

# Superfund Job Training Initiative

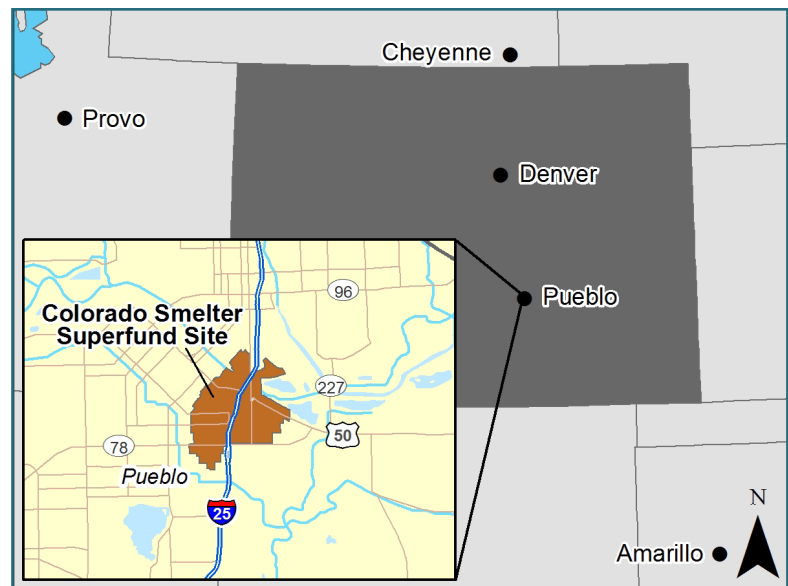


## MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT THE COLORADO SMELTER SUPERFUND SITE



### Introduction

The Colorado Smelter Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 17 trainees living near the Colorado Smelter Superfund site in Pueblo, Colorado. Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), NeighborWorks Southern Colorado, and area organizations and remedial site contractor APTIM, Colorado Smelter SuperJTI provided local job seekers with new skills, certifications and hands-on training linked to construction and cleanup. The EPA's goal is to help find employment opportunities available for affected communities during the cleanup and redevelopment process and to provide the workforce development skills needed to take advantage of those opportunities.



A silver and lead smelter operated at the Colorado Smelter site from 1883 to 1908. (Map Sources: Esri, DeLorme, AND, Tele Atlas, First American, UNEP-WCMC and USGS.)

## Outreach, Recruitment and Screening: July – August 2018

Colorado Smelter SuperJTI and EPA Region 8 staff reached out to the Pueblo community by posting flyers and advertising on area radio stations and in local newspapers. Local partner NeighborWorks Southern Colorado posted information on social media, and several area organizations helped publicize the program to attract interested candidates. SuperJTI, EPA Region 8 and CDPHE staff hosted information sessions about the program in Pueblo. In July and August 2018, over 80 people attended the program's 18 information sessions and 66 people completed a preliminary testing process. After these sessions, 43 people returned and submitted required documents. Forty-one people participated in program tryouts. The tryouts included leadership, team building and role-playing activities, a physical fitness evaluation, and observation by a team of evaluators from the program's partners. Fifteen of the 17 trainees selected during tryouts went on to complete the program.

## Training and Job Placement: August – September 2018

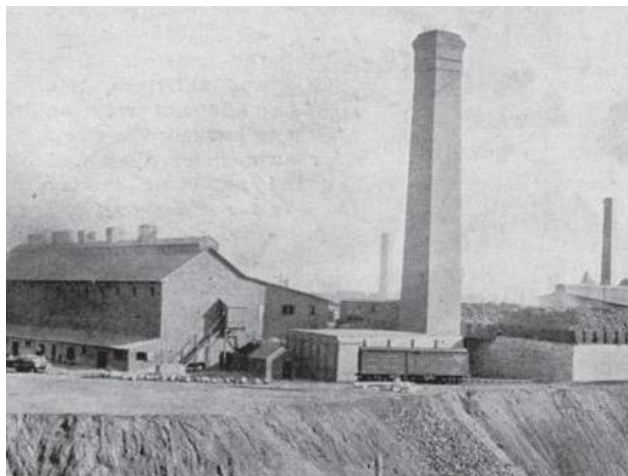
The two-week Colorado Smelter SuperJTI training program took place in Pueblo and Pueblo West. It included:

**Work Readiness Training:** Trainees completed courses in environmental justice, interpersonal communication, building cultural competence and effective work habits. EPA contractor Skeo provided the training.

**40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) Training:** Trainees earned their HAZWOPER certification and learned about cleanup and safety topics such as environmental legislation and standards, toxicology, hazardous material site/spill control containment, and decontamination and isolation. Trainees participated in hands-on training scenarios using equipment and gear.

**OSHA 10-hour Construction Safety and Health:** Trainees earned their OSHA-10 certification and learned about topics such as hazard communication, personal protective equipment, electrical safety and excavation process safety management.

**CPR/First Aid:** Trainees earned their CPR/First Aid certification and learned about topics such as soft tissue injuries, burns, shock, rescue breaths, methods to stop bleeding, bloodborne pathogens, poisoning, CPR, and



### Site Background

The Colorado Smelter was a silver and lead smelter active in the Eilers, Bessemer and Grove neighborhoods of Pueblo, Colorado, from 1883 to 1908. In 2010, CDPHE inspected properties near the Colorado Smelter and found elevated lead and arsenic levels. The EPA listed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List in 2014.

The site now consists of building remains and a 700,000-square-foot slag (waste) pile. Contaminant levels pose a threat to area residents. Additional sampling will help determine the type and scope of cleanup activities.

There are about 1,700 homes and 200 commercial properties in the preliminary study area. This area covers a half-mile radius from the smokestack of the former smelter. The homes are mostly detached, single-family homes. Many of the homes have bare-soil yards.

injuries to muscles, bones and joints. Local business Colorado Hazard Control provided the HAZWOPER, OSHA-10 and CPR/First Aid training.

After the program, SuperJTI provided graduates' information to USACE and APTIM to help inform placement efforts. Multiple graduates were placed into positions cleaning up the site including interior crew members, foreman and flaggers.

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## GRADUATE PROFILES



### Leila Jimenez

Leila had just moved to Pueblo and was looking for work when she saw a SuperJTI flyer posted in her neighborhood. She decided to pursue the opportunity and found the recruitment experience for the program to be enjoyable and informative. Leila also found the economics portion of the training to be extremely helpful. At the end of the program, she said she felt accomplished and “ready to do bigger and better things.” After graduating from SuperJTI, Leila was hired by site contractor Enviroworks as a laborer, and later moved on to work for prime contractor APTIM as the interior property manager. Leila now manages scheduling for the interior work crew and explains the process to homeowners involved in the cleanup. Leila is grateful that her participation in SuperJTI opened doors for her to work in the environmental cleanup field. She is now pursuing other certifications to help her achieve her career goals.



### Isaac Hernandez

A native of Pueblo, Isaac saw an advertisement for SuperJTI on Facebook. Formerly an executive chef, Isaac was looking to make a career change. After calling the hotline and going through the SuperJTI recruitment process at Neighborworks Southern Colorado, Isaac was selected to join the program. Isaac felt the training was interesting, personal and that the trainers made it “more of a family-type environment.” At the conclusion of the program, Isaac said that he was uplifted and felt accomplished. After graduating from SuperJTI, Isaac began working at the site as a laborer. Now working for APTIM, Isaac’s duties include setting up hot zones, flagging, working with team members to hit goals, and working on the excavation and backfill crew. Isaac feels that his participation in SuperJTI has helped him greatly. He reflected, “it gave me the opportunity – it opened up doors I didn’t think were possible. It opened up a whole new career path.”



### Vickie Long

Vickie first saw a flyer for the SuperJTI program when visiting the workforce center in Pueblo. She said that she found the recruitment process to be fun. After completing the tryouts event, she was selected to join the program. Looking back, Vickie said that “the whole thing to me was beneficial. Everything we talked about we use to this day. From dealing with an irate homeowner to an appreciative one. I enjoyed it!” After completing the program, Vickie was ready to start work and was hired on site. She was able to cross-train in a variety of positions such as property coordinator, interior crew member, and excavation and restoration crew member. Vickie now works for site contractor APTIM as a foreman for the interior crew working on home cleanups. For people thinking about participating in SuperJTI, Vickie says that “whoever wants to join, I encourage it. SuperJTI is an opportunity that people should be jumping at. It prepares you for what is going to come up next.”



Graduation for the program’s 15 trainees took place at Pueblo Department of Public Health & Environment in September 2018. Former EPA Region 8 Superfund Remedial & Federal Facilities Program Director Bill Murray attended the ceremony and handed out certificates to the graduates. The ceremony included remarks from program partners as well as the graduates.

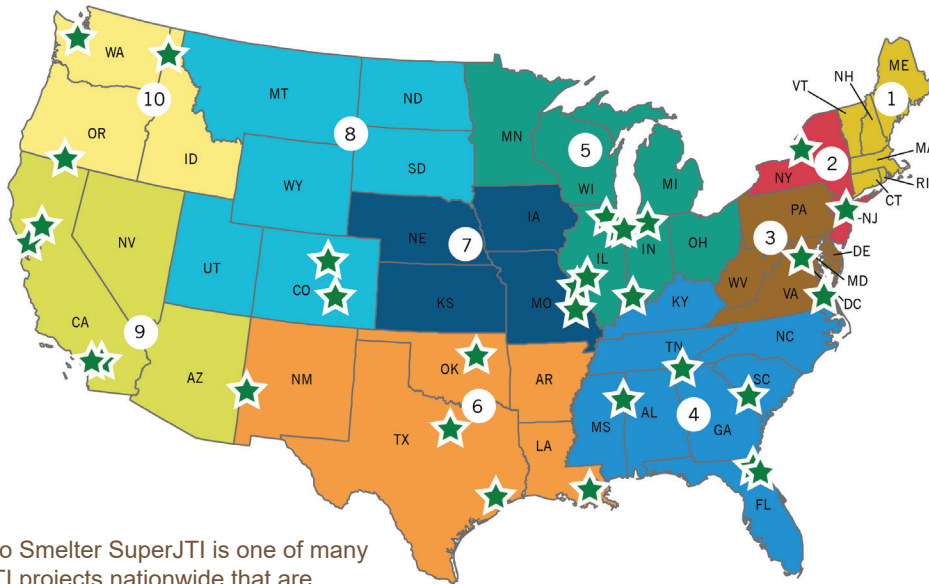
## COLORADO SMELTER SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

### *Live on or near the Colorado*

**Smelter site:** Ninety-three percent of the trainees (14 of 15 people) live in Pueblo. The other person lives nearby in Pueblo West.

### *Include a wide range of ages:*

Trainees ranged from people in their 20s to people in their 60s.



Colorado Smelter SuperJTI is one of many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for citizens living in communities affected by Superfund sites.



# What is the SuperJTI Program?

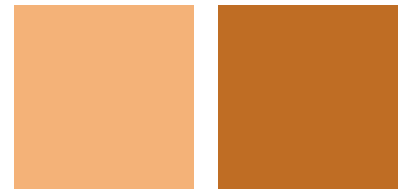


The Superfund Job Training Initiative, or SuperJTI, supports job readiness programs in communities affected by nearby Superfund sites and encourages the employment of trainees at local site cleanups.

The SuperJTI program combines extensive classroom instruction with hands-on exercises for each participant. Upon completion of the program, each participant possesses the marketable skills required to become a valuable member of the community's workforce.



The EPA offers SuperJTI training at no cost to training participants.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:**  
<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative>

Or contact SuperJTI's National Program Manager:

Devon Martin  
 (703) 603-7187  
 martin.devon@epa.gov

