing community issues and interest, it is important to identify prospective student applicants, which will influence program services and offerings. Successful BFJT programs recruit and graduate students with varying backgrounds, including:

- Women.
- Ex-offenders.
- Veterans.
- Military spouses.
- Individuals with disabilities.

Most job training programs provide training to applicants from a broad range of backgrounds. When defining the proposed target applicant pool and recruiting participants from a variety of backgrounds, it is important to consider classroom disparities (related to differences in educational experiences, cultural differences, access to resources, socioeconomic factors, and teaching styles and expectations), as these can become an issue if unaddressed.



Participants in the Richmond Build Brownfields Job Training Program.

Conducting Community Assessments

Community assessments can be initiated by researching potential stakeholders, community leaders, and neighborhood organizations in the proposed target community. Information and networking opportunities can be found with local government offices, elected officials, and organizations, including:

- Community and Economic Development Offices: Request contact information and introductions to community groups in target communities. See the [Economic Development Directory](#) hosted by the U.S. Economic Development Administration.
- Environmental and Health Offices: Request contact information and introductions to [Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup](#) (MARC) grantees and to redevelopment and associated cleanup project managers. Past MARC grantees can be identified using EPA's [Brownfields Grant Fact Sheet](#) search tool. Organizations who apply for a MARC grants are evaluated based on their relationships with workforce development programs and community partnerships, so most MARC grantees will have already researched potential target communities, demographics, and environmental and special considerations.
- Faith-Based and Civic Organizations: Request contact information for possible neighborhood stakeholders and partners.
- Land banks: [Land banks](#) play a critical role in brownfield redevelopment by acquiring and managing tax-delinquent, abandoned, or underutilized properties, many of which may be contaminated or require environmental remediation before reuse. By working with land banks, BFJT programs can identify key sites where revitalization efforts are planned, ensuring that training aligns with local redevelopment needs. These partnerships can also help in selecting target communities for training by prioritizing areas with high potential for economic revitalization and job creation.

Special factors that affect community residents such as enterprise zones, redevelopment zones, community development projects, plant closures, chemical spills or accidents, should also be considered as part of the community assessment.

Successful EPA BFJT applications thoroughly describe the community need and why the target area was selected for a BFJT program. EPA BFJT applicants should provide a detailed description of their community, including the degree to which a community is impacted by a variety of waste facilities, blighted properties, contaminated sites, and other environmental issues.

Environmental, public health, and employment/workforce challenges that negatively impact the target community should also be explained. EPA BFJT applications should provide demographic statistics for the target area, including a comparison to the larger local, state, and/or national averages and the degree to which the statistics for the target area demonstrate that the project will benefit communities in the target area.

Labor Market Assessments

A labor market assessment (LMA) is a broad term that includes reviewing general economic development data, detailed surveys of organizations, neighborhood studies, and one-on-one interviews with potential employers. An LMA is a critical first step in developing long-term relationships with potential employers. Comprehensive LMAs are essential because they address several key issues, such as:

- The demand for workers in specific locations.
- The skills and certifications associated with available jobs.
- Education and training requirements associated with available jobs.
- Restrictions and constraints associated with entry into available jobs.
- Organizations that need graduates with BFJT skills and certifications.
- Information and data for the reduction or expansion of the environmental workforce in a specific community.
- Future workforce expansion plans for specific projects.
- Local, regional, and national employment opportunities.
- If travel or relocation is required for available jobs.

When conducted properly, LMA results can guide critical BFJT program activity decisions, including:

- Recruitment and screening of applicants.
- Curriculum and certificate offerings.
- Additional skills that will facilitate employment.
- Timing of training schedules to maximize placement opportunities.

A proper LMA also helps identify potential partnerships, which may include:

- Program supporters.
- Advisory board members and participants.
- Leveraged resources.
- Potential guest speakers and student mentors.
- Potential employers.
- Potential new partners.
- New funding opportunities.
- Pathways to legislative or other governmental support.

Conducting Labor Market Assessments

Many types of employers look for BFJT graduates with environmental remediation skills and certifications, including:

- Local unions.
- Local government organizations.
- Manpower and temporary staffing firms.

- Consultants (remediation and service providers).
- Manufacturing firms.
- Chemical and refining facilities.
- Municipal facilities and utilities.
- Painting companies.
- Construction and deconstruction companies.
- Transportation and material handling operations.
- Scrap, recycling, storage, and landfill operations.
- Current city and municipal contractors.

Professional directories and internet searches can be used to identify potential employers, such as labor unions, consultants, service providers, and large manufacturing firms. Temporary staffing and manpower organizations may have an interest in environmental technicians.

In addition to guiding training needs, the curriculum, and graduate placement, LMAs provide several other benefits, such as:

- Promoting business and industry ownership in the BFJT program.
- Assuring employers that graduates can meet their job criteria and performance standards.
- Serving as a public relations tool to show the effectiveness of partnerships between business and BFJT programs.
- Providing a source of workers for contractors negotiating first-hire and project labor agreements, when applicable.

In the context of BFJT programs, an LMA is usually a local effort that is essential to determine the extent and type of education and training needs of local employers. The following activities should be conducted to complete a comprehensive LMA:

1. Search for existing LMAs in and around your target community that are specific to environmental employers and industrial firms. These reports will provide general information about the local labor market.
 - Identify potential employers, manufacturing firms, and temporary staffing and manpower organizations.
 - Use EPA's [Cleanups in My Community](#) screening tool. This database provides detailed information on potential environmental remediation sites and remediation activity.
 - Use the [Brownfields Grant Fact Sheet Search](#) tool, which provides information on current and past Brownfields grantees.
2. Distribute a survey to potential employers².
 - The survey can be shared with the entire relevant employer population or a representative sample.

²Because of the federal Paperwork Reduction Act, BFJT grant funds cannot be used to produce or distribute surveys to 10 or more entities, unless a grantee obtains an Information Collection Request from the Office of Management and Budget or meets the requirements for a generic ICR. However, grant funds may be used to analyze survey results.

- Include an explanation about the purpose of the survey alongside the survey link.
 - Note that the return rate for surveys is usually low and identifying appropriate employers to target can be time-consuming. Because of this, surveying efforts may be best handled by partners that can provide appropriate personnel contacts and administrative support. Adding an incentive for those who submit completed surveys can also increase submission rates.
3. When possible, convene a focus group of potential employers and local contractors to collect information through a strategic group interview.
- Provides a smaller, more intimate group.
 - Easier to plan.
 - Information gathered tends to be more detailed than a survey.
 - Creates buy-in for potential projects and networking for finding more contacts for surveys.
 - It can often be difficult to find a date and time that works for everyone invited.
4. Conduct one-on-one, in-person meetings with individual employers.
- In-person meetings with individual employers demonstrate commitment to the BFJT program.
 - Can often result in leveraging opportunities.

Issues to discuss with potential employers include:

- Type and size of the organization as well as its products and/or services.
- Wages for entry-level personnel.
- Minimum level of education, skills, knowledge, and certifications that are required for employment.
- Restrictions or constraints that would prevent employment, including criminal backgrounds.
- Required work experience for employment.
- Employer's interest in/ability to provide leverageable resources.
- Referrals to other organizations that may also be interested in hiring well-trained graduates.

It is important to leave discussions with potential employers with an action plan, commitment, or closure. Consider inviting potential employers to participate on an advisory board and to attend classes, graduations, and social events.

Successful BFJT applications thoroughly describe:

- How the labor market assessment was conducted using current data and the extent to which the methods used to conduct the assessment were sound.
- The demand for an environmental workforce in the proposed target area and/or region.
- How the results of the labor market assessment were incorporated into the proposed curriculum, including the extent to which trainings will meet the labor market demands.

Building Partnerships

BFJT programs are required to establish partnerships that supplement and leverage available federal support. Partnerships contribute to virtually every job training program activity, including applicant recruitment, screening, student services, training, and placement. Additionally, partners can provide technical, in-kind, and financial assistance that contribute to the long-term sustainability of the program.

BFJT program partnerships can include combinations of three types of partners:

- **Fiscal** partners (exchange of money).
- **In-kind** partners (goods and services are provided without charge).
- **Client** partners (stakeholders including the community, students, and employers).

Fiscal Partners

Fiscal partners may include federal, state, county, municipal, and community organizations, suppliers, and contractors. BFJT programs operate using a variety of fiscal relationships—some partners provide funds to assist in operations, while others provide goods and services to assist in program delivery.

Some partners may provide financial support with little or no active involvement or control over program operations. Others may require detailed progress reporting, fulfillment of promised deliverables, or specify restrictions on the use of funds. For example, the BFJT program is a cooperative agreement in which grantees work as partners in cooperation with the EPA. Each partner relationship is unique and has individual terms, expectations, and deliverables.

Fiscal partners may not always provide a fixed amount of support. For example, agreements with employment services may provide funds on a pay-for-services basis. Terms of the agreement may provide direct funding for training, or students may receive vouchers to be used in an authorized training program. Contractors and consultants may also be hired on an as-needed basis to deliver training or provide equipment or facilities.

The common aspect of all fiscal partner relationships is that money is exchanged for goods and services provided. When money is exchanged, it must be tracked and conform to specific rules, which can vary from contributor to vendor to contractor. When the money exchanged involves federal, state, or local funds, then additional special subrecipient, subcontracting, and purchasing regulations apply. Understanding these regulations is essential and can often involve a specific approval process. Federal administrative rules apply when EPA grant money is involved, but funds from other sources can be used in any manner that is acceptable to the funding organization and the grantee's internal policies.

Note

More information about federal programs and federal tax incentives that could support brownfields efforts is included in EPA's [2023 Brownfields Federal Programs Guide](#).

Subrecipients

When federal grant funds involve the use of subrecipients, strict administrative rules apply. Subrecipients are extensions of the primary BFJT grantee, even though they are independent nonprofit or governmental organizations. Subrecipients must comply with the same EPA federal regulation for which the BFJT grantee is responsible and are subject to audits, allowable and non-allowable costs, and contracting procedures. The primary grantee is held responsible for compliance by subrecipients.



Future Build Cohort 26 Partnership-Building Efforts.

Forming a Coalition

As of 2024³, BFJT applicants may propose forming a coalition to carry out their program. Applying as a coalition provides a unique opportunity to maximize the impact of the applicant program through collaboration and shared resources. By forming a coalition, multiple organizations can combine their expertise to address environmental, economic, and workforce challenges more holistically. Coalitions are often better positioned to design tailored training programs that meet the diverse needs of the community by leveraging the strengths and networks of each partner. City and county governments can also benefit from forming a coalition, as this approach can expand the jurisdiction of the target area. By doing so, they can create a more integrated strategy for job training and placement, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of their initiatives.

This collaborative approach can allow for broader outreach to communities that are impacted by a variety of waste facilities, blighted properties, contaminated sites, and other environmental issues, stronger partnerships with local employers, and increased capacity to address specific workforce needs in the community. This approach can also aid in fostering stronger connections with local employers, ensuring that the training aligns with in-demand skills and leads to higher rates of job placement for participants. Coalitions are often viewed as demonstrating a deeper commitment to the long-term success of the program, as they reflect the collective investment of stakeholders in the community's economic and environmental revitalization. Additionally, applying as a coalition

³ See the [BFJT Fiscal Year 2025 NOFO](#).

can facilitate the recruitment, training, and placement of students in environmental jobs, especially in rural areas where the geographic area is larger.

A BFJT coalition is comprised of one “lead” eligible entity that partners with one or more non-lead eligible entities. The lead eligible entity submits an application on behalf of the coalition members, who act as subrecipients receiving subawards. The non-lead coalition members may not be an agency or instrumentality of, or be affiliated with, the lead member (for example, a county and the redevelopment authority of the same county); except for coalitions in which the state is the lead and one of the members is a regional council or regional commission that is created by a state legislature through a charter or another official action.

If selected, the lead entity will serve as the point of contact for the other coalition members. The lead entity is the grant recipient and must administer the grant and be accountable to EPA for effectively carrying out the scope of work and the proper financial management of the grant. BFJT coalition recipients are required to have a [Memorandum of Agreement \(MOA\)](#) documenting the coalition’s process in place prior to the expenditure of any funds that are awarded.

Note

*Non-lead members of a coalition **cannot** have an open BFJT Grant. Coalition members may not be members of other Training Coalition Grant applications, nor may coalition members submit a Brownfields Job Training Grant application as an individual applicant. It is important that the lead coalition member confirms all this with each non-lead member **prior** to applying.*

Contractors and Consultants

Contract partners are organizations (not including subrecipients) that are paid for goods or services. Contract partners may include suppliers, trainers, consultants, and other vendors. When EPA grant funds are used for goods or services, specific procurement procedures must be followed. BFJT grantees are required to purchase goods and services in accordance with the minimum EPA [competitive procurement requirements](#), even if their own procurement system has less stringent standards. Some organizations may have more stringent purchasing requirements than required by EPA. Since obtaining competitive bids and administering the procurement process takes time to implement, it is important to plan for and start the requisition process early.

Generally, EPA will not allow sole source procurement contracts for professional services or goods above \$10,000 that are available in the commercial marketplace. At a minimum, the procurement process must include a public competition with at least three participating bidders. Awards do not necessarily need to go to the lowest bidder, but a justification needs to be documented to support the final award.

It is not necessary to wait until the award of a BFJT grant to begin the [procurement process](#). In fact, it is helpful to have trainers and consultants in place so that they can be included in the BFJT grant application. In this situation, any Request for Proposals (RFP) for procurements should include a statement that the award is contingent on receiving EPA funding and subsequent approval of the budget and work plan.

During the planning stages of a new program, it is recommended that program administrators obtain access to accounting and auditing staff or counsel who have experience working with fiscal partnership agreements.

In-Kind Partners

Not all support requires the exchange of money. In-kind partners, also called leveraged partners, provide goods and services at no cost to the program. Organizations and individuals may offer materials, classroom space, or services, which can be just as valuable as funders, paid suppliers, or paid contractors. In-kind assistance comes in many forms and may include:

- Facilities.
- Equipment.
- Recruitment and screening assistance.
- Instructional materials.
- Instructional assistance.
- Student support (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing assistance).
- Placement assistance.
- Staffing.
- Marketing/public relations.
- Consultation and advice.

In-kind partners may require formal partnership agreements that are similar to those of fiscal partners. For example, donated property may have audit controls that require tagging and tracking. In-kind partners may require progress reports and site visits, or they may choose to provide support on an informal, unrestricted basis. A good practice is to tag and track all donated material and generate regular progress reports regardless of grant requirements. As with fiscal partners, each in-kind partnership is unique.

Sharing facilities is an excellent way to stretch BFJT program dollars. Some organizations may see a public relations benefit by allowing BFJT programs to use meeting rooms, laboratories, hazardous materials practice facilities, or classrooms. If these facilities happen to be located on the grounds of a potential employer, the benefit can be two-fold.

In-kind staff support is a common and valuable source of assistance for BFJT programs. An employee from a partnering organization may be “loaned” as an advisor on marketing, public relations, management, or other task areas where their expertise would be helpful. Terms detailing the loan of individuals are usually more formal than with other contributions because of issues such as employee compensation, benefits, and indemnification.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a common approach for providing guidelines on in-kind partnerships, especially among governmental organizations. An MOU summarizes the nature of the partnership and states the expectations of each party.

Note

As provided in 2 CFR § 200.1, voluntary committed cost sharing is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project when a cost share is not required. Voluntary cost share is not accepted under BFJT grant competitions, and in-kind services should not be provided as a voluntary cost share in BFJT grant application budgets.

Client Partners

Training and employment organizations often refer to their students as clients. Expanding the definition, BFJT programs serve additional client populations, including community stakeholders, students, and prospective employers, each of which are equally important.

Agreements with client partners may be formal or informal. For example, some programs ask student recruits to sign a contract or partnership agreement before participating in the program. Such an agreement identifies expectations for both the client and service provider. In some cases, a violation of this contract may be used as a basis for removing an individual from the program.

Partnership agreements with prospective employers are often less formal and less binding. Employer partnerships are commitments with conditions to hire or to consider hiring qualified students upon their graduation. It is often difficult for employers to guarantee that there will be work when students graduate, so a firm commitment may not always be feasible. However, it may be possible to get a commitment from employers stating that BFJT graduates will be given first preference in hiring. BFJT programs should maintain flexibility when forming prospective employer partnerships, and potential employers should be invited to attend BFJT events.

Maintaining community support for job training programs is an essential part of the recruitment process. Community stakeholders should be treated as clients. While their support is informal and not binding, community engagement is critical to finding the best program participants and raising the community's awareness of the value of the BFJT program.

Most successful BFJT programs will use all the partnership approaches described above. It is important to use a management system to capture and track all the contributions made by various partnerships.

Leveraging Additional Support

By design, grantees receiving EPA funds through BFJT grants are encouraged to leverage additional support to fulfill program goals. BFJT grant awards are limited (\$500,000 for five years as of the Fiscal Year 2025 NOFO) and must only be used for specific training targeted to environmental assessment, cleanup, and remediation. Support for life skills training, remedial education, student assistance, and other technical skills necessary for long-term program success are not eligible activities under BFJT grants and must come from leveraged partners.

BFJT grants funds must only be used for specific training targeted to environmental assessment, cleanup, and remediation. Support for other skills that are necessary for long-term program success must come from leveraged partners.

BFJT programs need additional support from a variety of sources to fulfill the commitments and program goals described in their grant applications. Program coordinators consistently stress the importance of tapping into supplemental resources and services that are already available in their community, many of which are supported by federal, state, and local funding.

Leveraged partners may provide assistance in many forms, such as:

- Supplemental and matching grants that expand program offerings.
- Recruitment, screening, student support, and placement services from governmental employment agencies.
- In-kind contributions of staff and volunteers for day-to-day operation.
- Training services from education, municipal, and private sector partners.
- Equipment and facilities from education, municipal, and private sector partners.
- Services and support from other existing grant and assistance programs.

Because EPA funds are limited to environmental assessment, cleanup, and remediation training, programs often engage with organizations such as community colleges, community assistance programs, and labor organizations to leverage other types of training and skills, such as:

- Remedial education.
- Life skills training.
- Job readiness training.
- Construction skills.
- Ex-offender support.
- Drug testing services.⁴
- Veterans Affairs (VA) assistance.
- Student support including equipment, transportation, and childcare.
- Student recruitment and placement.

Successful BFJT applications need to include a detailed plan to leverage additional funds and resources beyond the BFJT grant funds awarded by EPA to support the proposed project activities and describe the extent to which these funds and resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. It is important to note which leveraged commitments for monetary services and resources have already been committed to the proposed BFJT program. If commitments are not yet made, the likelihood that the commitments will materialize during the project should be described.

Federal Support

Examples of agencies with grant programs associated with workforce development and job training include:

- [HAZMAT Safety & Training, Worker Training Program](#) from the National Institutes for Health, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.
- [Employment and Training Administration](#) in the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

⁴ As of the FY2025 NOFO, costs associated with drug testing directly related to the training and/or the placement of graduates in environmental work are an eligible use of BFJT grant funds. However, it may still be beneficial to partner with support organizations to implement.

- [Susan Harwood Training Grant Program](#) and other competitive grant opportunities from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration.

Examples of agencies that provide resources associated with workforce development and job training include:

- [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Online Curricula Database](#) is an online catalog of career and training opportunities, searchable by course category, program, grantee, training provider, and language.
- [U.S. Department of Transportation Workforce Development](#) supports initiatives to develop the transportation workforce.
- [U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education](#) administers programs related to adult education and literacy, career and technical education, and community colleges.
- [U.S. Department of Labor, Workforce Investment](#) provides information, advice, job search assistance, supportive services, and training for in-demand industries and occupations.

While many DOL programs are administered nationally, in most cases, employment and workforce development assistance is provided to states for administration. Accordingly, much of the responsibility for workforce development and training goes to local [Workforce Investment Boards](#) (WIBs), also called Workforce Development Boards. WIBs determine how resources will be directed on a local level. For this reason, WIBs across the country can vary greatly in the programs and type of assistance they provide. It is important to learn what services and programs the local WIB can provide and how supportive they will be in leveraging BFJT activities.

[CareerOneStop Centers](#) are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers. CareerOneStop Centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and other employment-related services. The CareerOneStop Center system is coordinated by the [DOL Employment and Training Administration](#). CareerOneStop Centers are important to BFJT programs because they can recruit, screen, and test prospective applicants. However, it is important that BFJT program staff use CareerOneStop Center assistance only as a supplement to their own internal screening and testing processes.

BFJT program staff should use CareerOneStop Center assistance *only as a supplement* to their own internal screening and testing processes.

The [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences \(NIEHS\) Worker Training Program \(WTP\)](#) helps prevent work-related harm by assisting in the training of workers to protect themselves and their communities from exposure to hazardous materials. NIEHS provides training grants through the [Environmental Career Worker Training Program \(ECWTP\)](#). The [NIEHS National Clearinghouse](#) also provides technical information and curriculum related to safety and health training.

Some BFJT grantees may also receive funding from both the EPA and NIEHS training programs. In these situations, the programs must demonstrate how the services proposed in their BFJT grant application will complement, but not duplicate, those of the NIEHS training program (i.e., different target audience, such as a different age group, differing types of certification training, etc.). The EPA and NIEHS worker training programs are fundamentally different in that the EPA program focuses on training related to environmental assessment,

Funding from EPA and NIEHS training programs cannot overlap in scope or target communities.

cleanup, and remediation, and the NIEHS program focuses on worker health and safety. It is important to note that, while these two programs provide similar training, they cannot overlap in scope or target communities. As long as these conditions are met, NIEHS support can complement BFJT programs through the cost sharing of administration, curriculum, and facilities.

[AmeriCorps](#) is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and under its [Volunteers in Service to America \(VISTA\)](#) program, members serve full-time for a year in nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and faith-based groups. AmeriCorps also has a [Retired and Senior Volunteer Program \(RSVP\)](#), a network of national service programs that provide older Americans an opportunity to apply their life experience to meeting community needs. RSVP volunteers serve in a diverse range of nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and faith-based groups. While AmeriCorps and Senior Corps may have costs associated with them, they can be an excellent source of experienced professionals that can be leveraged for BFJT programs.

The U.S. [Department of Housing and Urban Development's \(HUD\) Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\) Forecast](#) lists competitive grant opportunities, which include some from the Lead-Based Paint & Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Grant Programs, which can cover lead and asbestos remediation and training. HUD also provides assistance through block grants to states and communities. It is important to become familiar with state and local housing authorities, especially for BFJT programs that focus on lead and/or asbestos remediation.

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#), the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#), and other federal agencies also operate programs that may be useful to BFJT programs. They occasionally award individual grants, but most funds are administered through larger programs that provide a multitude of services on the local level. In addition to assistance for families, HHS also works with disabled and veteran populations. Many BFJT programs have recruited participants from these programs.

Local Business, Foundations, Non-Profit and Labor Organizations, and Community Development Corporations

Private companies can provide leveraged support by serving on advisory boards and recommending and/or conducting portions of the environmental training. Construction, demolition, scrap, and recycling firms often recognize the value of BFJT programs and donate facilities and equipment. Additionally, local environmental, engineering, and remediation firms that work on brownfields sites have a vested interest in hiring trained and certified BFJT graduates.

Private donations are also a popular way to support community projects including environmental training and education programs. Online fundraising entities can provide organizations and individuals with a mechanism for funding programs and projects of their choosing.

Family foundations also should not be overlooked. Locally, many non-governmental organizations, trusts, charities, and foundations provide resources to community organizations. [GuideStar](#)[®], for example, lists over 20,000 nonprofit organizations and charities associated with environmental conservation and education.

In most cases, BFJT programs that partner with established nonprofit organizations have an easier time developing leveraged partnerships. Those interested in starting a BFJT program should examine existing community programs in the target community. Many are already working with residents and provide life skills training, participant recruitment, screening, transportation, childcare, and placement services.

Organized labor organizations are also important to BFJT programs, especially in localities with large federal projects or where organized labor has a large representation in the community. Organized labor can provide leveraged assistance by establishing pre-apprenticeship programs and pathways to union employment. Union locals may provide use of facilities and equipment, recognizing the BFJT program as a feeder organization for union employment.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are a type of nonprofit organization formed by residents, small business owners, congregations, and other local stakeholders to revitalize low- and/or moderate-income communities. CDCs typically produce affordable housing and create jobs for community residents. Because of their experience in grant submission and administration, leveraging with a CDC as the lead grantee can be a good strategy for less experienced organizations.

State and Local Government Support

BFJT programs that are interested in accessing state or local funds should investigate how funds are distributed in their community. Sources of state and local government support may include legislative appropriations, inclusion in federal block grants, or distribution of environmental fines and judgments against polluters. Discretionary funds may also exist for environmental training depending on state and local community priorities. Available assistance can be identified by contacting the mayor's office in the departments of economic and/or community development, human resources, or environmental quality. Often, existing programs can provide services and assistance that leverage activities in BFJT programs.

Community designations (e.g., Empowerment Zones) are important to prospective BFJT grantees because they receive special consideration as part of the EPA grant application process. Learn about and consider targeting communities with special circumstances such as low employment, economic and/or environmental distress, or plant closures. Partnerships with MARC grantees can also provide abundant information and in-kind support. You can search for active MARC grantees using the [EPA's Brownfields Grant Fact Sheet Search](#).

State environmental agencies can provide expertise and training in brownfields site assessments, cleanup techniques, and environmental regulations. Most BFJT advisory boards include representatives of state environmental agencies, many of whom could provide a good introduction to potential employers and leveraged partners.

Two- and four-year colleges and universities may also be willing to provide in-kind support, such as:

- Offering the use of their classroom facilities.
- Providing technical assistance in designing the job training curriculum.
- Conducting portions of the training.
- Offering marketing services.
- Providing assistance with labor market assessments.
- Providing pathways to business and industry contacts.

Academic institutions may take proactive roles in screening, testing, and placement of BFJT participants. Most two- and four-year colleges and universities have established development, accounting, and administrative staff. Those with experience in environmental-related training and federal grant administration are excellent candidates to take the lead as a primary grantee.

Additional resources for potential applicants and recipients of BFJT Grants include:

- [Environmental and Natural Resources Technology \(EARTh\) Center](#), funded by the National Science Foundation at Central Carolina Community College, [provides resources and assistance in technology education](#).
- [American Association of Community Colleges](#) is an advocacy organization for more than 1,000 community colleges.
- [Green America](#) helps people and businesses with climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.
- [Home Builders Institute](#) provides trade skills training and education for the building industry.
- [Interstate Renewable Energy Council](#) advances efforts supporting rapid adoption of reliable and resilient energy.
- [National Council for Workforce Education](#) builds networks of workforce professionals that champion innovation, justice, and economic opportunity.
- [National Environmental Health Association](#) offers courses and certifications to enhance knowledge, skill, and professional growth opportunities.

Student Recruitment, Screening, and Retention

Over time, the reputation of a BFJT program is established by the quality and motivation of its graduates. The single most important step for success in training, retention, placement, and job satisfaction is the mindful recruitment and selection of applicants. First-year grantees often underestimate the need to be very selective in choosing their first cohort, and often the biggest mistakes are rushed recruitment or inadequate screening. Without a proven track record, successful graduates, and/or a reputation in the community, new grantees may have difficulty recruiting a large pool of applicants. Enhancing community awareness is especially important in the first years of BFJT operation.

The single most important step for success in training, retention, placement, and job satisfaction is the mindful recruitment and selection of applicants.

It is essential to limit the seats available in each training cohort to those applicants who are most likely to succeed. Some important questions to ask during the screening process are:

- Is this candidate motivated?
- Do they work well in a team?
- Do they demonstrate an ability to learn from their training and experience?
- Are they job-ready and meet common employment requirements?

Student Recruitment

For best results, it is desirable to screen from the largest applicant pool possible. Urban and large target communities have a distinct advantage over rural or smaller service areas where the number

of potential applicants is much smaller. BFJT programs with established reputations also have an advantage over new and less established programs. During the first year of operation (without graduates or a track record), new programs need to spend considerable effort promoting and developing community awareness of the program to ensure success.

Community awareness can be elevated using the following strategies:

- Public service announcements.
- Press releases.
- Newspaper articles and general interest stories.
- Videos and YouTube presentations.
- Television or radio interviews.
- Announcements at public hearings and community meetings.
- Websites.
- Printed materials—brochures, flyers, etc.
- Social media.
- Communications from community or faith-based organizations.
- Word-of-mouth advertising.

Career centers can help by providing a supply of interested applicants. Almost all BFJT programs find it necessary to supplement career center referrals with direct recruitment activities including open house events, awareness sessions, presentations, word-of-mouth advertising, and marketing promotions. Additional referrals can be obtained from other nonprofit, community, and governmental organizations.

Another important step in the recruitment/awareness process is developing an information packet or website. This resource should contain specific and detailed program information about environmental careers and what to expect before, during, and after participating in the training program, including:

- Program length.
- Training dates, times, and location.
- Courses offered and supplemental courses available.
- Financial and support services available.
- Time commitment and cost.
- Expectations of the program staff.
- Participant expectation of the program.
- Entrance requirements.
- Program guidelines and rules.
- Drug testing and policy guidelines.
- Application and acceptance procedures.

Provide specific and detailed program information about environmental careers and what to expect before, during, and after participating in the training program.

Developing website content that contains the above information, required forms, and training schedules is an effective way to make program details easily accessible and transparent. Information packets with the website URL or a QR code linked to the site can be provided as handouts during presentations or at open house recruitment events to encourage attendees to visit the site.

Student Screening

Finding applicants who are likely to complete the program, attend all classes, pursue available opportunities, and have a good chance of being hired requires a multi-level screening process.

Screening can involve a variety of tools and strategies. Example screening questions that are specific to BFJT environmental jobs include those listed below. Some of these questions may not be possible to ask, depending on state and local application policies. However, they are important when placing graduates and may assist in the type of training provided.

1. Do you have a driver's license? Often employers will require a commercial driver's license (CDL) for employment.
2. Are you an ex-offender? While some programs work with ex-offenders, some employers will not hire applicants with certain criminal records because of the nature of the job. However, every year over 700,000 individuals are released from our nation's jails and prisons, many of whom leave anticipating reentry into the workforce.
3. Can you work in confined spaces?
4. Are you afraid of heights?
5. Do you have physical handicaps that might prevent you from performing the job you wish to fill?
6. Would a physical condition prevent you from wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)? Physicals are required to wear SCBAs.
7. What is your work experience?
8. Can you pass a drug test?

It is important that students have a clear understanding of program expectations prior to acceptance. Developing and distributing a student handbook will clarify program expectations and disciplinary and expulsion policies, including drug use and anti-harassment policies. Equally important is a clear understanding of graduation requirements. Many BFJT programs use a contract to verify that the student understands and agrees to comply with program policies.

Applicant screening should also involve an assessment of skills and knowledge to determine if applicants meet minimum standards for entry into the program. Student assessments can provide a road map for developmental and life skills training. Minimum entrance requirements will vary from program to program. Some programs require GEDs or high school diplomas, while others require a minimum score on [Tests of Adult Basic Education \(TABE\)](#), [WorkKeys](#), or the [Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System \(CASAS\)](#). Entrance requirements should be determined on a program-by-program basis, depending on the curriculum, employer feedback, and type of jobs targeted. It is important to match training availability with the minimum educational standards.



Los Angeles Conservation Corps Students Participating in Brownfields Job Training.

Successful BFJT grantees have used a variety of strategies for applicant screening, in addition to analytical and subjective applicant assessment. Below are some of the advanced screening techniques used by past grantees to determine the motivation and ability of participants to work well in teams:

- Tryouts where applicants work in teams as part of the screening process.
- One-on-one and group interviews.
- Family visits.
- Open house and working sessions.
- Multi-tiered application process.
- Pre-training (training such as life skills or construction trades not related to environmental training, with the best and most motivated students offered advanced environmental training opportunities).

Personal, one-on-one interviews should always be conducted before accepting a student into the program. These give candidates a chance to ask questions that may have arisen during the application process and allow job training staff to learn about special issues, circumstances, or problems that might occur during the training and placement processes. In addition to addressing specific questions, program expectations should be discussed during the interviews. By the end of the interview process, staff usually have a solid impression regarding candidates' attitude, determination, and ability to complete the BFJT program.

Personal, one-on-one interviews should always be conducted before accepting a student into the program.

While the most important, subjective applicant qualities are often the hardest to screen. Several subjective applicant attitudes that are important to assess during the screening process include:

- Sticking with the program.
- Being determined to attain established goals.
- Working well in groups.

- Attending all classes.
- Accepting new and difficult challenges.
- Having a passion for their new career.
- Having a positive attitude toward potential employers.

Informing Unsuccessful Candidates

It is important to inform unsuccessful candidates that they were not selected and explain why. In some cases, qualified students may be eligible for a placement or waiting list. Others may be advised to reapply or pursue another program that is better suited to their interests and abilities. It is useful to recommend alternate opportunities to rejected applicants. If there are too many qualified applicants to accept, a waiting list can be used for the next cohort or in case an existing student drops out.

Often applicants pass assessment tests but do not appear to have the desire or interest required to successfully participate in the program. Therefore, it is important to establish a policy for documenting the rationale for acceptance and rejection of applicants.

Student Retention & Support

The primary focus of a BFJT program is to provide skills, knowledge, and certifications necessary for community residents to enter the environmental workforce. EPA BFJT funds can cover a core curriculum related to facilitating the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation, as noted in the FY2025 NOFO. BFJT grant funds can also be used for personnel costs for caseworkers or other specialists who work with participants to identify barriers they face to employment, connect them to resources, and support their success in the program and in retaining employment, with support provided for up to one year following the completion of the training program.

Additional support services must be leveraged with outside assistance from partners, stakeholders, and existing social service organizations to decrease the risk of student dropout. Support services include activities and assistance that students need to supplement their environmental and life skills training to keep them on the path to meaningful environmental employment. Addressing legal and personal issues can be just as important to student success as technical skills, and they can be the primary factor that influences student retention, attitude, willingness to learn, and ultimately, sustained employment.

External events that can cause students to drop out of a BFJT program may include:

- Childcare - Sickness, vacation, or other lapse in childcare services.
- Housing insecurity - The related financial and emotional stress can make it difficult to focus.
- Financial literacy and support - Part-time work conflicting with class schedules or events.
- Personal and legal issues - Court dates conflicting with certification tests.
- Transportation - Training and instructional events become difficult to attend.

Community colleges and faith-based and community organizations may also be available to provide resources and support to BFJT participants.

Student services supported by the federal government are usually part of large assistance programs, such as block grants that establish social service and employment agencies. Often, federal grants are matched or supplemented with local funds. Statewide programs provide additional resources to counties and communities to support local programs.

It is important to contact each state and local agency independently to assess potential student support services since every community operates differently. Federal, state, and local websites are useful tools to conduct research about services offered, eligibility requirements, and contact information.

Forty percent of BFJT Grant funds can be used on eligible participant support costs, such as:

- Transportation for site visits during training or to transport trainees to and from class in the form of stipends or other allowable direct costs (for example, transportation vouchers or vehicle rental).
- Reasonable stipends to compensate trainees for participating in training.
- Reasonable childcare subsidies (note that childcare subsidies must not duplicate childcare support provided through other federal, state, tribal, or local programs).

40%

**of BFJT Grant funds
can be used on
eligible participant
support costs.**

Note

Participant support costs may not exceed 40% of the amount of the total BFJT award. Additional information can be found in the EPA [Guidance on Participant Support Costs](#).

Child and Dependent Care

As noted above, reasonable childcare subsidies are eligible participant support costs under BFJT grants. Childcare subsidies must not duplicate childcare support provided through other federal, state, tribal, or local programs. Other child and dependent care programs that may support job training participants include:

- Funding for childcare services may be provided by the [HHS Office of Child Care](#) (OCC) through block grants to each state. The best options to assess potential childcare assistance are the state or county Department of Human Services, Child Care Services, or Family Services.
- If a student is on public assistance, [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families](#) (TANF) is a state and federal program that can be explored because it provides funds for support services and family assistance.
- The DOL [Employment and Training Administration](#) (ETA) provides assistance to qualified dislocated workers. A similar program includes the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA), which supports state WIBs.
- Funding to Tribal and Native American organizations may also be available from DOL. In addition, the [Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study](#) addresses support issues related to Native Americans.

Financial Literacy and Support

[Financial literacy](#) and support can be a significant factor in retaining students during training and job performance after graduation. BFJT participants may be in debt and unable to secure housing and provide for potential emergencies.

As noted above, reasonable stipends to compensate trainees for participating in training are eligible participant support costs under BFJT grants. The importance of providing financial assistance during participation in training programs has been recognized with numerous leveraged opportunities from federal and nonprofit organizations, as well as local banks, foundations, and faith-based community organizations.

BFJT programs that are part of larger organizations often have financial guidance counselors to assist students with the support they need to succeed. Work study opportunities, pre-apprenticeships, scholarships, and stipends provided by enterprise partners should not be overlooked as important resources.

Personal and Legal Issues

Some students may be able to work around financial and childcare demands with assistance from family and friends, but personal issues may still prevent them from being successful. Unaddressed personal issues can disrupt the entire BFJT process of training, retention, and placement. Potential personal and legal issues that could affect student success include:

- Attitude.
- Learning and physical disabilities, including medical conditions.
- Access to computers and learning resources.
- Anger management.
- Prior convictions.
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse.
- Student living assistance (for example, paying rent or finding housing).
- Driver's license suspension and outstanding tickets or warrants.
- Prior judgments and punitive awards.



Richmond Build Students Participating in Training.

Some BFJT participants have issues, responsibilities, and obligations that must be addressed if training and sustained employment are to be successful. Failure to be sensitive to students' personal and legal issues can result in low program completion and employment rates. Working with local courts, probation programs, and parole officers are important factors in retaining capable students who have prior legal issues. Anger management, ability to work in groups, proper presentation, and attitude adjustment can greatly influence student retention, placement, and post-graduate success.

Note

BFJT Grant funds can be used to cover costs associated with health exams (e.g., pulmonary function tests) directly related to the training and/or the placement of graduates in environmental work.

Transportation

Transportation is a support service that is often overlooked and can be a major challenge affecting student retention, placement, and sustained employability. Urban communities with good public transportation services provide for more flexibility since students can commute to training and secure sustainable jobs within the community's transportation network. In smaller and rural communities, transportation to training and employment can be more problematic.

BFJT programs have leveraged transportation support in several ways. In some cases, students receive free or discounted public transportation passes to and from class. In some communities, auto dealerships and rideshare transportation companies have provided discounts to BFJT graduates. In rural communities, reservations, and urbanized communities with an underdeveloped transportation infrastructure, BFJT programs may need to require transportation access (between home and training and between home and work) as a condition of acceptance. An alternative is to provide transportation services during the training program with the understanding that post-graduation transportation will become a responsibility of the participant.

In extreme cases and remote locations (such as island communities or Indigenous villages), options may need to be made available for students to dorm at a central location for the training period and then be employed while living in work camps where all transportation is provided. Additionally, virtual training programs can be implemented to reduce the need for long-distance travel, allowing students to complete coursework remotely before attending hands-on training at designated hubs. This blended approach provides greater accessibility while maintaining the necessary practical components of the training.

Note

BFJT Grant funds can be used to cover costs associated with licensing fees directly related to the training and/or the placement of graduates in environmental work.

Developing a Curriculum

Core Curriculum, Awareness Training, and Life Skills

To design and develop an effective BFJT curriculum, it is critical to leverage insights from the community and labor market assessments to identify the knowledge, skills, and credentials students need for successful employment in the environmental field. Input from prospective employers is essential to understand the skills and certifications they are looking for when recruiting new employees. Additional input should come from the advisory boards, content experts/trainers, and guidance in EPA's BFJT NOFO.

Workforce needs can vary greatly based on site characterization, cleanup requirements, the nature of contamination, and weather conditions. Skill and certification demands may vary from year-to-year and season-to-season depending on project activity and schedules.

Local training needs may also be influenced by economic considerations and employer priorities. A “one size fits all” curriculum will not address employment prerequisites for every locality and priority. For this reason, students must be flexible and trained for multiple types of potential job opportunities. The BFJT program allows for a flexible environmental assessment, cleanup, remediation, health, and safety curriculum with supplemental awareness training. Awareness training provides BFJT program graduates with basic knowledge and awareness of additional environmental remediation technologies (examples of eligible awareness training courses under BFJT grants are provided below).

The BFJT program allows for a flexible environmental assessment, cleanup, remediation, health, and safety curriculum with supplemental awareness training.

Of equal importance to securing and maintaining permanent employment are life skills, adult literacy, job readiness, and other abilities that help employees be successful on a sustained basis. Life skills are essential, but BFJT grant funding only supports training in facilitating the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation, as noted in the FY2025 NOFO. Fortunately, many federal, state, and local programs offer additional types of training that are not supported under a BFJT grant, which can be incorporated into the BFJT program. Student services can also be leveraged with other government programs and contributions from non-governmental partners and stakeholders.

Environmental Remediation, Health, and Safety Training

Worker health and safety are essential elements of environmental remediation. For this reason, the only required training under the BFJT Grant is the [OSHA 29 CFR § 1910.120 40-hour HAZWOPER](#), which includes an in-person personal protective equipment (PPE) component. Applicants proposing an online OSHA 29 CFR § 1910.120 40-hour HAZWOPER course are responsible for ensuring their computer-based training course meets all OSHA requirements and is supplemented with the required in-person training. Other [OSHA training](#) is also in demand, such as first aid, general

**40-hour
HAZWOPER
is the only required
training under the
BFJT Grant.**

construction, and confined space. These health and safety certifications provide worker protection guidance to students across a variety of environmental remediation jobs.

Additional training offerings should be guided by and meet the training needs identified by the local LMA, employer surveys, and community need. The LMA, employer advisors, and advisory board members can provide input on local employment needs and relevant training. Past grantees have adapted their curricula based on employer needs, which often resulted in increased placement rates for graduates.



Springfield Brownfields Job Training Program HAZWOPER Lecture.

Below are a few examples of the topics associated with certificates and certifications that are eligible for funding under a BFJT grant. For a more extensive list of eligible and ineligible Brownfield Job Training courses, please see <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/list-eligible-and-ineligible-brownfield-job-training-courses>. These offerings may change with each class depending on local priorities, schedules, and employment opportunities. Common trainings include:

- Asbestos Worker Certification.
- EPA Lead Renovator, Repair, and Paint (RR&P).
- Hazard Awareness and Communication.
- American Red Cross First Aid, CPR, and AED.
- OSHA Disaster Site Worker.
- OSHA 10- or 30-hour Construction Industry Outreach Training.
- OSHA 10- or 30-hour General Industry Outreach Training.
- OSHA Maritime Industry.
- OSHA Confined Space Entry.
- DOT Hazardous Materials Training.

- Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) commercial driver’s license (CDL), forklift, and machine operations associated with the transportation of hazardous waste.
- OSHA 24-hour Hazardous Materials Technician.
- Environmental Sampling and Analysis.
- Mold Remediation.

OSHA certificates and other credentialed training are regulated, such as [EPA’s Lead RR&P](#) and [asbestos training](#). As such, they may require authorized instructors and/or approved curriculum. It is important that program administrators understand and verify that training is delivered in accordance with federal and state requirements.

Note

There are some training courses that can be eligible when there is a specific connection to facilitating the inventory, assessment, and remediation of brownfield sites, as well as community involvement and site preparation.

- *For example, training around bloodborne pathogens must only cover how to mitigate safety risks from bloodborne pathogens in a site remediation setting. Training in manufacturing activities falls outside the scope of the Brownfields Job Training Program.*
- *Similarly, training for stormwater management cannot relate to understanding the water permitting system, as this will not help trainees learn how to assess, remediate, or prepare brownfields sites for reuse and does not have a sufficient connection to community involvement in a brownfields site assessment, remediation, etc. The training must be to prepare brownfield sites for sustainable reuse.*
- *For Green infrastructure, the green infrastructure training must be related to installing and maintaining green infrastructure projects as part of the management of brownfields cleanup/site remediation.*

Awareness Training

Awareness training is not as comprehensive and provides a working knowledge of environmental remediation topics that are important for many employment opportunities. Advice from experienced BFJT grantees suggests that awareness training should be designed to provide a broad enough curriculum to allow for a variety of workforce skills and certification requirements. Awareness training should be driven by employer guidance, current remediation activities, and LMAs.

Awareness training that is not related to community involvement in planning for assessment, remediation, and site preparation is not eligible for BFJT funding.

Note

BFJT grant applications that allocate at least 60% of funds to tasks directly associated with instruction/training will be evaluated more favorably.

Successful BFJT Grant applications should:

- Describe how the proposed training program will create a pathway to jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and economic mobility, or a pathway to continued training (e.g., a pre-apprenticeship program in partnership with a Registered Apprenticeship Program).
- Indicate if training courses will be offered to every student, or if courses will be separated into different specialized training tracks.
- Clearly demonstrate how the proposed training courses align with eligible activities fundable under the NOFO.

Curriculum Delivery Methods

As with traditional teaching and training, BFJT programs should use a variety of instructional methods depending on what approach will be most effective for students and instructors. A combination of textbooks, team-building exercises, demonstrations, and hands-on instruction is common in most BFJT programs. Many courses integrate laptops/tablets and YouTube® videos to replace printed materials, achieving cost savings and improved communication among students.

Scheduling Training

It is important that classroom times be flexible and planned based on student circumstances, work schedules, travel distances, and instructor availability. Many BFJT programs prefer training schedules that simulate a work week. For unemployed participants, a full-time, simulated work week makes sense. However, some programs include students that have part-time positions, and others have students with daytime commitments or issues that make full-time training impossible. For these programs, evening training works best with training spread out over longer periods. In rural and dispersed target communities, students may attend classes and dorm at centralized training facilities with breaks between sessions or attend classes online and then travel to a central location for an intensive few days of required in-person training.

To ensure student retention, training delivery needs to be synchronized with the schedules of potential applicants and described in program marketing materials. In some cases, alternating between day and evening classes and/or weekend offerings provides the best opportunity for attendance.

Finding and Recruiting Trainers

Finding and recruiting qualified trainers for Brownfields Job Training programs is a critical component of developing an effective curriculum. Trainers should possess the necessary skills, certifications, and resources to deliver the required instruction while meeting the diverse needs of program participants. Large organizations, including community colleges and nonprofit organizations, may have staff and facilities that could be used to provide some or all instruction necessary for a comprehensive environmental curriculum in-house. However, it is likely that at least some of the specialized technical instruction will need to be provided by qualified consultants and/or contractors.

Before initiating the search for trainers, program staff should address the following:

- **Training Relevance:** Ensure that the proposed training aligns with the skills and abilities of program participants and addresses the labor market needs identified in assessments.
- **Facilities and Resources:** Evaluate whether existing facilities and resources (in-house or with partners) are adequate to deliver the proposed training.
- **Health and Safety:** Verify that health and safety measures are in place for on-site and remote training, including insurance coverage.
- **Delivery Format:** Determine whether training will be delivered in person, online, or in a hybrid format, and whether trainers can accommodate digital learning strategies.
- **Accessibility:** Assess students' access to digital resources, transportation, and other support services.

BFJT programs may utilize trainers from various categories based on program needs and funding arrangements, including:

- **In-House Trainers:** These trainers, often program staff or associates, can deliver non-certification or soft-skills training. In-house trainers are cost-effective and ensure consistency in program delivery.
- **Sub-Grantee Training Organizations:** These entities, such as community colleges or government agencies, are written into the grant and operate under the same terms and conditions as the primary grantee. Sub-grantees are not subject to competitive bidding.
- **In-Kind Trainers:** Partners offering in-kind contributions, such as community volunteers or local employers, can provide valuable expertise at no cost to the program. Federal grant money is not exchanged with in-kind trainers, making this a flexible option.
- **Training Consultants/Contractors:** External trainers delivering specialized instruction are typically selected through a competitive bidding process.

When using contractors for roles such as suppliers, trainers, consultants, or other vendors, it is important to recruit and vet instructors before the curriculum has been finalized. As noted earlier, BFJT grantees are required to purchase services, supplies, and equipment in accordance with the procurement standards at 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500, as well as 40 CFR Part 33 (EPA's Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises regulations) as applicable. This includes, for instance, the requirement that procurement transactions in excess of the federal micro-purchase threshold (generally \$10,000) must be competed in accordance with the simplified acquisition procedures at 2 CFR 200.320(a)(2) (for purchases above the micro-purchase but do not exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (\$250,000)) or formal procurement methods at 2 CFR 200.320(b). These standards also generally require recipients to have their own documented procurement procedures that are consistent with Federal, State, local, and Tribal laws and regulations. Contracting for instructional services should include the stipulation that acceptance is dependent on budgets and scheduling. For more information, see [Guidance on Competitively Procuring a Contractor](#) and [Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements](#).

When recruiting trainers, program staff should:

- Develop a clear Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Quotes (RFQ) that includes the following:
 - Closing date and contact information.
 - Background on the BFJT program and target audience.

- Specific training requirements, schedules, and flexibility.
- Minimum qualifications and certifications.
- Location of training and details on transportation or meals if required.
- Requirements for student health and safety measures.
- Cost per class or per student.
- Request detailed information from prospective trainers, including:
 - Qualifications and experience.
 - Proposed training plans and schedules.
 - Proof of certifications and compliance with federal, state, or local requirements.
 - References and evidence of past performance.

Some grantees recruit potential employers as guest instructors and speakers, which provides several benefits to the program, including:

- Tailoring training to current labor market needs.
- Getting to know BFJT participants on a personal level.
- Often having an interest in hiring program graduates.
- Serving in advisory, support, and even leveraged roles in the BFJT program.

Qualified trainers can be sourced through various channels, including:

- [OSHA Training Institute Education Centers \(OTI\)](#): OTI provides train-the-trainer courses and certification programs for OSHA standards. Trainers authorized to deliver OSHA 10- and 30-hour courses can be located through the OSHA Outreach Training Program database.
- Eastern Iowa Community Colleges' (EICC) [Great Environmental Safety Trainers \(GreatEST\) Institute](#): A week-long intensive program that brings together trainers from across the United States to engage in hands-on learning experiences, such as simulated hazardous waste scenarios, to enhance their skills in hazardous waste operations and emergency response.
- [Partnership for Environmental Training and Education \(PETE\)](#): A nonprofit organization offering instructor training free of charge for BFJT grantees.
- [Sustainable Workplace Alliance \(SWA\)](#): A 501(c)(3) organization providing environmental, health, and safety training.
- Community Colleges and Universities: Many institutions offer degree or noncredit environmental programs and have experienced instructional staff.
- Local Employers and Agencies: Potential trainers may include staff from remediation firms, environmental agencies, fire departments, and emergency response teams.
- Internet Searches: Commercial organizations and state departments of health or environment often publish lists of certified trainers. Ensure trainers comply with all certification requirements.

While instructors for HAZWOPER, asbestos, lead or OSHA certificate courses require certified instructors and sometimes curriculum approved by individual states, a significant amount of training can be provided by individuals experienced in the field of their expertise. Additional instructional staff may be found in the following organizations:

- Training consultants.
- Remediation pollution control firms.

- Construction, painting, and abatement firms.
- Potential employers (providing in-kind training).
- Current staff (trained for certification training).
- Federal, state, or local environmental agencies.
- Local fire, water, and emergency response agencies.
- Recommendations from other BFJT grantees and training organizations.

BFJT grantees may need to train their trainers to meet certification requirements. For example, the OSHA Training Institute offers a variety of certification programs that prepare trainers to deliver OSHA-approved courses. Programs such as PETE and SWA also provide opportunities for grantees to certify trainers at low or no cost.

Partnering with local organizations, nonprofits, and employers can expand the pool of qualified trainers while reducing costs. Employers may provide guest instructors or donate facilities and equipment. These partnerships not only enhance program delivery but also strengthen connections with potential employers, increasing job placement opportunities for graduates.

By carefully planning and utilizing available resources, BFJT programs can build a robust instructional team that supports the success of their training initiatives.

Health and Safety in the Classroom and on the Worksite

It is essential that BFJT programs train and enforce health and safety standards in the classroom, laboratory, and worksite. This is true for training that is conducted by program staff or contracted trainers. Several environmental, health, and safety courses that are commonly offered in BFJT programs require that students have a medical waiver or physical examination.

HAZWOPER and some other courses require program participants to sign a Participant Liability Waiver and Release of All Claims form. This is especially true if an SCBA will be used during the training.

Many programs provide a list of health and safety rules that students are asked to sign and date to confirm that they agree to comply.

Adult Literacy, Life Skills, and Employability Skills Training

As part of the recruitment, assessment, and screening process, BFJT staff should evaluate each applicant's potential ability to complete the program, find employment, and become successful. Although adult literacy, life skills, and employability skills training are not the focus of BFJT programs and are not supported by BFJT funds, they play an important part in a student's ability to complete the training program and obtain employment. The degree to which BFJT programs can offer this type of training depends on their ability to secure the necessary resources and leveraged partners to provide the training.

Adult literacy is sometimes used as an umbrella term for adult basic education, which may include:

- Reading.
- Writing.
- Listening.
- Speaking.

- Mathematics.
- Computer skills.
- Financial literacy.

Life skills are the skills and abilities that are necessary to complete everyday tasks, including:

- Developing and keeping regular routines.
- Being reliable and on time.
- Appearance.
- Accepting personal, family, and academic responsibilities.
- Goal setting.
- Decision-making.
- Time management.
- Problem-solving.
- Teamwork and cooperation.

Employability skills involve the development of an attitude, experience, and mindset that are increasingly necessary for success in the workplace. Many BFJT programs include employability skills training as part of their curriculum to increase the likelihood of success. Employability skills include activities such as:

- Completing a job application.
- Creating a resume and keeping it current.
- Conducting mock job interviews.
- Stressing the importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Conducting exercises to improve skills and work ethic.
- Developing a list of references during training.
- Teaching general decision-making skills.
- Dressing for the job and use of proper etiquette.
- Settling past traffic and other fines.
- Discussing civic responsibility.
- Improving communication skills.
- Reinforcing first impressions that establish a solid foundation for future employment.
- Stressing the possibility and significance of drug testing.
- Providing an understanding of employer liability for employee behavior.
- Understanding of discriminatory, intimidating, harassing, and hostile behaviors.
- Incorporating conflict management skills.
- Sending participants to multiple interviews to get practice and improve interview skills.
- Videotaping interviews to provide feedback.

When adult literacy, life skills, and employability skills training cannot be made available, it is appropriate to raise the acceptance standards of the BFJT program. Not doing so could result in setting students up for failure, leading to low placement and retention rates.

Student Placement and Tracking

The placement and tracking of graduates defines the success of a BFJT program. Resources allotted for student placement, and especially for post-placement tracking, are often underestimated. Ultimately, the goals of placement and tracking are to:

- Find sustainable jobs for graduates in the environmental field.
- Maintain contact with alumni and provide post-placement guidance and services as needed.
- Engage graduates to support the BFJT program with recruitment, placement, and mentoring of future participants.

Successful BFJT applications must describe how their organization (and if applicable, coalition members) will track and provide employment support for program graduates and for how long (must be a minimum of one year).

Finding Sustainable Jobs for Students

Good placement practices result in safe, sustainable environmental jobs for program graduates. Effective placement creates goodwill and a positive reputation among graduates, employers, and the community. Successful BFJT grantees have noted that a best practice is to begin placement efforts before training starts, ideally once advisory board members and prospective employers are identified.

Begin placement efforts before training starts.

A single placement strategy is not sufficient when trying to find meaningful jobs.

A single placement strategy is not sufficient when attempting to find meaningful jobs for a graduating class. A multifaceted placement strategy should be implemented, which can include leveraging the resources described below.

- **Internal BFJT placement efforts:** Placement efforts conducted by BFJT staff, partners, and stakeholders can be the most effective vehicle to find jobs for graduating students for several reasons. Those involved in the program know the subject matter best, can answer questions regarding student abilities and credentials, and can provide references and recommendations. Engaging instructors, guest speakers, and advisory board members and conducting visits to prospective employers can serve both as a learning experience and a placement strategy. Participation in public events, attending job fairs, and engaging with human resource personnel from potential employers may uncover new opportunities for job placement. In addition, establishing close relationships with state and local governmental agencies can result in a variety of state and municipal job opportunities.
- **CareerOneStop Centers:** As part of an effective placement strategy, it is also important to partner with WIBs. In addition to student recruitment, screening, and support services, [CareerOneStop Centers](#) provide job placement services with dedicated staff and resources. Government employment services should be a supplement, not a replacement, for BFJT program's in-house placement efforts.

- Internships, pre-apprenticeship programs, and company visitations: When students work with prospective employers, a mutually beneficial exchange occurs regarding company culture, work environment, and expectations. Establishing co-op programs can be a very effective vehicle for placing graduates, and may include work-study, internship, job shadowing, or formal pre-apprenticeship programs. BFJT programs may be able to leverage stipends and scholarships to bring donors and students together. Involving organized labor and remediation contractors as advisory board members can broaden employment opportunities.

Successful BFJT grant applications should describe how the proposed training program will create a pathway to jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and economic mobility (or a pathway to continued training), so documenting details about pre-apprenticeship programs and pathways into a Registered Apprenticeship Program can be beneficial to applications.

- Professional employment services, temporary staffing, and labor contract services: Professional employment services target and employ candidates with specialized, high-demand skills, often in response to quick turnaround hiring needs in the environmental field. BFJT program staff should establish long-term relationships with national remediation contractors, professional employment services, and temporary staffing services specializing in environmental workers. Many jobs obtained through these services can end up lasting for years and lead to full-time employment and permanent, sustainable careers.



PathStone Brownfields Job Training Program Graduates.

- Personal networking: Networking is also an effective approach for identifying employment opportunities. Networking can take many forms, but it is intended to connect employers who have a workforce need with job seekers. Potential networking opportunities for BFJT programs include:
 - Alumni reunions and mixers: BFJT graduates can interact with former graduates to network and share experiences. As with prospective employers, involving former graduates in BFJT activities provides an effective networking opportunity for new graduates.
 - Employer open houses: Invite prospective employers and graduates to tour facilities, exchange ideas, and discuss topics of mutual interest.

- Environmental conferences: Environmental conferences provide an excellent venue for networking and an introduction to prospective employers interested in BFJT graduates. Many state and regional brownfields associations convene routine workshops and conferences, and many attendees are stakeholders and contractors with employment opportunities.
- Job Fairs: Many communities and employment service organizations sponsor periodic job fairs. Job fairs address a variety of occupations and provide an opportunity to network with companies who do not normally employ environmental technicians. Larger and/or more established BFJT programs could consider organizing their own open house and job fair, while others may participate in a larger, community-wide event.

Maintaining Contact with Alumni and Providing Post-Placement Services

Graduate tracking involves following each student's progress in the workforce, including promotions, salaries, and commendations. An effective tracking program must establish a clear method for capturing post-graduation training and work experiences. Graduate tracking is important for the following reasons:

- Graduates with certain types of certifications will need refreshers or recertification classes to keep their credentials current.
- Sometimes worker or employer expectations are not fulfilled, resulting in an unemployed graduate who needs placement assistance and/or additional training.
- Feedback from former students can be valuable in improving job training approaches and maintaining a current and relevant curriculum.
- Building an effective alumni program can benefit former graduates and current participants.
- Tracking graduate employee statistics and employer satisfaction provides definitive outcomes regarding the success and opportunities provided by the BFJT program.

It can often be difficult maintaining current contact information as program graduates move, change employment, and migrate into new jobs. Example strategies to maintain contact with program graduates include:

- Encourage use of a social networking platform, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, or X (formerly Twitter), for all program participants and graduates.
- Maintain a regular newsletter that includes employment opportunities and current events.
- Track pre-apprenticeship candidates that enter union employment.
- Continue social events that include alumni and current students.
- Offer incentives, including refreshers and professional development activities, to all graduates.
- Provide employment and placement opportunities to all graduates.

As graduates are placed, prospective employers should be briefed on the tracking process. It is also important to instill in graduates an obligation to report his or her progress in the workforce. Maintaining an active BFJT Facebook or other social media site for all program participants is an effective approach for maintaining contact with students.

Engaging Graduates to Support the BFJT Program

Successful graduate engagement requires close relationships with the students and their employers. Graduates can contribute to a successful BFJT program in a variety of ways, such as:

- Becoming part of the staff.
- Providing instruction as guest speakers.
- Serving on advisory boards.
- Providing employment leads for recent graduates and alumni.
- Assisting in development activities and leveraging opportunities.
- Serving as community advocates for the BFJT program.

Graduates can be an excellent resource for guidance, placement, and mentoring of other graduates and current students. Graduates are ideal role models, providing testimony regarding the worthiness of the program to potential recruits, employers, supporters, and partners.

It is essential to build a culture that welcomes, values, and promotes continued participation by program graduates as a prerequisite for a post-graduation tracking strategy. Sometimes, incentives may be necessary to foster student engagement after graduation. Example strategies to maximize graduate participation in BFJT activities and provide tracking opportunities include:

- Free or discounted refresher courses.
- Opportunities for additional and supplemental training.
- Invitations to participate in BFJT events and conferences.
- Offers to sit in or monitor current training.
- An opportunity to pay-it-forward by mentoring current BFJT participants.

Drug Use

In recent years, drug use has become a predominant issue with regard to graduate recruitment, screening, and placement. Regardless of state and/or local ordinances, the use of federally prohibited drugs remains a federal crime. As such, most employers have strict drug use policies for recruitment and ongoing employment. BFJT programs should make participants aware of zero-tolerance drug policies, even if state and/or local laws permit federally prohibited drug use.

Grant recipients may address potential drug use issues in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, drug testing as an acceptance criterion into the job training program, random drug testing of BFJT program participants, and/or drug testing prior to graduation. During the recruitment and screening process, program participants should be informed that they will be subject to random drug testing. Tests need to be randomly separated and spaced to ensure effectiveness. The comprehensiveness of drug tests may vary depending on the administering agency.

Note

Some BFJT programs will accept applicants that fail drug testing on the condition that they work with counselors to become drug-free during the training program and as a condition of graduation.

Graduates with Incarceration Histories

Programs considering the involvement of ex-offenders must be sensitive to employer attitudes and company re-entry policies. The successful placement of graduates with criminal records begins with Local Market Assessments (LMAs), ensuring that employment opportunities exist before training begins. In communities where LMAs reveal a lack of employers willing to hire individuals with criminal histories, screening criteria and curricula may need adjustments to align with realistic job prospects. Many formerly incarcerated individuals face barriers such as legal restrictions, employer reluctance, and logistical challenges like housing, transportation, and financial obligations. Without proper support, these challenges can hinder their ability to complete training and secure long-term employment.

To improve outcomes, training programs should engage potential employers early, ensuring they understand the value of hiring graduates who have been vetted, properly trained, and hold industry-recognized certifications. Some employers, particularly those with experience hiring ex-offenders, may offer structured employment pathways, while tax credits and bonding programs can help mitigate perceived risks. Additionally, workforce re-entry initiatives should incorporate wraparound services, including case management, mental health support, peer mentoring, and flexible scheduling to accommodate participants' needs. Collaboration among training providers, community organizations, and employers is essential to creating sustainable employment pathways for individuals with criminal records.

Program Sustainability

Program sustainability addresses issues, activities, and organizational structures to ensure the continued operation and success of the BFJT program. Developing long-term relationships and financial support is critical to create a sustainable training program. BFJT awards are for up to five years, and prior recipients can typically apply for a new grant if they did not receive their existing grant in the previous fiscal year (as of the FY 2025 NOFO, an existing BFJT recipient is required to have drawn down at least 50% of the funding for any prior BFJT grants before applying for a new grant).

Existing BFJT recipients must decide whether to apply for more EPA funding, replace EPA funding with support from other sources, merge brownfields job training with other local workforce programs, or terminate the program. Many BFJT programs have successfully combined these strategies to create sustainable training programs.

Sustaining a quality BFJT program requires continuous evaluation and improvement to ensure that training is current, relevant, and fulfills community needs. In order to continue the healthy operation of an BFJT program, outcomes must demonstrate quality and value to all parties, which includes trainees, stakeholders, employers, and the community.



El Centro Inc's Go Green to Get Green Brownfields Job Training Program.

Application to EPA for Continued Funding

Over the years, BFJT grantees have demonstrated that communities can successfully develop and deliver comprehensive, quality environmental training with funding from EPA, combined with assistance from leveraged local resources. As noted above, prior BFJT recipients can typically apply for a new grant if they did not receive their existing grant in the previous fiscal year and if they have drawn down at least 50% of their previous BFJT grant funding before applying for a new grant. After programs become established, they are encouraged to become self-sustaining with state and local resources and other assistance that is from leveraged partners.

Experience and past performance are important, but partnerships, community needs, and local support also play a critical role in the selection of successful applications, whether an applicant is new or an existing BFJT grantee.

If an existing grantee is not selected for continued EPA BFJT funding, it is recommended that they work with existing partners and local government organizations to find support for continued operation, even at a reduced level, if necessary. Applicants that are not selected for a follow up BFJT grant should contact the [EPA regional job training coordinator](#) for a debriefing to identify the strong and weak points of the application so that it can be improved for future rounds of funding.

Replacing EPA Funding with Support from Other Sources

It is critical that BFJT programs focus on partnerships, leveraging, and other long-term funding sources to continue their program when EPA funding is no longer available. The key to sustainability is establishing an institutionalized, long-term training plan that maintains relevance and

contributes to the community. Below are some potential sources that could replace EPA assistance:

- Legislative support.
- Public and private partnership support.
- Environmental penalties and judgments.
- Philanthropic grants.
- Foundation and nonprofit organization grants and contributions.
- Contracts and fee-for-service agreements.
- Other federal and state grant programs.

Replacing EPA funding with other sources requires the development of long-term relationships and demonstrated success with government, community, and private sector decision-makers. It is important to communicate and demonstrate the value of the BFJT program to future supporters during the initial planning stages. Legislators and private supporters have little interest in funding programs that they perceive as ineffective, inefficient, or a drain on limited resources.

Merging Environmental Training with Other Local Workforce Programs

BFJT programs that attempt to operate independently often have a difficult time sustaining their program. Stand-alone programs are not able to benefit from economies of scale and multi-program synergies. Instead, they must seek outside assistance for infrastructure, administration, and support services not funded by the BFJT grant.

To share the burden, grantees may choose to combine with a larger job training or social services program, thereby contributing only a portion of the overall costs. In this arrangement, programs share facilities, organizational infrastructure, administrative obligations, and staff, resulting in classrooms, facilities, and instructors that are better utilized.

Affiliating with other organizations, including applying as a coalition, can dramatically reduce the economic burden on the brownfields portion of the overall program and provides a stronger magnet for attracting community support and leveraged financial assistance.

In the absence of resources to replace EPA funding, a sustainable approach may be to transition the BFJT program into an existing institutionalized program. Legacy programs are those that are already supported by ongoing city, county, or state government. They may also include community colleges, community and nonprofit organizations, organized labor, or established workforce organizations funded by the DOL. Merging a BFJT program with an existing legacy program allows mature workforce programs to add an additional service (environmental training) to existing offerings. It also allows the BFJT program to continue, regardless of future EPA funding decisions.

Successful BFJT applications must thoroughly describe plans for sustaining and continuing the brownfields job training program once EPA grant funds are exhausted. This may include documenting interest from the local public workforce agency or partner employers to collaborate to continue offering the training after the EPA grant period.