From Dirt to Dollars: Writing Winning Grant Applications

Florida Brownfields Association 2025

Annual Brownfields Conference



In Partnership with



NJIT TAB

Agenda

- > TAB How We Can Help
- > EPA Grants
- Grant Solicitation Cycle
- > Early Application Tasks
 - Build Your Grant Team
 - Create Your Vision
 - Write Your Story
 - Set Up Your Application





NJIT TAB EPA REGION 4

NJIT has served as an EPA designated technical assistance provider since 2008

NJIT TAB serves as an independent resources to state, territory, regional, county, tribal, and local government entities, and nonprofits attempting to learn about, identify, assess, cleanup and redevelop brownfields.

Assistance is free!



NJIT TAB Brownfields Academy

njit.edu/tab



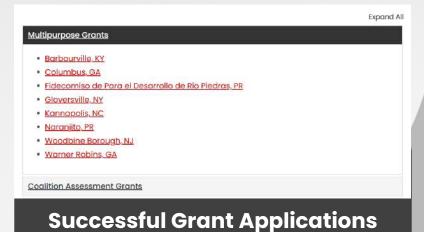










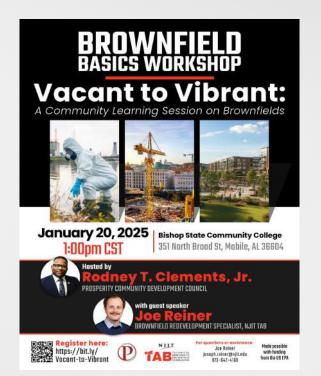


njit.edu/tab/sample-grant-

applications

NJIT TAB Brownfield Community Engagement and Educational Forums





Brownfield Basics
Workshops: a beginnerfriendly introduction to
the brownfield
redevelopment process.





Grant Writing Workshops: getting started on your grant applications; tips and tricks for preparing an EPA brownfields grant application.



Community Workshops: on brownfield-specific topics.



Conferences: preconference workshops, learning labs, panel sessions, office hours

NJIT TAB Brownfield Community Engagement and **Educational Forums**





(973) 642-7280

elise.molleur@njit.edu

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

9:00am - 3:00pm

Centralina Regional Council

Charlotte, NC 28262

10735 David Taylor Dr. Suite 250







Apopka Community Center 519 S. Central Ave, Apopka, FL 32703

JUNE 24, 2025 12-00 PM - 08-00 PM

IUNE 25, 2025

This 1.5-day workshop will focus on updating the plans that communities have in place and are

using to resolve their individual environmental preparing a workable plan to follow will enable

Learn the history of Lake Apopka and the effects of pesticides on the local community

"Our Movement Starts Here" Documentary

The documentary tells the story of a rural community fighting the state of North Carolina's plan to construct a toxic landfill.

> Community Spotlight 4 Communities provide an overview of brownfield related challenges.

Community Planning 4 Communities devise goals and objectives

to enhance engagement and collaboration. Resource Roundtable 4

> Gain insight on how to advance your mission by leveraging resources.

floridabrownfields.com





Breaking Brownfields: an event where a government entity or nonprofit presents their specific brownfields redevelopment challenge to an audience of private sector representatives and obtains feedback on how to overcome those challenges.

Brownfield Summits: Full day event that may include peer-to-peer sessions, success stories, and sessions on brownfield-related topics relevant to the specific locations, their needs, and their challenges.

NJIT TAB One-on-One Technical Assistance

Examples of one-on-one Technical Assistance tailored to fit specific community's needs

- Answer your brownfield questions
- Develop redevelopment strategy
- Review draft EPA grant applications
- Explain the regulatory programs
- Develop your redevelopment roadmap
- Identify funding sources
- Explain clean-up technologies

- Guidance on developing brownfield inventories
- Create site prioritization processes
- Develop strategies on marketing brownfield sites
- Develop Assets and Needs Studies
- Design and conduct community redevelopment vision workshops



And Much More!

- **State**
- **▶** County
- Local
- **▶** Tribal
- ► Non-Profits

Who is eligible for EPA Brownfield Grants?







Brownfield Multipurpose Grant

• provides funding to conduct a range of eligible planning, assessment and cleanup activities at one or more brownfield sites in target area(s).

Brownfield Assessment Grant

Community-Wide Assessment Assessment Coalition

• provides funding for brownfields inventories, planning, environmental assessments, and community outreach.

Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Grant

NOT anticipated in FY 2026

• provides funding to capitalize loans that are used to cleanup brownfields.

Brownfield Cleanup Grant

• provide funding to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites by the applicant.

Brownfield Job Training Grant

FY26 Job Training Grants due Friday, September 26, 2025

• recruiting, training and placing residents who are unemployed or underemployed, equipping them with the essential skills to secure full-time positions in the environmental sector.



Upcoming Job Training Webinar









September 15, 2025 2:00PM ET

Virtual Session

Join the US EPA Region 4 Brownfield and NJIT TAB (Technical Assistance for Brownfield Communities) teams for a webinar exploring job training (JT) opportunities for your community ahead of the September 26

Key Speakers

submission deadline!

- Olga Perry, Brownfields Project Officer, U.S. EPA Region 4
- Jayvion Crawl, Physical Scientist, U.S. EPA Region 4
- Mimi Marcus, Manager, Marketing & Engagement, NJIT Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities



Register Here:

https://bit.ly/R4-JT-Grants

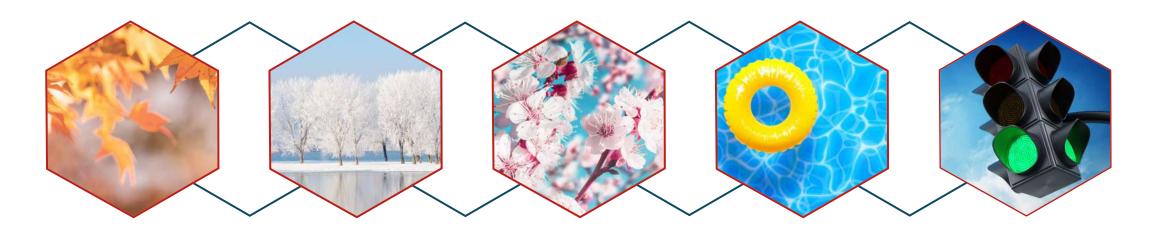


Made possible with funding from the US EPA



EPA Brownfields Grant Solicitation Cycle

For FY25, ARC grant applications are due November 14th, 2024



Request For Applications (RFA)

Grant
Application
Submissions
Are Due

Successful
Grant
Applicants Are
Announced

Funding Becomes Available Ready, Set, Redevelop!

Fall **FY25: (9/3/2024)**

6 weeks after RFA **FY25: (11/14/2024**)

Spring **FY25: (5/16/2025)**

Late Summer



FY26 EPA MAC Grant Offerings

Grant Type	Max. Project Period	Max. Amount per Grant	Estimated Awards	Total per Grant Type – Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funds	Total per Grant Type – Regular Appropriated Funds
Multipurpose	5 years	\$1,000,000	20	\$20,000,000	
Assessment (Community- wide)	4 years	\$500,000	70	\$35,000,000	
Assessment (Coalition)	4 years	\$1,500,000	39		\$58,700,000
Assessment (Community- wide for States and Tribes)	5 years	\$2,000,000	18	\$35,000,000	
Cleanup	4 years	\$500,000	10	\$5,000,000	
Cleanup	4 years	\$4,000,000	26	\$102,000,000	



Why Starting Early is Important

- Only six weeks from RFA to submission date
- Builds a solid planning foundation or continues existing planning efforts
- Provides time to address EPA application emphasis areas
- Allows for more involved technical assistance

A visual representation of all my deadlines coming at me





Narrative Ranking Criteria

- I. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION
- II. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

III. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

IV. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE



What should I start NOW to prepare for upcoming grants?

- 1 BUILD YOUR GRANT TEAM
- 2 CREATE YOUR VISION
- 3 WRITE YOUR STORY
- 4 SET UP YOUR APPLICATION



1. BUILD YOUR GRANT TEAM

Building Partnerships

Strong partnerships can guide community-informed decision making, strengthen funding applications and build capacity to tackle complex brownfield site challenges.

What to consider when identifying partners:

- Who is affected by the project?
- Who can bring effective resources, meaningful feedback, and communication skills to the table?
- Who are the relevant populations that we need to reach? Who are the best partners to reach them?



1. BUILD YOUR GRANT TEAM Typical Partners & Stakeholders

- Federal, State, Tribal, and Local Governments
- Local and Regional Community Development Agencies
- Real Estate Professionals
- Colleges and Universities
- Banks and Lenders
- Chambers of Commerce/Local Business Owners
- Neighborhood Associations and Other Community Groups
- Non-profit Organizations
- Environmental Consultants

Also go beyond the 'usual suspects':

- faith based organizations
- arts and culture community
- medical community



1. BUILD YOUR GRANT TEAM

Project Roles to Consider

- Project Manager
- Technical Expert
- Financial Manager
- Community Engagement Coordinator
- Legal Expert
- Purchasing Agent

Don't forget to talk with your EPA Project Officer!



low-To Video on Grant Project Teams Available at njit.edu/tab/how-videos



1. BUILD YOUR GRANT TEAM Begin Community Engagement

- Before applying for grants, think about what your community engagement plan will look like and start the outreach process
- Identify and document previous community engagement efforts





Avoid Common EPA Brownfield Grant Mistakes

Community Engagement Mistakes:

- Applicants make the mistake of going for quantity versus quality of partners.
- Applicants tend to have redundant project roles.

Building your team now will help you select meaningful partners with meaningful roles and reflect this in your grant application!



Avoid Common EPA Brownfield Grant Mistakes Community Engagement Mistakes:

- Applicants discuss community input as a necessary requirement instead of meaningful.
- Applicants don't discuss how garnered input will be considered in the project.

Starting community engagement now will help you discuss how you will meaningfully engage impacted populations in your project.

Avoid Common EPA Brownfield Grant Mistakes

Programmatic Capability Mistakes

- Applicants don't include an organizational structure and description of how it will function.
- Applicants forget to reference "in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200" or higher procurement standard.

Building your team now allows you to set up your organizational structure and get the experts on board you need (like a purchasing agent) to make sure you "cross your "t"s and dot your "i"s.



2. CREATE YOUR VISION Identify Your Brownfields

A brownfield inventory is a detailed list or database of brownfield sites within a given area.

Recommended Brownfield Inventory Components:

- Spreadsheet of brownfield properties
 - Basic site attributes
 - Owner
 - Environmental Status
 - Zoning
 - Legal barriers
 - Access
 - Assets (infrastructure, location, etc.)
- Map showing distribution and location of brownfields





Upcoming Inventory & Prioritization Workshop

https://bit.ly/Reclaiming-Brownfields





RECLAIMING IDLE SPACES:

Identifying & Prioritizing Brownfield Properties

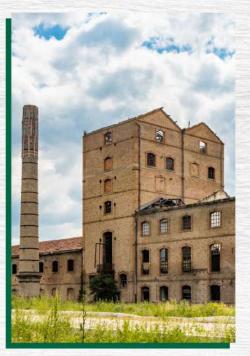
This community workshop explores practical methods for identifying and prioritizing brownfields to spark community revitalization.

Includes an interactive session that covers strategies and publicly-available tools for locating sites with environmental concerns and creating inventories to guide future planning and leverage funding opportunities.

September 12, 2025 10:00am - 12:00pm

University of South Florida, Oak View Room at Discovery Hall





With guest speakers

Carrie Martin, AICP

University of South Florida



Registration and More Info:

https://bit.ly/Reclaiming-Brownfields



Delineate Your Geographic and Target Areas

What is a Geographic Area?

- The area in which you are going to conduct eligible activities with your grant funds.
- An area that suffers from brownfield challenges and impacts.
- Can include your entity's jurisdictional or service area boundaries or a subarea of those boundaries.
- Tip: Make as big as reasonable.







Delineate Your Geographic and Target Areas









What is a Target Area?

- Downtown District
- Community
 Gateway
- Waterfront Area
- Industrial District
- Corridors

Why is it Important to Delineate a Target Area?

- Serves as the foundation for a comprehensive planning approach
- Helps identify priority brownfields
- Helps focus redevelopment scenarios
- Helps leverage funding





Gather Information to Select The Best Target Area

Data gathering helps you to:

- Establish community need
- Support project goals
- Inform redevelopment types









Information Gathering: Leverage Past Planning Efforts

- Plans to Consider:
 - Target Area Specific Redevelopment Plans
 - Master Plans
 - Zoning
 - Transportation Plans
 - Stakeholder/Community Engagement Findings
- To find information on community and infrastructure improvements, search for capital improvement funds in your municipal budget and any capital improvement plans.





Priority Brownfield Sites

- **Definition:** "Does the site meet EPA's definition of a brownfield?"
- **Eligibility:** "Did you confirm with the EPA Regional Office that your site is eligible?
- Location: "Is the site located within your target area or project emphasis area such as a downtown or gateway?"
- Existing Inventory: "Is there an existing Brownfield inventory, and are you drawing your sites from that inventory?"
- **Data:** "Does the data associated with your priority sites highlight your community's challenges to the greatest extent possible?"
- Goals: "Do your priority site(s) have the potential to meet project goals."

Additional Considerations

- Ownership
- Past site uses
- Contamination
- Structures
- Wetlands
- Floodplain
- Secured site
- Available infrastructure



Avoid Common EPA Brownfield Grant Mistakes

Reuse Strategy Mistakes:

- Applicant doesn't discuss how identified plans specifically pertain to priority brownfield sites or target area.
- Applicant doesn't discuss other plans that are relevant.

Competitive applications will have a project goals and outcomes that align with existing community revitalization efforts. Create your vision now so you can demonstrate that you have plans in place to ensure project success.



Avoid Common EPA Brownfield Grant Mistakes

Leveraging Resources Mistakes:

- Applicant forgets to mention infrastructure that provides access to the site (e.g., roadways, rail, water, mass transit)
- Applicant forgets to mention required infrastructure upgrades.

Learn about community investment (i.e., streetscape improvements, utility upgrades) and existing infrastructure to be leveraged (i.e., water, sewer, gas, electric, transportation, high speed internet) to determine any upgrades that will be required to meet project goals.



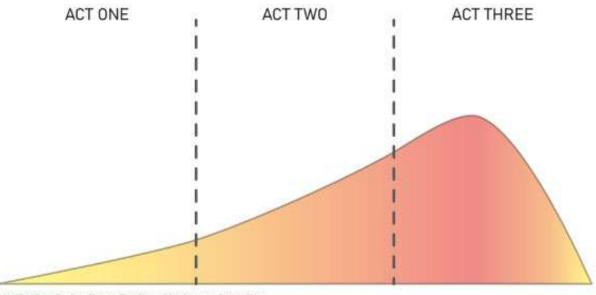
Avoid Common EPA Brownfield Grant Mistakes Priority Brownfield Site(s) Mistakes:

- Applicant doesn't provide details of priority sites.
- Applicant doesn't select priority brownfield sites that make the best case.
- Applicant lists too many priority sites.
- Applicant doesn't describe how they will identify and prioritize additional sites to expend funding on or who will employ this process.

Competitive applications will demonstrate a comprehensive approach with priority sites that make the best case for your application story and focus on project goals.



3. Write Your Story



Modified from Pauline Clague, Five Beats Of Indigenous Storytelling.

Setup

The post-war industrial decline led to factory closures throughout the city. This vacant building stood as a reminder of hard times for 40 years.

Confrontation

Investors perform site assessment and contamination is found. It is cleaned up.

Resolution

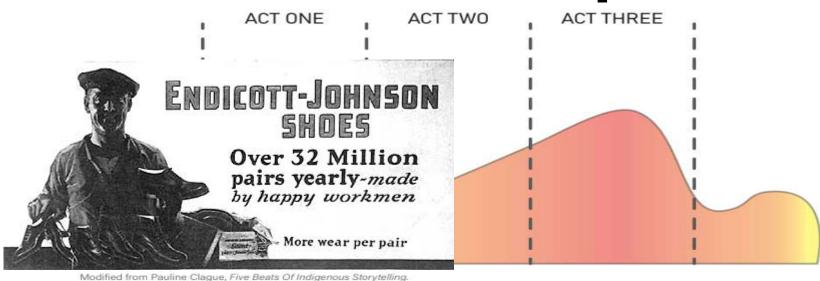
The building is adaptively reused for affordable housing.







Give it context. Once upon a time...





Once Upon a Time... (Setup)

The EndicottJohnson
Corporation was a major employer for the community and were ahead of their time in taking care of their employees. They provided healthcare and recreation.

Introduce Characters

The post-war industrial decline led to factory closures throughout the city. This vacant building stood as a reminder of hard times for 40 years.

Rising Action

Investors perform site assessment and contamination is found. It is cleaned up.

Crisis, Climax, Falling Action

The building is adaptively reused for affordable housing.

Future of Characters and Setting

The development catalyzed interest in the area and fulfills the original legacy by providing nice, affordable housing to the working class.





3. Write Your Story

Typical Data Included in Grant Applications...

Sensitive populations might include:

- Low Income
- Less than High School
 Education
- Age >65
- Age <5
- Veterans

Threats to sensitive populations might include:

- Crime
- Substance abuse
- Unemployment
- Critical service gaps
- No health insurance

Higher incidence of disease and adverse health conditions:

- Low life expectancy
- Cancer
- Asthma
- Heart disease



Wait, Where Do I Find This Data?

Where can I find information on population, race, ethnicity, income, and housing in my geographic and target areas?

- U.S. Census Bureau
- Poverty Statistics (USDA)

Where can I find information about public health in my geographic and target areas?

- EPA Resources on Public Health
- <u>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Environmental Health Tracking Network</u>
- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps
- City Health Dashboard
- HealthData.gov
- National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System
- Kaiser Family Foundation
- Local Health Department Data
- Community Health Needs Assessments
- Local Hospitals or Urgent Care Centers



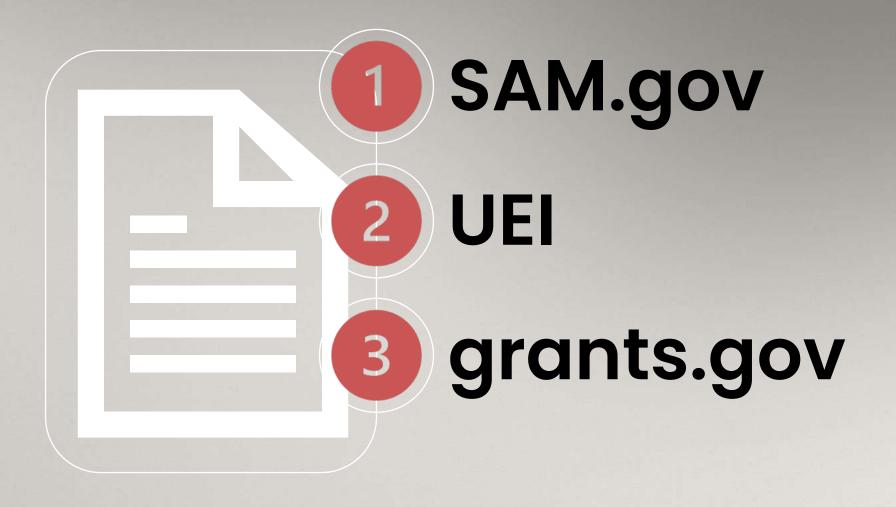








4. SET UP YOUR APPLICATION





Requirements to Submit an Application

Requirement	Accept	Reject
Active <u>www.sam.gov</u> account through deadline	 The account is active and matches the applying entity's information 	Inactive/expired accountAccount is being updated, but is in "processing" status
Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) generated in www.sam.gov	The same UEI must be used on future applications	 Another organization's/ department's UEI is listed on the Standard Form 424
Active <u>www.grants.gov</u> account	Associated with same, correct UEI number	 Application is not submitted through grants.gov solely due to an incomplete registration/ inactive account
Submission by the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)	 Designed in grants.gov by the E-business POC (listed in sam.gov) Has a grants.gov account Submits the application in grants.gov 	Someone other than the designated AOR submits the application

SAM.gov **Entity** Registration Checklist

Includes:

- □Legal Business Name
- □Organization Start Date
- □ Website
- □Address (Need Proof)
- □Criminal/Civil Proceedings
- **DNAICS** Code
- □ Point Of Contact Info





Data Bank

Data Services

Get Started with Registration and the Unique Entity ID

Submitting a registration and getting a Unique Entity ID are FREE.

Before You Get Started

Review these steps to choose which option is right for you. You can register to bid and apply for federal awards or you can request a Unique Entity ID only without having to complete a registration.



About Registration

Set up a SAM.gov Account

Prepare Your Data

3

Get Started

(1) About Registration

If you want to apply for federal awards as a prime awardee, you need a registration.

A registration allows you to bid on government contracts and apply for federal assistance. As part of registration, we will assign you a Unique Entity ID.

To see comprehensive instructions and checklist for entity registration, download our Entity Registration Checklist .

If you do not want to apply directly for awards, then you do not need a registration. If you only conduct certain types of transactions, such as reporting as a subawardee, you may not need to complete a registration. You may only need a Unique Entity ID.

What does it mean to get only a Unique Entity ID and not register?





get started doing busin

government.

Register Your E

Unique Entity I

Register your entity or

Get

Entity Info

Ren



Already Regis

You must renew you days to keep it activ to your registration renewal. If you're all already have a Uniq

> Go to your Enti Workspace to u registration

Check the statu

? How do you kn registered?

Registration: Before Grants.gov System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

- Register with SAM at <u>www.SAM.gov to receive</u> <u>UEI</u>
- Establish E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC): Individual who oversees all activities for organization within Grants.gov and approves the AOR
- ~7-10 business days (or more) to complete SAM registration, including submitting notarized letter to SAM



Your www.grants.gov Application Package

REQUIRED FORMS

- 1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- 2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424 A)
- 3. Preaward Compliance Review Report (EPA Form 4700-4)
- 4. EPA Key Contacts (Form 5700-54)
- 5. Project Narrative Attachment Form, as one file (if possible) include:
 - ✓ Narrative Information Sheet
 - ✓ Narrative (responses to ranking criteria)
 - ✓ Required Attachments

OPTIONAL FORMS

- Grants.gov Lobbying Form To be submitted by applicants requesting <u>more</u> than \$100,000 of EPA grant funding.
- Negotiated/Proposed Indirect Cost Rate
 Agreement submit using the Project
 Narrative Attachment Form.



- A workplan is not required at time of submission. Applicants that are selected for funding
 will negotiate a workplan with EPA before the cooperative agreement is awarded.
- Sample forms are available on the <u>MARC Grant Application Resources</u> webpage.





SF-424



SF-424A



Form 5700-54



EPA Form 4700-4



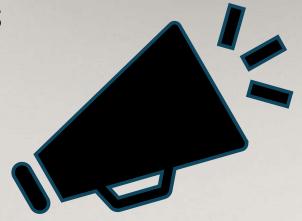
Required Attachments



State/Territory Letter

- Usually from state/territory environmental regulatory entity
- For all grant types
- Cleanup

Cleanup





Community Notice



- Follow the guideline outline, don't get creative.
- Use tables when appropriate.
- Do not include maps or photos in the application.
- Don't skip questions because you don't have information or data.
- Do not add hyperlinks to data or other information.
- Get one person to edit the application.
- Get someone who knows nothing about the project to review your application.
- If you hire a consultant, make sure they tell the story you want told.







NJIT provides free technical assistance to state, regional, county, tribal, and local government entities and nonprofit organizations interested in learning about, identifying, assessing, cleaning up, and redeveloping brownfield sites in EPA Regions 2 & 4.

Contact Us:



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