

Construction Manager Perspective: Lessons Learned Implementing the EPA Superfund Job Training Initiative (SJTI)



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Project Manager



SUPERFUND TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

Final report on the recommendations developed in response to the EPA Administrator's request on May 22, 2017. The recommendations address expediting cleanup and remediation process; reducing financial burden on all parties involved in the entire cleanup process; encouraging private investment; promoting redevelopment and community revitalization; and building and strengthening partnerships.



EPA's Superfund Job Training Initiative Provides Skills and Opportunities for Jacksonville, Florida Residents

EPA's Superfund Job Training Initiative is a job-readiness program that provides training and employment opportunities for people living in communities affected by Superfund sites. EPA's goal is to help communities develop job opportunities and partnerships that remain long after a Superfund site is cleaned up. The Superfund Job Training Initiative provides area residents with the technical skills and specialized training needed to work on a broad range of projects in environmental remediation and construction, as well as the cleanup of a Superfund site.

Community outreach for the Superfund Job Training Initiative project at the Fairfax St. Wood Treaters Superfund site began in December 2018. EPA worked with local partner Northwest



A graduate receives his certificate of completion for Superfund Job Training Initiative from Region 4 Superfund Division Director Franklin Hill.

Jacksonville Community Development Corporation to advertise the project

in newspapers, on the radio, using social media, distributing fliers at area locations, and email blasts. Twenty information sessions were held in the community providing information on the program to interested applicants. After a rigorous screening and recruitment process, 13 trainees were selected to participate in the program. Once selected for the program, the trainees earned three certifications: (1) 40-hour hazardous waste and emergency response, (2) cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/ first aid and (3) Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10-hour construction safety. Participants also completed coursework in work-readiness training.

On March 6, 2019, the project's graduation ceremony was held at the Jacksonville Public Library. EPA, site contractors, local partner Northwest Jacksonville Community Development Corporation, representatives of three elected officials, and friends and family of the graduates attended the ceremony. Site contractors have hired eight graduates of the program to work on site.



Graduates of Superfund Job Training Initiative pose at the graduation ceremony in Jacksonville.



AGENDA

- **SJTI Program Overview**
- **Implementation**
 - **Initiation/Planning/Execution/Monitoring/Close Out**
- **Lessons Learned/Challenges/Solutions**
 - **Initiation/Planning/Execution/Monitoring/Close Out**
- **RAF Implementation Considerations/Recommendations**
- **Acknowledgements**
- **Q/A and Contacts**



SJTI Program Overview

SJTI Program Overview



- An EPA Headquarters funded job readiness program
- Targets under/unemployed citizens affected by the Superfund Site
- Provides the basic remediation/hazardous waste clean up training
- An opportunity to be placed in positions set aside by the contractor on the site.
- Can provide significant benefits to the project including building trust and transparency to the community, contractor benefits, and change individual lives.



SJTI Program Overview

Basic Training Certifications

- **OSHA 40 hour HAZWOPER**
- **CPR/First Aid**
- **Job Readiness Skills**
- **May include other training certifications, if needed, such as 10 hr Construction, Asbestos and Lead awareness/abatement training**



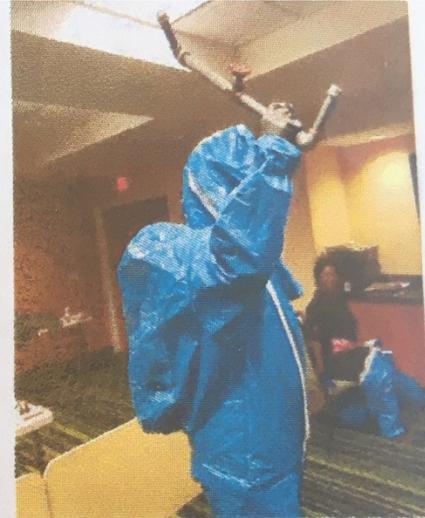
SJTI Implementation

Implementation -Project Initiation/Scoping/Planning

- **Discussed in the Initial Scoping Meeting with Region 4 EPA.**
- **Scoping/Planning with EPA HQ SJTI representative, Contractor, and the Region 4 RPM:**
 - **Contractor/Constructor relationship with the SJTI program**
 - **Positions available/expected**
 - **Training requirements (40 hr HAZWOPER, CPR/First Aid, 10 hr Construction, Asbestos/Lead?)**
 - **Hiring requirements**
 - **Schedule (both SJTI and RA schedules)**

Implementation -Project Initiation/Scoping/Planning

- **Develop RFP**
 - **Include SJTI participation as part of the remedial scope**
 - **Requested the number of positions available for the JTI program**
 - **Requested the position role (i.e. driver, laborer, eq. operator, etc.)**
 - **Internally developed weight and bid selection criteria including SJTI for the bids received**



Implementation –Project Execution

- **Select and Awarded the Constructor subcontractor**
- **Confirmed the number of positions and roles**
- **Requested hiring requirements**
- **Communicated information to the EPA HQ SJTI staff**
- **Clarification/Communications with the local SJTI coordinator**
- **Participation in the evaluation and selection of SJTI applicants for the program**

Execution- Applicant Screening

- The EPA will recruit and do preliminary screening of the applicants.
- The final phase of the screening process is the try outs.
- The try outs are a 1-day session that include some physical fitness demonstration, leadership and team building exercises.
- The tryouts are done in front of an evaluation board may include representatives of the EPA SJTI staff, EPA RPM, local and community partners, contractor, and subcontractors.
- The applicants are evaluated on effort, attitude, and commitment



Implementation –Project Execution

- Participation in the Graduation
- Pre-employment Interviews and Processing



Implementation –Monitoring/Close Out

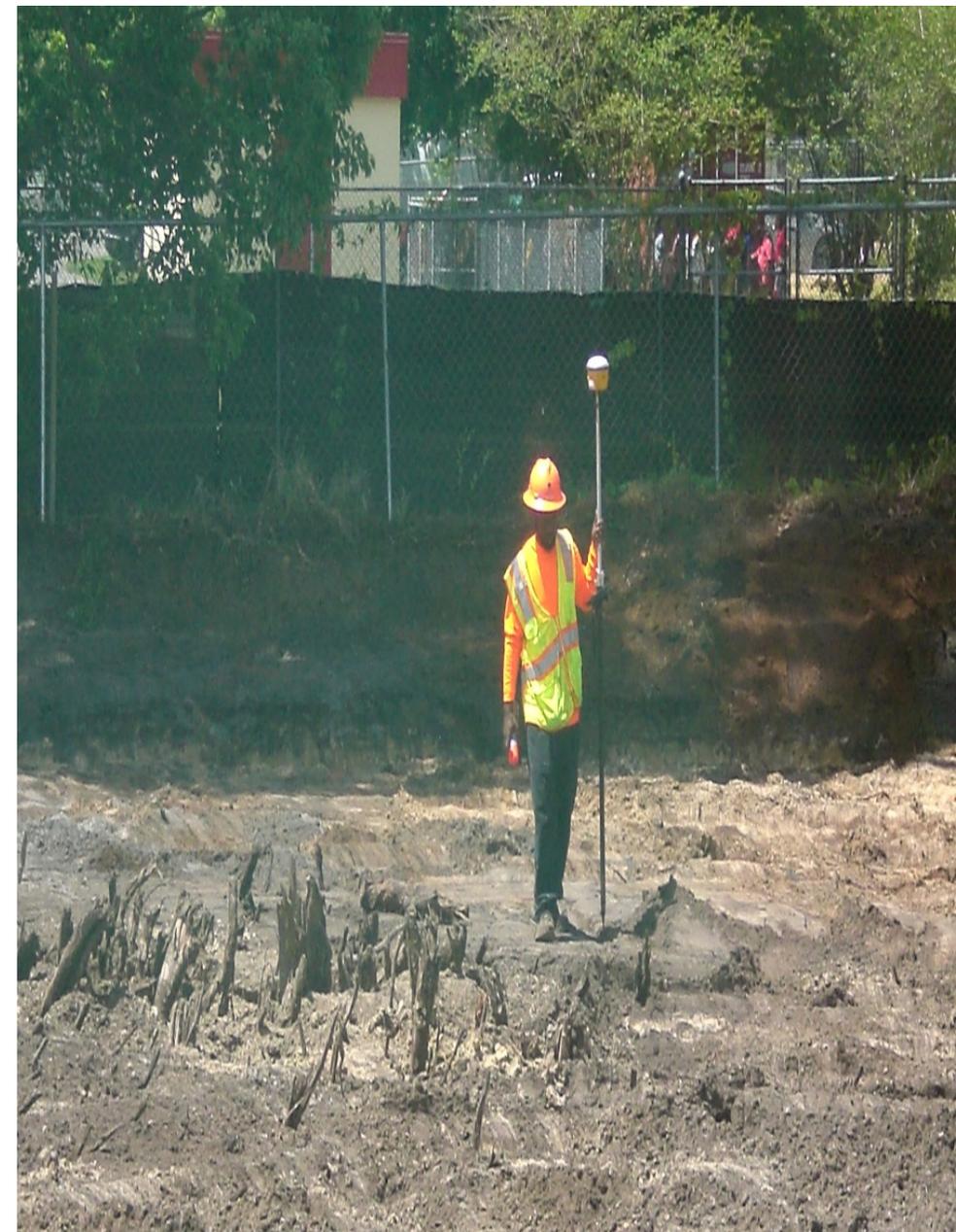
- **Monitoring Status of potential new hire**
- **Monitoring Status of new hires**
- **Close out Documentation**
 - **Memorandum**
 - **Verification of Employment**
 - **Summary in RA Report**



Lessons Learned/Challenges/Solutions

Lessons Learned- Initiation/Planning

- Extremely important for the EPA to introduce the intent to implement the SJTI program in project initiation phase of the project since budget and schedule can be significantly affected.
- It is very important for the contractor to have an understanding of the program logistics, typical duration of phases, and contractor level of effort.
- Because the implementation will be unique to the specific needs and schedule of the project, it is important to get an understanding of the EPA expectations (priority, level of importance, goals, the success factor metric).
- If the SJTI program is included as part of your site remediation, then assume it is extremely important that the program be successful.
- Frequent Communication is critical to ensure all parties stay on the same page as the project is planned. A very involved EPA RPM was critical to the success of this implementation, bridging the efforts of the EPA HQ SJTI program and contractor.



Lesson Learned Project Planning- Bid Documents, Procurement, and Constructor Subcontract Selection

- Important to convey the importance of the SJTI program in the bid document without telling the contractor
 - “In support of EPA SUPERFUND Job Training Initiative (SJTI), the Contractor will agree to participate in the Job Training Initiative (SJTI) program as part of its labor force. Significant participation in the SJTI program is strongly encouraged by EPA.”
- This language did not convey the priority of the SJTI program a success factor and critical objective of the project.

Project Planning-Lessons Learned with Bid Documents, Procurement, Subcontract Selection

- Develop the weight and method of scoring the bid responses consistent with goals and expectations
- Get feedback from the RPM when developing the weights.
- Consider the size of the remediation crew expected and the impact from the clients success metric, safety, quality, productivity, and schedule.
- Follow up call with the EPA HQ and RPM on the job descriptions/positions offered. (i.e. CDL drivers)

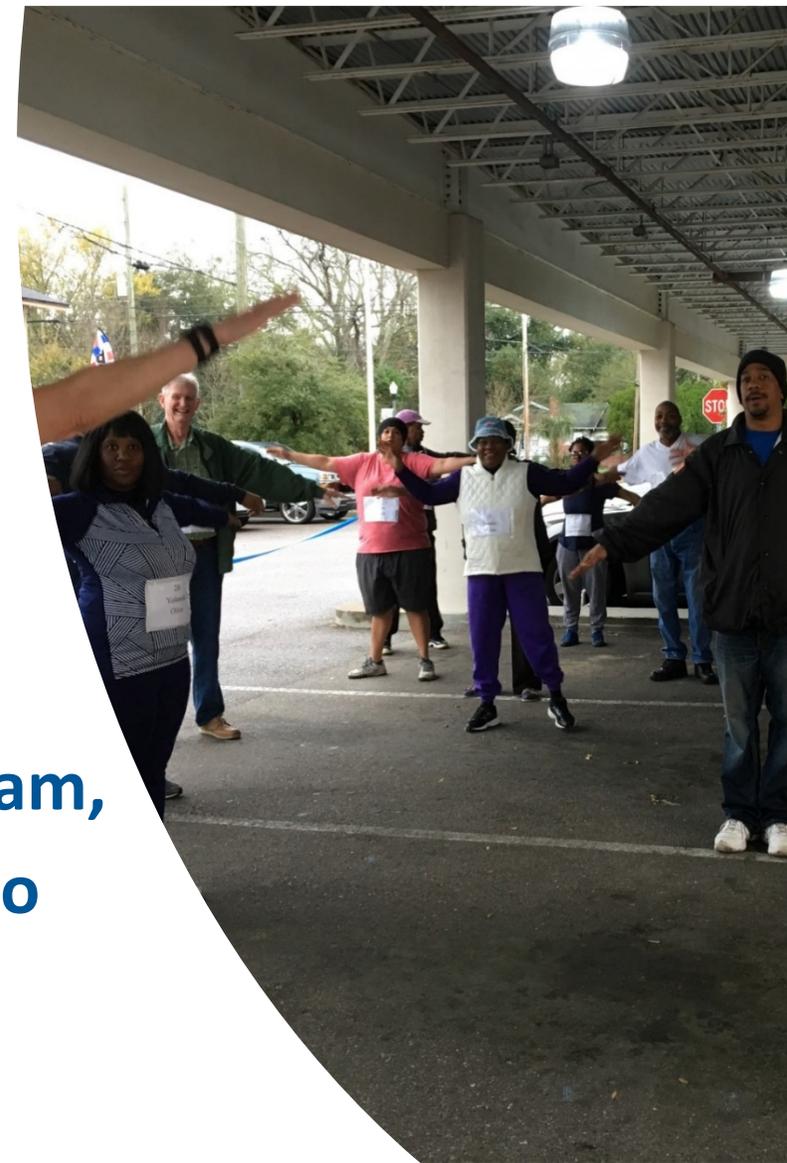


Execution – Lessons Learned on working with Local SJTI trainer

- Continually check the SJTI schedule and progress while making decisions about site construction schedule (i.e. mobilization, initial construction work).
- Reach out the subcontractor to discuss and document hiring requirements once received.
- Be flexible with the positions such as “up to xx drivers, laborers, etc..)
- Convey the positions and hiring requirements to the EPA as soon as possible.
- A hiring requirement that the candidate have “requisite abilities to work in the environmental/construction industry” was problematic

Execution- Lessons Learned in the Applicant Screening

- The selection criteria is based on effort, attitude, and commitment, not experience.
- The Contractor, Constructor, Construction manager should make every effort to attend the try outs.
- There is no guarantee that if accepted into the program, that the candidate will be hired by the subcontractor to work on the site, but graduates are considered viable potential employees.
- Follow up call with Constructor/CM on candidate selected.



Execution- Lessons Learned -The Graduation

- The Graduation is a big deal!
- Representatives from the State Senators office attended, as well the EPA Regional Division Director, EPA HQ, city and local officials,
- Contractor should participate
- An opportunity to meet those who may potentially work on site



Execution- Hiring Process- Lessons Learned

- **Some of the hiring requirements may not be met by graduates (ability to work full time, no felonies).**
- **Some of the graduates only wanted the certificates and did not want to work on the site.**
- **Contractor and subcontractor should have a weekly discussion and updates during this process as many unexpected discoveries come up**
- **Subcontractor should keep detailed notes of the pre-employment interview (questions and answers).**
- **The background check from the construction subcontractor revealed some significant hindrances to hiring.**
- **Some positions offered by the constructor or set aside for the SJTI program may not be filled by the graduates (i.e. CDL drivers).**

Monitoring- Lessons Learned

- Once a graduate is hired and begins work on site, the status of the new hire should be monitored closely by the Contractor.
- After all the graduates were interviewed and 6 “qualified” graduates were put through the pre-employment process with subcontractor, only 3 graduates were working on the site. ... fireworks please.
- Maintain close communications between the subcontractor as well the EPA on the progress and status of graduates.
- Bottom line- a minimum of 8 graduates are expected to be working on the site.
- Creativity may be required and cooperative efforts to fill positions for graduates.



Close Out

- Documented in a memorandum to the EPA the number of graduates that were hired.
- Supporting documentation included Verification of Employment from the subcontractor for each hired graduate.
- Summary section about the SJTI program in the RA Completion report.
- Conducted Lessons Learned follow up call with the Construction Team and Subcontractor.



RAF

Considerations/Recommendations

RAF Considerations/Recommendations

- Requirement included in the initial SOW
- The EPA should consider conducting background checks prior to accepting applicants prior to training to ensure the hiring potential of the applicant
- EPA selection of the contractor for the Task Order should consider experience with implementing the program as a significant weight to selection.
- Defining the success metric. A minimum success metric in SOW (i.e minimum number of graduates on the site or a % of the labor force) may incur significant safety or quality implications if not in balance with project work force, remediation scope/complexity).
- Can the “requirement” or minimum success metric for implementing the SJTI program at a site be determined after award?

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- Randy Mendonsa, ENTACT Construction Manager
- Chris Chizmar, ENTACT Fairfax Site Administrator
- Robert Hooper, Black & Veatch Construction Manager
- Joshua Molgren, Black & Veatch Project Coordinator

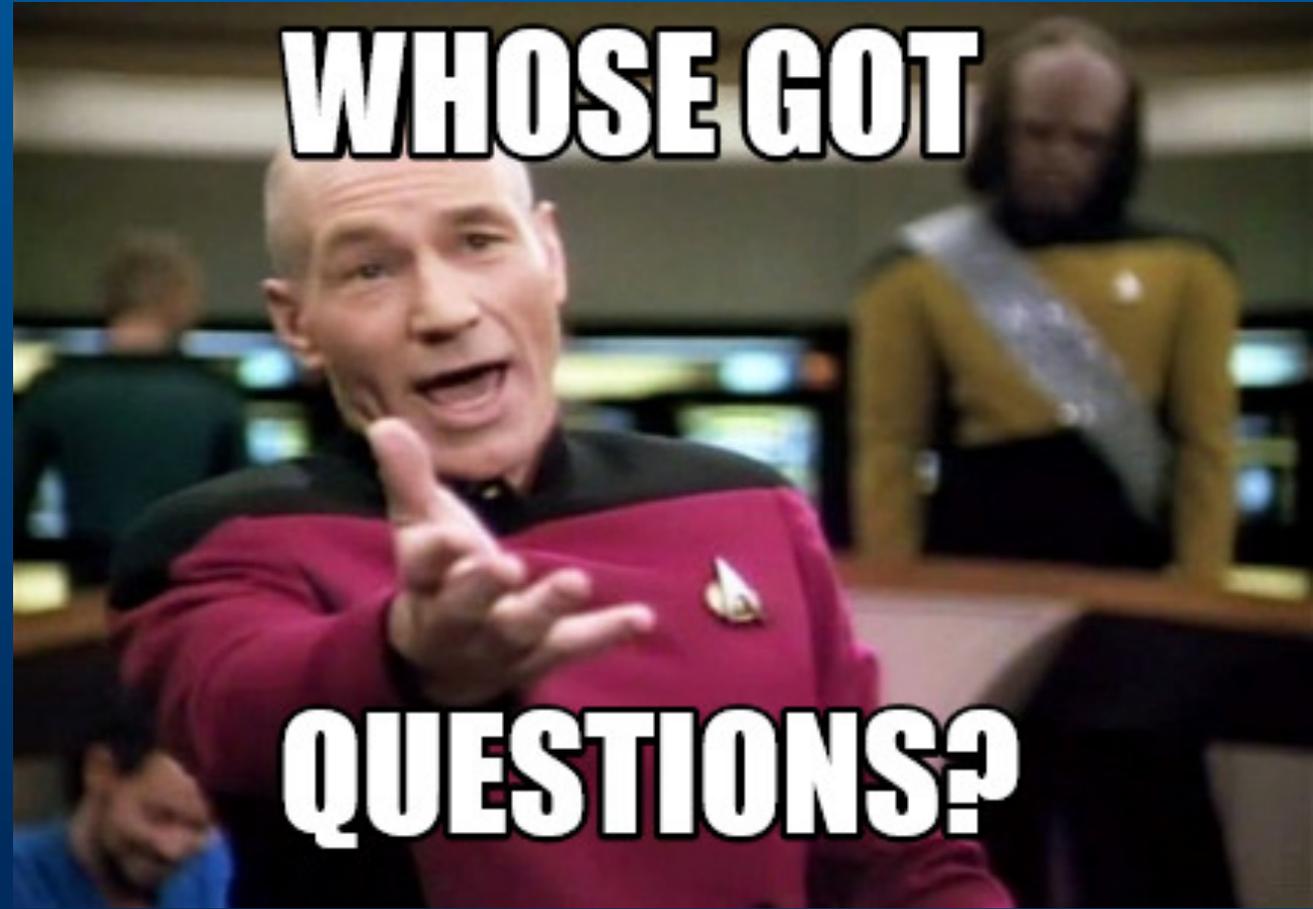
More Information:

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative>

Hint....Just search “EPA SJTI program”



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