



Second Chances through Brownfields Job Training Grants

E Job Training Grants

EPA's Brownfields Job Training Grant programs improve the lives of disadvantaged citizens by providing job training and life skills instruction, resulting in employment opportunities that would otherwise have been out of reach. Since the inception of EPA's Brownfields Job Training Grants in 1998, more than 4,800 participants have graduated from Brownfields Job Training programs. Of these, nearly two out of every three graduates are employed and earn an average of nearly \$14.00 per hour.

As impressive as these numbers are, they do not reveal just how significantly communities—and the residents within them—are affected by brownfields revitalization and Brownfields Job Training programs. Consider Adam, who completed an EPA-funded Brownfields Job Training program in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After Adam left the Marines in 1998, he drifted in and out of jobs, had a failed marriage and young daughter to support, and was unable to hold a job for more than six months. After completion of the training program Adam landed a full-time job with A Clean Environment of Wilson, Oklahoma, working hazardous emergency response actions all over the Midwest. Adam grins when he talks about his first week on the job. "It was like going from zero to 60 in 6 seconds... there was a lot to learn and learn quickly." Adam has since caught up on his child support payments, and is saving to purchase his first home.

The numbers also do not reveal the personal struggles or the triumphs of Brownfields Job Training graduates. Buddy, for example, was born into a life of chaos, living with his grandparents and a string of foster families until he ran away and lived on his own. All of his efforts to create a stable life, be a good father to his young son, and be a good husband fell apart in November 2004, when he walked out of his house after repeated arguments with his wife. He left everything behind him—his son, wife, car, business, and bank account. For a time he stayed with friends while working for a family member. He was living paycheck to paycheck and when his employer went to jail for tax evasion, he was forced to seek shelter at the Oklahoma City Rescue Mission. One day, he noticed a flyer advertising a class in environmental remediation. He made an appointment to discuss the class with the Oklahoma City Job Training Program's coordinator, Cherry Dienz. Funded by an EPA Brownfields Job Training grant, the program sounded like a perfect opportunity to develop a career in an area of work in which he was familiar and interested. He started work



A student celebrates his graduation for the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Job Training Program.

JUST THE FACTS:

- Job Training Grant programs offer participants a second chance on their career and their future, helping to create jobs and improve lives.
- EPA has facilitated more than 3,100 Job Training graduates in obtaining employment, earning an average of \$13.84 per hour.
- Job Training graduates are equipped with the skills they need to become successful environmental professionals.

"I realized I wanted more for myself and for my daughter... I wanted an opportunity for stable work and a chance to advance. I made it this far because of my determination, the support of my family, friends, and classmates, and the encouragement of JFY staff."

**– Nat, JFYNetWorks
Job Training Program graduate**

the day after he finished the Asbestos Worker class, making \$11.00 per hour. Buddy has moved out of the City Rescue Mission and visits his son every week. Ms. Dienz commented, “That’s the way this program was designed to work. I am so happy that Buddy is working and seeing a light at the end of the tunnel.”



Students enjoy their experience with the JFYNetWorks Job Training Program in Boston, Massachusetts.

More than 80 percent of the 164 graduates trained through the JFYNetWorks Job Training Program in Boston, Massachusetts, found employment in the state of Massachusetts. An example is Nat C, who was out of school and running in the streets of Boston by age 15. By age 21 he had served six months in jail, lost his latest job, and was about to become a father. Realizing his dire situation, Nat sought help through JFYNetWorks Program. After completing the EPA Brownfields grant-funded, 14-week Environmental Technology training course, Nat graduated with a certificate that covers environmental science, chemistry, math, and business writing, as well as five professional environmental health and safety certifications; he was subsequently hired by All & Inclusive Environmental Services as an environmental field technician.

Brownfields Job Training courses complement EPA’s overall Brownfields Program goals by facilitating efficient cleanup of brownfields while promoting employment of environmental job trainees. Job Training grants are typically awarded to entities within urban, low-income, and high-minority areas. The Job Training Programs funded by these grants not only recruit residents of communities affected by brownfields, but also those in public assistance programs (including Welfare-to-Work), under- or unemployed residents, single mothers, and veterans. Various recruitment strategies are used, including working with community and city organizations, college and high school alumni, existing job training and placement programs, local Welfare-to-Work programs, and the media; conducting house-to-house visits, meetings, forums, and open enrollment sessions; and relying on word-of-mouth.

Through skills development and career training, participants are able to find jobs with good wages and often with benefits, greatly improving their quality of life. Three graduates of the EPA Brownfields grant funded, New Jersey Youth Corps—Phillipsburg/Newark Job Training Program, partly due to their 40-hour HAZWOPER training, each received an employment package from CIANBRO, Inc. Construction that included a \$27.00 per hour salary, full medical, dental, and vision insurance coverage, a 401K, and a tuition reimbursement plan. Another New Jersey Youth Corp (NJYC) Job Training graduate, Dominick Marciano, was placed with Clean Harbors, Inc., an environmental services company in Brooklyn, New York. After just two months at Clean Harbors, Dominick was recruited by another project contractor impressed by his work performance. He was subsequently hired by the LEW Corporation in Mountainside, New Jersey, with an increase in pay, and a company-issued laptop computer and cell phone. Dominick has since received additional training and certifications such as: X-ray fluoresces (XRF) Training, Dust Wipe Sampling, and Asbestos Certification. He has also returned to NJYC Brownfields Training classes as a guest speaker.

EPA’s Brownfields Job Training grants provide outstanding opportunities for graduates to find good paying jobs in the environmental cleanup field. Brownfields Job Training grants also provide an environment where individuals are not afraid to fail—where individuals can triumph no matter the apparent hopelessness of their circumstances. These grants offer individuals a second chance at having a better life.

CONTACTS:

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www.epa.gov/brownfields/