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City of Miami Will Provide Green Job Training through EPA Brownfields Grants

(Aug. 7, 2009) The EPA has selected the City of Miami, Fla. to receive \$500,000 in grant funding to help train City residents for jobs assessing, remediating and redeveloping brownfield sites. Funding for these grants is supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by President Barack Obama on February 17, 2009.

“The City of Miami is very fortunate to have been chosen for this program and we look forward to working with the EPA to train our residents in these exciting and profitable careers,” said Mayor Manny Diaz. “I want to thank Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Senator Bill Nelson for their strong support of the City’s program.”

“This Recovery Act funding will train people for real jobs that help restore their neighborhoods,” said Stan Meiburg, EPA Acting Regional Administrator in Atlanta. “It will go a long way in protecting public health and the environment and providing economic benefits through cleanup and redevelopment of properties that have been sitting idle due to real or even perceived contamination.”

This award is the latest component to The City of Miami’s Brownfield/ Land Revitalization Program that already manages four EPA Brownfield assessment and remediation Grants totaling \$1.2 million, focused on sites in Liberty City, Wynwood, Allapattah and Little Haiti. The City’s Office of Economic Initiatives has used EPA grant funding effectively as an economic development tool to stimulate affordable housing, retain area businesses, assist non-profits, create greenspace and promote job growth in underserved markets.

The Miami Brownfields Job Training Program will facilitate the cleanup of brownfields by providing free “green job” training for 120 city residents over nine 16-week training cycles. Training will include brownfields assessment, remediation, and redevelopment and will prepare graduates for entry-level positions as asbestos inspectors and abatement workers, emergency spill response technicians, environmental technicians, field sampling technicians, HAZWOPER technicians, and OSHA safety inspectors.

Since 1998, EPA has awarded more than \$25 million in brownfields job training funds. More than 5,000 people have completed EPA-funded training programs, with more than 3,250 obtaining employment in the environmental fields, earning an average wage of \$13.81 per hour. EPA established the Brownfields Job Training Program to help residents take advantage of jobs created by the assessment, cleanup, and sustainable reuse of brownfields sites and to ensure

that the economic benefits derived from brownfields redevelopment remain in the affected communities.

Brownfields are sites where expansion, redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. EPA's Brownfields Program encourages redevelopment of America's estimated 450,000 abandoned and contaminated waste sites. The City of Miami currently has 450 known contaminated properties. A disproportionate number of these brownfields exist in urban areas of economic despair and blight.

The 120 trainees have yet to be selected, as agreements with area partners such as Lindsey Hopkins Technical School and SERJobs for Progress will be finalized over the next several weeks. Updates on the upcoming Brownfield Job Training Program can be found on the Office of Economic Initiative's job website: www.accessmiamijobs.com.

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