

Getting Started on Your FY15 Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grant Proposal

EPA's [Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization](#) (OBLR) is planning to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) in summer 2014 for the EPA Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) Brownfields Area-Wide Planning (BF AWP) grant program. From the date the RFP is released via www.grants.gov, applicants will have approximately 60 days to prepare and submit their proposal to EPA.

Potential applicants can get a head start with proposal preparation by familiarizing themselves with the information below, discussing possible projects with local partners and stakeholders, pulling together important information, and working with their local Brownfields contacts to resolve any questions about brownfields site eligibility.

EPA hopes this information will help applicants prepare a thorough, well-organized, and timely proposal.

GENERAL

- **Review the RFP and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from the FY13 BF AWP competition** - While the FY15 RFP will differ from the last RFP in FY13, the FY13 RFP will give applicants a good idea of the goals and structure of the BF AWP grant program.
 - Changes to the FY15 RFP are intended to strengthen, streamline, and clarify the RFP language.
 - The [FY13 RFP and FAQs](#) can be found at http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/areawide_grants.htm, at the bottom of the webpage under "Reference."
- **Key program elements to consider when reviewing the FY13 RFP and FAQs:**
 - The core part of an applicant's proposed BF AWP project needs to include community involvement and research activities that will enable them to develop an area-wide plan for brownfields within a designated project area, and include specific strategies that will help with implementation of the plan. The FY13 RFP provides examples of the types of activities applicants may consider for their project.
 - Applicants should review eligible and ineligible uses of grant funds. Note that the proposed activities need to be consistent with research, technical assistance and/or training activities, as per EPA's statutory authority for awarding BF AWP grants. EPA's statutory authority is under §104(k)(6) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).
 - An applicant's proposed BF AWP project must focus around one or more catalyst, high priority brownfield site(s). Understand how EPA describes a catalyst, high priority brownfield site for the purposes of the BF AWP grant program by reviewing this section of the FY13 RFP.
 - Applicants should start thinking about how their proposed BF AWP project supports sustainable and equitable development outcomes and promotes the [six HUD-DOT-](#)

[EPA Livability Principles](#) developed under the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

- **Gather project partners and engage the community.** The BF AWP grant program promotes inclusive, long-term engagement of community stakeholders and recognizes that strong partnerships are instrumental to developing a well-supported brownfields revitalization plan that will be implemented over time. Key local organizations, regional partners and representatives from a broad spectrum of the community should already be working together to support various revitalization efforts in the project area. Applicants should be prepared to share how they are already collaborating, how they will strengthen these efforts through the proposed BF AWP project, and the role of each partner in the project. Applicants should notify partners and community supporters that they will want them to provide letters of commitment to include with the grant proposal.
- **Develop a grant proposal framework/outline.** Applicants should develop a framework or outline for the grant proposal to help them write a clear and well-organized narrative. Each applicant should think about the situation that the community wants to convey, and begin gathering the information needed in order to clearly explain the community situation and tasks/activities for the proposed BF AWP project.
- **Check out the Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) Program for more information.** The EPA's [TAB Program](#) provides technical assistance to communities and other stakeholders on brownfields issues with the goal of increasing the community's understanding and involvement in brownfield cleanup and revitalization, and helping to move brownfields sites forward toward cleanup and reuse. Applicants who have questions about brownfields can contact brownfields TAB grantees ([Kansas State University \(KSU\)](#), [Center for Creative Land Recycling \(CCLR\)](#) and [New Jersey Institute of Technology \(NJIT\)](#)) to request assistance in developing or refining their BF AWP project approach or in preparing their proposal.

THRESHOLD CRITERIA

EPA expects the FY15 RFP will contain the following five threshold criteria:

- **Applicant Eligibility.** Each applicant should refer to the list in the FY13 RFP of who can apply for the BF AWP grant program. If necessary, an applicant should begin to gather the necessary information to document their applicant eligibility status. If an eligibility question arises, contact the EPA Brownfields regional staff; a list of the Brownfield regional staff for each region can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/regcntct.htm>. Note: EPA currently anticipates one major eligibility change for the FY15 RFP. Previous recipients of a BF AWP grant (during the FY10 or FY13 grant cycle) are not eligible to apply for the FY15 BF AWP grant.
- **Location of BF AWP project area.** Applicants should be prepared to define geographic boundaries of the BF AWP project area. As in previous BF AWP grant competitions, the BF AWP activities must focus on a specific project area such as a city block or neighborhood,

district (e.g., downtown, arts or shopping retail/mixed-use district), local commercial or industrial corridor, community waterfront, etc. This grant funding is not for comprehensive planning, city-wide or regional planning activities.

- **Identify one catalyst, high priority brownfield site within the BF AWP project area around which your project will focus.** To meet this threshold criterion, an applicant must identify one catalyst, high priority brownfield site in their proposal. This site must meet the [definition of a “brownfield site” per CERCLA §101\(39\)](#). The applicant will also be required to identify the type of contamination or potential contamination (e.g., hazardous substances or petroleum) at the site. If the site is contaminated with petroleum, the applicant should request state determination for petroleum site eligibility. Non-tribal applicants must provide the information required for a petroleum site eligibility determination to their state, so the state can make the necessary determination on petroleum site eligibility. Applicants should discuss any site eligibility questions with the EPA Brownfields regional staff contact early on.
- **Ineligible activities.** Applicants should become familiar with activities listed as ineligible uses of BF AWP grant funds. The portion of any proposal that includes ineligible activities will be considered ineligible for funding.
- **Letter of commitment to the project.** To meet this threshold criterion, one letter of commitment to the project must be attached to and submitted with the applicant’s grant proposal. If the applicant’s organization is a government or quasi-governmental entity, the letter of commitment must be from a relevant nonprofit organization. If the applicant’s organization is a nonprofit entity, the letter of commitment must be from a relevant government entity. Applicants should work on getting this letter of commitment early to ensure they meet this threshold criterion.

EPA hopes that this information will help applicants be more prepared when the RFP for the FY15 BF AWP grant program is released. If you have questions, please contact Aimee Storm (EPA OBLR) at storm.aimee@epa.gov.