



Environmental News

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BROWNFIELDS COMMUNITIES GET \$1.8 MILLION FOR JOB TRAINING

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EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner today awarded nine communities a total of \$1.8 million in grants to provide environmental job training at brownfields sites. Since the job training program was started in 1998, more than 540 local workers have been trained in 20 states and Puerto Rico. Today's announcement marks another step in the EPA's longstanding efforts to promote economic vitality, while protecting our nation's environment and safeguarding public health.

"The Administration believes that workforce development and job training are the critical links between environmental cleanup and safe, sustainable community development," said Browner. "These grants help to guarantee that brownfields cleanup and redevelopment have the trained workforce needed to revitalize contaminated properties, and that local community members have the opportunity to compete in the economic mainstream."

The job training grants, totaling \$200,000 each, are used to implement environmental training programs for the creation of workforce development programs to teach job skills in the field of environmental cleanup to individuals living in low income areas in the vicinity of brownfields sites. The majority of participants who successfully complete the training program go on to pursue careers with environmental firms and organizations.

Brownfields are abandoned, lightly contaminated properties often found in economically distressed areas, that are returned to economically thriving, community hubs. Since 1993, the EPA has taken significant steps to clean up brownfields and return them to productive use, awarding over \$157 million in grants to cities, counties, tribes, states, non-profits and educational institutions nationwide.

According to an independent study conducted by the Council for Urban Economic Development, the revitalization of brownfields has created over 22,000 permanent jobs, and leveraged \$2.48 in private investment for every \$1 spent by federal, state, or local governments.

With today's selection of recipients in Massachusetts, Maryland, Illinois, Louisiana, North Dakota, New York, Iowa, North Carolina, and Connecticut, brownfields job training program efforts are now active in 23 states and Puerto Rico. Attached is a summary of each grant recipient. For more information go to: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

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**Brownfields Job Training Grants
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Boston Connects People to Economic Opportunity, Inc., Massachusetts

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Boston Connects People to Economic Opportunity, Inc. (BCI) plans to train 90 participants from the city's federal Empowerment Zone. The poverty rate in the Empowerment Zone is nearly 36% and the unemployment rate exceeds 16%. Massachusetts has identified 455 brownfields within Empowerment Zone neighborhoods of Boston. The 12-week environmental technician training program will consist of health and safety, introduction to brownfields remediation, environmental field sampling, lead and asbestos abatement, and innovative technologies. Local developers and remediation firms that are actively involved in major brownfields redevelopment projects in the Empowerment Zone have committed to hiring graduates.

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Civic Works-Baltimore, Maryland

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Civic Works plans to train 50 young adults among Baltimore's underserved population. A quarter of the city's residents live below the poverty level and 10% are unemployed. The pilot will focus on the federal Empowerment Zone in eastern Baltimore. Between 3,500 and 5,500 acres in the Empowerment Zone are underdeveloped due to perceived contamination. In addition, the city's diminishing tree cover has negatively affected its poorest communities. There is a need for training in hazardous materials handling skills for those employed in planting vegetation in the contaminated soils of brownfields. The pilot will train residents with the skills needed to preliminarily assess sites and implement protective permanent vegetation, forestation, and phytoremediation projects on brownfields sites in the city.

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Office of Applied Innovations, Riverdale, Illinois

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the Office of Applied Innovations will train 90 residents of the Village of Riverdale and surrounding communities. Riverdale (population 14,000) is located just south of Chicago. The unemployment rate among village residents is 20%. The village is in the process of investigating and prioritizing more than 200 brownfields sites. The potential for redevelopment is strong due in large part to an excellent existing transportation infrastructure. The 480-hour training program will include health and safety, underground storage tank removal, lead and asbestos abatement, and innovative technologies. A career week will be conducted at the end of the training program to enhance placement opportunities.

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Shreveport, Louisiana

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Shreveport plans to train 48 residents of inner city neighborhoods impacted by brownfields. Shreveport (population 198,000) is located in northwestern Louisiana and is at the crossroads of major rail and highway systems that transport high volumes of hazardous materials. Shreveport's inner city contains hundreds of acres of former industrial sites that were abandoned during the "Oil Bust" of the 1980s. Almost half of the city's residents have not graduated from high school. The

city has made a loan through its Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Pilot to fund cleanup of a site for Shreveport's new \$85 million convention center. The city will offer 200 hours of training in construction skills, health

and safety, lead and asbestos abatement, soil sampling, and innovative technologies. Eight local employers have committed to hire participants to fill environmental jobs.

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Spirit Lake Nation, Fort Totten, North Dakota

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the Spirit Lake Nation plans to train 40 unemployed or underemployed tribal members. The Spirit Lake Nation (5,300 enrolled members) includes 383 square miles of land in the northeastern portion of the state. The unemployment rate among tribal members is 75%. Through the Brownfields Assessment Pilot, the tribe is conducting assessments of two landfills and abandoned buildings located in two community districts. The Spirit Lake Nation will offer training in sampling, health and safety, asbestos abatement, hazardous materials management, emergency response procedures, and innovative technologies. The Brownfields Sustainability Advisory Committee, a consortium of tribal elders, industry managers, and residents, will oversee the training program. The pilot will empower tribal members with skills to cleanup sites on tribal lands and provide much needed jobs.

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Troy Rehabilitation and Improvement Program, Inc., New York

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the Troy Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (TRIP) plans to train 50 residents of the distressed North Central and South Troy neighborhoods, which are located in waterfront industrial areas within the city's federal Enterprise Community. The two neighborhoods suffer from unemployment rates as high as 13% and poverty rates as high as 30%. Troy's population of 54,000 is 17% minority. The city is in the process of implementing a brownfields redevelopment strategy that will add over 2,000 new jobs, one million square feet of new commercial space, and 50 acres of waterfront greenspace. Demand for environmental technicians is expected to increase as more of the planned redevelopment projects are implemented. The 230-hour pilot training program will cover health and safety, lead and asbestos abatement, brownfields assessment and remediation, and innovative technologies.

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Western Iowa Tech Community College, Sioux City, Iowa

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, Western Iowa Tech Community College plans to train 40 residents of Sioux City's state Enterprise Zone. Changes in the meat packing industry over the past 35 years have left a legacy of abandoned buildings and contaminated properties within the Enterprise Zone. The per capita income of Sioux City (population 106,000) places it in the bottom half of the largest 350 cities in the United States. Environmental companies, particularly those working with the Sioux City Brownfields Assessment Pilot, are interested in hiring local residents trained as environmental technicians. The 222-hour training program will consist of general construction, lead abatement, introduction to environmental technology, ecosystem restoration, and innovative technologies. An advisory committee consisting of project partners and residents has been formed to coordinate pilot activities.

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City of Winston-Salem, North Carolina

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, the City of Winston-Salem plans to train 40 residents of the Piedmont Park and Cleveland Avenue Homes communities within the Liberty Street Corridor. The decline of tobacco and clothing manufacturing facilities in the Corridor have contributed to the economic distress of residents, who suffer from an unemployment rate of 12%. The Brownfields Assessment Pilot has spurred the development of an Airport Business Park near the two target communities. This development will involve the clearance of 200 properties, many of which have been contaminated by past industrial activities. The training program will provide local residents with the skills required to access the environmental jobs created by this and other redevelopment projects in the city. Courses will include health and safety, sampling, field measurement techniques, hazardous waste management, and innovative technologies. Classes will be offered during the day, evening, and on weekends, as necessary.

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The WorkPlace, Inc., Bridgeport, Connecticut

With the \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training and Development grant, The WorkPlace Inc. plans to train 45 residents of inner-city neighborhoods impacted by brownfields within Bridgeport's federal Enterprise Community. Two-thirds of the diverse residents of the city (population 137,000) are minorities. The poverty rate is over 17%, and Bridgeport's child poverty rate is among the highest in the nation. The loss of much of the city's manufacturing base has resulted in job loss, property deterioration, and economic distress. Bridgeport has identified more than 200 brownfields in the city. Environmental employer demand for brownfields technicians is very high and is expected to increase. The eight-week training program will include health and safety, industrial hygiene, lead and asbestos abatement, and innovative technologies. Seven local companies have committed to provide internships and hire graduates of the training program.

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