

PLC Session 289 - March 15, 2023



Southwest Economic Solutions

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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:

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

Conference Registration

<https://forms.gle/JbyZeYeq2hUAoGAK8>

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 will hold the 2023 conference 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](#)

Yes you may nominate your organization for consideration.

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](#)

Region 3 is initiating quarterly open discussions

Region 3 has announced a quarterly Zoom call as an opportunity to meet with Regional Brownfield stakeholders, including EPA Brownfield Project Officers, technical assistance providers as well as current and prospective Brownfield grantees. Open discussions will address challenges, and provide input on topics that impact the community. For more information and registration, check out section 6 of these PLC notes.

2. Questions from PLC Participants

Question: When I used the online hotel registration, it appeared that I will be charged for the entire hotel stay. I do not appreciate that my charge card may be charged for the room.

Response: We understand your concern regarding the apparent hotel charge for your room reservation. The hotel explained that this is a standard "reservation procedure" for many hotels. **Note that your credit card has not been billed.** HMTRI has a direct billing agreement with the hotel and people who register for the conference using the HMTRI booking code will be covered by this agreement. The hotel needs the credit card number to hold your room and for incidentals not covered by our agreement. On your final bill, you will not be charged for your room.

Please let us know if you have any other questions. sfenton103@aol.com

Again, thank you for registering and we look forward to seeing you at the conference.

Question: Although we have not yet applied for a BJT grant, training returning citizens may be a good fit for our organization. Could you provide us with contact information of grantees who have been successful with transitional training?

Response: Below are PLC participants who have indicated that they would be happy to discuss their reentry programs in more detail.

Paul Sammons, Recycleforce
psammons@recycleforce.org

Jake Markosky , Pauline Auberle Foundation
jakem@aubarle.org

Samantha Pugh, Fortune Society
spugh@fortunesociety.org

Eric Shanks, Cypress Mandela Training Center
eshanks@cypressmandela.org

Each of these programs offer outstanding transitional training with wrap around services for returning citizens. Because of the extensive partnering required we suggest you begin now in preparing to apply for the next round of BJT grants with a Request for Applications expected this Spring.

3. Southwest Economic Solutions



Thanks go to Karyn and Mac for today's presentation.
Please check out Mac's PowerPoint presentation attached.

The Southwest Economic Solutions Corporation (SWES) targets returning citizens, young adults, young immigrants, minorities, and veterans in Detroit. As an adjunct to other programs the goal of the program is to provide opportunities for individuals to achieve greater economic success. Here is a summary of the Southwest Economic Solutions BJT program.

Primary target community

The primary target area is Zip code, 48217 a neighborhood southeast of Dearborn Michigan. Zip code 48217 is primarily located in Wayne County. Portions of the target community are contained within or border the city limits of Detroit, Dearborn, Ecorse, Lincoln Park, Melvindale, and River Rouge. The percentage of school students eligible for free or reduced lunch is 90.7% with 100% of the school having Title 1 status. The unemployment rate runs about 7%.



Training Program

Every BJT participant receives a full spectrum of wraparound services and training

This allows SWES to provide a total package to all participants. Wraparound services and training include the following.

1. Adult basic literacy, ESL and High School Equivalency
2. Workforce preparation-Employability Skills, contextualized materials, career planning, conflict resolution, and transitions to post-secondary
3. Workforce Training Opportunities-IET Model
4. Workplace Literacy-Being on-site for education and employment training
5. Financial Education/Coaching
6. Homebuyer/Foreclosure Assistance
7. Expungement opportunities
8. Workplace Payday Loan Opportunities (coming soon!)

BJT Technical Training

Southwest partners with Detroit Training Center to provide EPA job training in 40-hour Hazwoper and CDL A. Additional coursework includes the following.

- Hazwoper 40-hour
- OSHA 30
- Lead remediation
- Asbestos remediation
- First Aid/CPR

The CDL program will run 6-8 weeks and results in students receiving both Hazwoper 40 and CDL A . Participants will spend the two weeks reviewing and testing for the TIP exam. Once completed they will go to the yard for practice in driving as well as the Hazwoper training.

Student Support and Retention

SWES maintains an extensive partner network to provide wraparound services and counseling to students. The result is an 87% completion rate and 100% placement record. Each participant is assigned three caseworkers to assist with support services.

- Case manager
- Financial coach
- Job placement coach



Key Partners

SWES partners with Marathon and the Kemeny Center to provide outreach for services. Additional partners include the following organizations.

- Detroit Training Center
- Community Social Services of Wayne County
- Schneider National
- Local Workforce Investment Board (Job Center)
- Detroit Economic Solutions Corporation

Placement

The SWES grant focuses on small classes, attention to student needs, and program completion. The following results have been achieved.

- 2 cohorts with 15 enrolled
- 13 completed with 87% completion rate
- 100% employment
- Average salary \$22.46/hr.



Mac and Karyn would be happy to discuss student support, wraparound services, and their BJT program. You may contact them at the following addresses. Please check out the PowerPoint presentation attached with the PLC Notes.

Karyn Goven, Workforce Director
Kgoven@swsol.org

Mac Elabed, Federal Project Manager, Senior Manager
ielabed@swsol.org



4. Strategies to Consider when Training Previously Incarcerated BJT Participants

With almost 10,000 returning citizens released from prison every week, most convicted of nonviolent crimes, BJT environmental workforce development programs have an opportunity to assist an underserved population which often reside among BJT target communities. During the last two sessions, the PLC began a discussion related to transitioning previously incarcerated individuals into the environmental workforce. Topics covered included the following.

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

Today we are addressing strategies that BJT program may consider when working with returning citizens.

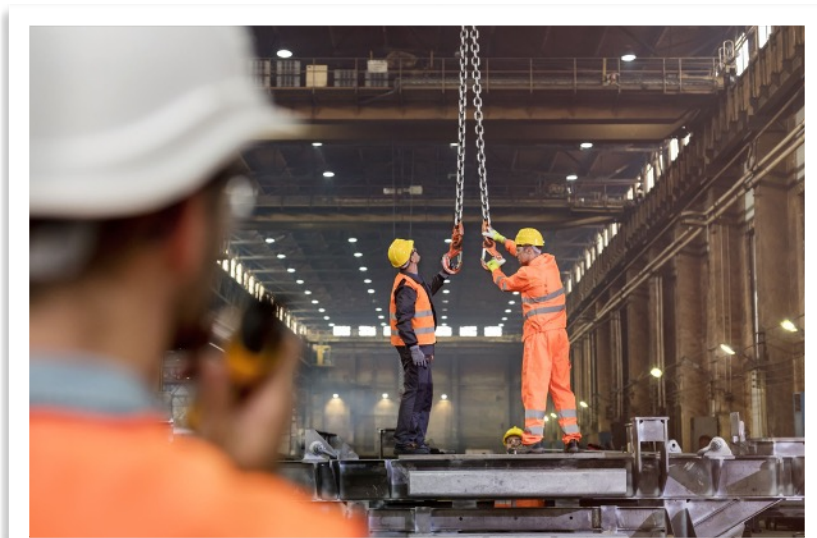


Strategies for Recruitment and Assessment of Returning Citizens

A difficult question for program staff to ask is the following: “Is the BJT program sufficiently funded and partnered to address the needs of re-entry applicants?” The answer may be “no.” In such cases, the proper approach is to determine who will be selected for the few seats available for BJT instruction and certification. With 20 seats per cycle, opportunities must be

given to the worthiest and most likely to succeed in employment. It is of no value to a participant if he or she cannot graduate, obtain sustained employment, or disrupt opportunities afforded to others.

- Determine if the BJT program is capable of serving participants with special needs.
- What level of offense is considered acceptable for entry into the BJT program?
- When and what were the circumstances of the incarceration.
- Can returning citizens put former issues, toxic relationships and "baggage" behind?
- Will housing and transportation be an issue in attending classes?
- Are program offerings flexible enough to accommodate participant absences?
- Will participants with special needs disrupt schedules, training, and certification?
- Is there a path for reentering the program if circumstances are beyond applicant control?
- Are participants committed to program requirements, rules, and expectations?



Strategies for Instructors and Program Staff to Increase Student Retention.

- Can partners provide wrap around services if needed?
- Are local partners able to deliver lunch daily if required?
- Are local health and wellness facilities available to participants?
- Are legal services available to aid and consultation?
- When possible, provide paid transitional work to supplement training.
- Extensive use of peer-to-peer networking including volunteer mentors providing support and guidance.
- Encourage peer to peer mentoring. Encourage graduates to return to the program to mentor a new participant.
- Encourage and support team building exercises.
- Provide uniforms to mitigate potential adversarial relationships.
- Engage in exercise before each session to begin the training day.
- Institute the issuance of uniforms to mitigate gang rivalries.
- Have instructors had sufficient experience working with reentry classes?
- Can curriculum be presented graphically and with demonstrations?
- Will language become an issue to successful completion of the curriculum?
- Always have a clear path from participant to program staff.

Strategies that Set Up Graduates for Success

As previously noted, a failure to employ BJT graduates is often a result of insufficient staffing and attention to graduate placement. Employers interested in employing ex-offenders need to be recruited prior sending graduates out for an interview.

- Some employers are returning citizens themselves eager to help others and “make a difference”.
- Many employers are interested in returning citizens who have been vetted, screened, and trained.
- Seek out employers with special programs for returning citizens.
- Never let a graduate go for an interview without reviewing reentry challenges with potential employers.
- Employers should plan on 10-15 hours per week related to oversight/probation/counseling, and community service when informed in advance.
- Participants completing the course of study have demonstrated reliability and determination.
- Consider smaller employers likely to take a chance of reentry workers.
- Consider manpower firms able to indemnify their workforce.
- Many states have special employment incentives for reentry workers. Federal and State security bonds may be available to ease employer concerns.
- BJT graduates are vetted, screened, and carry with them as much as \$5,000 worth of certifications.
- BJT graduates have demonstrated their desire to begin a new life.
- Previous graduates are the best sales force for BJT graduates.



Clearly, there is lot to unpack when considering transitional training. Reentry into the green economy is an ongoing topic. Hopefully as a group, HMTRI and BJT grantees can expand strategies and best practices when working with this special underserved and challenging population. HMTRI will be addressing this topic in future PLCs, All Grantee Meetings, and in this month's issue of the HMTRI CONNECT Newsletter.

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

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](#)

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>.

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.

Quarterly Region 3 Brownfield Community Zoom Calls

By bringing our region together more often, we hope to build a rich, experienced, and inspiring support network.

What are we offering?

An opportunity to meet once a quarter with the R3 Brownfield Community, including EPA Brownfield Project Officers, Technical Assistance to Brownfield (TAB), as well as current and prospective Brownfield grantees, and a platform to elevate your successes, challenges, and provide input on topics that impact the community.

What will we be discussing?

Each session will be themed based on a topic the region would like to discuss. Some current ideas:

- Looking for Inspiration for Projects?
- Navigating the EPA Grant System
- Strategies for Leveraging Money
- Public Health and Brownfields
- Engaging your Communities During Redevelopment

This first session will be an introduction and extension of the Open House where we will be asking...

1. What have been some challenges in launching your Brownfield Program?
2. What are some resources that would help your Brownfield Program?
3. What are some topics that could be beneficial to discuss with your R3 community colleagues?

To register follow the link [here!](#) (Before March 27th)

This will be an open discussion, and everyone is invited to participate orally and in the chat. To optimize conversation, please let us know on the registration ahead of time if there is a specific discussion question you would like to be given the opportunity to speak, and we will do our best to facilitate an allotted time.

If you have any questions, please reach out to adams.sydney@epa.gov

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.

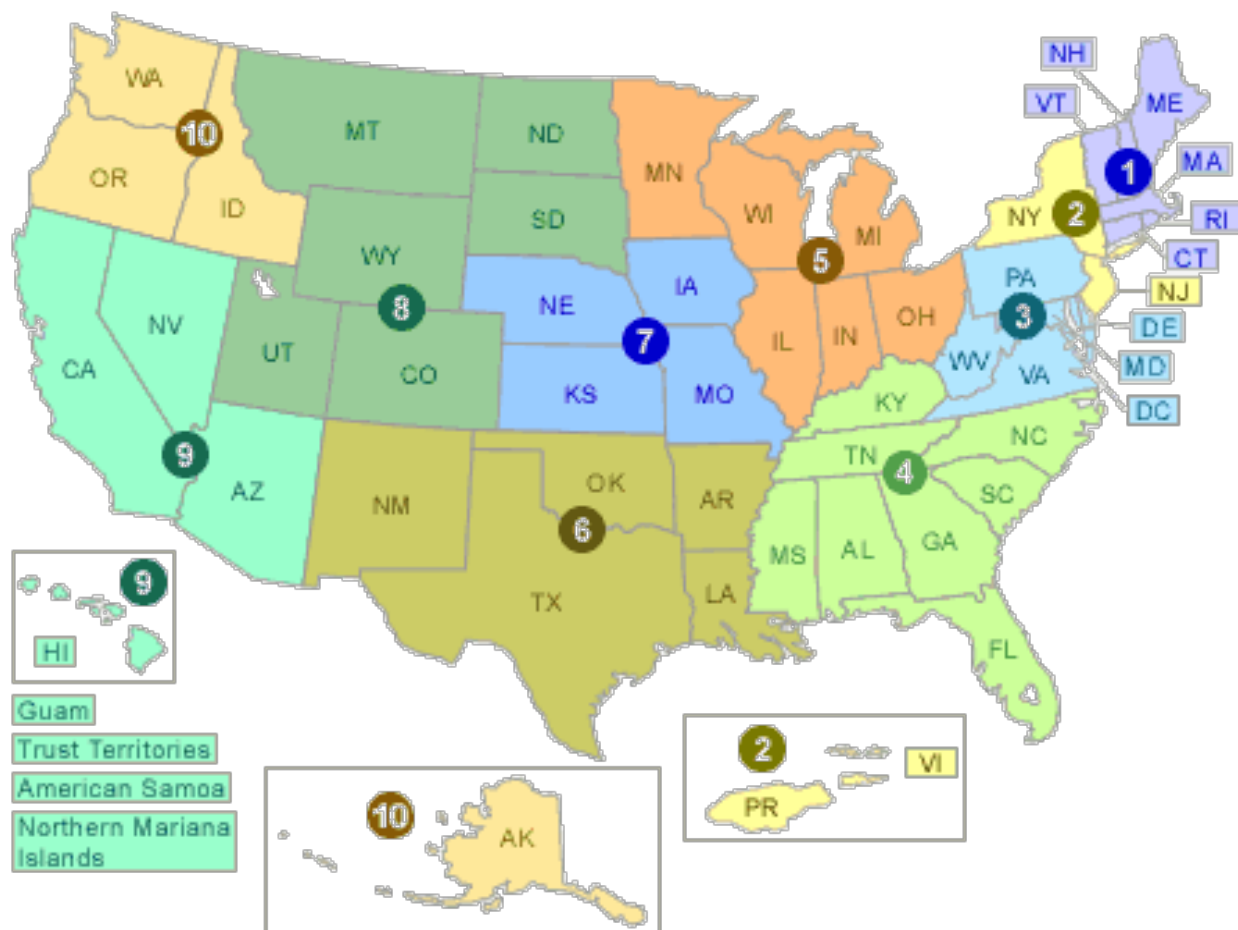
For those who cannot attend in person, we are presenting this as a hybrid event once again this year, so feel free to register for virtual attendance as well.

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**

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
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9. Join Us for the Next PLC March 29, 2023



Join a conversation with EPA Brownfields Job Training grant recipients, alumni, and interested stakeholders. PLCs are scheduled bi-weekly on Wednesdays at 2:00pm (EST). 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

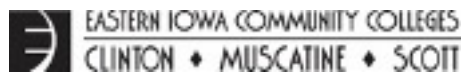
The objective of the (PLC) is to promote and share innovative strategies among those interested in establishing community based environmental job training programs. Our sessions allow participants to stay in touch with BJT happenings, ask questions, showcase their programs, and help others. The Environmental 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).