



# Superfund Job Training Initiative

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT THE OMAHA LEAD SUPERFUND SITE

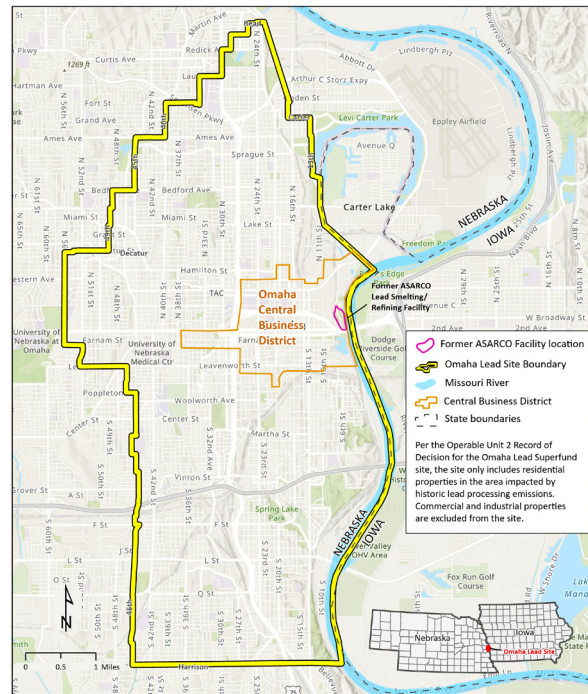
### Introduction

The Omaha Lead Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 20 trainees living on or near the Omaha Lead Superfund site in Omaha, Nebraska.

Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), local partner Capacity Cultivators, and site cleanup contractors Environmental Restoration and ABC Abatement, Omaha Lead SuperJTI provided local job seekers with new skills, certifications and hands-on training linked to construction and cleanup. Omaha Lead SuperJTI is EPA's first-ever SuperJTI project in the country to provide Spanish interpretation during the training program.

EPA's goal is to help identify employment opportunities available for affected communities during the cleanup and redevelopment process, and to provide workforce development skills needed to take advantage of those opportunities.

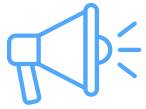
Omaha Lead National Priority List (NPL) Superfund Site



The Omaha Lead site includes 27 square miles in downtown Omaha, Nebraska. From the early 1870s to 1997, two lead smelting plants operated near the site. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri

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## Outreach and Screening: March – April 2023

Omaha Lead SuperJTI and EPA Region 7 reached out to the community through local and regional stakeholders, unemployment offices and non-profits, and by advertising on area radio stations, local newspapers and social media. Local partner Capacity Cultivators helped publicize the program, attracting interested candidates. Throughout outreach and recruitment, English and Spanish language materials were used to advertise the program, with English and Spanish-speaking residents encouraged to apply.

SuperJTI and Capacity Cultivators staff hosted information sessions about the program in Omaha. In March 2023, over 125 people attended the program's 11 information sessions, offered in both English and Spanish. After these sessions, 79 people returned and submitted required documents. Twenty-five people participated in program tryouts. The tryouts included leadership, team building and role-playing activities, a physical fitness component, and observation by a team of evaluators from the program's partners. All 20 trainees selected during tryouts went on to complete the program.



## Training and Job Placement: April 2023

The 3.5-week Omaha Lead SuperJTI training program took place in Omaha. EPA contractor Skeo provided the Work Readiness Training. Midwest Training Institute, a local business, provided the 40-Hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), OSHA 10-hour Construction Safety and Health, Lead Worker Initial, Lead Renovator, Asbestos Supervisor and CPR/First Aid trainings. Courses consisted of:

**Work Readiness Training:** Trainees completed courses in environmental justice, interpersonal communication, building cultural competence, finance management and effective work habits.

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

**Lead Worker Initial:** Trainees earned their Lead Worker Initial certification and learned about topics such as identifying and



## Site Background

The Omaha Lead Superfund site is in Douglas County, Nebraska. It includes 27 square miles in downtown Omaha. The site includes residential areas and child-care centers. From the early 1870s to 1997, two lead smelting plants, American Smelting and Refining Company and Aaron Ferer & Sons Company (later Gould Electronics), were active on the banks of the Missouri River. Plant smokestacks released lead-containing particulates into the air. The metals then settled out of the air and contaminated the ground across the site.

EPA added the site to the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL) in 2003. Cleanup activities at the site included removing surface soil from residential properties and other high child-use areas with high lead levels. EPA led cleanup efforts from 2009 to 2015. In 2015, EPA approached the City of Omaha to address the remaining phases of the cleanup. The city continues to clean up other residential soils, does exterior lead paint stabilization and educates the public about the health risks of lead exposure. To learn more about the site, please visit [www.epa.gov/superfund/omahalead](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/omahalead).

For more information:

- City of Omaha webpage: <https://planninghcdcityofomaha.org/lead-hazards-101>
- About Lead: <https://www.gotlead.org/>
- Omaha Lead Registry at <http://omahalead.org/>

evaluating lead-based hazards, health effects of lead exposure, regulations and standards of lead abatement, containment and controlling of lead hazards, soil abatement, and disposal.

**Lead Renovator:** Trainees earned their Lead Renovator certification and learned about topics such as lead-safe work practices, containment, work-area cleaning, maintaining containment barriers, inspection and risk assessment, exterior dust cleanup, and disposal.

**Asbestos Supervisor:** Trainees earned their Asbestos Supervisor certification and learned about topics such as the history and uses of asbestos, health effects of asbestos exposure, protective equipment and best work practices, inspections, regulations and standards of asbestos abatement, containment, and disposal.

**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 injuries to muscles, bones and joints.

After completion of the program, SuperJTI provided the graduates' information to site cleanup contractors Environmental Restoration and ABC Abatement, the City of Omaha and other local organizations to assist with job placement efforts. Several graduates took positions cleaning up the site. Through SuperJTI, trainees are provided with the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation, helping empower communities affected by Superfund sites.

## GRADUATE PROFILES



### Avery Lewis

Avery was recovering from a workplace injury and decided he needed a career change when his mother shared a SuperJTI flyer she found online with him. He signed up for an information session and, following the initial steps of the SuperJTI process, was selected as one of the program's trainees. During the program, Avery enjoyed the team-building exercises that are part of work readiness training and said he learned a lot from asbestos training. After graduation, Avery accepted a position with site cleanup contractor Environmental Restoration, where he works as a laborer in charge of routine maintenance, walkthroughs and organizing. Looking back at his time in SuperJTI, he is glad to have gone through the program and the doors it has opened, reflecting that "I came out with a lot of knowledge I did not have before ... it equipped me for my career."



### Penélope León

Penélope first learned about SuperJTI from a flyer that a friend forwarded to her. After attending an information session, she realized she could benefit from participating in the program. "It was a great opportunity because it was a few different trainings at once," she recalled. After completing the screening and recruitment process, Penélope was selected to participate in the program. As she is also an OSHA-10 and OSHA-30 instructor who helps Spanish-speaking workers in Omaha, Penélope was hired by SuperJTI to provide the OSHA-10 training in Spanish. Penélope enjoyed the program, especially the work readiness training. "I liked the work readiness aspect, how to work and solve problems as a team," she said. At the end of the program, Penélope said she felt happy and had a lot of job opportunities. She continues to assist local workers, teaching OSHA safety classes, and is working on becoming a HAZWOPER instructor.



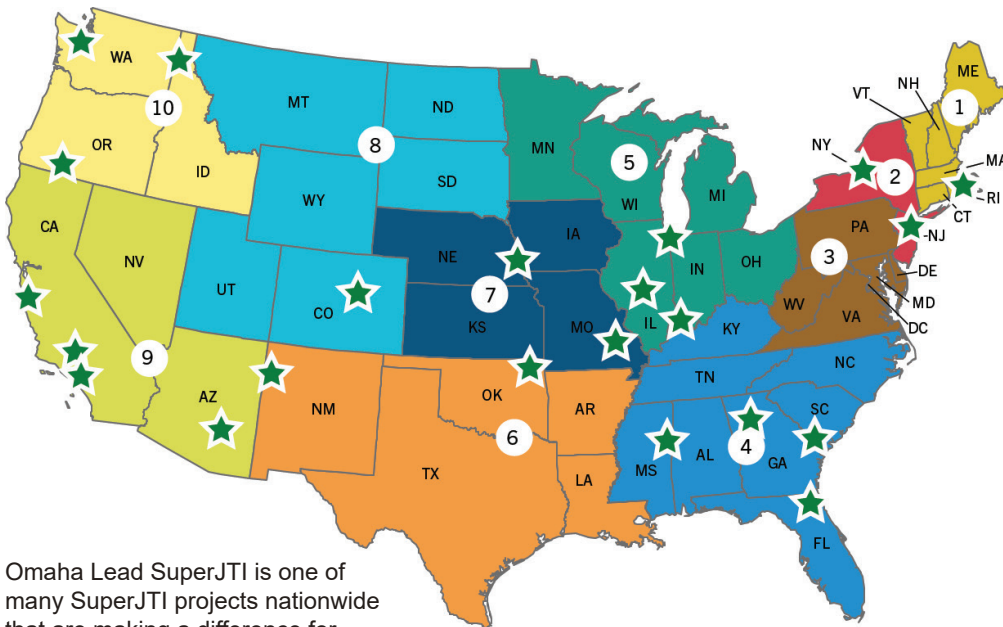
Graduation for the program's 20 trainees took place at the Highlander Accelerator in Omaha in May 2023. Meg McCollister, EPA Region 7's Regional Administrator, attended the ceremony and handed out certificates to the graduates. The ceremony included remarks from program partners as well as the graduates.

## OMAHA LEAD SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

**Live on or near the Omaha Lead site:** 95% of trainees (19 people) live in the greater Omaha metropolitan area. One trainee lives in a neighboring area.

**Simultaneous Spanish Interpretation:** Simultaneous interpretation and Spanish materials were provided for Spanish-speaking trainees throughout the training program, with the exception of the OSHA-10 training, which was offered in both Spanish and English.

# What is the SuperJTI Program?

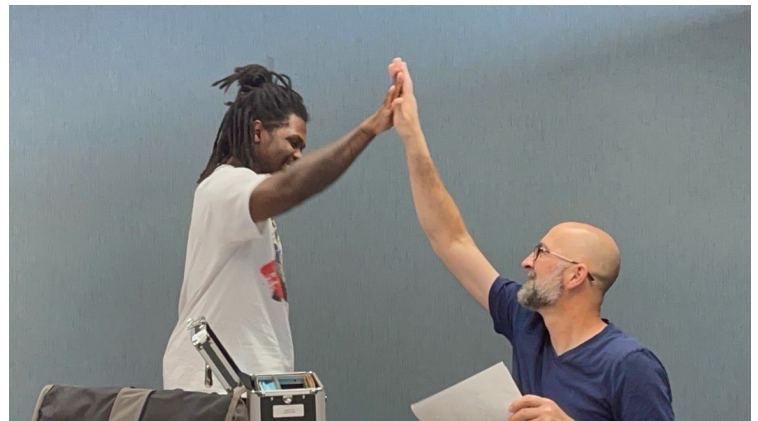


Omaha Lead SuperJTI is one of many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for people living in communities affected by Superfund sites.

EPA's 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.

EPA offers SuperJTI training at no cost to training participants.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:  
[www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative)

Or contact SuperJTI's National Program Managers:

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