EPA Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund and Cleanup (ARC) Grant Proposal Guidelines: Key Modifications

Background

EPA's Brownfields Program promotes the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of America's estimated 450,000 brownfields. In fiscal year 2008, communities in 43 states, 2 Tribal Nations and 2 territories will share over $74 million in EPA Brownfields grants to help revitalize these former industrial and commercial sites, turning them from problem properties to productive community assets. Since the beginning of the Brownfields Program, EPA has awarded 1,255 Assessment grants totaling $298.6 million, 230 Revolving Loan Fund grants totaling $217.7 million, and 426 Cleanup grants totaling $78.7 million—resulting in 11,779 properties assessed, 258 properties cleaned up, 544 properties representing 4,497 acres determined as ready for productive reuse, and 316 properties redeveloped or with redevelopment underway. These projects have leveraged more than $11 billion in private investment and helped to attract more than 48,238 jobs.

Grand opening ceremony, Belmar City Center, Lakewood, Colorado

Check awarding ceremony, Fletcher, North Carolina

Ribbon cutting, Metro Center Shopping Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Overview

EPA modified key areas of its Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup (ARC) Grant Proposal Guidelines to create additional funding opportunities for communities, and improve applicants' potential for success through:

- New opportunities for assessment applicants;
- Streamlined guidelines; and
- New proposal requirements, designed to help ensure grantee success.

Request for Brownfields Grant Proposals

EPA plans to issue a request for proposals (RFP) in late summer of 2008 for 2009 competitive EPA Brownfields grants.

Breakdown of the Differences Between the New EPA Brownfields ARC Grant Proposal Guidelines and Old Proposal Guidelines:

Modification	Old	New
New opportunity for assessment applicants – Coalition Assessments	No Assessment Coalition Opportunity.	An Assessment Coalition is comprised of three or more eligible entities. The lead coalition member submits a Community-wide Assessment grant proposal on behalf of itself and the other members. The coalition may request up to $1 million to work on a minimum of five hazardous substance and/or petroleum sites. Coalition members are not eligible to apply for individual Community-wide or Site-specific Assessment grants in the year they apply as part of a coalition. Examples of how Assessment Coalitions are designed to work are presented elsewhere in the fact sheet.
Streamlined guidelines a. Reduced complex terminology b. Single proposal for community-wide assessment c. Separate guidance documents for each grant type d. Reorganized ranking criteria sections e. Reduction in legal opinions (RLF grants only) f. Inclusion of a proposal content checklist	a. Complex, legal language in various sections of the grant proposals. b. Two separate community-wide assessment proposals required for hazardous and petroleum funding. c. Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup grant proposal guidance consolidated into one document. d. Ten separate criteria sections used in proposal evaluations. e. Two legal opinions required when submitting RLF grant proposals. f. Proposal content checklist not included in the grant proposal guidelines.	a. Reduced "legalese" to increase accessibility and readability. b. Hazardous and petroleum funding requests combined into one community-wide assessment proposal. c. Issued separate proposal guidance for Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup grants. d. Four concise criteria sections to reduce redundancy and focus on project implementation. e. One legal opinion required when submitting RLF grant proposals. f. Proposal content checklist is now included at the end of threshold and ranking criteria of the proposal guidelines, enhancing its accessibility.

(continued)

Modification	Old	New
New proposal requirements to help ensure grantee success a. Environmental Assessment reports b. Community notification c. Narrative proposal limit d. Letters of support from community-based organizations	a. A Phase II environmental assessment report had to be complete or underway at the time a Cleanup Grant proposal was submitted. b. Applicants not required to include documentation of community notification with a proposal (i.e., provide the community with notice of its intent to apply for an EPA Brownfields grant). c. 18-page limit for narrative proposal (including two-page cover letter). d. Names and contact information for community-based organizations provided in grant proposals.	a. Phase II environmental assessment reports must be complete at the time a Cleanup Grant proposal is submitted. b. Cleanup applicants only must include documentation of community notification and response to comments when submitting an EPA Brownfields grant proposal. This eliminates the need for applicants to respond to several community notification questions in the grant proposal while clearly demonstrating that the requirement has been fulfilled. c. 18-page limit for narrative proposal (not including two-page cover letter). d. Letters of support from all community-based organizations identified in proposal must be included.
Community notification is a threshold criteria for cleanup grant applicants only	All applicants performed community notification prior to grant award.	For threshold eligibility, only cleanup grant applicants need to perform community notification prior to proposal submission. All applicants (including RLF & Assessment applicants) are required to implement community involvement plans once a grant is awarded. All applicants will still be evaluated on their plans for community involvement per required ranking criteria when submitting an EPA Brownfields grant proposal.

What are some examples of how Assessment Coalitions work?

Example #1

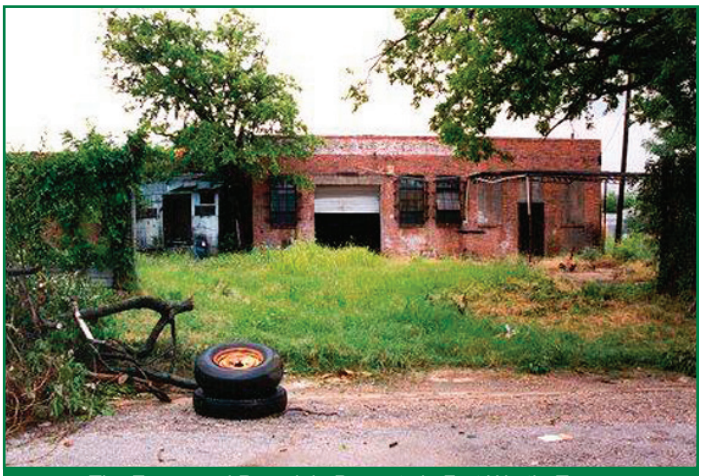
A state agency applies for EPA Brownfields funding together with several smaller communities as members of a coalition. The state assumes the role of "recipient" (i.e., the entity that would administer the grant, is accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of the funds, and acts as point of contact for other coalition members). These entities have formed a coalition to target numerous sites that have become blighted and/or under-utilized along an historic highway running through the communities.

Example #2

A coalition of metro municipalities, such as one large city and several surrounding cities/towns, could apply for $1 million. In a given year, one coalition member's site assessment needs may be relatively minimal compared to another member's, or the ability to assess a targeted site may be complicated by legal access issues. Priorities can be set each year to conduct assessments on the properties that have the most immediate need.

For additional information on the changes to the EPA Brownfields ARC Grant Guidelines, or to apply for an EPA Brownfields Grant, please visit:

www.epa.gov/brownfields/applicat.htm



The Evans and Rosedale Property in Fort Worth, Texas, before revitalization (above) and after (below).