



National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences  
*Your Environment. Your Health.*

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# **NIH Tribal Advisory Board Meeting**

**Sharon D. Beard, M.S., Director of the NIEHS Worker Training Program**

**NIEHS Division of Extramural Research and Training**

**June 26, 2024**

## NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP)



### Worker safety and health

Delivering training to keep workers, worksites, and communities safer.



### Disaster preparedness and response

Responding to disasters and emergencies, such as wildfires, hurricanes, and infectious diseases.



### Workforce development

Empowering individuals in disadvantaged communities with new skills and careers.



### Technology and training tools

Developing innovative technologies to use for worker health and safety training.

*\*WTP also trains workers at U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) sites (separate from Superfund appropriations)\**

# NIEHS Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP)



Nearly **30 years of success** in workforce development for construction and environmental careers/industries.



Building careers, changing lives through **technical** and **life skills training**, **social support**, and **empowerment**.



Building local capacity to **train disadvantaged communities** affected by environmental contamination and employment barriers.



**Returns 28X** the amount invested by the federal government back to the economy. *(prelim results from recent study)*



## Building Capacity with American Indians and Alaska Natives to Handle Hazardous Materials and Respond to Emergencies Report

A report detailing the significance and accomplishments of trainings provided by the NIEHS WTP with regards to American Indian and Alaska Native communities during the 2022 program year.

### During 2022, NIEHS WTP grant recipients:



Trained more than **1,336 American Indians and Alaska Natives**.



Delivered more than **61 courses** and nearly **21,967 contact hours**.



Offered **30 courses**, including adult CPR, emergency response awareness, and oil spill response.



*Photo courtesy of Alabama Fire College*

WTP delivered training to **105 Tribal nations and villages** across **30 states**. (From 2018 to 2022)



In Alaska, WTP grant recipients partner with various organizations and Tribal colleges and universities.



**Rural Alaska Community Employment Job Training (RACEJT)** program provides training and employment for residents in Alaska Native villages impacted by EH issues. (*WRUC and Zender Environmental*)

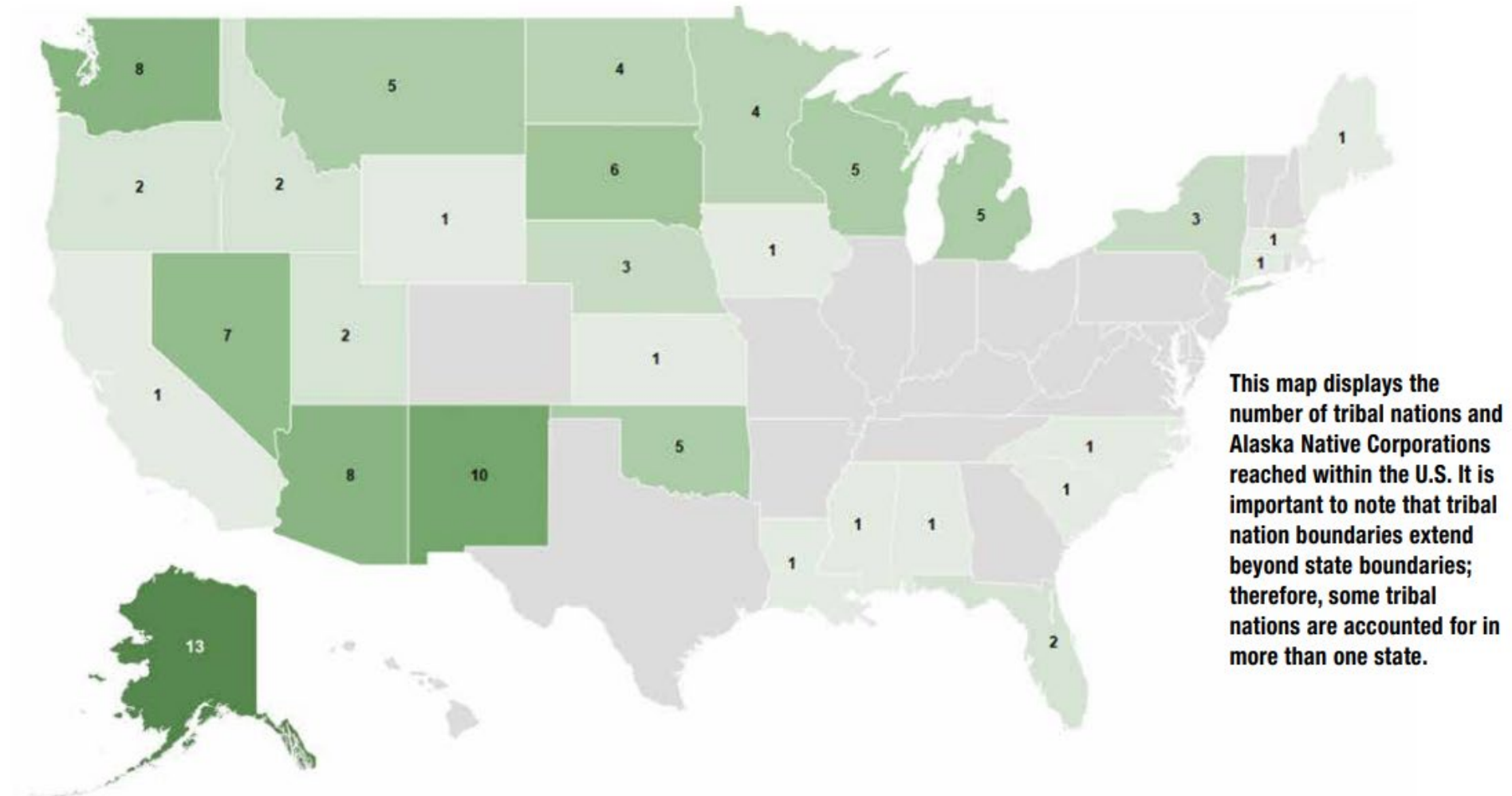


**Oil spill and disaster response training** to local fishing vessels, many of which are owned and operated by American Indian Tribal members. (*PETE and Prince William Sound College*)



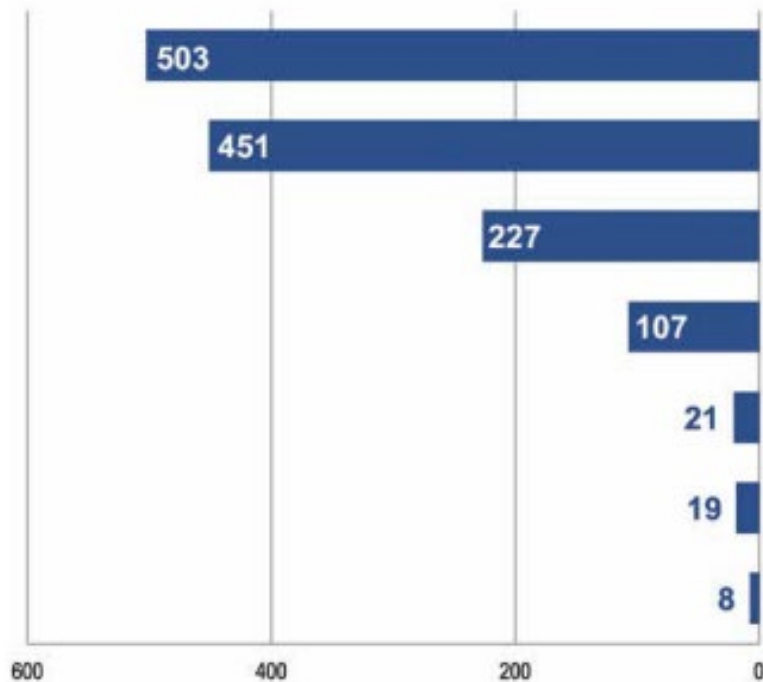
**Top:** Burnbox and trash in landfill. **Bottom:** Trainees gather in Anchorage for a combined hands-on training and graduation ceremony from the RACEJT program.

## Tribal Nations and Alaska Native Corporations Reached Through NIEHS WTP Training in the U.S. from 2018 to 2022



## Trainings by the Numbers (2022)

Workers Trained



**Community College Consortium for Health and Safety  
Training/Partnership for Environmental Technology and Education**

**Western Region Universities Consortium**

**Alabama Fire College Workplace Safety Training**

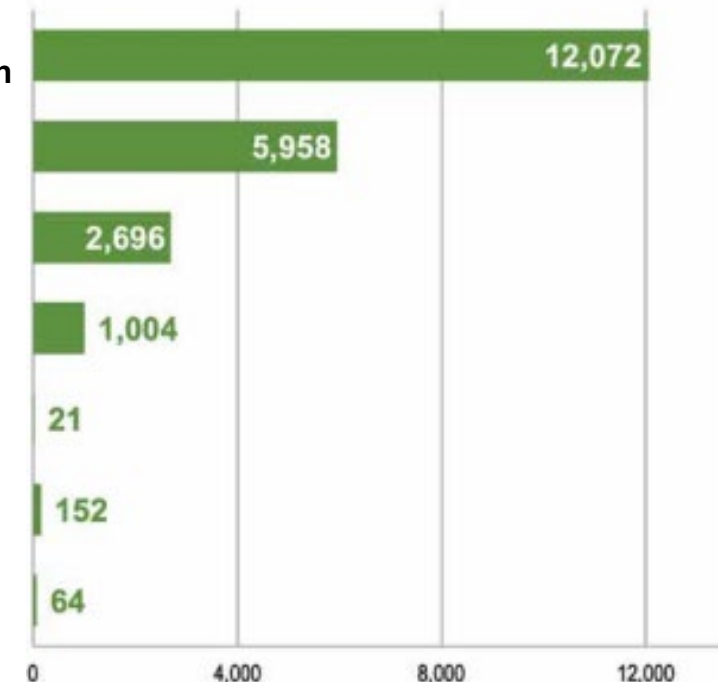
**International Brotherhood of Teamsters**

**International Union, United Auto Workers**

**Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization Tony  
Mazzocchi Center**

**International Chemical Workers Union Council**

Contact Hours



# Environmental Career Worker Training Program (ECWTP): Building Careers, Transforming Lives, and Advancing Environmental Justice

- **28+ years of success in training and empowering** individuals to obtain sustainable careers
- **Engagement with disadvantaged communities across the country**
- ECWTP selected as **pilot for the White House Justice40 Initiative**
  - Justice40 aims to deliver 40% of the overall benefits from federal investments to disadvantaged communities



Admiral Rachel Levine, Assistant Secretary for Health at HHS, met with staff from Motivating Purpose with Education and Readiness (MPWER) to discuss the Justice40 Initiative.

MPWER is a partner of OAI, Inc.

## ECWTP Goals & Training Metrics

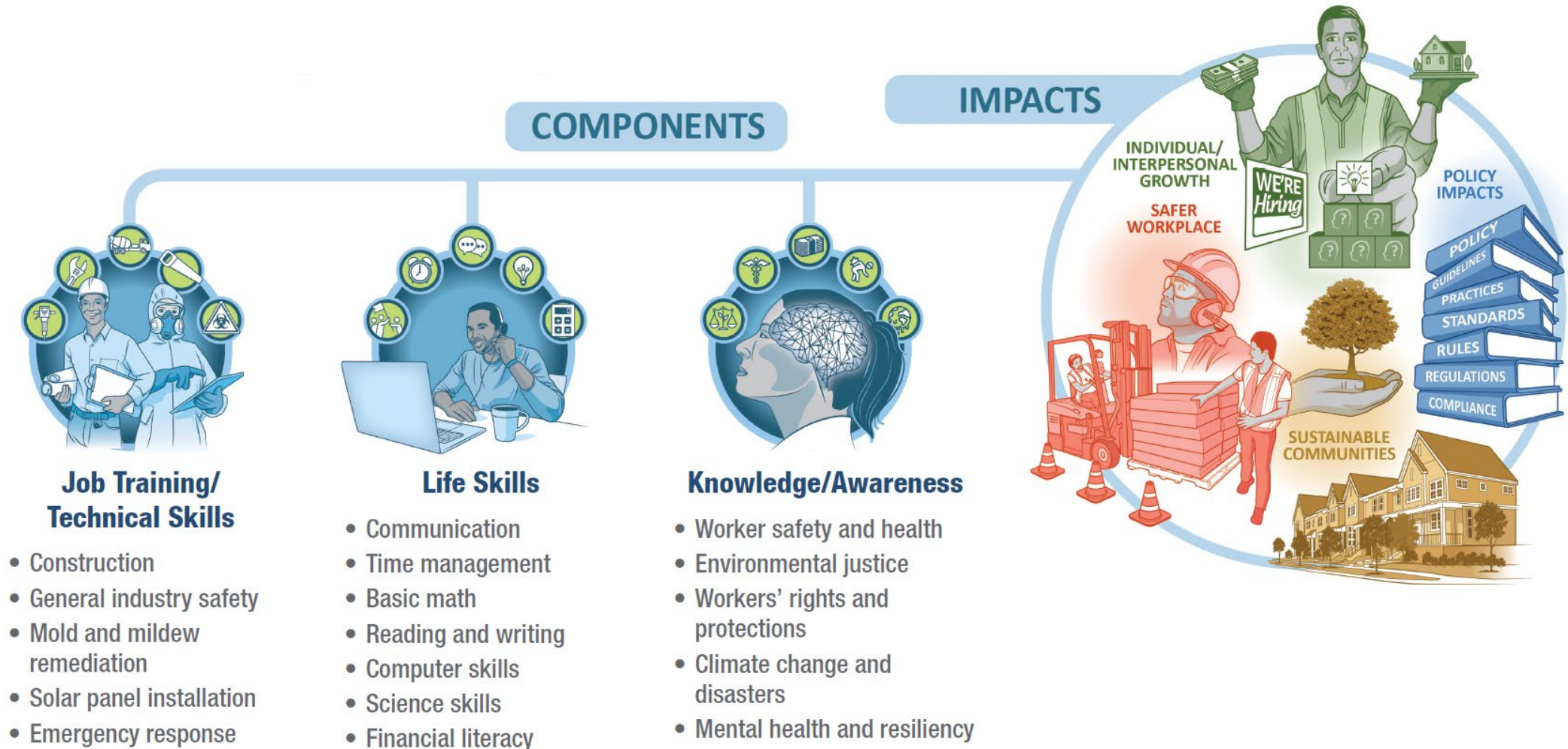
Delivers pre-employment and life skills training for un/under-employed individuals in disadvantaged populations; helps individuals obtain sustainable careers in environmental cleanup and emergency response.

|               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 14,678        | Workers trained since 1995 |
| 10,284        | Workers employed           |
| 72%           | Job placement overall      |
| 512           | Workers trained in 2023    |
| 6             | Current grant recipients   |
| \$4.2 million | Funding dollars in FY23    |



Environmental Career Worker Training Program:  
[niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat/training\\_program\\_areas/ecwtp/index.cfm](https://niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat/training_program_areas/ecwtp/index.cfm)

# ECWTP Training Components & Impacts



## ECWTP Impact Evaluation (2014 to 2022): Economic Findings



The figure shows the **approximate monetary (direct) benefits** to the economy that arose from the ECWTP's interventions. The cumulative value added over the study's duration (2014 to 2022) was calculated by summing the program's estimated direct benefits.

The ECWTP returns approximately **28X** the amount invested by the federal government back into the economy.

## ECWTP Impact Evaluation (2014 to 2022): Qualitative Findings



**Evaluation:** Shows continued success and improvement.



**Recruitment:** Through partnerships and networks.



**Job placement:** Through pre-apprenticeship programs, first-hire ordinances, community benefit agreements, etc.



**Adaptation:** Technical and safety training adapted for the unique needs of communities.



**Community:** Benefits at large, as graduates recognize and respond to health and safety concerns in their community and workplace.

## Western Region Universities Consortium (WRUC)

- Group of university-based programs that partners with tribal entities in the Southwest, Pacific Northwest, and Alaska.
- Provides hazardous waste training programs, including:
  - Alaska Forum's Environmental Training and Apprenticeship Program
  - HAZWOPER training at the Native Village of Saint Michael
  - Zender Environmental Rural Alaska Community Environmental Job Training (RACEJT) Program



**WESTERN REGION**  
UNIVERSITIES CONSORTIUM

## Highlight: WRUC/Zender Environmental RACEJT Program

- Brings **environmental training and job readiness** for unemployed/underemployed Alaska Native residents in remote villages.
- Helps graduates of the RACEJT program **gain employment** in environmental careers.
- Teaches residents in remote villages to **safely conduct environmental remediation work** in their communities.

“

This training helped me to better understand hazards in our community. It will help me make the community better. **My recommendation is for everyone to take this training.**

”

– **Zender Environmental trainee**

## Personal Impact Story: Brandon Fleming and the RACEJT Program

**Brandon Fleming**, from Anvik, a subsistence community on the lower Kuskokwim River, was unemployed when he came to the RACEJT Program.

After graduating from RACEJT, Brandon was employed by the City of Anvik Landfills. He collected water samples at the Anvik and Yukon rivers, mapped the locations of sampling sites, and calculated baseline data for annual water testing campaigns.

He also works with the community to prevent improper disposal of old appliances in landfills where they could cause environmental damage.



*Photo courtesy of Zender Environmental*

## Alabama Fire College (AFC) Workplace Safety Training Program



WORKPLACE SAFETY TRAINING

- Provides hazardous material response training to Native American and public sector emergency response personnel
- Partners with the [Native American Fish and Wildlife Society](#) to promote the training to Tribal emergency response personnel.

**During the 2022 program year, training was provided:**

- To 23 tribes in 14 states
- On 22 courses over 2,696 contact hours
- To 227 American Indian responders and hazardous waste workers

## Highlight: AFC and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians

- Supported Poarch Tribe with HazMat training for **almost 20 years**.
- Prepared Poarch Tribe for **Hurricanes Ivan, Katrina, Rita**.
- Now a **regional leader** in emergency response with **full-time fire department** with HazMat capability.



*Photo courtesy of AFC WST*

## Highlight: AFC Mobile Training

- Provides training to remote Tribal locations with **mobile units**.
- Two-pronged approach includes **hands-on teaching materials** and **on-site training**.
- Serves as a model to **increase engagement** around **environmental justice**.

“ Our program is effective because we come on-site. We have no classroom space. **Our whole model is to carry training to response agencies.** ”

-- Kenneth Oldfield, AFC principal investigator

## International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)

- Delivers health and safety training to workers involved in the **remediation, construction, and transport of hazardous materials** to and from DOE facilities.
- Collaborates with tribal communities living near DOE sites to **increase awareness of hazards** and **build capacity for emergency response**.



*Photo courtesy of IBT*

## Highlight: IBT and Navajo Nation Railroad Workers

- Delivers **OSHA-specific training courses** to American Indian railroad workers in **Navajo Nation**.
- Courses include **hands-on activities** and **in-person training**.
- Classes cover:
  - General industry
  - Transportation security
  - Chemical emergency response
  - Radiological transportation training



*Photo courtesy of IBT*

## Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization Tony Mazzocchi Center (SCEO TMC)

- Provides health and safety trainings to protect nearby tribes from hazardous waste at the **Hanford Site in southeastern Washington**.
- Partners with the **Tribal Employment Rights Office of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation** and the **Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation** to bolster OSHA training.



“ Our tribe **absolutely needs and requires** your fantastic certification trainings! ”

– *Tribal leader trainee from Washington State*

## Highlight: TMC & Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)

- Partnered with CTUIR to **engage Tribal fence-line communities** near the Hazardous Materials Management and Emergency Response (HAMMER) Training Center.
- Connected with the HAMMER Tribal Committee to **identify health, safety, and environmental barriers**.
  - CTUIR provided **open channels of communication** to engage with five tribes near HAMMER.



*Photo courtesy of SCEO TMC*

## WTP's Commitment to DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility)

### Language Justice

- Encourages grant recipients to include **multiple languages** in outreach and educational materials.
- Provides resources that have simplified terms to **reach various adult reading and education levels**.

### Environmental Justice

- Focuses on workers and communities that are low-income and **disproportionately impacted by hazardous environmental conditions**.
- Pursues **interagency partnerships** for disaster preparedness and response efforts in disadvantaged communities.

### Occupational Health Equity

- Trains workers to **safely handle hazardous materials**, protecting themselves and their communities.
- Delivers training to workers across **many occupational sectors**.
- **Adapts programs** to meet ongoing needs for workforce development.

### Cultural Competency

- Encourages **cultural understanding and empathy** across grant recipient programs.
- Holds the **Trainer's Exchange** for trainers to enhance teaching methods and learn **more effective, empowering training models**

## To learn more about WTP's efforts with Tribes and Indigenous communities, visit:

### Building Capacity with American Indians and Alaska Natives Report



*Use the QR code to access the report.*

### PEPH Safety & Health Training for American Indians & Alaska Natives Webinars



*Use the QR code to access two PEPH webinars with presentations from WRUC, United Steelworkers, and others.*



# Thank you for listening!

**For more information, contact:**

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