

PLC Session 288 - March 1, 2023

The Fortune Society



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1. News Impacting BJT Programs

Please Join Us for the 2023 In-Person Annual All-Grantee Meeting May 24 & 25, 2023

(Travel May 23 and 26)

**Hilton Alexandria Old Town
Alexandria, Va.**

Topics being considered for the 2 Day All-Grantee Conference include:

- Grants Management: Federal regulations impacting BJT program implementation
- Grantee Partnerships: Employers/advisory boards, social services, working with WIBS and trainer resources
- Challenges and Minefields for BJT Grantees: Transportation, childcare, cultural/gender issues, and demographic disparities
- EJ Tool: Locating demographic and environmental information when establishing target service areas
- ACRES tool for Brownfield Job Training Grantees
- Rural Grantee Issues: A panel of selected programs located in rural communities
- Tips and Strategies for Recruiting, Screening, and Assessing Populations: Successful recruiting strategies used by BJT grantees
- Working with Diverse Populations: Including returning citizens and temporarily housed and/or homeless applicants

Plus, networking lunches, briefings from breakout discussions, open forums, and plenty of opportunities to meet, mingle, and network.

Don't miss this unique opportunity!

Mark your calendars and make your conference and hotel reservations now!

HMTRI will cover the cost of three nights lodging (Checking in on Tuesday, May 23, and Checking out Friday, May 26). We have secured a block of rooms at the **Hilton Alexandria Old Town hotel**.

Note, there is a two-step process for attending the meeting:

1. *First* - Register for the meeting (limit two people per organization). Click on this link:

Conference Registration

<https://forms.gle/JbyZeYeq2hUAoGAK8>

2. *Second* - Reserve your room.

Hotel Reservation by Phone:

- Phone 703-837-0440 or call 1-800-Hiltons (800-445-8667)
Select "Reservations". The Group Code for the reservation is **HMTRI**.
- Be prepared to provide a credit card for incidentals not covered by HMTRI.

What is covered?

HMTRI will be providing two continental breakfasts and two lunches on the two days of the conference (May 24 & 25). If you are driving, discounted parking is available.

What is not covered?

Transportation, transfers, and incidentals.

If you have any questions, please contact: Steve Fenton, HMTRI at sfenton103@aol.com

Brownfields 2023 National Conference

August 8 - 11, 2023

Detroit, MI

The conference is a partnership between ICMA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and one of ICMA's longest running grant funded programs. EPA and ICMA have announced dates for the conference to be held in Detroit, Michigan, August 8 through 11, 2023. Educational sessions and registration will be announced later in the year.

2023 Phoenix Awards Nominations are Open

Nominations due April 17, 2023

The premier awards program for brownfields redevelopment is coming to Detroit at the 2023 National Brownfields Training Conference. This year's awards will once again celebrate exemplary projects in brownfields redevelopment from across the country and recognize the people that make them happen.

Click the link below to review the categories and [make your nomination](#).

Nominations are due on April 17, 2023. All winners will be notified in June 2023 and recognized at Brownfields 2023 in Detroit, MI August 8-11, 2023.

[Click Here to Nominate](#)

Interested in Being a Sponsor or Exhibitor at Brownfields 2023?

Let ICMA know by [filling an interest form](#) and be the first to know when the sponsorship and exhibitor prospectus is available.

[Sponsorship and Exhibitor Interest Form](#)

2. Questions from PLC Participants

Question: FY23 BJT awards have changed from previous competitions. Do you have any insight on what will happen moving forward?

Response: While nothing official has been posted, requests for proposals are expected in June as they were for FY23. Applications will be due 60 days after the RFA is posted. It is expected that the EPA Brownfield Job Training (BJT) cooperative agreements will have a maximum funding level of \$500,000 total to be spent over a five-year period. New applicants, as well as all current and past grantees are expected to be eligible to apply. As in the past, there will not be matching requirements and indirect costs will be allowable. The number of awards has yet to be determined.

Question: Why is the BJT grant called a cooperative agreement?

Response: BJT cooperative agreements are, in simple terms, grants where EPA has a role in guiding work plans and program operation. Traditional grants award funds with minimal or no input over the execution of the grant. Cooperative agreements allow for a more participatory conversation between EPA Project Officers and BJT grantee program managers. Grants and cooperative agreements are often used interchangeably but technically BJT awards are cooperative agreements.

3. The Fortune Society - Samantha Pugh

Thanks, Samantha, for a great presentation.

The Fortune Society is a New York City area nonprofit with a 50-year history of serving community residents touched by the criminal justice system. The Fortune Society has been awarded six EPA BJT grants in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2020 and 2023 with a proven track record working with challenged populations in New York City.

Background and History

The Fortune Society was first organized in the late 1960s by playwright David Rothenberg to help New York City residents marginalized by the criminal justice system. “The Fortune Society’s vision is to create a world where those who are incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, or hampered by the criminal justice system can become positive, contributing members of society.” This multifaceted nonprofit has helped over 7,000 participants.

The target demographic

The EPA BJT program is primarily working with individuals impacted by the criminal justice system in the following communities.

- South Bronx
- Mid-Upper Manhattan
- Brooklyn neighborhoods of Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, and Crown Heights
- Jamaica, Queens

Under their FY23 grant, The Fortune Society plans to train 96 students and place at least 57 in environmental jobs.

The training program will include 284 hours of instruction

- 40-Hour HAZWOPER
- EPA Lead Renovation, Repair, and Repainting
- OSHA Construction Industry Health and Safety Program
- OSHA Confined Space



- Asbestos Handler Initial
- Global Hazard Communication
- NYC DOB four-hour Supported Scaffold User
- Site Safety Training (SST) Worker
- OSHA Lead in Construction
- New York State Mold Remediation Awareness
- Bloodborne Pathogens and Infections
- Medical and Fit Test

Students will also receive awareness training and 2-3 weeks of work readiness instruction

- Environmental Science
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Innovative Treatment Technology
- Remediation Techniques
- Stormwater Management
- Green Infrastructure
- Solid Waste Management
- Assessment and Cleanup
- Medical and Fit Test

Students who complete the training will complete the program will receive

- Two state certifications
- Five federal certifications

Key Partners

The Fortune Society illustrates how an established community service organization, with the assistance of EPA workforce funding an numerous support partners, has been able to expand participant services to provide opportunities for career challenged residents in environmental remediation. MOUs have been established with participating partners providing recruitment, retention, case management, legal, technical training and placement services. A



sample of the broad range of support partners include the following organizations.

- ANDO International
- Approved Storing & Waste Haulage
- Building Skills NY
- Commercial District Services
- Marin Workforce
- Office of Climate and Environmental Justice
- New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
- Newtown Creek Alliance
- New York City Department of Probation
- New York City Mayor's Office of Workforce Development
- Smiling Hogshhead Ranch

Student Recruitment

Program applicants are accepted from not only formerly incarcerated individuals but include all those touched by the criminal justice system.

- Prospective applicants are screened and referred by multiple reentry organizations

- GED is required
- 9-10th grade TABE for literacy and math
- No drug test performed by the BJT program – monitored by partners
- Participants must be physically able to perform occupational tasks
- Participants demonstrate a genuine interest in environmental careers

Student retention and support

Experience has demonstrated that program managers, case workers and trainers need to have a degree of tolerance when working with program participants. A low tolerance approach was tried early in the program and did not demonstrate to be more effective than working with participants and their individual needs. Each program participant is assigned a case worker in addition to an advocate who can assist with issues that impact retention. Impediments to successfully completing the program may include the following.



- Do participants have stable housing?
- Can support themselves during training?
- Are participants delinquent or overburdened by child support?
- Will court, probation and personal issues conflict with training, testing and placement?
- Are food stamp and other social services being provided as part of student support?
- Are transportation services in place?
- Are childcare and family support services in place before training begins?

Numerous support services addressing individual needs are provided by The Fortune Society and established partners. Everything from case worker support, meals, mental health support, life skills and legal aid are available based on each individual's special challenges.

Student Placement

The environmental program works closely with employers, city services and reentry organizations to leverage their expertise in environmental workforce development and training. The Foundation works specifically with environmental employers and local 78 Environmental Technicians Union. BJT graduates have an entry path into the Local 78 apprenticeship program.

Internships play a key role in student retention as well as student placement. Selected students have an opportunity for 3-month internship programs (externally funded) providing wages and transportation subsidies (metro cards). The internship programs work well for graduates not ready for full time employment and for employers hesitant about reentry employees.

Samantha would be happy to discuss their program and may be contacted at:

Samantha Pugh

Fortune Society, Queens, NY
spugh@fortunesociety.org
Phone: (347) 988-0297

<https://fortunesociety.org>



4. Addressing Special Needs of Returning Citizens

While many BJT programs include participants previously involved with the criminal justice system, several BJT grantees have extensive experience dedicated to transitional training and workforce reentry into the green economy. EPA grantees including RecycleForce, The Fortune Society, The Pauline Auberle Foundation, and others such as The Cypress Mandela Training Center all have years of experience training and placing previously incarcerated participants. With almost 10,000 returning citizens released from prison every week, most convicted of nonviolent crimes, environmental workforce development programs have an opportunity to assist this underserved population which often reside among BJT target communities.



This week's PLC introduced following issues. A more detailed discussion of these topics will be presented at this year's All Grantee Meeting and in next month's issue of the HMTRI CONNECT eNewsletter.

- Challenges faced by returning citizens
- Understanding the challenges faced by instructors and program staff
- Placement challenges that set up graduates for failure.

Frequently consequences faced by returning citizens apply without consideration of the time passed between the conviction and the opportunity being

sought since the conviction. Often the severity of the offense is not a consideration. Additionally, the experience of incarceration takes a mental and physical toll on those affected.

Challenges Faced by Returning Citizens

Consequences and restrictions vary widely between states. While some states have instituted "Ban the Box" questions on job applications, others have not.

- Often courts do not inform those convicted of the restrictions they have incurred
- Some participants return homeless with no transportation or family support
- In addition to mental distress, PTSD from incarceration is becoming more prevalent
- Often participants have persistent health issues
- Certain states require reentry candidates bear costs of administration and tracking such as court costs, restitution, ankle bracelets, and civil liabilities
- Without employment basic work life skills and personal hygiene are neglected
- Many participants are still involved or impacted by drug use
- Released inmates often return to their previous peer group rather than positive mentors
- Individuals previously convicted of any felony may be restricted from obtaining certifications and licenses, Ability to secure loans or grants, Ability to receive SNAP benefits

Understanding the challenges faced by instructors and program staff

Environmental, remediation, health, and safety instructors may not be accustomed to training participants they are likely to encounter teaching returning citizens.

- Many returning citizens have not been in a classroom environment for years.
- Language and gang affiliations have a potential for personality conflicts and classroom disruption.
- Students with mental/PTSD or anger related issues may be more prevalent than a typical classroom setting.

- Release commitments are likely to conflict with training schedules, attendance, and certification exams.
- Most returning citizens will require wrap around services which may interfere with training schedules.

Placement challenges that set up graduates for failure

Connotations associated with ex-offender, returning citizen, or previously incarcerated, work against BJT graduates before the first interview. The unemployment rate of those attempting to re-enter the workforce is 60-70%. Program managers should never send out a prospective job applicant without first addressing the following issues with the potential employer,

- Some participants may need from 10-15 hours per week related to oversight/probation/counseling and other work.
- Employers are reluctant to take a chance on reentry workers and need to understand the vetting and rigorous nature of the training program.
- Employers must be committed to assisting new hires that may have special needs.
- Transportation and housing may impede the productivity of returning citizens.
- Some employers may have concerns with legal liability associated with employing ex-offenders.
- Federal and State Security Bonds may be required to overcome employer reluctance in hiring previously convicted workers.
- Employers may be concerned, from a public relations perspective, employing workers with criminal records.
- Returning citizens are likely to be restricted from government employment.



Strategies and best practices for BJT programs working with returning citizens is an ongoing topic. HMTRI will be addressing this topic in future PLCs, the CONNECT eNewsletter, and the All Grantee Meeting as it is an integral component when working with underserved populations. Failure to address the special needs of returning citizens can easily set BJT participants up for failure when managers and instructors are not aware of the challenges discussed.

5. Funding opportunities and EPA Requests for Information (RFI)

Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes
Application Package Due March 14, 2023

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes made available \$403 million for the Lead Hazard Reduction grant program. Grants are for evaluating and mitigating threats from lead-based paint hazards in privately-owned pre-1978 housing that is not receiving federal assistance. Additional housing-related health and safety hazards in those homes; outreach, training, and related work are eligible activities.

The funds are for States and Native American Tribes that have EPA-authorized lead abatement certification programs.

EPA's Lead Abatement Program regulations provide a framework for lead abatement, risk assessment and inspections. Those performing these services are required to be trained and certified by EPA or an authorized State. States may, upon approval, receive authorization to carry out their own program in lieu of the federal program.

There is a list of EPA-authorized lead abatement certification programs at: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-based-paint-abatement-and-evaluation-program-overview> and for cities and counties/parishes.

To download the application package for this Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program, go to: [https:// www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=341222](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=341222)

The completed application package is due (through Grants.gov) March 14, 2023.

The Office held two comprehensive Question and Answer Sessions on the grant program. The recorded sessions can be found at: <https://www.gotostage.com/channel/f4a0dda684424a94be27d697e2d04326>

EPA's Environmental Justice (EJ) initiative

With the dramatic increase in EPA's Environmental Justice (EJ) funding as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL), grantees need to be aware of EJ programs that will be coming to their community.

The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program

Applications packages due April 10, 2023

This program provides financial assistance to eligible organizations working to address local environmental or public health issues in their communities. The program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders (e.g., local businesses and industry, local government, medical service providers, academia, etc.) to develop solutions to environmental or public health issue(s) at the community level. [Learn More Here](#)

The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS) Cooperative Agreement Program provides financial assistance to eligible organizations working to address local environmental or public health issues in their communities. The program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders (e.g., local businesses and industry, local government, medical service providers, academia, etc.) to develop solutions to environmental or public health issue(s) at the community level. The EJCPS Program requires selected applicants, or recipients, to use the [EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model](#) to address local environmental or public health issues in a collaborative manner with various stakeholders such as communities, industry, academic institutions, and others. The case studies listed in the resources section below highlight some of the successful strategies of previous projects.

To apply for this opportunity, [view the RFA on Grants.gov](#). Applications packages must be submitted on or before April 10, 2023. Applicants should plan for projects to begin on October 1, 2023.



EPA Seeks Input on Inflation Reduction Act Environmental and Climate Justice Program

The deadline to provide input is March 17, 2023.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking input on its Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) program funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. This program provides EPA with approximately \$3 billion for ECJ program grants and technical assistance for environmental and climate justice efforts that benefit overburdened communities.

ECJ Program includes, but is not limited to:

- ECJ Program Design
- Types of Projects to Fund
- Reducing Application Barriers
- Reporting and Oversight
- Technical Assistance

"This Request for Information allows EPA to hear from communities and their partners on how the grant programs can work better for the communities that need this support the most."

[More information on the Inflation Reduction Act.](#)

[Learn more about environmental justice at EPA.](#)



Increased Funding for Superfund Cleanups Bipartisan Law Allocates \$3.5 Billion toward Superfund Cleanup

The Environmental Protection Agency announced an additional \$1 billion in funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to be used for cleanup efforts at 22 Superfund sites. The infrastructure law was written to address environmental justice issues. This is the second \$1 billion round of funding, following an initial wave in December 2021. This funding round includes sites in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas,

Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Virginia, and Vermont. EPA plans on using BIL funds to speed up 100 and begin cleanup of Superfund projects across the United States. At the time of the first round of funding, 49 unfunded sites existed across 17 states.

6. Brownfields Training Related Virtual Meetings



National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Calls

The purpose of these calls is to inform communities about EPA's environmental justice work and enhance opportunities to maintain an open dialogue with environmental justice advocates. As environmental justice continues to be integrated into EPA programs and policies, the Agency hopes that these calls will help reaffirm EPA's continued commitment to work with community groups and the public to strengthen local environmental and human health outcomes.

March 21, 2023, 2 - 4 p.m. (Eastern)

EPA Environmental Justice Initiatives

Listening Session and Dialogue: Q&A about ongoing EJ Initiatives

For more information and registration, go to:

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

Register for EPA's upcoming series of webinars for grant applicants and recipients

Participants will hear from EPA staff about key aspects of the grants process and have the opportunity to submit questions. Additional information about each webinar and instructions for how to register is provided below. **Advance registration is required, and you must register for each webinar separately.**

Presentation materials and a list of helpful links will be available before each webinar on EPA's website at:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-grants-webinars>.

After the webinars, a recording and transcript will be posted to the same webpage. For more information on how to prepare for EPA OGD grants webinars, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/tips-attending-grants-webinars>.

Financial Management

March 15: 1:00-2:00pm ET

Hear from staff at EPA's Research Triangle Park Finance Center about grant financial management, including how to successfully enroll in the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system, properly draw down and account for funds, make adjustments in ASAP, submit financial reports, and financially close out a grant.

Competition Process

March 28: 2:00-3:00pm ET

Learn how to find and successfully apply for EPA grants.

What to Expect When You're Expecting... a Grant

March 29: 1:00-2:00pm ET

EPA will review what grant recipients need to do and look for when they receive a grant award, discuss how to understand terms and conditions of grants, and talk through EPA's oversight once a grant is awarded.

7. Brownfield Conferences and Seminars

Registration & Sponsorships for the 2023 GBA Brownfield Seminar are Open!
Tuesday, April 11, 2023



Early Bird Registration is Open:
Register for GBA's 2023 Brownfield Seminar Now



GBA 2023 members: save on registration for the 2023 Brownfield Seminar with our early bird discount. Still need to renew for 2023? Click [here](#) for membership information and take advantage of this opportunity to save on one of the year's most valued events.

Who: Stay tuned - presenters will be announced soon, but we are excited to present a full slate of timely, valuable content from industry leaders once again this year!

When: Tuesday, April 11, 2023, beginning at 8 am. Content will conclude around 5 pm, but we hope you'll plan to stay for our reception - always a great time with fantastic networking!

Where: Back by popular demand, we're returning to the Georgia State University Knowles Law Center located at 85 Park Pl. NE, Atlanta, GA 30303.

For those who cannot attend in person, we are presenting this as a hybrid event once again this year, so feel free to register for virtual attendance as well.

What: A full day of programming and networking that once again will offer up to 8 hours of CE & CLE credit.* Now its ninth year, GBA's Brownfield Seminar has sold out in person every year, with virtual participation eclipsing those participation levels.

Click here to [REGISTER NOW](#)



**Central Massachusetts Brownfields Roundtable
MassHire Central Region Workforce Board
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce
March 15, 11AM**

Please contact Bruce Mendelson if you are interested in participating in this workforce development roundtable.

Below is a snapshot summary of a current example of “what right looks like” in terms of environmental remediation efforts in Central Massachusetts.

In Year 2 of the MassHire Brownfields Job Training program, graduates can earn four environmental remediation certifications: OSHA-10-hour Construction Safety; OSHA-40-hour Asbestos Worker/Supervisor, OSHA 40-hour HAZWOPER, and American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED). Trainees also receive 16 hours of self-awareness and “soft skills” development delivered by certified trainers.

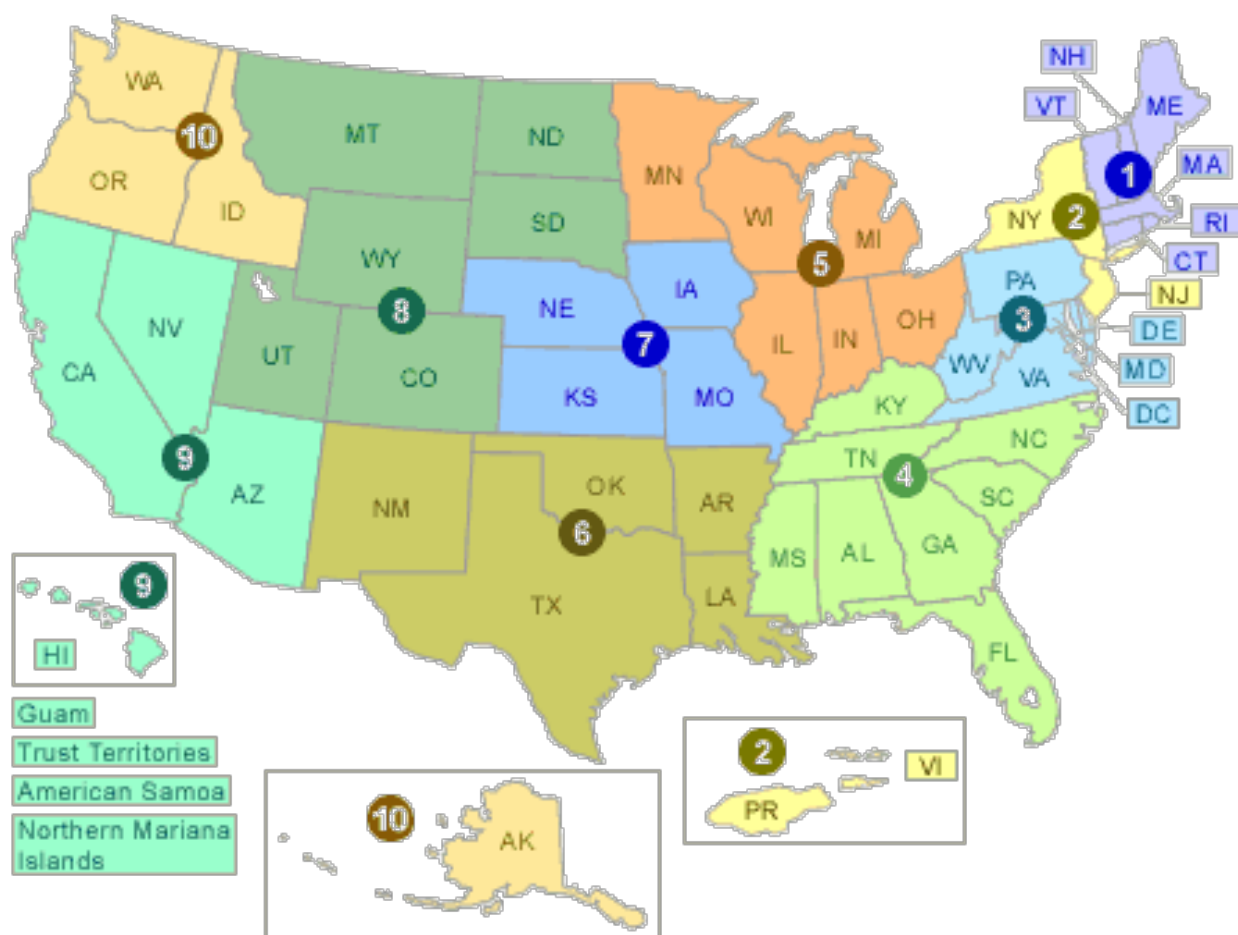
In addition to offering employer partners “first crack” on hiring program graduates, to further incentivize potential employers, MassHire offers a \$300 “Program Graduate Hiring Stipend” to those who hire BJT program grads. The stipend is intended to cover onboarding costs such as an Asbestos Physical, Respirator Fit Test, testing/licensing fees, etc.

8. Contact EPA Regional Coordinators

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

EPA Region 1 CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT William “Bill” Lariviere Phone: (617) 918-1231 E-mail: lariviere.william@epa.gov	EPA Region 2 NJ, NY, PR, VI Schenine Mitchell Phone: (212) 637-3283 E-mail: mitchell.schenine@epa.gov
EPA Region 3 DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV Gianna Rosati Phone: (215) 814-3406 E-mail: Rosati.Gianna@epa.gov	EPA Region 4 AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN Olga Perry Phone: (404) 562-8534 E-mail: perry.olga@epa.gov
EPA Region 5 IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI Linda Morgan Phone: (312) 886-4747 E-mail: morgan.linda@epa.gov	EPA Region 6 AR, LA, NM, OK, TX Elizabeth Reyes Phone: (214) 665-3163 E-mail: reyes.elizabeth@epa.gov
EPA Region 7 IA, KS, MO, NE Alma Moreno Lahm Phone: (913) 551-7380 E-mail: moreno-lahm.alma@epa.gov	EPA Region 8 CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY Christine Michaud-Tilly Phone: (303) 312-6706 E-mail: MichaudTilly.Christine@epa.gov

<p>EPA Region 9 AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU Nova Blazej Phone: (415) 972-3846 E-mail: blazej.nova@epa.gov</p> <p>Noemi Emeric-Ford Phone: (213) 244-1821 E-mail: meric-ford.noemi@epa.gov</p>	<p>EPA Region 10 AK, ID, OR, WA Angel Ip Phone: (206) 553-1673 E-mail: ip.angel@epa.gov</p>
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9. Join Us for the Next PLC March 15, 2023



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

<https://zoom.us/j/93598658578>

Meeting ID: 935 9865 8578

On the road - Computer not available?

You can phone in using the nearest location

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

Meeting ID: 935 9865 8578

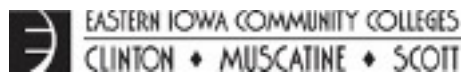
The objective of the (PLC) is to promote and share innovative strategies among those interested in establishing community based environmental job training programs. Our sessions allow participants to stay in touch with BJT happenings, ask questions, showcase their programs, and help others. The Environmental Workforce PLC is open to all and there is no cost or obligation to attend. Join us when you can. If you would like to invite a guest, feel free to forward this email.

Showcase your program – Biweekly, the PLC will hear from one of our grantees, discuss opportunities or exchange ideas related to environmental job training. HMTRI is inviting you to participate in the next cycle of Professional Learning Community ZOOMs. If you would like to present at an upcoming PLC contact:

Mike at:

msenew@gmail.com/

PLC notes presented represent individual opinions and ideas from Professional Learning Community participants and BJT recipients. They do not represent EPA policy, guidance or opinions and should not be taken as such.



The Brownfields Training PLC is sponsored under Cooperative Agreement with The US Environmental Protection Agency in association with the Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute (HMTRI) of the Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC).