



Everything You Need to Know About Crafting a Competitive Brownfields Job Training Application

Thursday, July 30, 2026



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Today's Agenda

Let's Get to Know Each Other - Introductions

Overview of the Brownfields Job Training (BFJT) Program

- Purpose and successes + Skills and Jobs Supported + FY2027 Solicitation
- **Stories and lessons learned from BFJT Grantee – Future Build**

Drafting a Compelling Grant Application – Tips and Best Practices

- Defining and demonstrating need
- Responding to need – Training development and Program Structure
- Cultivating and maintaining partnerships
- Budget development
- Common challenges and pain points
- **Stories and lessons learned from BFJT Grantee – Future Build**

Review Next Steps

Discussion and Q&A



Today's Speakers

Claire Weston



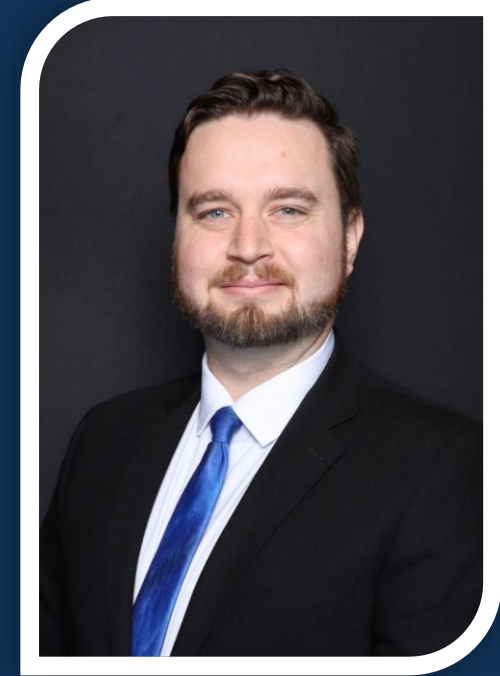
Program Director,
Center for Creative
Land Recycling

Stephanie
Steinbrecher



Project Manager,
Brownfields and
Land Revitalization
Program, EPA
Region 9

Robert Hicks-
Carrera



Economic
Development
Manager
City of Pittsburg,
California



BFJT Overview | Purpose and Success

EPA provides funding to help nonprofits, local governments, and other eligible entities **build their local environmental workforce** to facilitate the revitalization of **communities affected by brownfields**.

- Funding supports organizations that provide training in areas such as:
 - Health and safety
 - Solid and hazardous waste management
 - Ecological restoration
- Programs typically prioritize:
 - **Unemployed or underemployed residents**
 - Communities affected by contaminated or blighted land



BFJT Overview | Purpose and Success

EPA intends to use these grants to support the creation of **full-time, good-paying, and in-demand careers.**

- Graduates often pursue jobs such as:
 - Environmental technician
 - Construction
 - Other trade jobs
- Programs may also include:
 - Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs
 - Connections to further education
- Successful Brownfields Training Programs are **employer-informed, demand-driven**, and directly **linked to ongoing employment opportunities** taking place in the respective community.

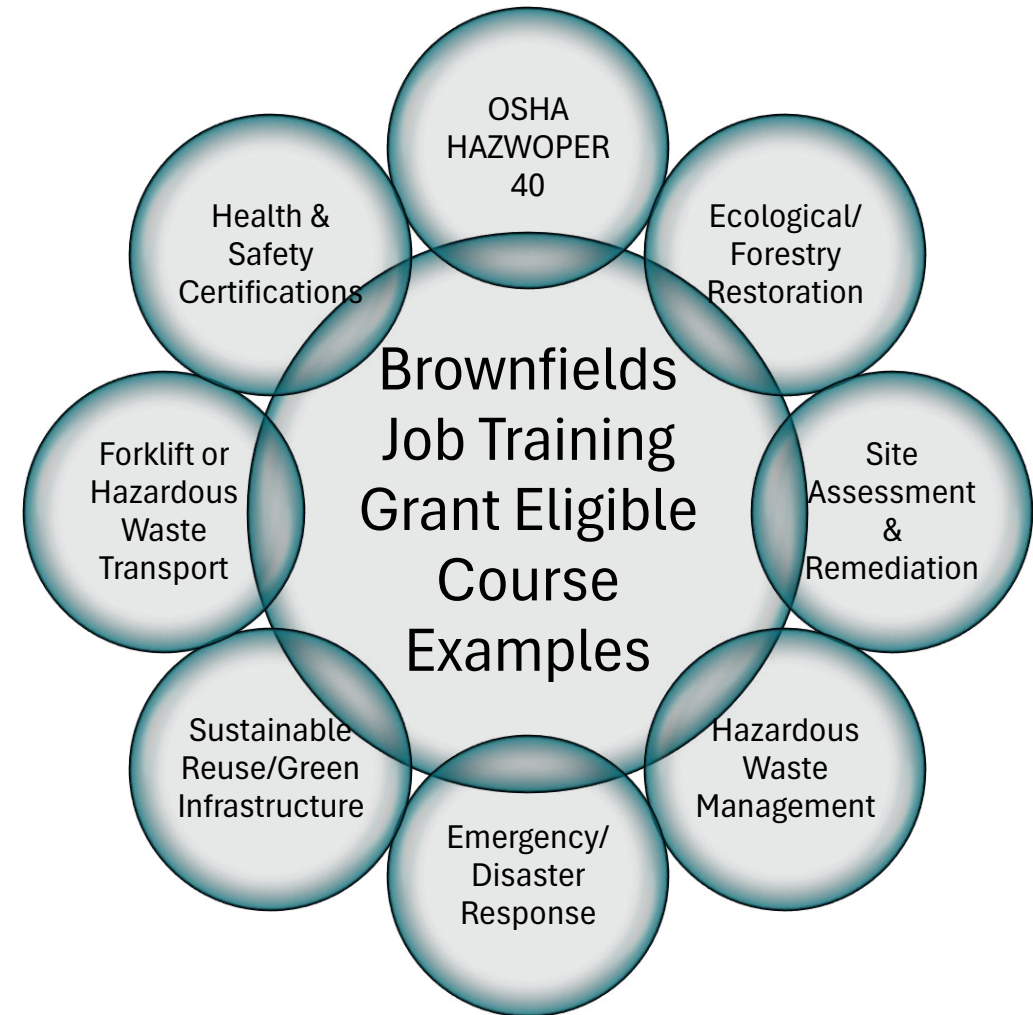


BFJT Overview | Skills/Jobs Supported

What Types of Trainings are Eligible?

- All eligible training **must** have a **direct connection** to facilitating the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation.
 - **Required:** 40-Hour HAZWOPER
- Examples of **ineligible** courses include general construction, carpentry, solar installation or life skills training.

[View the full list of eligible and ineligible brownfield job training courses here!](#)



BFJT Overview | Skills/Jobs Supported

Examples of Eligible Expenses

View the full list in the NOFO

Take Note: Past grantees have reported that the most impactful support services that improve retention include stipends, case management wraparound services, and safe peer and staff support



Personnel costs, including fringe benefits, for instructors to conduct training and other staff involved in managing the training program.



Costs for recruiting, screening, and placement of individuals in the training program.



Personnel costs for caseworkers or other specialists who work with participants to identify barriers they face to employment, connect them to resources, and support their success



Costs for training materials and work gear associated with the training curriculum.



Costs associated with eligible participant support costs, including for: Transportation, stipends, childcare subsidies

BFJT Overview | Grant Specifics

Key Application Info

- Applicants may apply for **up to \$300,000**
- Project period is **three (3) years**
 - Applicants may propose completing the grant in less than three years.
- Applications are **due Wednesday, September 23rd**
- **FY2027 Guidelines** and Summary of Changes now available on [EPA BFJT website](#)



Spring → Prepare to Apply

Review previous year's guidelines and reach out to Regional EPA staff for application resources

Summer → Apply for Grant

Notice of Funding Opportunity typically is released in April and remains open for 60 calendar days

Winter → Award Selection

Selections are typically announced in winter, and grant funding typically becomes available **July 1st**



BFJT Overview | Regular vs. Coalition Application

Which is right for you?

Apply as a Regular Applicant if...

Your organization plans to carry out the training program on its own *with project partners*.

- One lead applicant
- Partners can be subrecipients, contractors, or leveraged
- Simpler application and grant administration
- Fewer threshold eligibility requirements



Remember: You can have many project partners without applying as a coalition. Most successful applications involve strong partnerships but are submitted by a single applicant.

Apply as a Coalition Applicant if...

Two or more organizations want to jointly apply and share responsibility of the grant.

- Multiple **coalition members** work together under one application
- Best when organizations are implementing the program across multiple jurisdictions/service areas
- Requires additional coalition documentation

Remember: There is *no competitive advantage* to applying as a coalition. Coalition applications have additional threshold requirements for non-lead coalition applicants.



BFJT Overview | Meeting Threshold

Threshold Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility
 1. Demonstrate how your organization is eligible
 2. Indicate if you are exempt from federal taxation under 501(c)(4) of the IRC
2. Coalition Agreement (**only applicable to coalition applicants**)
 1. Signed letter from each non-lead coalition member in which they agree to be part of the coalition.
3. Target Area
4. Required HAZWOPER 40 Training
5. Demonstration that Proposed Project Does Not Duplicate Other Federally Funded Environmental Job Training Programs

IMPORTANT: If one of the threshold criteria doesn't apply to you do not skip it. Affirm that it does not apply to you.

Check out CCLR's **Application Elements and Requirements Checklist**
(Released after FY2026 RFA release)



Let's Hear from Our Grantee Speaker!

Why did you elect to apply for the BFJT grant?

What was the need in your community and how did you demonstrate that need? Who are you targeting?

What has your success been - Placement rate, types of jobs, etc.



Drafting Your Grant App | Demonstrating Need

Ask yourself two questions:
Why are you doing this and **who** are you doing this for?

Why

- Identify and describe the need using data
 - Why is this training important for your community?
 - What environmental challenges does your community face?
- Share findings from your **labor market study** and how those findings have informed your curriculum development

Who

- Identify and describe your target area using demographic data
- Who specifically are you targeting? (unemployed individuals, formerly incarcerated persons, veterans, etc.)



Your labor market study is critical.

Learn more about how to conduct one and how to use it to support your application by watching [*Strategies for Successful Brownfields Job Training Programs*](#)

Drafting Your Grant App | Demonstrating Need

Use data to identify and demonstrate need

Data Type	National Sources	Regional/Local Sources (Examples)
Demographic Data to Demonstrate Community Need	• U.S. Census Bureau (Detailed demographic, income, and poverty data) • City Health Dashboard	• California Dept. of Finance Demographic Research Unit Data Hub • Arizona Progress Meters • Hawaii State Data Center and UHERO.data • Nevada State Demographer and Data Hub at the Lincy Institute and Brookings Mountain West
Data on Overburdened and Sensitive Populations	• CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) • National Equity Atlas • County Health Rankings and Roadmaps	• CalEnviroScreen and California Healthy Places Index • Nevada Community Health Needs Assessment • Hawaii Environmental Health Tracking Program • Arizona Environmental Public Health Tracking

Drafting Your Grant App | Demonstrating Need

Use data to identify and demonstrate need

Data Type	National Sources	Regional/Local Sources (Examples)
Labor Market Data	• Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) • Results from your labor market study: surveys, reports, interviews with employers, etc.	• California Employment Development Department • Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity – Labor Market Information • Hawaii Workforce Development Division • Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation
Environmental Challenges and Other Vulnerabilities	• EPA’s Cleanups In My Community (CIMC) • U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit • FEMA National Risk Index	• California State Geoportal and CAL Fire Hazard Severity Zones Maps • Arizona Department of Environmental Quality • Hawaii Climate Portal • Nevada Division of Environmental Protection

Drafting Your Grant App | Training Description

Provide a detailed description of curriculum and certifications earned

"Describe how the training is structured to meeting the needs of the students, employers and the community."

**Don't forget
these 3
columns!!**

Course Name / Level of Training	Type of Certification	Course Description	# of Hours	Start Date – End Date	# of Times Course will be Offered	Cost of Course Per Cohort	Total Course Cost	% of Grant Budget
RCRA Hazardous Waste Management / Intermediate	Federal	This course provides an overview of RCRA hazardous waste management regulations. It covers key topics such as waste identification, generator classifications, storage requirements, and cradle-to-grave tracking. Participants will gain a foundational understanding o how to manage hazardous waste in compliance with federal law.	16	Week 1	5	\$2,268	\$11,340	6%
Blueprint Reading / Intermediate	Industry	This course introduces the fundamentals of blueprint reading, with a focus on interpreting site plans, environmental reports, and construction drawings. Participants learn how to read and.....	8	Week 6	5	\$1,134	\$5,670	3%

Drafting Your Grant App | Program Structure

Program Structure



Recruitment, screening, and retention of students

How will your organization ensure prospective students of the program are successful?



Program support for job placement

How will your organization assist graduates with initial job placement?



Program sustainability

How will your organization ensure that the job training program will continue once grant funds are exhausted?

- EPA tracks outputs and outcomes based on:
 - How many participants you **enroll**
 - Number of students **graduated**
 - Placement of students in **employment** or number of students pursuing **further education**
 - **Average wages** for students placed in employment
- Applicants should discuss how program outcomes reflect challenges presented in describing **Community Need**

The clarity of your **cohort structure** is important!

Drafting Your Grant App | Cultivating Partnerships

Who's at the table:

Employers: Local businesses, environmental contractors, labor unions

Community: Community leaders, faith-based organizations, block clubs, social service providers

Important: Include a letter from each identified partner stating their commitments to the program.

Letters should be tailored and specific!

Environmental Entities: MARC recipients in your community, City or County Depts.

Job Readiness/Life Skills: GED prep institutions, substance abuse counseling, One Stop Centers, Workforce Development Boards

Coalition Member (optional): If more than one job training entities want to apply together

Drafting Your Grant App | Cultivating Partnerships

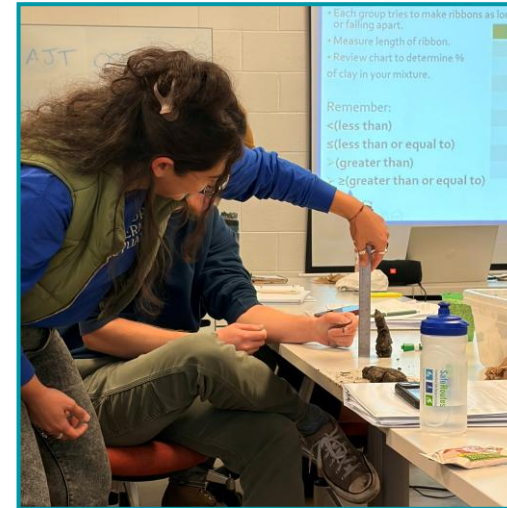
Cultivating and maintaining partnerships with employers is crucial to success

Engage employers early to:

- Understand labor market demand
- Shape curriculum
- Outline their involvement/commitments (Exp. employer guest speaker series, field trips, mentoring, interview commitments, etc.)

Engagement Strategies:

- Conduct focus groups and employer interviews
- Survey employers and consider offering incentives for survey participation
- Host employer led workshops and site visits



Drafting Your Grant App | Budget Development

Budget Development Tips

- Set aside funding to support placement and tracking of graduates
- Use the provided budget template and modify as necessary
- Must include a budget narrative that provides basis for each cost estimate **(show the calculations!)**
 - Exp. “Student safety equipment for 100 students at a cost of \$50 each for a total of \$5,000”
- Familiarize yourself with [participant support cost guidance](#)
 - Participant support costs must not exceed 40% of the award
- **Take note:** Administrative costs are restricted to 5% of the total award and all indirect costs are considered administrative and are therefore subject to the 5% administrative cap.

Sample Budget Table

	Budget Category	Project Tasks				Total
		Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention	Instruction/ Training	Program Management	Placement and Tracking	
Direct Costs	Personnel					
	Fringe benefits					
	Travel ¹					
	Contractual					
	Supplies					
	Other (Please be specific for Participant Support Costs such as stipends)					
Total Direct Costs ²						
Indirect Costs ²						
Total Budget (Total Direct Costs+ Indirect Costs)						

Tips!
Review accepted BFJT grant examples and look at how they structure and format their budgets

Allocating budget towards actual **training** is viewed more favorably

¹ Travel to brownfields-related training conferences is an acceptable use of these grant funds.
² Administrative costs (direct and/or indirect) for the Brownfields Job Training Grant applicant itself cannot exceed 5% of the total EPA-requested funds.

Drafting Your Grant App | Budget Development

Budget Category	Project Tasks				Total
	Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention	Instruction/ Training	Program Management	Placement and Tracking	
Personnel	\$6,000	\$21,000	\$24,000	\$12,000	\$63,000
Fringe Benefits	\$1,680	\$5,880	\$360		\$17,640
Travel	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$200		\$8,400
Contractual	\$0	\$108,000	\$0		\$108,000
Supplies	\$600	\$13,560	\$600		\$15,960
Other	\$3,000	\$60,000	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$72,000
Total Direct	\$12,480	\$210,240	\$42,120	\$20,160	\$285,000
Indirect Costs	\$657	\$11,065	\$2,217	\$1,061	\$15,000
Total Budget	\$13,137	\$221,305	\$44,337	\$21,221	\$300,000

Of this \$60,000, \$25,000 are participant support costs



Is the Instruction and Training task category total greater than 60% of the budget total?

YES! → $\$221,305 / \$300,000 = 74\%$



Is the Participant Support Costs total less than 40% of the budget total?

YES! → $25,000 / \$300,000 = 8.3\%$



Is the Instruction and Training task category total minus the Participant Support Costs total greater than 60% of the budget total?

YES! → $(\$221,305 - \$25,000) / \$300,000 = 65\%$



Drafting Your Grant App | Budget Development

Budget Narrative – Deficient Level of Detail vs. Sufficient Level of Detail

Supplies to deliver the training and provide personal protection equipment will cost \$52,000 over the grant period.

Student Stipends will cost \$48,000 over the grant period.

Drug Screening will cost \$5,280 over the course of the grant period.

Marketing for program student recruitment will cost a total of \$18,000 for the entire grant period.

Supplies to deliver the training and provide personal protection equipment (**Safety glasses, gloves, hard hats, earplugs, respirators, and steel-toed boots in compliance with OSHA safety standards**) and equipment (**air quality monitors, noise level meters, chemical detection kits, water testing kits, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, spill containment supplies, and eye wash stations**) to every student (totals \$52,000, **which equates to \$541.67 per student, per session**).

Student Stipends of **\$500 per enrolled student (96)** totaling \$48,000 over the grant period.

Drug Screening will cost **\$55 per student**, totaling \$5,280 over the course of the grant period.

Marketing for program student recruitment will focus on **targeted social media advertisements** and **will cost \$1,500 per session, per year** and total \$18,000 for the entire grant period.



Drafting Your Grant App | Budget Development

Budget Narrative – Deficient Level of Detail vs. Sufficient Level of Detail

Detail added on types of supplies and PPE that factor into the cost

Supplies to deliver the training and provide personal protection equipment (**Safety glasses, gloves, hard hats, earplugs, respirators, and steel-toed boots in compliance with OSHA safety standards**) and equipment (**air quality monitors, noise level meters, chemical detection kits, water testing kits, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, spill containment supplies, and eye wash stations**) to every student (totals \$52,000, **which equates to \$541.67 per student, per session**).

Detail added on the cost per student effectively writing out the math →
 $\$500 \times 96 = \$48,000$

Student Stipends of **\$500 per enrolled student (96)** totaling \$48,000 over the grant period.

Drug Screening will cost **\$55 per student**, totaling \$5,280 over the course of the grant period.

Detail added on the cost per session
→ $\$1,500 \times 12 \text{ session} = \$18,000$

Marketing for program student recruitment will focus on **targeted social media advertisements** and **will cost \$1,500 per session, per year** and total \$18,000 for the entire grant period.

Drafting Your Grant App | “Table Manners”

Important tables and charts

NARRATIVE

- Demographic Information
- Training Program Table
- Budget
- Outputs
- Partnerships
- Leveraged Funding

NARRATIVE ATTACHMENT

- Milestone Schedule

“Eye candy”



Tip 1!

Follow EPA suggested format
as closely as possible

No Pictures



Tip 2!

Tables and charts give visual relief,
and provide a lot of info in a snapshot -
to an otherwise prose-heavy document



Common Challenges and Pain Points

Common Mistakes	Meeting Threshold	Labor Market Study	Employer Engagement	Budget Development
	- Applicants do not meet all threshold criteria - Applicants don't submit threshold responses	- Applicants don't provide enough data and/or only use online data and don't conduct employer surveys - Applicants don't detail their methods or results used to conduct the LMA	- Applicants don't connect with employers early enough - Partnership letters lack detail	- Miscalculations can lead to budgets that are less competitive than they could be. - Budget narrative lacks sufficient detail.
Tips for Success	- Thoroughly read the NOFO - Respond to threshold criteria questions even if not applicable	- Utilize data sources beyond baseline employment data - Clearly outline your methods for assessing labor market demand	- Engage employer partners early - Ensure letters include specific commitments from partners	- Triple check calculations. Do not include PSCs in Training task category total. - Write out calculations in narrative

Let's Hear from Our Grantee Speakers!

What does your curriculum look like?

How did you cultivate productive partnerships with relevant entities (environmental, community, employers)?

What challenges or pain points did you encounter and how did you overcome them?



Your Next Steps | Get your ducks in a row

Do these things ASAP!

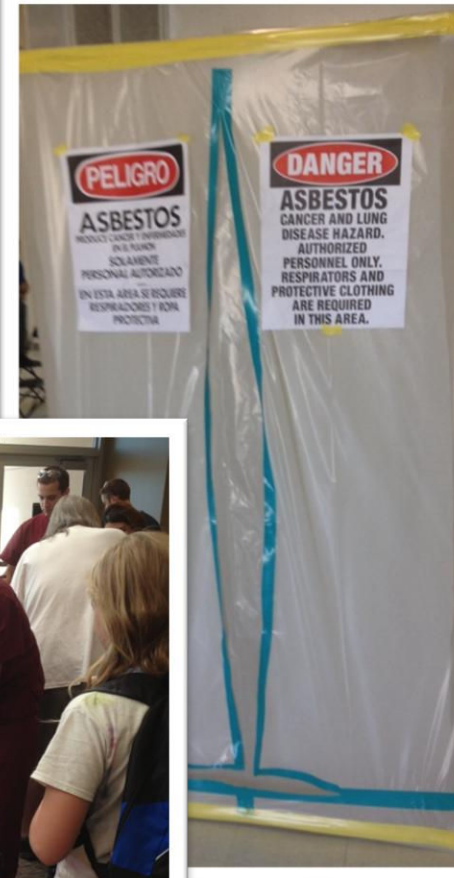
1. Register in SAM.gov
2. Make sure you're clear on **why** you're doing this and **who** you're doing this for
3. Review your Labor Market Study, leverage a partner's study on labor market data, and begin collecting any remaining data that will allow you to identify and demonstrate need in your application
4. Solidify partnerships and confirm how each partner will be involved



Your Next Steps | Draft and Develop Application

Do these things in the first month

1. Open a public comment period/notify the public that you'll be applying for this grant
2. Solicit letters of commitment from partners
3. Develop curriculum - any uncertainty regarding course eligibility should be discussed with CCLR
4. Draft application



Your Next Steps | Review and Refine

Do these things in the second month

- Finish drafting your application
- Get your application reviewed by CCLR!

“As first-time applicants for a Brownfield grant, [CCLR’s] support was invaluable in helping us grasp both the big picture and the key details of the application With CCLR’s guidance, the process became much more efficient and manageable.”

-FY2026 Grant Review TA Recipient

Ready for Review?!

Email the following to Claire.Weston@cclr.org

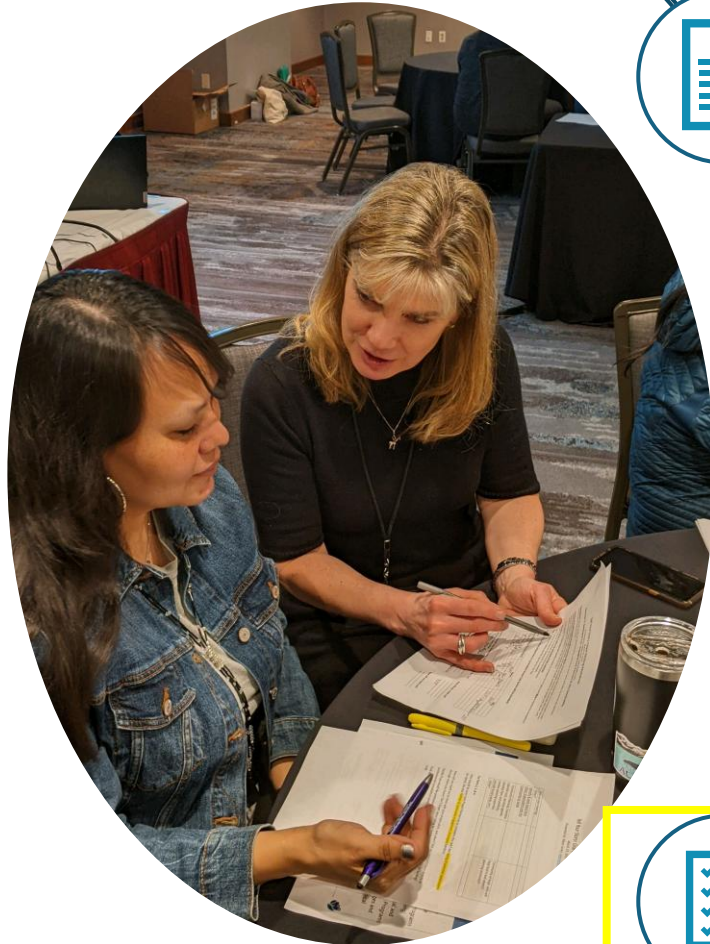
1. Application Information Sheet
2. Threshold Criteria Response
3. Narrative Criteria Response (doc/docx format)
4. Letters of Commitment from Partners

The subject line of your email should be **APPLICANT NAME_STATE_BFJT_Review Request**. (Exp. City of Whoville_CA_BFJT_Review Request)

b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy	5	Describe the potential of the proposed project or revitalization upon completion of the cleanup of the priority sites; and preservation of, or addition to a park, greenway, undeveloped property used for nonprofit purposes				
		If applicable, describe how the reuse of the priority site(s) or geothermal energy; or will incorporate energy efficiency measures				
c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources	10	If the proposed project or revitalization plans may potentially cause the displacement of residents and/or businesses, describe the strategies and/or policies that will be implemented to minimize displacement.	3			The extent to which the proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments. When applicable, the extent to which the reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy, or will incorporate energy efficiency measures.
c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse	5	Describe your access to monetary funding from other resources and how the grant will stimulate the availability of additional funds for environmental site assessment or remediation, and subsequent reuse.	1			The extent to which the applicant has access to monetary funding from other resources, and the extent to which the grant will stimulate the availability of additional funds to support the completion of the environmental site assessment or remediation, and subsequent reuse strategy at the priority site(s). (Note, a response may not earn full points if the applicant duplicates sources that are listed in 3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs.)
c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure	5	Describe how work performed under this grant will facilitate the use of existing infrastructure at the priority site(s) / target area	1			The extent to which work performed under this grant will facilitate the use of existing infrastructure at the priority site(s) and/or within the target area(s).
		If additional infrastructure needs or upgrades are key to the revitalization plans for the priority site(s), describe the infrastructure needs/upgrades, and describe the funding resources that will be sought to implement that work.	3	3		When additional infrastructure needs or upgrades are needed, the extent to which a clear description of the infrastructure needs/upgrades and the extent to which the identified funding resources that will be sought to implement the work are relevant to the project.

Example of a completed grant review scoring rubric. This always accompanies a redline-edited draft of your application narrative.

How CCLR Helps | Grant Review



Help you plan out your application narrative approach



Help you navigate data platforms



Connect you to grantees that have had success in applying for and managing BFJT grants



Provide resources to help you navigate the application process and craft a compelling narrative



Provide a thorough review of your application including multiple rounds of edits



Final Thoughts | Common Questions/Concerns

- ❑ **You do not need to identify specific brownfield sites as part of your project**, nor are participants required to work on brownfield sites after completing the program.
- ❑ **Training programs must address unemployed or underemployed residents in the target area** (at least 17 years old).
- ❑ Additional training (e.g., life skills, job readiness, construction, carpentry, etc.) may be included in your overall program, but they **must be funded through non-EPA sources**.
- ❑ **There is no cost share requirement**. However, applicants should demonstrate strong partnerships and explain how those partnerships will be leveraged to support the program.
- ❑ **At least 60% of the grant should support direct instruction and training activities** (excluding participant support costs like paid on-the-job training). Participant support costs cannot exceed 40% and do not count toward the recommended 60% minimum training budget.

Clarity and Responsiveness are key!

Write for reviewers who know nothing about your organization or community. **Applications should be clear, complete, and avoid assuming prior knowledge.**



EPA Grant Guideline Outreach Webinar

Join us on Zoom **Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET / 11:00AM PT** for a public outreach webinar about EPA's FY 2027 Brownfields Job Training Notice of Funding Opportunity.

This webinar will support applicants with understanding the NOFO for the FY 2027 Brownfields Job Training Grant Guidelines.

- Webinar Link: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/j/1652364500>
- Webinar ID: 165 236 4500
- Join by phone: 1 646 828 7666

Why Attend? Training programs funded by Brownfields Job Training Grants equip graduates with essential skills for securing full-time, sustainable employment in various sectors related to hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, and petroleum products, within the larger environmental field. This includes areas such as sustainable remediation, chemical safety and site preparation for the revitalization of brownfields. To see the impact of these programs, check out this success story: [Brownfields Job Training Program Success Story](#).





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The California Land Recycling Conference (CALRC) is the premiere brownfield and land reuse training event of the year. CALRC features informative and inspirational sessions and networking opportunities to help you transform idle/potentially contaminated land into valuable communities' assets.

Learn more at www.calrc.info

Don't miss ***Building Local Workforce Pathways Through EPA Brownfields Job Training Grants*** Featuring two BFJT Grantees :

- Hunters Point Family
- Young Community Developers

What questions do you have for us?



Contact Today's Speakers

Claire Weston



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Center for Creative Land
Recycling
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Stephanie Steinbrecher



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Get in Touch and Stay in Touch!

[Get Acquainted with the CCLR Team](#)

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