

## **OEEF's Preferred Characteristics for Projects Targeting the Regulated Community Audience**

The aim of OEEF grants to the regulated community is to change specific business behaviors through introducing more environmentally friendly processes, or providing specific direction to aid compliance with regulatory requirements. Because the purpose of the grant is to encourage/implement behavioral change, regulated community proposals should:

1. Have very specific situational objectives which are clearly and concisely stated;
2. Relate the subject matter to professional experience and job situations, and;
3. Provide continuous feedback/technical assistance during the learning process to assure progress toward project objectives.
4. Make some attempt to evaluate whether behavior change is happening over time as a result of the education project, and whether compliance rates are improving.

### Regulated Community Grants Should:

- \*have strong local, regional, or sector-wide impact, i.e., not just train the employees of a single company
- \*improve the grantee's ability to address regulatory issues/achieve regulatory compliance through cooperation and collaboration
- \*provide for collaborative implementation of the project
- \*address environmental issues that are relevant to, or a priority for, the regulated community
- \*identify long-term benefits of the project
- \*identify strategies for follow-up after the project period ends
- \*identify methods for up-dating materials that may become dated after the project period ends, particularly as regulatory requirements may change

### **Working with Adult Learners**

OEEF prefers to support projects that are tailored to provide a meaningful learning experience for adults. Where appropriate, applications should demonstrate how the following adult learning principles have been built into the educational program.

**Readiness:** Adults are motivated by needs, benefits or interest. Get to know the intended learners and what they want and need to know. Link learning to the topics most immediately useful to them. Example: provide specific examples of how other companies have complied with the same regulation and reduced waste disposal costs in the process.

**Flexibility:** Adults have many different roles and responsibilities, with competing demands upon their time. Schedule events to meet learner needs and availability. Offer flexible time schedules and advance scheduling. Example: schedule a training workshop during the industry's "slow" season. Offer regional workshops rather than one statewide event. To reach an agricultural audience, one grantee offered farmer-to-farmer learning circles that met at kitchen tables rather than in formal classrooms.

**Self Direction:** Adults are self-directed and want others to see them that way. Involve learners in as many aspects of selecting, planning, doing and evaluating objectives and learning experiences as possible. Example: recruit managers and employees who struggle with compliance issues every day to design case study scenarios for the group to "solve".

**Association:** When presented with new information, adult learners unconsciously ask, "How does this information relate to what I already know?" Adults learn best when they can bridge the gap between the known and the unknown. Help learners relate their experiences to new concepts and skills. Build upon the learners' knowledge and vocabulary while providing a common denominator. Example: draw linkages between environmental compliance and compliance with safety and health regulations, or ISO 14001 efforts.

**Application:** Adults learn when they can understand and use the information. Adults want learning to be relevant to their life, immediately applicable and problem-centered. Use a problem-centered rather than a subject-centered approach. Make learning immediately useful by answering "how". Example: for the automotive service sector, showcase problem-solving examples from large auto dealerships and small repair shops.

**Active Learning:** Adults learn most effectively by doing. Provide hands-on learning opportunities. Example: Allow the learners to practice operating pollution control equipment, or conduct a waste audit in a real or simulated facility.

**Segmented Learning:** Adults need time to assimilate one group of facts before accepting the next group. Provide educational materials that are divided into parts and presented one step at a time in a logical sequence. Provide educational experiences based on job and/or life situations relating new or difficult concepts to the existing base of experience.

**Sensory Learning:** Adults favor different senses. Learning is enhanced when it appeals to multiple senses and includes sight, hearing and kinesthetic approaches. Use a variety of teaching styles. Example: simulation, case studies, role playing, small group discussion, and facility tours or other field demonstrations.

**Feedback:** Adults need feedback on how they are progressing. Adults learn from their mistakes. Provide learners with continuous evaluation and feedback relating to personal learning objectives. Example: Ask others in the training to comment on what this group did well and poorly during the simulation.

**Reinforcement:** Adults are motivated to learn more when they are successful. Some adults may lack confidence in their ability to learn. Encourage sharing of success stories and reinforce and highlight information that is key to learning. Conduct educational programs over an extended period of time and include one or more follow-up sessions. Example: Instead of sending participants home from a one-day training with a binder of information, schedule the group to reconvene three months later with a specific homework assignment, to share their experiences trying to put what they learned into practice.

**Recall:** Adults gradually forget what they've learned. Provide opportunities to frequently repeat, recall or review material. Example: One training facilitator set up a list-serv for a weekly on-line chat room where those who attended the training could discuss their experiences putting what they learned into action.

**Comfort:** Adults learn best in an environment that is physically comfortable and supportive. Some adults face barriers to learning, including diminishing physical abilities. Be aware of physical limitations and arrange learning environments for ease in hearing and sight. Stress mutual setting of goals and encourage free exchange of ideas. Allow learners to set their own pace and work toward their own goals. Provide a supportive learning environment that allows the participants to comfortably interact one-on-one or in groups.