

Summary of NIEHS WETP 2007 Fall Conference: The Future of Hazardous Materials Cleanup & Training Chapel Hill, NC

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

1:00 p.m.

Welcome/NIEHS Update

Dr. William Suk, *Acting Deputy Director, NIEHS*

- Has a family connection to grantees – father was a union member for 50 years
- Grantee work is important because you are the end users for the agency

Joseph “Chip” Hughes, *Director, NIEHS WETP*

- Provided a summary of Avian Influenza Responders Conference - Avian Influenza Booklets
- Summary of Investigations, Leadership Transition – hopes that it will make the agency stronger
- President’s budget is at \$80M – base amounts are covered
- Brownfields Program, MWTP – currently not being funded
- WETP has renewed MOUs and IAGs with DOE, OSHA, EPA, USDA – key way to leverage the program and utilize resources
- Upcoming technical workshops – NIEHS Superfund Programs, April 2008; NIEHS WETP/OSHA, Spring 2009
- TOPOFF – 4 Simulated Exercise currently underway

Ted Outwater

- Provided overview of WETP performance, the RFA, and the Strategic Plan
- How to measure performance – participant feedback, instructor support, training content, numbers
- RFA overview – develops model programs, partnerships, shares information, and develops public materials
- RFA schedule: Will be issued Summer 09; Due Fall 09; New awards begin August 2010.

Sharon Beard

- Provided an update on Brownfields and Minority Worker Training Issues
- Curricula Catalog Issues – partner materials need to be online and updated
- Overview of Brownfields 2008 – call for papers, logistical information
- Overview of NIEHS, WETP, Clearinghouse, and grantee pages

Patricia Thompson

- WETP Training Accomplishments – course, workers trained and training hours
- Update on SBIR Program – updates on DMS web page access

Carolyn Mason

- NIH Update – federal government grantee rules and regulations
- New Branch management policy – notice of award (NoA) now a .PDF attachment to an e-mail
- Audit requirements, profile maintenance, administrative, programmatic, review questions
- Where and when to submit required reports

Questions

- Reciprocity (like DHS certification) for model programs in other agencies?
 - Kirkwood has 4 courses approved – but with DHS money
- Is grants.gov going to be the vehicle to apply for future NIH grants?
 - Yes

2:30 p.m.

NIEHS National Clearinghouse Update

Deborah Weinstock, *NIEHS Clearinghouse*

- Provided an overview of the packet contents
- Overview of Clearinghouse activities over the past year
- Overview of the Clearinghouse web site – issues of going between NIEHS and Clearinghouse sites
- Next tool to create is earthquakes, afterwards chemical release

3:00 p.m.

Plans for the Spring 2008 Awardee Meeting Presentation

Joseph “Chip” Hughes, Director, *NIEHS WETP*

Claudia Thompson, *NIEHS SBRP*

- Introduced SBRP – took over as head of program from Bill Suk
- Announcing Joint WETP/SBRP Meeting
- Initiated a SBIR program – site characterization
- Partnerships with federal agencies (EPA, OSHA) and communities – research translation and community outreach cores

3:45 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Business Official Meeting – Grants Management Issues

Carolyn Mason, *NIEHS*

- Provided an overview of what’s due, when it is due and where to send it.
- The annual Progress Report (PHS 2590) is due two months prior to the start date.
- You must submit the completed, signed original progress report and one copy (with required signatures).

- “Other support information” on the PHS2590 is a **requirement**. Don’t ignore it. The “key personnel” is always the PI.
- When you list the unobligated balance do not include unliquidated balances. Just balances you expect to carry over.
- The annual FSR is due 90 days after the end of the budget period.
- As of October 1, 2007, NIH requires all Financial Status Reports (FSRs) to be submitted using the electronic FSR system in the eRA Commons.
- Revisions are to be submitted electronically as well.
- There isn’t a penalty for missing the October 31 FSRs deadline, but consistently late submissions will red flag an awardee. This may increase your chances of being audited.
- Better to make a best guess, submit it on time and then submit a revision.
- Do not submit hard copies to Carolyn, send items via email. If you can’t scan something, have your authorized institutional individual send the email, that constitutes as an official signature.
- The authorized person for your organization (the person who signs grant notices), is not necessarily your PI.
- Only one person per awardee can receive the grant awards email notification.
- Your funding cannot cover food for breaks during training/meeting. It can pay for food for a working lunch, but not lunch/dinner otherwise.
- If you provide a meal lunch during a working lunch you the attendees cannot also receive per diem, it’s one or the other.
- There is a limit on per diem: you cannot exceed the federal limits, but if your institution’s per diem is less than the federal government’s then you can’t exceed the institution’s per diem.
- Paying for lunch during training is an “incentive” not a stipend.

Program Official Meeting – HWWT/HDPT/DOE Issues

Joseph “Chip” Hughes, *NIEHS*

Ted Outwater, *NIEHS*

Jim Remington, *NIEHS*

- Introduction of attendees
- Ron Snyder, Kirkwood – update on Avian Influenza program
- 851 is on the web, RDD is not yet
- Create a process for DOE, in the coming year convene a few meetings
- Idaho, Los Alamos, and other sites – want to get out to any site that is interested – not many workers know about 851 and their rights under the standard
- DOE grantee meeting in Hanford?
- Kirkwood has electronic training program for 851 – film interview with Deputy VP

Earthquakes

- Could not find a responders overview for earthquakes – either agency or organization
- Hope to fill out a modular responder training like the AI and Hurricane
- Maybe add tsunami to the hurricane? Tornados?

- Opportunity to talk to chemical industry – avenue to get to existing information for large facilities
- Booklets are meant to target health and safety of skilled support personnel
- PBS Special – Ring of Fire, Sea-Tac Airport might have some good information
- Places around the world – Japan, might have resources
- Secondary disaster – people who come in to the area to help – how to coordinate that effort

OSHA RFI

- Question not independent of DHS, ask for NRF
- ESF, not an annex
- Questions for OSHA - Enforcement and emergency response at the same time?
- Broad questions and process issues
- NRF response from Clearinghouse for DHS
- Why is this RFI out? Getting heat from Congress about not protecting first responders
- Is EPA brought into the discussion?

Program Official Meeting – B/MWTP Issues

Sharon Beard, *NIEHS*

- Brownfields 2008
 - Submit ideas! Deadline is 10/26/07
 - Sharon Beard is on the review committee – "influences the vote" and will work to pair/leverage ideas
 - It's important that WETP is well represented
- B/MWTP Dinner and Meeting
 - Working to piggy-back – not conflict – with the EJ Caucuses
 - "Roadmap to Revitalization"
 - Tours may be available – please submit ideas
 - Update on Funding
 - Thanks for cooperation/patience
 - The FY 2008 EPA budget has no funding for Brownfields – not just WETP, but ATSDR, OSHA, etc.
 - WETP may have some contingency funding – NOT 100%; will have to evaluate, prioritize
 - Grantees are encouraged to work together to influence the funding process
- Question - What other agencies is WETP working with to establish new/expanded partnerships?
 - Department of Labor – Green Jobs Act (funding uncertain)
 - States – much of the DOL money goes to states in block grants
 - Private Foundations
- Question - Are grantees aware of other sources of funding?
 - Prudential Foundation; NYCDEP has an outreach initiative

- WETP grantees do a *great* job and it's not hard to "sell the programs" to states and foundations
- HUD – they have a project that is not training, but are placing trainees at a project remediating old housing stock.
- Curricula Catalog Issues
 - We need to get the Life Skills materials uploaded!
 - All materials need to be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate
 - WETP will begin audits – and will hold funds in cases where progress reports include development of materials that are not uploaded to the Curricula Catalog
 - Need to make sure that information about consortia and partnership structures are current
 - Need to make sure that all contact information is current
 - Catalog contents are being reviewed – materials older than 2000 will be archived unless grantees demonstrate that content is reviewed annually and updated as needed
 - SARA requires that WETP-funded materials be publicly available – just do it
- Question - If materials are reviewed and do not need updates, how do we document that they were reviewed?
 - List documents reviewed in your progress report.
- Question - Are we required to upload materials developed by contractors?
 - All materials developed with WETP funds must publicly available.
 - You must upload the materials, or at least provide links to a source for the materials.
- DMS Progress Reporting Problems
 - Prior to reporting, please verify that your data in the DMS match the information in your progress report
 - Provide a summary paragraph *covering your entire program* in your progress report. Include: # trained, # training hours, # placed
 - Ask Lynn Albert or Patricia Thompson about the DMS – it has several very useful query functions. It can be a great tool for grantees – use it!
 - PIs are responsible for data accuracy
 - WETP has been audited by new auditors – need to be prepared to justify discrepancies between projected and actual values.
- Green Jobs
 - Could provide opportunity for synergies with WETP activities
 - Brownfields and Minority Worker Training could position WETP for participation in Green Jobs Act activities
 - Grantees could consider incorporating Green Jobs training as a component of WETP training – but NOT as the focus.
 - Design a model and get approval. Experience with Green Jobs may position programs well for the future

- Question - Are grantees aware of Green Jobs opportunities?
 - JFY has a small planning grant for Green Jobs. Prince Charles was in NO and toured a site; a JFY trainer is currently in England getting training
 - The Ford Foundation is very interested in the concept of training people to repair solar panels
 - Clinton Foundation has a Green Building initiative – no money
 - Technical and Community colleges are training people for Green Jobs

- Upcoming Conferences
 - APHA
 - AICHE – Sharon Beard is working to get WETP grantees onto panels
 - EJ Conference this weekend in Franklin, NC
 - It would be great if grantees would present MWT as an EJ activity – both at conferences and in publications

- Kizzeta Vaughn – works with a contractor who has a \$980 million contract for highway construction in Washington, DC and Maryland. They are looking for MWT students. It is the Life Skills training that makes the MWT trainees attractive. She asked if other programs had trainees to recommend; can provide contact information. Sharon Beard suggested that grantees prepare a joint letter, with names and certificates.