



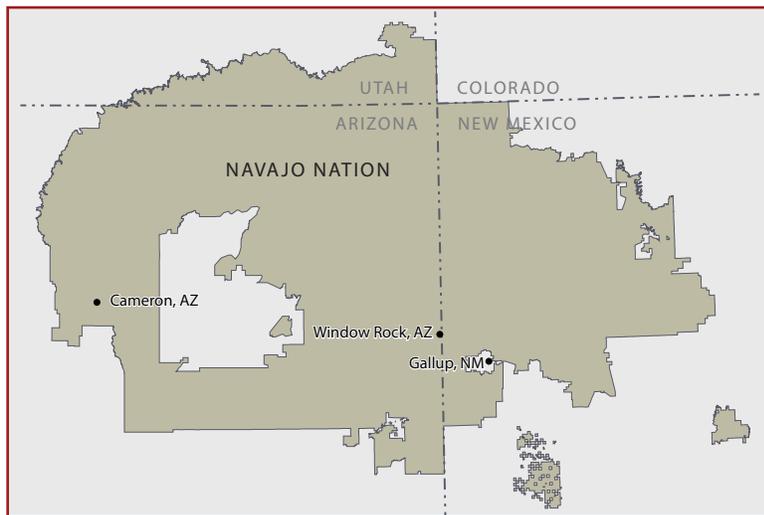
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MAKING A *DIFFERENCE* IN THE COMMUNITY: The Superfund Job Training Initiative on Navajo Nation Lands



INTRODUCTION

The Navajo Nation Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 19 trainees living on the Navajo Nation. Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Navajo Nation's Community Housing & Infrastructure Department (CHID) and Environmental Protection Agency, Navajo Nation SuperJTI provided local job seekers with new skills and work experience linked to construction and cleanup near Gallup, New Mexico, and on Navajo Nation lands. EPA's goal is to help the community create job opportunities and partnerships that remain in place for the long term.



The Navajo Nation is nearly the size of West Virginia. The area includes over 500 abandoned uranium mines.

CANDIDATE OUTREACH, RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING: OCTOBER 2012

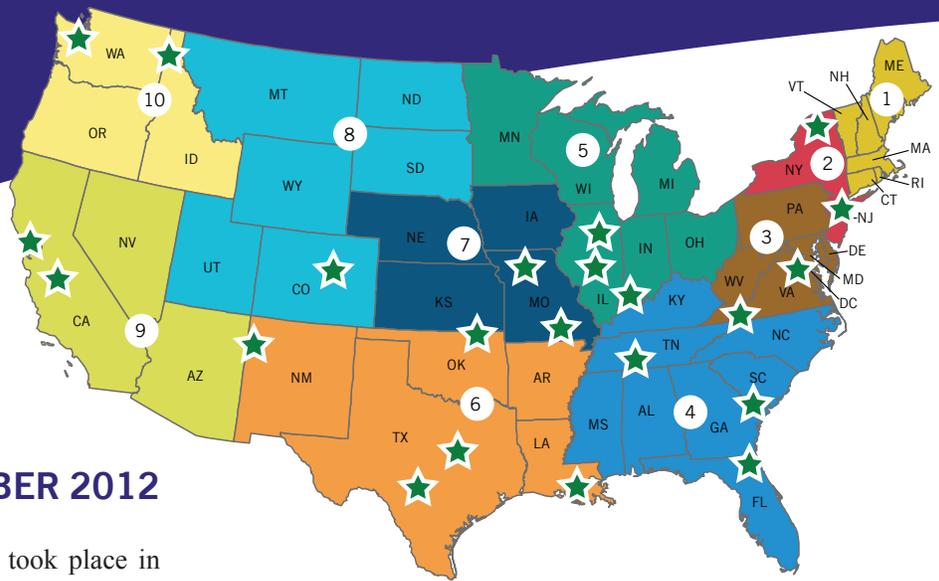
Navajo Nation SuperJTI staff and the project's community liaison Joanna Austin-Manygoats reached out to the Gallup, New Mexico community, sending out flyers and hosting orientation sessions to publicize the program and attract interested candidates. Area organizations and a local newspaper also advertised the program. In October 2012, over 60 people came to the program's eight orientation sessions. Following these sessions, more than 50 people completed a preliminary testing stage. Thirty-nine 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 project's partners. Nineteen of the 20 trainees selected during tryouts went on to complete the program.

SITE HISTORY

The lands of the Navajo Nation include 27,000 square miles in three states in the Four Corners region of the United States. The lands are rich in uranium, a radioactive ore long in high demand for nuclear power and nuclear weapons. In total, from 1944 to 1986, nearly four million tons of uranium ore came from Navajo Nation lands, under leases with the Navajo Nation. Many Navajo people worked in the uranium mines and mills, often living and raising families nearby. Today, long after the closure of the mines and mills, a legacy of uranium contamination remains. There are over 500 abandoned uranium mines as well as homes and drinking water sources with elevated levels of radiation located on Navajo Nation lands. Potential health effects from exposure include lung cancer from breathing in radioactive particles, as well as bone cancer and impaired kidney function from exposure to radionuclides in drinking water.

EPA has been working in partnership with the Navajo Nation and other federal agencies for two decades to address contaminated areas. Today, this partnership remains focused on addressing immediate risks to public health and finding permanent, long-term solutions for remaining contamination on Navajo Nation lands.



TRAINING: OCTOBER— NOVEMBER 2012

The Navajo Nation SuperJTI training program took place in Gallup, New Mexico, over three weeks. It included:

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

Technical Training: Trainees completed the 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training and CPR and first aid courses provided by Acme Environmental and the American Red Cross. Trainees also completed courses in radon measurement and mitigation provided by Western Regional Radon Training Center.

Upon completion of the program, trainees possess the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation and become valuable members of the workforce in their community.



JOB PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW UP: DECEMBER 2012 — MAY 2013

After graduation, trainees applied for available cleanup positions with CHID and other area employers. Several graduates now have positions in radon remediation and construction. Remaining graduates are interviewing with area employers, pending the availability of cleanup jobs.

Navajo Nation SuperJTI's community liaison Joanna Austin-Manygoats followed up with the graduates for six months after the program. During this time, graduates were encouraged to seek employment with CHID or other area employers in the field of environmental remediation.

Navajo Nation SuperJTI is one of many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for unemployed and underemployed citizens living in communities affected by Superfund sites.

NAVAJO NATION SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

Live on or near the Navajo Nation. One hundred percent of the trainees (19 people) live on or near Navajo Nation lands.

Include men and women. Thirty-two percent of the trainees (six people) were women and 68 percent of the trainees (13 people) were men.



Graduation for the program's 19 trainees took place at Memorial Hall in Gallup, New Mexico, in December 2012. Navajo Nation President Ben Shelley attended the ceremony and handed out certificates to the graduates. The program also included remarks from project partners as well as the graduates.

SUPERJTI COMMUNITY PROFILES: Making a Difference

Joanna Austin-Manygoats



With years of experience as a Navajo translator and interpreter, Joanna Austin-Manygoats came highly recommended as a community partner for the Navajo Nation SuperJTI. Having worked with the Navajo Superfund Program and Division of Natural Resources for over 30 years, she knew the position would be a good fit.

From the beginning of the program, Joanna was impressed by the selection process. She liked the hands-on activities and thought the process efficiently identified qualified candidates. During the training, Joanna was surprised by how the students opened up. “The cultural competency training helped the students view themselves from a different perspective and gave them the boost to become very inquisitive and participatory,” she noted. Joanna said the graduates left with increased self-determination and good skills under their belts. She feels the graduates now have the confidence to broaden their job searches beyond the Navajo Community, creating new avenues for employment. Joanna greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in the program and looks forward to partnering with EPA in the future.

Brandi Moore

Brandi Moore was considering a move from Phoenix to her hometown of Gallup, New Mexico, when she read about SuperJTI in a local newspaper. She was immediately interested in learning more. “It was something new that I didn’t think I would have the opportunity to do,” she reflected. She told her family about the opportunity as well. After participating in recruitment and tryouts, she and her mother were both accepted into the program. Brandi found the training to be a positive experience, and most enjoyed the initial pre-employment activities. “The training was fun and beneficial,” she recalled. “It felt more and more comfortable as we (program participants) made friends. When we see each other now, we say hello. The training really helped us.” Looking forward, Brandi would like to work for an environmental services company and is currently looking for a job.



Clarence Montgomery



Clarence Montgomery read about the Navajo Nation SuperJTI in the newspaper. With years of environmental work already under his belt, he was looking to increase his level of environmental knowledge and focus on Navajo Nation lands. After being chosen for the program, Clarence was impressed by the quality of the training and the caliber of the other participants. “The training was very useful,” he noted, “and I met a lot of good people.”

Following the program, Clarence has worked in the environmental field installing protective plastic liners. He credits SuperJTI with helping him pursue needed certifications and providing him with the knowledge he needed to stay abreast of changes in the environmental field. “The program gave us insight into what’s happening in the world, especially [on the Navajo Nation] near Church Rock,” he reflected. “SuperJTI gave me knowledge that I hope one day to pass on to others.”

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: www.epa.gov/superfund/community/sfjti

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