

U.S. EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program

Formerly known as the Brownfields Job Training Program prior to 2011, EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training program provides grants on a competitive basis to nonprofit organizations and other eligible entities to recruit, train, and place predominantly low-income and minority, unemployed and under-employed residents, including veterans, from solid and hazardous waste-impacted communities. Residents learn the skills needed to secure full-time, sustainable employment in the environmental field, including a focus on assessment and cleanup activities. These grants help prepare people for green jobs that reduce environmental contamination and provide more sustainable futures for the communities most affected by solid and hazardous waste contamination. This brochure includes two case studies highlighting the accomplishments and successes of job training grantees.

Since 1998, EPA has provided 169 Brownfields Job Training grants totaling over \$35 million. Of the more than 6,700 who have completed EPA-funded training, more than 4,400 obtained employment in the environmental field, earning an average starting wage of \$14.69/hour. The graduates of these programs promote EPA's goals of sustainable land reuse and environmental protection, not only through cleanup of site contamination and sustainable redevelopment of brownfields, but also by applying knowledge that reflects today's environmental and energy opportunities.

This program brings together community groups, job training organizations, Workforce Investment Boards and Career One Stop centers, educators, community colleges, labor groups, investors, lenders, developers, and environmental contractors to jointly provide environmental employment and training for residents in communities impacted by contaminated properties. Local training programs must demonstrate connections to real employment opportunities by working with employers to survey training and hiring needs as well as building partnerships where training results in long-term, sustainable employment before submitting a proposal for grant funding.

Types of Training

Based on conversations with local training providers and placement agencies, traditional training in hazardous waste related remediation still seems to be a steady guarantee for placement of graduates. This includes traditional "clean up" certifications in lead and asbestos abatement, HAZWOPER, OSHA, confined space entry, mold remediation, and a solid foundation in environmental site sampling, as well as supplemental training in construction skills and the trades.

Additionally, the Program has learned through the years that by providing comprehensive training in a variety of environmental skills and certifications, graduates are more likely to secure not only short-term contractual assessment and cleanup work, but full-time careers within the environmental field. Examples of eligible supplemental training include:

Job Training Highlights

- EPA has provided 169 total brownfields job training grants
- Job Training Grants total more than \$35 million
- More than 6,700 participants have completed EPA-funded training
- More than 4,400 graduates have obtained employment with an average starting hourly wage of \$14.69

- Green remediation techniques,
- Federal facilities and Superfund site-specific cleanup,
- Recycling center operator training,
- Recycling of demolition materials,
- Spill response and cleanup,
- First responder, disaster site worker, first-aid, and emergency response,
- Site surveying, blueprint reading, inventorying, mapping, and GIS,
- Commercial driver's license (CDL), heavy machinery operations, forklift operator, and HAZMAT,
- Weatherization and energy auditing,
- Landscaping, native plant revegetation, and ecological restoration,
- Stormwater management design and low impact development,
- Site preparation for solar and renewable energy, and
- Leaking underground storage tank removal.

Job Training Graduates: Rising to the Challenge of Greening the U.S. Economy

Throughout the United States, recent program graduates are applying their improved skills to the demands of a "greening economy." As a result of the country's shift from an industrial-based economy, thousands of abandoned manufacturing properties, including brownfields, Superfund Sites, and other solid and hazardous waste sites dot the country's landscape. Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program graduates are among the vanguard of green economy workers cleaning up and redeveloping these sites. Other graduates, by adding to industrial-sector skill sets through supplemental training, are filling emerging green jobs such as solar energy system installation, green infrastructure installation, or energy efficiency auditing/installation. Employers are benefitting from the experience, dedication, and place-based connections that Program graduates bring to these revitalizing jobs in their home communities.

King County Work Training Program

King County, Washington

In a writeup titled, "Beyond Bars: Program trains offenders for green jobs Beyond Bars," the King County Brownfield Jobs Training Program was highlighted as one of two workforce development programs in Washington State honored by Governor Christine Gregoire. Through its Brownfields Job Training Program, King County helps formerly incarcerated County residents move beyond the stigma of jail time and into living-wage "green jobs" focused on environmental cleanup. The program won the "Governor's Workforce and Economic Development Best Practices Award" in 2010.

The King County Jobs Initiative (KCJI) is a long-standing program with a proven track record. Established in 1998, the program serves low-income, disadvantaged residents of South King County, and has placed more than 1,500 students into full-time employment. Participants are trained in high-demand, environmental skills including hazardous waste removal.

In 2007, KCJI took on a new challenge by focusing exclusively on those with recent criminal records. This population is among the hardest to serve, as employers are often reluctant to hire those with prior convictions. Many ex-offenders also have low education levels, limited work experience and other major barriers to getting jobs.

Focusing on the offender population has required KCJI to gain a deeper understanding of the criminal justice system and the many organizations that serve this population.

Program staff developed relationships with state and county Work Release Programs and the King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, jails and other community groups serving this population. The program also enhanced its job clubs, training and job readiness to focus on the barriers many former offenders face.

Today, 100 percent of the Brownfield Job Training program's participants have a prior conviction.

According to Program Manager Carolyn Bledsoe, "KCJI has been successful in overcoming employer hesitation to hiring workers with criminal records because of its close relationship with employers and its history of providing skilled workers in the past."

KCJI works with community-based organizations, community and technical colleges, labor unions, employers and others to create customized training that meets employers' specific job needs. To date, King County has trained over 314 participants and placed over 218 into jobs with an average wage of \$17.66 an hour. The Program provides an advanced, 238-hour curriculum in topics such as HAZWOPER, soil vapor extraction, bioremediation, wastewater treatment, lead and asbestos abatement, and confined space. Graduates also receive Basic Science, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and construction readiness certifications upon completion.

The Program has had many success stories throughout the years, but the most compelling stories reflect the challenges of our current participants and our employers. Three young women, Amani, Daema and Kelly graduated from the Program and are working with wages ranging from \$14 to \$30 an hour. They all told KCJI how honored they were to be able to participate in the brownfields training and find good paying jobs in spite of their past mistakes. Each of their employers has provided them with additional training and a host of other skill sets for promotional opportunities.

Another KCJI success story involves Roy, who completed the training but immediately fell out of touch. Three months later, Roy contacted his case manager and explained that he was grateful for the training and had partnered with another person to form a small, minority owned contracting company. One of the contracts the company landed was a long-term agreement that would pay him and another worker \$40 per hour. Roy has since been a guest speaker at the program, where he encouraged participants to be persistent and not to give up while seeking employment. He also stressed the value of the training and his belief that there are limitless opportunities for graduates who are dedicated to finding jobs.

"KCJI has been successful in overcoming employer hesitation to hiring workers with criminal records because of its close relationship with employers and its history of providing skilled workers in the past."

**—Carolyn Bledsoe,
KCJI Program Manager**



Students of the King County Work Training Program participate in HAZMAT training.

JFYNetWorks

Boston, Massachusetts

F. Scott Fitzgerald said American lives have no second acts. Alan Arrajj would respectfully disagree.

Alan was laid off from his construction job in September, 2009. The Worcester resident was 40. With the long term decline of construction and manufacturing, compounded by the recession, Alan wasn't sure where a 40 year-old unemployed construction worker could find a living wage—or any wage.

Looking through help wanted ads in the newspaper, he saw one for an Environmental Technology Training Program at a non-profit agency in Boston called JFYNetWorks. He liked the sound of Environmental Technology, and the idea that there might be a job at the end of the training. He went to the information session and listened to the program director, Larry Elgart, describe how demanding the 14-week training was, with environmental science, college-level chemistry and eight industry certifications including the 40-hour OSHA HAZWOPER; and how tough the jobs would be for those making it to graduation. The challenge appealed to him and he decided to apply.

Alan passed all the entrance requirements and started class in October 2009. The warnings were true—it was the hardest course he had ever taken. He had not been inside a classroom since finishing his GED in 1997 and his study skills were rusty. When his mother died in the middle of the training, he had to dig deep to find the strength to make it through. But Larry, case manager Pat Pestana, and his other instructors and classmates rallied to support him with phone calls, emails and unyielding encouragement. On January 29, 2010, fourteen weeks after taking the plunge, Alan had his certificate of completion.

Alan started the job search process he had learned in the program. By June he had a job with A & E Environmental in Westminister, MA, as an Asbestos Supervisor. That was a good start, but he kept looking, and in July of 2010 he landed a position with Entrix Environmental as a Field Technician on the BP oil spill. Overtime was plentiful and the work went on seven days a week. The company also paid his living expenses and travel. He worked for three months at sea in the Gulf of Mexico cleaning the oil spill. But he wanted to come back to Massachusetts, and in November 2010 Brown and Caldwell, an environmental engineering and consulting firm with offices all over the country, offered him a position as a Field Service Technician III in Andover, MA. Only a month later he was promoted to Site Safety Officer/Hydro Geologist/Geologist I.

Needless to say, Alan is happy with the outcome of his JFYNetWorks EPA-sponsored training. Less than a year after being laid off at 40, he was making twice as much money in a new career with big responsibilities and opportunities. The former "unemployed, overage construction worker" is now a skilled manager in the growing field of environmental services. It's an industry that doesn't balloon and collapse with the business cycle, and it's a job that can't be shipped overseas. Best of all, it's an opportunity to make a real contribution to things Alan cares about: public safety, conserving natural resources, protecting the environment, and the future.

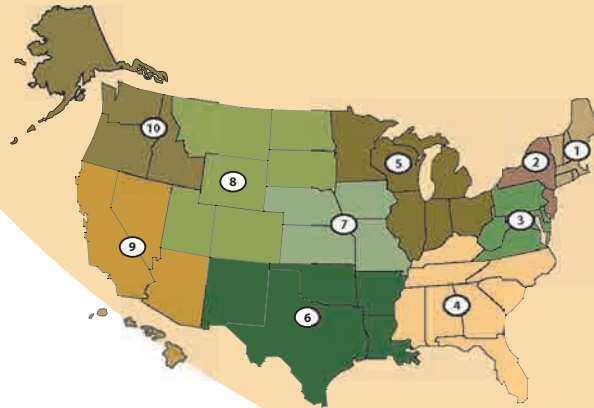
Alan proved Mr. F. Scott Fitzgerald dead wrong: his second act is even better than his first. Thanks to EPA and JFYNetWorks, he is in a position to help ensure that our regional economy will provide job opportunities for others like himself, people with a lot to contribute if they can only get some training and a chance. Through its EPA-sponsored Job Training, JFYNetWorks has produced nearly 400 graduates, with a placement rate of more than 80 percent. The average entry-level job pays nearly \$30,000 per year.



JFYNetWorks environmental job training graduate Alan Arrajj.

For more information on EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program, please visit:

www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm



Or contact your EPA Regional Office:

Region 1 • CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT

(617) 918-1429

Region 2 • NJ, NY, PR, VI

(212) 637-3283

Region 3 • DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV

(215) 814-3246

Region 4 • AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN

(404) 562-8660

Region 5 • IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI

(312) 886-4747

Region 6 • AR, LA, NM, OK, TX

(214) 665-6682

(214) 665-3172

Region 7 • IA, KS, MO, NE

(913) 551-7357

Region 8 • CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY

(303) 312-6019

Region 9 • AZ, CA, HI, NV, AS, GU

(213) 244-1821

(415) 972-3270

Region 10 • AK, ID, OR, WA

(206) 553-6378



Solid Waste
and Emergency
Response (5105T)

EPA-560-F-11-019
March 2011
www.epa.gov/brownfields

EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program



Improving Land and Lives



Students participating in Tucson, Arizona's Brownfields Job Training Program