FY2016 Assessment Guideline Checklist

The Agency will evaluate applicants’ proposals on their merits and use of this checklist does not guarantee funding from EPA. This checklist is designed to serve as a guide for Brownfields Program applicants in preparing their proposals. This checklist does not serve as a substitute for reading the “Proposal Guidelines for Brownfields Assessment Grants” or the Frequently Asked Questions.

October 2015
Proposal Checklist for Assessment Grants

Before you submit your proposal(s) for assessment grants, please ensure the following documents are included in your package submitted electronically through www.grants.gov and emailed to the Regional Brownfields Contact listed in Section VII.

Please label all attachments. For example:

Attachment A: Letter from the State
Attachment B: Applicant Eligibility
Attachment C: Threshold Criteria
Attachment D: Leveraged Resources

- Transmittal Letter (2-page limit)
- Regional Priorities Form/Other Factors Checklist (located in Appendix 3) attached to the Transmittal Letter
- The Narrative Proposal, which includes the responses to ranking criteria (15-page limit)
- Documentation of all applicable threshold criteria (see Section III. B and C)
- Letter from the state or tribal environmental authority (see Section III.C.2)
- Documentation of applicant eligibility if other than city, county, state, or tribe (see Section III.C.1)
- Documentation indicating committed firm leveraged resources, if applicable (see Section V.B.2.c)
- Letters of Commitment from all community organizations identified in the Community Engagement and Partnerships ranking criterion (see Section V.B.3)
- Justification for requested waiver of the $200,000 limit for a site-specific assessment, if applicable (see Section I.A.2)
- Property-Specific Determination request, if applicable (see Section III.C.4.d)
- Letters of commitment from assessment coalition members, if applicable (see section III.C.1)
- Petroleum eligibility determination information, if applicable (see Section III.C.3.i)

Please also remember to complete the following items.

- Register on www.grants.gov and www.sam.gov as soon as possible.
- Submit your complete proposal package through www.grants.gov no later than December 18, 2015 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.
- Email a courtesy copy of your proposal package to the appropriate Regional Brownfields Contact listed in Section VII.
THRESHOLD CRITERIA CHECKLIST
Your responses to these items are required and must be included as an attachment to your proposal.

1. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

☐ Did you demonstrate how you are an eligible entity for an assessment grant (see Section III.A)?
☐ If you are NOT a city, county, state or tribe, did you provide documentation of your eligibility?

Assessment Coalition applicants
☐ Did you document how all members are eligible entities?
☐ Did you attach a letter from each coalition member, addressed to lead coalition member, in which they agree to be part of the coalition?

2. LETTER FROM THE STATE OR TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY

☐ Did you attach a letter from the appropriate state or tribal environmental authority acknowledging your plans to conduct activities and plans to apply for federal grant funds?
☐ Is the letter current (with a current date) and not included in a previously submitted cleanup grant proposal?

3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

☐ Did you demonstrate how you intend to inform and involve the community and other stakeholders during the planning, implementation and other brownfields assessment activities described in the proposal?

SITE-SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ONLY:

4. SITE ELIGIBILITY AND PROPERTY OWNERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Site Eligibility
(Note: Refer to Section III.B Site Eligibility and Section III.C Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants in the Guidelines when responding to this section.)

4.a. Basic Site Information
☐ Did you identity the following:
  o name of the site;
  o address of the site, including zip code; and
  o current owner of the site?

4.b. Status and History of Contamination at the Site
☐ Did you identity the following:
  o whether the site is contaminated by petroleum or hazardous substances;
  o the operational history and current use(s) of the site;
environmental concerns, if known, at the site; and
how the site became contaminated, and to the extent possible, describe the nature and extent of the contamination?

4.c. Sites Ineligible for Funding

☐ Did you affirm that the site is:
  o not listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List;
  o not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into by parties under CERCLA;
  and
  o not subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the United States government?

4.d. Sites Requiring a Property-Specific Determination

☐ If your site requires a property-specific determination, did you attach the information requested in the Brownfields FAQs (see Appendix 1, Section 1.5)?

Property Ownership Eligibility – Hazardous Substance Sites

4.e. CERCLA §107 Liability

☐ Did you affirm that you are not potentially liable for contamination at the site by establishing that you are eligible for one of the CERCLA liability protections or defenses? (see Section III.B.3)

☐ Did you explain why you are not potentially liable?

4.f. Enforcement or Other Actions

☐ Did you identify known ongoing or anticipated environmental enforcement or other actions related to the brownfield site for which funding is sought?

☐ Did you describe any inquiries, or orders from federal, state, or local government entities that you are aware of regarding the responsibility of any party for the contamination, or hazardous substances at the site, including any liens?

4.g. Information on Liability and Defenses/Protections Where the Applicant Does NOT Own the Site

☐ Did you affirm you that you did not arrange for the disposal of hazardous substances at the site or transport hazardous substances to the site, and that you did not cause or contribute to any releases of hazardous substances at the site?

☐ Did you describe your relationship with the owner and the owner’s role in the work to be performed?

☐ Did you indicate how you will gain access to the site?

4.h. Information on Liability and Defenses/Protections Where the Applicant Owns or Will Own the Site During the Performance of the Grant

4.h.i. Information on the Property Acquisition

Did you describe/state:
how you acquired or will acquire ownership;
the date of acquisition;
the name and identity of the party from whom you acquired ownership; and
all familial, contractual, corporate, or financial relationships you have or had with prior owners or operators of the property?

4.h.ii. Timing and/or Contribution Toward Hazardous Substances Disposal

Did you identify whether all disposal of hazardous substances at the site occurred before you acquired the property?

Did you identify whether you caused or contributed to any release of hazardous substances at the site?

Did you affirm that you have not, at any time, arranged for the disposal of hazardous substances at the site or transported hazardous substances to the site?

4.h.iii. Pre-Purchase Inquiry

Did you describe any inquiry by you or others into the previous ownership, uses of the property, and environmental conditions conducted prior to taking ownership?
This includes:
  o types of site assessments performed, dates of each assessment, and entity for which they were performed;
  o who performed the AAI investigation or Phase I environmental site assessments and identify his/her qualifications; and
  o affirming that you conducted the appropriate updates in the original assessment (if conducted more than 180 days prior to date you acquired the property) in order to take advantage of the BFPP, innocent landowner, or contiguous property owner provision.

4.h.iv. Post-Acquisition Uses

Did you describe all uses to which the property has been put since you acquired ownership through the present?

Did you include the following in your timeline description:
  o names of all current and prior users during time of your ownership;
  o dates of all uses;
  o details of each use, including the rights or other reason pursuant to which the use was claimed or taken; and
  o your relationship to the current and prior users?

4.h.v. Continuing Obligations

Did you describe in detail the specific appropriate care that you exercised with respect to hazardous substances found at the site by taking reasonable steps to:
  o stop any continuing releases;
  o prevent any threatened future release; and
  o prevent or limit exposure to any previously released hazardous substance?
Did you confirm your commitment to:
  - comply with all land-use restrictions and institutional controls;
  - assist and cooperate with those performing the cleanup and provide access to the property;
  - comply with all information requests and administrative subpoenas that have or may be issued in connection with the property; and
  - provide all legally required notices?

Property Ownership Eligibility – Petroleum Sites
(Note: Disregard this item if you do not have a petroleum site.)

4.i. Property Ownership Eligibility
4.i.i. Current and Immediate Past Owners
  - Did you identify current and immediate past owners of the site?
4.i.ii. Acquisition of Site
  - Did you identify when and by what method the current owner acquired the property?
4.i.iii. No Responsible Party for the Site
  - Did you identify whether the current and immediate past owner:
    - dispensed or disposed of petroleum or petroleum product contamination, or exacerbated the existing contamination at the site;
    - owned the site when any dispensing or disposal of petroleum (by others) took place; and
    - took reasonable steps with regard to the contamination at the site?
4.i.iv. Cleaned Up by a Person Not Potentially Liable
  - Did you identify whether you dispensed or disposed of petroleum or petroleum product, or exacerbated the existing petroleum contamination at the site?
  - Did you state whether you took reasonable steps with regard to the contamination?
4.i.v. Relatively Low Risk
  - Did you identify whether the site is of “relatively low risk” compared to other petroleum or petroleum product-only contaminated sites in the state in which the site is located, including whether the site is receiving or using Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) trust fund monies?
4.i.vi. Judgments, Orders, or Third Party Suits
  - Did you provide information that no responsible party is identified for the site?
4.i.vii. Subject to RCRA
  - Did you identify whether the site is subject to any order under section 9003(h) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act?
4.i.viii. Financial Viability of Responsible Parties
  - Did you provide information regarding whether any responsible parties have the financial capability to satisfy their obligations under federal or state law to assess, investigate, or clean up the site?
NARRATIVE RANKING CRITERIA CHECKLIST

I. COMMUNITY NEED

I.a. Targeted Community and Brownfields

I.a.i. Targeted Community Description
☐ Did you include a brief description of your city, town, or geographic area?
☐ Did you provide background on the geographic area’s cultural and industrial history?
☐ Did you establish the context for your brownfield challenges?
☐ Within this geographic area, did you identify and describe the targeted community, such as a neighborhood, district, corridor, census tract or other locality, where you plan to perform assessment activities?

I.a.ii. Demographic Information
☐ Did you provide demographic information about your targeted community?
☐ Did you provide data similar to that in the “Sample Format for Demographic Information” table?
☐ Did you supplement the demographic information table with other categories and relative comparative data? (not required)
☐ Did you clearly cite the sources of your data?

I.a.iii. Description of Brownfields
☐ Did you describe your brownfields in your targeted community?
☐ Specifically, did you provide information on the:
  ☐ nature and extent of your brownfields? For example, information on past land uses and site activities, potential environmental issues or contaminants, and current conditions.
  ☐ real or perceived negative environmental impacts associated with the brownfields?
  ☐ brownfields’ proximity to the targeted community?

I.a.iv. Cumulative Environmental Issues
☐ Did you include a summary of the various cumulative environmental issues (e.g. siting of industry, power plants, incinerators, landfills, congested highways, or other sources or air, water and land pollution) or environmental justice concerns (such as overburdening from existing sources of pollution) which may be present?

I.b. Impacts on Targeted Community

Note: applicants are not required to develop new studies in order to respond to the criteria. Any information discussed and/or cited should reference existing available studies, data, and information.

☐ Did you discuss impacts the brownfields have on public health or welfare of your targeted community?
Impacts may include:
  o possible aggravation of public health issues, such as a greater than normal incidence of diseases or conditions (including cancer, asthma or birth defects) that may be associated with exposure to hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants resulting from cumulative environmental conditions, including brownfields;
  o social negatives such as blight, crime, vandalism, illegal dumping, people moving out, lack of neighborhood upkeep, lack of prosperity; or
  o other impacts on the general health and/or welfare of the targeted community.

☐ Did you provide recent, relevant, cited data describing the threats to health or welfare of sensitive populations potentially subject to environmental exposures, including brownfields, in the targeted community?

☐ Did you describe how cumulative environmental and/or brownfields issues have disproportionally impacted your targeted community?

☐ Did you include citations for all data?

☐ Coalition applicants – did you demonstrate that you, as the lead applicant, will serve coalition partners and communities that would otherwise not have access to resources to address brownfields?

1.c. Financial Need

1.c.i. Economic Conditions
  ☐ Did you describe why you need this funding?
  ☐ Did you describe why you are unable to draw on other sources of funding for assessment of brownfield sites? Factors may include fiscal conditions, or population size, etc.
  ☐ Did you describe how local economic conditions might have been made worse due to industrial decline, plant closures, natural disasters, or other significant economic disruptions?

1.c.ii. Economic Effects of Brownfields
  ☐ Did you elaborate on the demographic table in Section V.B.1.a and provide context to the values presented?
  ☐ Did you discuss the key economic effects of the brownfields on the targeted community (e.g. reduced tax base, lost jobs and business opportunities, depressed property values, ongoing costs to secure vacant properties, etc.)?
  ☐ Did you describe the other economic effects associated with brownfields such as blight, property vacancy, community disinvestment, burden on municipal services, etc.?
  ☐ To the extent possible, did you include quantitative estimates and statistics?
  ☐ Did you clearly cite all data sources?
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND FEASIBILITY OF SUCCESS

2.a. Project Description

2.a.i Project Description

- Did you describe the project that will be funded under this grant?
- Did you describe how the project aligns with the targeted community’s land use and revitalization plans or vision?
- Did you describe the grant-funded assessment work planned with this funding?
- Did you describe the redevelopment strategy or projected redevelopment for the property or properties that are assessed?

2.a.ii. Project Timing

- Did you describe a clear approach for implementing and executing key project activities within the 3-year period of performance?
- Specifically, did you address timing of contractor procurement, site selection, and securing site access?
- Did you clearly state who will be responsible for implementing/completing activities related to contractor procurement, site selection, and securing site access?

2.a.iii. Site Selection

- Community-wide applicants – did you describe the process for prioritizing and selecting sites to assess, and for obtaining access to those sites?
- Assessment Coalition applicants – did you describe the proposed governance structure amongst your coalition partners which be implemented to prioritize and select sites to assess, and the process for obtaining access to those sites?
- Site-specific assessment applicants – did you describe the existing conditions of the subject property including anticipated levels of contamination, size, and/or status of ownership of the site?

2.b. Task Description and Budget Table

It is important to demonstrate that you understand the Brownfields Assessment Program process and the proposed work that will be accomplished with the grant funding. In preparing your project description, think about the following:

- What eligible assessment activities are needed to accomplish your project?
- What steps are necessary to implement your project?
- What deliverables/outputs will you produce?
- Who is involved in your project?
- If you named a contractor (including an individual consultant) as a project partner, did you demonstrate that you selected the partner in compliance with your jurisdiction’s and federal competitive procurement procedures?
What outreach methods will you use to communicate with the affected public/targeted community?

2.b.i. Task Descriptions

☐ Did you list the tasks required to implement the proposed project?

☐ Did you describe the grant-funded work that will take place under each task?

☐ Did you include any additional work or services necessary to carry out the project that will be funded by sources other than this grant?

☐ Did you identify and enumerate specific outputs from the project?
  - Outputs may include, but are not limited to, Phase I environmental site assessments, Phase II environmental site assessments, site cleanup plans, area-wide plans, or site inventories.

☐ Did you provide a basis for cost estimates for each grant-funded task and value presented in the budget table?
  - Specifically, did you present unit costs and quantify work products (e.g., Contractual Costs: Conduct Phase 1 assessments on five sites at a cost of $2,500 each for a total of $12,500; Personnel Costs: $45/hr x 20hrs = $900.)
  - Did you explain any costs that appear to be atypical (i.e. unusually high or low)?

☐ If applying for both hazardous substance funding and petroleum funding, did you clearly distinguish and provide descriptions of both sources of funding?

☐ Did you exclude activities that are ineligible uses of funds under EPA’s Assessment Grant?

☐ Are the majority of the funds allocated towards assessment related field activities?

☐ Did you describe how you plan to track and measure your progress in achieving project results (outcomes and outputs)?

☐ Site-specific applicants – did you demonstrate that the task descriptions and budget justify the need for requested grant funds?

☐ Coalition applicants – did you demonstrate that grant funds would address a minimum of five sites, as well as sites located in each coalition member’s jurisdiction?

2.b.ii. Budget Table

☐ Did you provide the information identified in the “Sample Format for Budget”?

☐ If applying for both hazardous substance funding and petroleum funding, did you clearly distinguish and provide budgets for both sources of funding?

☐ Did you include only eligible Project Tasks in the budget table?

☐ Did you include ONLY EPA grant funds in the budget table?

☐ Did you exclude activities not supported by the grant from the budget table?

☐ Do all totals add up correctly?
2.c. Ability to Leverage

☐ Did you describe other sources of funding/resources that you have to ensure the successful revitalization of brownfields sites assessed with this grant?

☐ Did you describe other sources of funding/resources that you may be seeking to ensure the successful revitalization of brownfields sites assessed with this grant?

☐ Do leveraged funding/resources include public and/or private resources (beyond this grant) to achieve assessment, cleanup, and/or redevelopment needs of brownfields sites?

☐ Did you attach copies of documentation to this proposal for any “firm leveraged” resources identified in this section?

☐ If you are not yet able to identify sources of leveraged funding, did you provide a recent example(s) where you or your project partners have successfully leveraged resources to achieve an environmental or revitalization goal of your community (not necessarily on a brownfields site)?

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

☐ Community-wide applicants – Did you demonstrate how the whole community, not just localized groups directly affected by a site or sites, has provided input from the project inception and will be engaged throughout the project?

☐ Site-Specific applicants – Did you discuss and demonstrate meaningful involvement of community groups or representatives directly affected by the site, in addition to the broader community?

☐ Assessment Coalition applicants – Did you demonstrate how all communities addressed through this project have provided input from the beginning of the project, and will be engaged throughout the project?

☐ Assessment Coalition applicants – Did you demonstrate that you, as the potential grant recipient, will ensure that community engagement is tailored specifically to the needs of each targeted community and coalition member?

3.a. Plan for Involving Targeted Community & Other Stakeholders; and Communicating Project Progress

3.a.i. Community Involvement Plan

☐ Did you discuss your plan for involving the targeted community and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of your project?

3.a.ii. Community Progress

☐ Did you describe your plans for communicating the progress of your project to members of the community?
☐ Did you explain how the identified communication plans are appropriate for the targeted community and how you plan to address any communication barriers?

3.b. Partnerships with Government Agencies

3.b.i. Local/State/Tribal Environmental Authority
☐ Did you identify and clearly describe which agency runs the brownfields, voluntary or other similar cleanup program at the local/state/tribal level (i.e., the environmental agency and/or other health agency)?
☐ Did you include a description of the role the local/state/tribal environmental authority will play to ensure your brownfields project is successful?

3.b.ii Other Relevant Governmental Partnerships
☐ Did you identify and provide information on other relevant federal, state and/or local governmental agencies with which you will partner during your assessment project?
☐ Did you include a description of the role other relevant governmental agencies will play to ensure your brownfields project is successful?

3.c. Partnerships with Community Organizations

3.c.i. Community Organization Description & Role
☐ Do the organizations identified fit within the Brownfield Program's definition of a Community Organization (CO)?
☐ Are the COs relevant to your proposed project?
☐ Did you describe your current efforts and plans to initiate and develop partnerships with community organizations?
☐ Did you discuss how the COs will be involved in the planning and implementation of your project?
☐ Did you include a brief description of each CO?
☐ Did you discuss the role of each CO and how they will be involved in your proposed project?

3.c.ii. Letters of Commitment
☐ Did you attach a current letter from each CO identified in this section of your narrative?
☐ Does each CO letter affirm the role and commitment to your project/program?
☐ If COs do not exist in your area, did you demonstrate how the community is engaged and involved in your project and attach supporting documents?
4. PROJECT BENEFITS

4.a. Health and/or Welfare and Environment

4.a.i. Health and/or Welfare Benefits
☐ Did you describe the health and/or welfare benefits anticipated from this grant (or broader project)?
☐ Did you describe how these benefits will address the health and/or welfare challenges discussed in the Community Need?

4.a.ii. Environmental Benefits
☐ Did you describe the environmental benefits anticipated from this grant (or broader project)?
☐ Did you describe how these environmental benefits will address the environmental challenges discussed in the Community Need?

4.b. Environmental Benefits from Infrastructure Reuse/Sustainable Reuse

4.b.i. Policies, Planning, and Other Tools
☐ Did you provide examples of how you will use your community or organization’s policies, ordinances, planning or other tools to foster and implement sustainable development outcomes for sites assessed with this grant?
☐ Did you describe the use (or re-use) of existing infrastructure for sites assessed with this grant?

4.b.ii. Integrating Equitable Development or Livability Principles
☐ Did you describe how your approach to revitalizing sites in the targeted community incorporates equitable development practices or the HUD-DOT-EPA Livability Principles?

4.c. Economic and Community Benefits

4.c.i. Economic or Other Benefits

Notice the “or” language – you only have to respond to one category. However, it is acceptable to respond to both categories if you have discussed both economic and non-economic challenges in your proposal.

☐ Did you discuss specific potential outcomes and economic benefits, such as increased employment and expanded tax base, from the redevelopment of sites assessed under this grant?

OR

☐ Did you discuss non-economic benefits associated with sites to be reused for greenspace or other not-for-profit activities?

4.c.ii. Job Creation Potential with Workforce Development Programs
☐ Did you describe any planned efforts to promote local hiring and procurement, or link members of the community to potential employment opportunities in brownfields assessment, cleanup, or redevelopment related to your proposed projects?
5. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

5.a. Programmatic Capability

□ Did you describe the organizational structure you will utilize to ensure the timely and successful expenditure of funds and completion of all technical, administrative and financial requirements of the project and grant?

□ Did you include a brief discussion of the key staff including their roles, expertise, qualifications, and experience?

□ Did you describe the system(s) you have in place to appropriately acquire any additional expertise and resources (e.g. contractors or subawardees) required to successfully complete the project?

5.b. Audit Findings

□ Did you describe any adverse audit findings and how the problem was corrected?

□ If you have not had any adverse audit findings, did you state that there were no adverse findings?

5.c. Past Performance and Accomplishments

*Respond to the correct category*

5.c.i. If you currently or have ever received an EPA Brownfields Grant

□ Did you identify the EPA Brownfields grant(s) you currently have or have received in the past?

□ Did you provide information on no more than 5 of your most recent grants?

□ Did you demonstrate how you successfully managed the grant(s), and successfully performed all phases of work, including whether each grant by providing information on the following:

Compliance with Grant Requirements

□ Did you provide information regarding your compliance with the:
  o work plan,
  o schedule, and
  o terms and conditions?

□ Did you explain progress made, or are making, towards achieving the expected results/outputs under the grants?

□ If you did not make progress towards achieving the expected results/outputs, did you explain why not, what corrective measures were taken, and how measures were documented and communicated with EPA?

□ Did you discuss your history of timely and acceptable quarterly performance and technical reporting, as well as, ongoing ACRES reporting?
For each open EPA Brownfields Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup grant(s):

- Did you explain your need for additional funding?
- Did you include the grant period (start and end date)?
- Did you indicate if there are funds remaining on the grant?
- Did you discuss your plan for expending the remaining funds by the end of the grant period?

For each closed EPA Brownfields Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup grant(s):

- Did you indicate if there were funds remaining at the time the grant closed?
- Did you include the amount of remaining funds?
- Did you include a brief explanation of why the funds were not expended?

Accomplishments

- Did you describe the accomplishments (including specific outputs and outcomes) of your grant-funded program?
- Did you discuss whether these outputs and outcomes were accurately reflected in ACRES at the time of this proposal submission? If they were not, did you explain why?

5.c.ii. If you have not received an EPA Brownfields Grant but have received other federal and/or non-federal assistance agreements

- Did you identify and describe each of your current and/or most recent federally and non-federally funded grants that are most similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project?
- Did you provide information on no more than 5 of your most recent grants?
- Demonstrate how you successfully managed the grant(s), and successfully performed all phases of work under each grant by providing information on the following:

Purpose and Accomplishments

- For each grant, did you describe the:
  - awarding agency/organization,
  - amount of funding, and
  - purpose of the grant(s)?

- For projects supported by these grants, did you discuss the accomplishments (including the outputs and outcomes) and specific measures of success?

Compliance with Grant Requirements

- Did you describe your compliance with the
  - work plan,
  - schedule, and
  - terms and conditions?

- Did you describe whether you made, or are making, sufficient progress towards achieving the expected results of the grant in a timely manner?
If you did not make progress towards achieving the expected results, did you explain why not, what corrective measures were taken, and how measures were documented and communicated with awarding agency/organization?

Did you discuss your history of timely and acceptable reporting, as required by the awarding agency/organization?

5.c.iii. If you have never received any type of federal or non-federal assistance agreements

Did you affirm that your organization has never received any type of federal or non-federal assistant agreement (grant)?