

Superfund Job Training Initiative

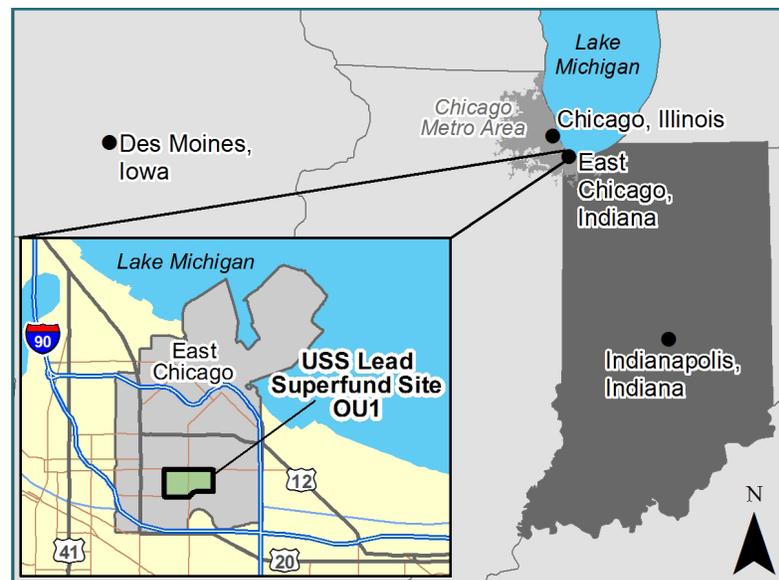


MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT THE USS LEAD SUPERFUND SITE



Introduction

The USS Lead Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 15 trainees living on or near the USS Lead Superfund site in East Chicago, Indiana. Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and remedial site contractors Environmental Restoration (ER), Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. and Summit, USS Lead SuperJTI provided local job seekers with new skills, certifications and hands-on training linked to construction and cleanup. EPA's goal is to help ascertain 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 copper smelter and a lead refinery and smelter operated on site from 1906 to 1985. (Map Sources: Esri, DeLorme, AND, Tele Atlas, First American, UNEP-WCMC and USGS.)

Outreach, Recruitment and Screening: March 2017

USS Lead SuperJTI and EPA Region 5 staff reached out to the East Chicago community by posting flyers, advertising on local radio stations and mailing over 900 flyers to area residents. SuperJTI and EPA Region 5 staff hosted information sessions on the program at the East Chicago Public Library-Pastrick Branch. In March 2017, more than 90 people came to the 12 information sessions and completed a preliminary testing process. Following these sessions, 53 people returned and submitted required documents. Forty-two 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: April 2017

The two-week USS Lead SuperJTI training program took place in East Chicago. It included:

Pre-Employment Training: Trainees completed courses in environmental justice, interpersonal communication, cultural competence and effective work habits. EPA contractor Skeo provided the training.

40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) Training: The course covered topics such as environmental legislation, toxicology and spill control containment. Trainees participated in hands-on training scenarios using equipment and gear. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Hazardous Materials Training Program provided the HAZWOPER training.

CPR/First Aid: The course covered topics such as rescue breaths, soft tissue injuries, use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), and injuries to muscles, bones and joints. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Hazardous Materials Training Program provided the CPR/First Aid training.

Upon completion of the program, all trainees were hired to work on site with remedial site contractors Environmental Restoration, Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. and Summit. Through SuperJTI, trainees are provided with the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation and become valuable members of the workforce in their community.



Site Background

The 79-acre USS Lead Superfund site is located in East Chicago, Indiana. A copper smelter and a lead refinery and smelter operated on site from 1906 to 1985. These activities resulted in the contamination of soil and groundwater with lead and arsenic. EPA placed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL) in 2009. The site is divided into two areas – a residential area and the USS Lead facility property plus site groundwater. The residential area has three zones. Zone 1 is a part of a neighborhood that includes the former Carrie Gosch Elementary School and the site of the now demolished West Calumet Housing Complex. Zones 2 and 3 consist primarily of single-family homes.

In 2012, EPA selected a cleanup remedy for the residential area. It includes excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soil. Short-term remedies addressing soil contamination include temporary protective barriers and warning signs. EPA started soil cleanups and in-home cleanings in Zone 2 and Zone 3 in 2016; those efforts are ongoing. Along with yard cleanups, indoor dust samples were collected and tested for lead and arsenic. Houses showing results above EPA screening levels were cleaned. Residential and public service uses at the site are ongoing.

GRADUATE PROFILES



Benito Castillo

An East Chicago, Indiana native and military veteran, Benito Castillo was finishing up his bachelor's degree in organizational management when he heard an ad for the SuperJTI program on the radio. Benito was interested in construction management and thought SuperJTI sounded like an ideal opportunity to jumpstart his career. After attending the information sessions and tryouts, Benito was selected for the program.

Benito found the training to be beneficial in many ways. SuperJTI staff during pre-employment skills training “were motivational, enthusiastic about the information and helped us build confidence in ourselves,” he noted, while the 40-hr HAZWOPER certification elevated his resume. After graduation, Benito was placed with remedial site contractor Jacobs Engineering Group Inc., working at the USS Lead site as a resident inspector. He oversees a team of six workers. Since starting work in the spring of 2017, Benito has been offered a permanent position with Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. “I can’t say enough about the opportunity that has been given to me,” he said, reflecting back on his experience with the SuperJTI program. “The people I am working with now are very professional and willing to give me what I need to move on and up. I feel very fortunate to be in the position I am in now, and I owe it all to SuperJTI.”



LaKeyia Harris

LaKeyia Harris was employed in sanitation when she saw flyers advertising SuperJTI in her community. She researched the program and, knowing that earning certifications would help her career, decided to apply. After completing the screening and recruitment process, LaKeyia was selected to participate in the program. In addition to the certifications she earned, LaKeyia found the Building Cultural Competence and Diversity training to be extremely valuable. “When you’re out on the job, it’s like a different world ... the training prepared me for that,” she noted. “I thank the trainer for giving me that insight.”

Soon after graduating, LaKeyia received a job offer from site contractor Environmental Restoration. She joined the site’s digging team as a worker and equipment operator. LaKeyia now makes \$43 to \$60 an hour, a significant pay increase from her previous job. When site-related work finishes, LaKeyia plans to take advantage of other opportunities at the company providing disaster relief assistance. Looking back on her SuperJTI experience, she reflects, “I am happy today that I did it. I am appreciative of the job opportunity and experience that the program gave me. It was life changing for me.”



Graduation for the program’s 15 trainees took place at Greater First Baptist Church in East Chicago in April 2017. Robert Kaplan, EPA Region 5’s Acting Regional Administrator, attended the ceremony and handed out certificates to the graduates. The ceremony included remarks from program partners as well as the graduates.

USS LEAD SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

Live on or near the USS Lead site in East Chicago, Indiana: Thirty-three percent of the trainees (five people) live on or near the site. An additional 53 percent of the trainees (eight people) live within 10 miles of the site.

Include men and women: Forty percent of the trainees (six people) are women. Sixty percent of the trainees (nine people) are men.



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

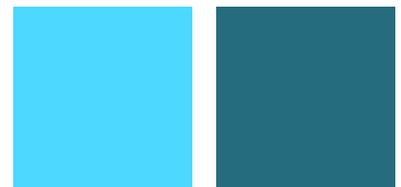


What is the SuperJTI Program?

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.

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 Managers:

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