

Outreach Webinar Questions and Answers

Below is a transcript of questions received during the two outreach webinars that cover the FY17 Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training guidelines. Answers that may have been answered incorrectly or required supplemental information will immediately be followed with correctional information.

Q: *Guidelines say 11-pt font, webinar said 12-point. Which is correct?*

A: The narrative proposal and transmittal letter must be typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper with a font size no smaller than 11 point and have one (1)-inch margins

Correction: The answer to this question is correct; additionally, if there are any other discrepancies between what is included in the webinar and what is written within the RFP, the RFP is the information you should use when preparing your proposal

Q: *Is single space permitted or is double spaced required?*

A: Single space is permitted.

Q: Will a table of content be counted against our 15-page limit in the narrative?

A: Generally, proposals do not include a table of contents since there is a uniform structure of answering criteria listed in the RFP.

Q: *Can you clarify eligibility of community colleges? I thought the slide said trade schools were not eligible to apply.*

A: Public and nonprofit private educational institutions are eligible to apply. Trade schools do not usually fall under the above categories.

Q: *We are a state agency working with a local non-profit to develop a water/wastewater mentorship & job training program for people incarcerated at a local pre-release unit. Would that be eligible?*

A: Yes, state governmental agencies and non-profit organizations are both eligible.

Q: *Can an organization submit two proposals? If so, is it possible that both would be awarded?*

A: No, an organization can only submit one proposal per fiscal year.

Q: *If training is contracted out as a package, do we still need to provide cost for each class?*

A: If the training is contracted out, it is helpful to provide the cost of each class or at least an estimate provided by the contractor.

Q: *Not clear if costs for licensing, certification, medical exam fees, etc. are eligible?*
A: Costs associated with health exams (e.g., pulmonary function tests), drug testing, or licensing fees directly related to the training and/or the placement of graduates in environmental work are eligible uses of grant funds. Specify in the proposal if it will be part of grant funds or participant burdens.

Q: *Can grant funds be used for respirator fit testing, OSHA 10-hour construction safety class and asbestos medical screening?*
A: Unfortunately, OSHA 10-hr construction safety falls under general construction training, which is ineligible under this program. The costs for respirator fit testing and asbestos medical screening are eligible.

Correction: The answer given in the webinar, and seen above, is **incorrect**. Grant funds may be used for OSHA 10-hr so long as it is related to an environmental training program. The course covers, among other topics, enhanced health and safety and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Q: *Would lead remediation training be eligible?*
A: Yes - lead remediation training is eligible.

Q: *Does training that comes with a certification necessarily garner more points than one without? What if the labor market research shows that both certified and non-certified training is needed locally?*
A: We understand that not all training results in a certification. What's important is that you address the elements in the guidelines the best that you can and explain how the labor market research requires this specific training whether it results in a certification or not.

Q: *Employers are requesting fork lift training - can we offer that?*
A: Yes, training in commercial driver's licenses, forklift, and machine operations are eligible to the extent that they are associated with the transportation of hazardous waste.

Q: *What training related items may be purchased for students such as instructional resources and field PPE?*
A: Those may fall into supplies (see the budget table that is currently on the screen). Additionally, instructional resources and field PPE is generally considered an eligible and allowable expense. We do encourage applicants to leverage resources where possible. Some programs have been successful in getting donations from companies (e.g. home depot).

Q: *Can we use grant funds to provide training to students already employed in the environmental field?*
A: Our program is for unemployed and underemployed community members. If this training will further improve these students' opportunities, as a reflection of the market analysis, then yes.

Correction: Funds under the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training program **must** be used to target unemployed and underemployed individuals. If these individuals you have some sort of employment within the environmental field could be considered underemployed (i.e., the availability of work is inconsistent and limited, highly seasonal, etc.)

Q: *Will you please define output and outcome again*

A: In general, outputs are quantitative and outcomes are qualitative.

Q: *The RFP states that the majority of funding will go to projects in the Brownfields category (\$2.8 million out of \$3 million) rather than the seven other categories of training so is it realistic to apply for a program in one of the other categories?*

A: Yes, it is realistic to apply for funding if your curriculum includes courses from the other categories. Funding levels are provided for information purposes only and are not meant to hinder the design of your program. Many of the categories compliment courses that can be funded with Brownfields funding. Keep in mind the funding amounts for wastewater training and integrated pest management if you plan to include those courses in your program.

Q: *How can an applicant determine how large of a target area is too large. For example, a proposed area of over 1 million acres but the population is only about 25,000.*

A: Target area varies from applicant to applicant. A target area that may make sense for one applicant to focus on, may not make sense for another. Given that you have provided the information within your proposal, EPA makes into consideration your community type (i.e. rural versus urban) when evaluating your target area

Q: *Do we need to call out a specific clean-up project in our proposal? What if there is not a project that is ready for clean up now but will in 2 years but they have not hired out the project?*

A: You do not need to develop a clean-up project. It is important to demonstrate that your program will prepare trainees to cleanup that brownfield project and to include the status of the brownfields in the target area.

Q: *Is the anticipated placement rate over total enrolled or total completed? That is 35/50 enrolled or 32/45 completed?*

A: Each grant award is anticipated to result in at least 50 individuals completing training, with a minimum job placement rate of 70%.

Q: *If we apply for 3 years of funding, is the \$200,000 limit the yearly or total 3-year budget? For example, can we ask for \$66,660 a year for 3 years for a total of \$200,000 or \$200,000/year for 3 years for a total of \$600,000?*

A: Yes, a total of \$200,000 for the three-year period. It does not necessarily need to be the same amount in each year. The training will occur in the first two years, so those years may use more of the funding.

- Q:** *Do the participants need to be tracked 1 year from when they completed the actual training or one year after all trainings/cohorts are completed?*
- A:** Students are usually tracked 1 year after they complete training. If they are not immediately placed, tracking may be longer.
- Q:** *Can grant funds be used in the third year to pay for the student tracking? or does funding have to be spent in first two years?*
- A:** Grant funds should be used in the third year to track student placement, not all funds are used in the first two years.
- Q:** *Will the application be scored lower if some of the employment opportunities are outside of (but relatively close to) a rural target area in larger population centers?*
- A:** It's important that your application, and project goals support the targeted community; and that those goals are a reflection of the market analysis for the target area. You define both the area and community. I can't really speak to how proposals will be scored other than what is in the guidelines.
- Q:** *Does the employer commitment to hire graduates need to be quantified in their letter of support? Does a commitment to interview viewed differently than a commitment to hire?*
- A:** The employer commitment to hire graduates does not need to be quantified in their letter of support but it is helpful if it is. Yes, a commitment to interview is viewed differently than an employer's commitment to hire.
- Q:** *Can you clarify organizations from employer community?*
- A:** Are you asking for examples of organizations of the employer community? If so, local businesses, environmental contractors, labor unions, and site owners would be considered part of the employer community.
- Q:** *Can a letter of support represent more than one organization? I.e., signed by several relevant organizations.*
- A:** It is preferred that relevant organizations provide individual letters of support of how they will specifically be involved.
- Q:** *Are there any examples or sample labor market assessments we can review if this is something we are unfamiliar with? If there are no examples you can provide, specific best practices for conducting a study or the criteria used to evaluate these studies would be helpful.*
- A:** TAB EZ (<https://www.ksutab.org/tools>) allows you to view successful proposals from previous years, including responses to the labor market assessment criterion. There's no one-size required format for the labor market assessment, but the examples will give you a good idea of what others have done.

HMTRI has information about conducting Community and Labor Market Assessments on their Brownfields Toolbox website at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/labor-market-introduction/>. It also includes a sample that can be customized to meet the needs of other organizations.

Q: *Do you have any examples of the specific type of employers who have hired graduates of past and existing programs?*

A: You might want to check with your Region. We normally publish success stories about this type of question.

Q: *On the other factors checklist, the last item is proposals that seek to serve veterans. Should this be checked if we are serving veterans as part of the overall population that includes non-veterans should we check the box, or is this box reserved for programs that primarily serve veterans?*

A: Yes. Proposals that seek to target veterans, even partially, should check this box and reference where additional information pertinent to this other factor can be found within the proposal.

Q: *Should current grants be considered "past grants"?*

A: Stick with grants that are closed, since active grants will not fully include funds expended and accomplishments.

Q: *Does that mean do NOT include current EWDJT grant?*

A: No. If you are a current EWDJT grantee, you should be discussing your management of this grant under the programmatic capability section, in addition to your experience managing any past closed EWDJT grants.

Q: *Our Brownfields Job Training Program was closed out in 2007 and I no longer have records. However, we are also the WIOA sub-state grantee thus have experience in program administration- can I provide information as both a past EPA grantee and an "other" grantee?*

A: It is either/or, so please submit information about your past Brownfields grant. You should respond to Section 5.D (programmatic capability) as a previous EWDJT grantee, and not "other". You can contact your EPA Regional POC to get the data from the 2007 grant (we keep it all in our ACRES system). You will also be able to discuss your WIOA experience under Section 5.B. Organizational Experience.