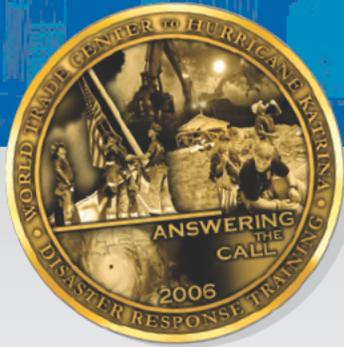


NIEHS WORKER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM



Fall Awardee Meeting Report

*September 13, 2006
New York City*

Disaster Response Training: From WTC To Katrina
FIVE YEARS OF LESSONS LEARNED



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INTRODUCTION

On September 13-15, 2006, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) proudly hosted the Fall Worker Education and Training (WETP) Awardee meeting in New York City almost five years to the day after the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. This year's Fall 2006 Awardee Meeting and Technical Workshop was fittingly themed "Disaster Response Training: From WTC to Katrina, Five Years of Lessons Learned." This report is designed to provide a summary of the activities conducted during the Fall 2006 NIEHS Awardee Meeting on September 13, 2006.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Welcome and NIEHS Update

Presenters: Joseph "Chip" Hughes, Sharon Beard, Ted Outwater, Patricia Thompson, Jim Remington, Carolyn Mason, NIEHS

The Conference convened at 12:00 pm on Wednesday September 13, 2006 with the welcome and introduction to activities made by Joseph "Chip" Hughes, Director of the NIEHS Worker Education and Training Program. The first speaker, Sharon Beard, began with an update on the curricula submission process in which she provided conference participants with several tips for submitting curricula. Ms. Beard stressed the importance of all NIEHS WETP Awardees following the same criteria for document submittal in order to ensure accuracy. She also

informed awardees of their responsibility to ensure that all documents are accurate and have received PI or training director approval prior to uploading to the WETP Curricula Information and Data Management System (WETCIS).

Ms. Beard also provided an update on the Minority Worker Training and Brownfields Minority Worker Training Programs (MWT/BMWT). She discussed the current status of BMWT data and made the announcement that the NIEHS WETP awardee programs should send pictures of the programs in action, and the program gradu-

"Best yet!" "Excellent and to-the-point."

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

ations should be videotaped. She concluded with logistical announcements for the Brownfields 2006 Conference.

Ted Outwater addressed NIEHS WETP Awardee reporting issues. During his presentation, he encouraged awardees to make their reports more interesting and appealing. Progress report formats should be simplified and reports produced should follow the same format. Attendees agreed with this sentiment, as one participant stated, “It’s good that he has re-emphasized the importance of issue stories, anecdotes and photos.”

Following the reporting issue discussion, Patricia Thompson discussed the Awardee progress report submission process. She stated that awardee programs must now mail one copy of their progress report to NIEHS prior to uploading it to the Data Management System. Mrs. Thompson also discussed recent SBIR/STTR awards and the new Data Management System Users Manual.

Jim Remington provided an update on the Mission Assignment, highlighting the most common types of trainings being provided and the breakdown of courses by state from October 2005 to present. The majority of trainings were conducted in areas along the Louisiana and Mississippi coast. The most common types of trainings being provided to workers in these areas were general health and safety awareness, driver safety, and CPR.

Carolyn Mason discussed the recent modifications made to the proposal submittal process for grantees. The changes made to this process include:

- PI signatures no longer required on proposal form
- the utilization of PH 398 forms for supplemental funding
- the use of the R&R 424 form for competitive applications after May 5th, 2006 for certain mechanisms, and
- the calculation of person months is now required on all forms rather than percent effort.

Participants highly approved of the welcome and NIEHS update. Awardee Meeting Attendees stated that this year’s Welcome and NIEHS Update was the “Best yet” and “Excellent and to-the-point.”

NIEHS National Clearinghouse Update

Deborah Weinstock, Director of the NIEHS WETP National Clearinghouse provided an update on the Clearinghouse activities and initiative. Her presentation highlighted a few of the successes the National Clearinghouse had achieved during the 2005-2006 fiscal year, which included the distribution of more than 53,000 Protect

Yourself While Helping Others Booklets, designed for workers involved in the Katrina remediation effort. The National Clearinghouse also reported over 8,000 downloads of the Katrina booklets from the Clearinghouse website. Ms.

“Deborah’s summary of achievements and challenges was succinct and easy to follow.”

Weinstock also highlighted the number of workers trained by National Clearinghouse facilitated courses and the training hours generated. The presentation was concluded by describing the following future objectives for the National Clearinghouse:

- Completion of DOE surveys and produce a summary report.
- Collaborate with OSHA to revise the Disaster Site Worker Course
- Coordinating awareness level training for the Department of Homeland Security 15 Disaster Planning scenarios.

The NIEHS WETP National Clearinghouse update was concluded with a discussion on logistics for the 2007 Trainers Exchange planning committee meeting. Attendees felt that the Clearinghouse update segment was informative and concise. One Awardee meeting participant stated, “Deborah’s summary of achievements and challenges was succinct and easy to follow.”

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Rebuilding Communities – Voices from Katrina:

Moderator: Sharon Beard, NIEHS **Panelists:** Robert Bullard, Clark Atlanta University, Beverly Wright, Dillard University, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, Jim Frederick, Labor Institute/United Steel Workers Union

This panel explored the relationship between environmental justice, contamination issues, cleanup and rebuilding strategies after Hurricane Katrina as detailed in “The Wake of the Storm: Environment, Disaster, and Race After Katrina,” and how communities, academia, and labor can work together to develop model programs to assist in the training and cleanup efforts such as the Safe Way Back Home Project between Dillard University and the United Steel Workers Union.

Dr. Robert Bullard discussed health in terms of access and resources during Katrina, as well as the history of contamination in New Orleans and the resulting debate over government responsibility for cleanup. Local communities are fighting to get cleaned up, and while mold and spores are growing in people’s homes, officials are saying that what was once a “Toxic Soup” is fine. The government’s justification is that New Orleans was like other cities in terms of pre-Katrina contamination, even though it has the highest asthma rate in the country. Bullard’s view was that the government needs to take some responsibility for cleanup, as well as communities, CBOs, nonprofits, etc.

Dr. Beverly Wright addressed many of the human factors that contributed to the disaster of Katrina. She gave a personal perspective of the Katrina evacuee experience, and discussed the pre-Katrina demographics and socio-economics of race, poverty, healthcare access, and special populations. There were two underlying themes to Dr. Wright’s presentation: the economic disadvantage of African Americans and botched government response led many to remain in the city and; man-made environmental hazards also contributed to the devastation, such as the strengthened surge caused by the Port of New Orleans, putting 80% of the city under water, and 6 major oil spills contaminating that water and leaving toxic chemicals and debris behind. She went on to discuss the development and implementation of

the Safe Way Back Home Project, including its successful recruitment and training of 180 volunteers and the renovation of 27 homes in New Orleans.

Jim Frederick of the United Steel Workers discussed the development of the United Steel Workers partnership with Dillard University Deep South Center for Environmental Justice to implement the Safe Way Back Home Project.

He highlighted the reasons behind USW’s participation. One reason stemmed from the fact that much of the contamination in New Orleans had come from union members’ workplaces. Another reason for USW’s participation was because of their experience in handling the chemicals that had contaminated communities in New Orleans. Lastly, a significant number of

their members were residents of the affected area and the USW felt some responsibility for their lack of preparedness. To contribute to the program, USW provided boots, suits, goggles, and dust masks for volunteers that completed the Safe Way Back Home trainings, as well as HAZWOPER training for 45 community members, a mold remediation class for 56 community members, 1,600 hours of hazard awareness training, and 4,000 hours of Health and Safety for Devastated Communities training.

The Awardee Meeting attendees really enjoyed this panel discussion. One participant stated, “I was pleased to see a panel that really emphasized the racial and class dimensions to the tragedy. Robert Bullard and Beverly Wright did a fine overview and I look forward to finding time to read Robert’s paper in our packets. Jim Frederick’s comments on the union and community linkages were helpful.” Another participant stated that this segment provided “Great insight into the “behind the scenes” of Katrina. Good human element I could relate to...and lets me know how important disaster training and response is.”

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BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Business Official Meeting – NIEHS Grants Management Issues:

Moderators: Carolyn Mason and Pamela Clark, NIEHS

This year's NIEHS Grants Management Issues Business Official Meeting was designed to address issues specifically related to prior approval requirements and NIH Commons registration. The moderators for the Grants Management Issues meeting were Carolyn Mason and Pamela Clark of NIEHS. The first topic discussed was the prior approval requirements and expanded authorities, which covered modifications in the process under the following areas:

- A&R
- Capital Expenditures
- Change in Scope
- Change in Key Personnel
- Change of Grantee Organization
- Change in Grantee Organizational Status
- Addition of a Foreign Component
- Deviation from Award Terms and Conditions
- Carryover of Unobligated Balances
- Need for Additional NIH Funding

“Carolyn really hits on points at hand and is dedicated to answering our questions and/or providing help”.

Following this discussion, the meeting focus shifted to the eRA and NIH Commons. The eRA Commons are websites developed to facilitate the extramural research administrative process for NIH and the grantee community. The presenters discussed the importance and benefits of registering for both the eRA and NIH Commons for awardees, in addition to providing step-by-step details for how participants can register for the website.

Participants thought that the session was informative and well structured. One participant stated, “Carolyn really hits on points at hand and is dedicated to answering our questions and/or providing help”.

Program Official Meeting – HWWT/HDPT/DOE Issues

Moderators: Joseph “Chip” Hughes, Ted Outwater, Jim Remington, NIEHS

During this session, Chip Hughes discussed with participants his vision of where the program had been over the past few years and where it was headed from his perspective. He then asked participants for their sense of where the program is and should be going. The main question asked was “Should we continue in the disaster response business?” While there was a little trepidation from some, the overwhelming sense was that the program does need to continue its involvement in disaster response. For NIEHS this means continuing to develop relationships with other federal agencies. For awardees, it means they agree to offer their assistance

“This was the best segment of the afternoon. The informed style gathering worked well to share information.”

when disasters occur and will commit resources (human capital and money) as needed and as possible within their organizations. For the most part awardees seem to be getting internal organizational support for their involvement in disaster response, though challenges to this work were acknowledged.

Mr. Hughes also mentioned that he and others would be traveling to Hanford the following week and would propose joint work with HAMMER on developing a rad awareness booklet/PPT to address the dirty bomb scenario included the Department of Homeland Security's 15 planning scenarios.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Program Official Meeting: MWT/BMWT Issues

Moderator: Sharon Beard, NIEHS **Presenters:** Bruce Jennings, East Baltimore Community Development Corporation (EBCC/CPWR); Michael Holmes, St. Louis Community College (STLCC/HMTRI); Sonia Torruella, New York City Housing Authority; Gregory Smith, OAI Inc.; David Myers, OAI Inc.

The Minority Worker Training and Brownfields Minority Worker Training (MWT/BMWT) Program Meeting

This year's Minority Worker Training and Brownfields Minority Worker Training Program Meeting had two major issues addressed through presentations and discussion. One of those issues was how awardee programs can effectively build capacity with local governments that will address workforce issues within the Brownfields Redevelopment program. The second issue addressed was how awardees can work collaboratively with housing authorities, health departments and other community based organizations to address workforce development issues.

The moderator for the session was Sharon Beard of NIEHS and Michael Holmes, St. Louis Community College. Ms. Beard began the program meeting with a brief presentation to address operational issues within the MWT/BMWT programs. The first issue addressed involved the development of curricula, namely the formalization of Life Skills curricula. The second issue addressed the importance of awardees involved in Katrina related training ensuring the quality of their documents. Co-moderator, Michael Holmes initiated a discussion on the challenges training programs have placing training graduates into gainful employment and the strategies these programs can use to address this issue, and introduced the presenters for the meeting.

Presenter Bruce Jennings of the East Baltimore Community Corporation delivered an excellent presentation on the activities of his organization, specifically highlighting the Gate Program. The Gate Program is a referral service available to Baltimore

“The speakers and resources were fantastic!”

residents, providing for substance abuse treatment, life skills, occupational skill training, literacy training, and health screening. Attendees of this meeting gained very useful information for developing partnerships with local and state government entities.

Gregory Smith and David Myers of OAI discussed the OAI MWT program and its partnership with the New York City Housing Authority. The presentation began with a brief review of existing OAI partnerships with housing authorities. Then Mr. Smith and Mr. Myers described the process of developing their partnership the New York City Housing Authority, in which they provided useful advice on how participants can develop similar partnerships within their organizations. The presentation highlighted the challenges, benefits, and outcomes of the partnership to provide participants with an idea of what to expect when attempting to replicate their program. Presenter, Sonia Torruella, later joined the presentation to provide participants with the Housing Authority's perspective on the development of this partnership.

The participants were really impressed with the session and gained valuable information in how they can help their programs better reach their recruitment, retention, and job placement goals. One participant stated, “The speakers and resources were fantastic.” Other participants stated that the session had “good presentations and dialogue” and found it “Interesting to hear about issues in New York and Baltimore.”

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Program Official Meeting – Data Issues:

Moderator: Patricia Thompson, NIEHS Presenter: Lynn Albert, Alpha Gamma Technologies, Inc.

This breakout session addressed issues, new initiatives, and changes in the NIEHS WETP data management process for awardees. The Data Issues program breakout discussed recent updates and issues concerning the User's Manual for the Data Management System (DMS), presented by Patricia Thompson of NIEHS and Lynn Albert of Alpha Gamma Technologies, Incorporated. Users of the manual can now download the manual and have access to online assistance. The DMS system also has new navigation options, a new list serve for DMS users, and the curricula catalogue submenus are now visible at all times. Changes to the Emergency Support Activation Plan data screens involved the addition of two new pages.

“Patricia and Lynn have done incredible work over the years on these data and DMS issues. The manual for using the DMS is very well put together.”

Future modifications to the DMS website include the following:

- Availability of Student Demographic Cumulative reports.
- Enabling the retrieval of historical initial projected course data.
- Ability to retrieve subtotals for reports.

The presentation concluded by facilitating a discussion to determine additional ways to improve the DMS. Attendees of this meeting found the information was very useful and the presentation was well put together. An attendee of this meeting stated, “Patricia and Lynn have done incredible work over the years on these data and DMS issues. The manual for using the DMS is very well put together.”

CONCLUSION

The Awardee Meeting was concluded following the completion of the breakout sessions. Overall the Awardee Conference received good reviews from the attendees. At least 82% of all Awardee Meeting survey respondents found that the meeting met their expectations and they gained useful information that can be utilized to improve the effectiveness of their program. Participants stated that the conference overall was “very well done!”.

“Very well done!”

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