



In Durham, North Carolina, Environmental Training Prepares Residents for the Jobs Created by Area Revitalization

Durham, North Carolina

Located in central North Carolina, the City of Durham, like most cities, has a number of brownfields that have had adverse economic impacts on their surrounding communities. In particular, Northeast Central Durham's Pettigrew Street Corridor was once a thriving residential and business area before residents moved to the suburbs and industrial facilities closed. Today, the corridor contains multiple brownfields including scrap yards, garages, and vacant and abandoned industrial facilities; and more than 36 percent of residents live in poverty.

Having received a Brownfields Assessment grant in 2006, the City of Durham designed a revitalization strategy for this 96-block area, including cleanup and reuse of the corridor's brownfields. To ensure that the demand could be met for area workers with training in solid waste management, field testing and equipment, and other environmental technician skills, Durham applied for and received a Brownfields Job Training grant in 2008.

The city worked with its Brownfields Advisory Panel—a network of community, public, and private partners—to assist with recruitment and screening activities. These included local informational meetings; mass emails targeted toward local entities that could inform potential candidates; and use of the “JobLink” Career Center network (including the local WorkFirst Program, Veterans’ Employment & Training, Ex-Offender Program, Adult/Laid Off Worker Program, and the Youth Employed and Succeeding Program) to reach individuals in need of brownfields training and employment opportunities. Durham was also able to use a “Best Practices Recruitment Technique Framework” developed by another EPA Brownfields Job Training grant recipient in North Carolina, the City of Winston-Salem. Ultimately, this framework helped Durham surpass its screening and retainment goals and graduate work-ready, easily employable individuals.

Durham Technical Community College was chosen to deliver the environmental training course, titled “Brownfields Environmental Response Training.” The curriculum for this comprehensive,



Students in Durham, NC undergo classroom training.

JUST THE FACTS:

- Durham's Brownfields Job Training Program was designed to ensure that local residents can benefit from the jobs created through area revitalization.
- The city was able to apply a proven recruitment strategy developed by a neighboring EPA Brownfields Job Training grant recipient, the City of Winston-Salem, NC.
- The Program has trained three rounds of students—66 in all—with a graduation rate of more than 86 percent.

In addition to their environmental and HAZMAT courses, students received job skills training to prepare them for their professional careers.

More than half of the Program's graduates have already found jobs, with wages ranging from \$10-\$15 per hour.

200-hour course included HAZWOPER training and certification, OSHA Health and Safety training, lead and asbestos abatement techniques, soil and water management, first aid/CPR, and in-the-field equipment training. In addition, students received job skills training that featured a “Day in the Life of an Environmental Employee” course to prepare them for their professional lives.

Training began in the Spring of 2009, and the first class graduated in April of that year. Since the course’s inception, the College has trained three rounds of students—66 in all—with a graduation rate of more than 86 percent. While placement is

ongoing, more than half of the Program’s graduates have already found jobs, with wages ranging from \$10-\$15 per hour. One of those graduates, Antonio Snell, credits the Program with not only preparing him for a career, but providing him newfound motivation to better himself. “The Program helped me better my skills, and helped me improve on a lot of weak points that I had,” he explained. “I learned that if you really set your mind to something, you can get it done.”

Another success of the Program is Antoine Freeman, a father who found himself unexpectedly laid off in 2007. Recognizing Durham’s Brownfields Job Training as a way to make a difference in his community and become marketable to local employers, Antoine applied and was accepted. He was hired immediately after graduation as a Hazardous Waste Coordinator for the City of Durham, where he coordinated a paint consolidation and reuse program and prepared hazardous materials for safe transportation. He has since transitioned to the private sector and is now a site supervisor at a hazardous waste facility.

In recognition of the Program’s successes, EPA awarded the City of Durham an additional Brownfields Job Training grant in April 2010.

CONTACTS:

For more information on the Durham Brownfields Job Training grant, contact EPA Region 4 at (404) 562-8660

Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
www.epa.gov/brownfields/