



Worker Training Program: Oregon

A National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Superfund-Related Activity

The NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) annually funds training for 1,200 workers through more than 120 health and safety courses in Oregon. Recipients of NIEHS WTP grants lead trainings to prepare workers to handle hazardous materials and respond to disasters in their communities.



Courses include:

- Asbestos Awareness
- Basic Superfund Site Worker and Site Worker Refresher
- Hazard Communication
- Confined Space Entry and Rescue
- First Aid
- Hazardous Waste Operations
- General Construction Safety
- General Industry Safety
- Personal Protective Equipment Awareness
- Emergency Response
- Wildfire Awareness
- Infectious Disease Awareness (COVID-19)

Training Highlights

Job Training and Economic Impact

The NIEHS [Environmental Career Worker Training Program](#) offers job training for disadvantaged and underrepresented workers. This program has a nationwide [economic impact](#) through pre-employment, and health and safety training in underserved communities.

In Portland, the Western Region Universities Consortium works with the University of Washington and Constructing Hope to provide a workforce development program for underserved communities. As part of this program, the consortium targets individuals who face barriers to employment, health disparities, poor or unsafe environmental conditions, and other environmental justice concerns. Constructing Hope students receive job and life skills training to advance their economic stability. Overall, this training helps students obtain sustainable careers in the construction industry. The 2019 job placement rate was approximately 86%.



Instructor (front and center) leads training for Constructing Hope students in Portland, Oregon, in fall 2020. (Photo courtesy of Western Region Universities Consortium)

Native American Tribes: Hazardous Materials Awareness and Emergency Response

The Alabama Fire College Workplace Safety Training program serves members and employees of Native American tribes nationwide. A longstanding partnership with the Native American Fish and Wildlife Services (NAFWS) allows this training program to reach, promote, and deliver hazardous materials and emergency response training to tribes.



Photo courtesy of CCCHST

About the Worker Training Program

WTP funds nonprofit organizations to provide health and safety training for workers who may be exposed to hazardous materials and waste at work or while assisting with emergency response. WTP was initiated under the Hazardous Substance Basic Research and Training Program authorized by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (42 USC 9660a).

Under these NIEHS Superfund-related activities, WTP grantees provide trainings across the country through the [Hazardous Waste, Hazmat Disaster, and Environmental Career Worker Training Programs](#).

For more information, visit
www.niehs.nih.gov/wtp

In Oregon, the program provided training to NAFWS regional conference participants. The Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation is also a key training partner, with a representative from the tribe providing guidance and feedback on the program's advisory board. Other tribes in Oregon have benefitted from training over the years, such as the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Burns Paiute Tribe.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, members of The Klamath Tribes in Oregon joined an online emergency response awareness training class. This training supports recognition of and protection from hazardous materials.

Wildfire Preparedness and Response

WTP grantees deliver training on hazardous waste associated with natural disasters, such as wildfires. Wildfire training can focus on the wildland-urban interface, wildfire smoke safety, or disaster preparedness.

The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees conducted a wildfire awareness training using their [Wildfire Preparedness and Response at Home fact sheets](#) and the NIEHS [Protecting Yourself While Responding to Wildfires training booklets](#). Although the training was conducted online due to COVID-19 restrictions, it reached more than 120 workers across Oregon. Their program is funded under the International Chemical Workers Union Council Center for Worker Health and Safety Education.



Wildfire in the Pacific Northwest. (Photo courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management)

The Western Region Universities Consortium partnered with Northwest Fire Workers Center run by Lomakatsi to deliver Spanish language respiratory protection training related to wildfire preparedness and response for forest workers in Oregon. The training equipped workers to protect themselves while working outdoors in smoky conditions.

Native American Tribes: Instructor Development and Emergency Response Skills near Nuclear Cleanup Sites

Under the NIEHS/U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [Nuclear Worker Training Program](#), the United Steelworkers Tony Mazzocchi Center (TMC) delivers training to The Yakama Nation and The Confederated Tribes of Umatilla

Indian Reservation. Both tribes now have members who are authorized to teach Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) courses following the TMC Train-the-Trainer program.

The trainings increase tribal members' ability to respond to incidents or emergencies on or surrounding tribal lands near DOE cleanup sites. The trainings also lead to new jobs and opportunities in industrial and environmental settings. According to the Tribal Employment Rights Office, TMC's OSHA training inspired two youth participants to enroll at The Evergreen State College to pursue degrees in public health and environmental studies. TMC is also building a relationship with The Nez Perce Tribe in Oregon.



TMC facilitators pose with participants who completed the OSHA 500 training course in Oregon. (Photo courtesy of United Steelworkers TMC)

Community Colleges

The Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST), sponsored by the National Partnership for Environmental Technology Education, partners with community colleges, universities, businesses, and community-based organizations to provide critical job skills training through health and safety courses. TCB Northwest in Oregon has been a partner of CCCHST since 2016. The company offers hazardous waste worker and related training for companies whose employees perform remediation and response. In recent months, TCB Northwest offered hazardous materials awareness and hazard communication courses achieving more than 3,000 contact hours of training.

Overall Training

The following [WTP grantees](#) trained workers in Oregon:

- Alabama Fire College
- CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- International Chemical Workers Union Council
- International Union of Operating Engineers
- Laborers' International Union of North America
- Partnership for Environmental Technology Education
- United Steelworkers Tony Mazzocchi Center for Health, Safety, and Environmental Education
- Western Region Universities Consortium