

On November 10th, 2015, EPA Office of Brownfields & Land Revitalization held a webinar to assist applicants with preparing Assessment, RLF and Cleanup grant proposals. All questions proposed by participants were responded to by an EPA representative. The recorded webinar is available at <http://epawebconferencing.acms.com/p2vibf6p6fu/>. If you have additional questions, please contact your Regional Brownfields Contact list in Section VII of the Guidelines.

GENERAL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Is there a plan in place for submitting the grants if grants.gov is out of commission for several days?

A: We encourage you to register early. If or when that plan is available, we will send it out. But please register early.

Q: TAB EZ applies only to Assessment and Cleanup though, right?

A: Correct- KSU says it's only for Assessment and Cleanups but they say they will review RLF grants.

Q: How can I find EPA Brownfields Grant Writers in Oregon and Washington?

A: Many environmental consultants will offer their services for free. Without the expectation that they will become the qualified environmental professional if the applicant receives a grant. Perhaps the state environmental department has a list of environmental professionals. We do not keep a list of grant writers. However, if you know of an existing grantee, they may have leads for you. Please keep in mind that if awarded, you cannot use any of the grant funds to pay for a proposal writer.

If you're in OR/WA/AK/ID, consider calling CCLR (EPA TAB grantee) for assistance in reviewing your application - Ignacio Dayrit - ignacio.dayrit@cclr.org- Phone Number: 415.398.1080 x107 -<http://www.cclr.org/technical-assistance>

Q: Do you recommend retaining a professional grant writer? Do you find that most of your winning applications were completed by the community or by a grant writer?

A: There are grant writing tools available, such as TAB-EZ, grant writing workshops, etc. Grant writing costs are not eligible for reimbursement under the grant. But, EPA is not privy to whether a grant proposal is written by a professional grant writer.

Q: Okay so let's talk about maps for a moment. You earlier said..."no maps". I have had EPA representatives tell me that maps can be beneficial providing they are greyscale and can be

legible when reproduced multiple times? If I include a map meeting the aforesaid criteria, will I get dinged on points for doing so?

A: We don't not want maps included in your proposal. We will not review any maps. Old guidelines from previous years which allowed. Maps are no longer applicable. Current guidelines say no maps but if one happens to be in your ABCA that is attached to the cleanup proposals then we will look at your map.

Q: For long and repeated terms, is it okay to use abbreviations and acronyms after they have been defined the first time they are used?

A: That's okay.

Q: If a community has received cleanup funds, the money has been spent, all of the reports are up to date, but the final cleanup letters will be issued from the state once all of the development is done, will this affect an assessment grant app?

A: Be sure you address the final cleanup letters are forthcoming.

Q: Are all the Tables that you are suggesting we use in the RFP packages?

A: All of the demographic and budget tables are in the RFPs.

Q: It appears that Ports are eligible coalition members for brownfields assessment grants based on the answer to Question 12 in the FAQ document. Please confirm this if this is correct and confirm if EPA requires eligibility documentation for Port agencies. Thank you.

A: See Section III.A of the guidelines ("Who Can Apply"). If the Port Authority falls into one of those categories (such as a government entity established by State legislature), then they would be eligible to apply. You may need to verify their eligibility by showing/attaching the statute that establishes that organization. See the bottom of page 19/top of page 20 of the guidelines--applicants who are not a city/county/state/tribe must attach documentation of their eligibility.

Q: The city received a Phase I then 7 1/2 months later acquired an old railroad property--can we be eligible for Cleanup funds

A: Please review the AAI requirements as certain aspects of the Phase I needs be updated within 6 months acquisition.

Q: In Port Heiden we have assessed sites that had POLs in the soil that just eroded into our ocean because we couldn't get "clean up funds" procured in time; Meshik Village is still eroding today and our community is absorbing the cost and labor to demobilize the old site

before the road disappears -its hard out here in the small villages 80 people can only do so much.

A: We understand and appreciate your concern. EPA encourages small and rural communities to apply for grant funding. Please contact the EPA Region X office for additional assistance.

Q: When will Region IX have a workshop? Who is the region 9 contact?

A: Jose Garcia, Noemi Emeric-Ford are both Region 9 contacts. Use lastname.firstname@epa.gov. You can also go to Region 9's website.

Q: Who is representative contact for Region IV?

A: Barbara Alfano, alfano.barbara@epa.gov

Q: Will the slides be emailed to the participants? I am not able to download them.

A: Please email me and I will send you the slides minor-gordon.jerry@epa.gov

THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

Q: Cleanup threshold - in what instances is ownership, other than fee simple title, eligible? Can they contact the regional office in these cases?

A: If you have site-specific eligibility questions, please contact your Regional EPA Office early. They will be happy to help. But for cleanup grants, you be able to show that you are the sole owner of the site.

Q: Question about determination - if tribal, application does NOT need state letter?

A: Correct, the tribe does NOT need to obtain a state letter.

Q: Does the applicant need to have ownership of the site for Assessment grants?

A: The answer is no.

Q: Would a match on the assessment better your chances? Is there an advantage to providing a voluntary cost-share match for an assessment grant?

A: There is not match required for Assessment Grants. Having a match for assessment does not make your proposal stronger. You can discuss additional committed funding in the leveraging criterion.

Q: Is a coalition necessary to make application for RLF?

A: No, applicants can apply as individual entities.

Q: December 4th meeting deadline for cleanup. Does that apply to Community- Wide Assessment?

A: The answer is no. It only applies to cleanup grants.

Q: Do Restoration Advisory Board community meetings count as cleanup the community notification requirement? Or is the direction specifically that applicants MUST publish an ad?

A: Yes, advisory boards count and can be used as community meetings as long as you state the brownfield proposal is discussed. If it's a cleanup or RLF proposal, be sure your community members have an opportunity to comment on the proposal and how they will be engaged in the BF process throughout the project period.

Q: Where do we generate an ABCA?

A: you can have a contractor develop the ABCA or you can use the template. The template for ABCA is on the OBLR website.

Q: I have not had that chance to read ABCA description yet. Might that be the same as a Remedial Action Workplan?

A: Possibly, but an ABCA has some clear components that will be necessary for the public meeting required for applying for a cleanup grant.

Q: We also tried doing an ABCA but it has strict procedure to follow through like public input prior to clean up and demonstrate your public notification which is like during City and Village meetings or informal public meetings which is a weird way of communication for native people in Alaska.

A: The method of notification should be the accepted practices of notifying the community. Please contact either Robert or Veronica if you are planning to assist an eligible entity in applying for a competitive grant.

Q: Faustina: What the reason for Superfund sites/CERLIS listing not being eligible?

A: it is a limitation of the brownfield statute. It is Sites on the NPL that are not eligible. CERCLIS sites is a bigger universe of sites, not all are on the NPL. Talk with your regional coordinator.

Q: Can we use an existing deliberative body to provide the public engagement along with publicizing the project and process and providing opportunity to comment?

A: Yes, you can use an existing meeting for your community meeting. However you must also publish an ad to place the community on notice that you're holding the meeting and to let them know where they can view a copy of the proposal and ABCA.

Q: For a petroleum cleanup grant, what affect would it have if the applicant is looking to leverage state UST trustfund monies with the EPA brownfields cleanup grant. For example, if the UST funds are used to conduct soil and groundwater remediation and the EPA funds are used to conduct building demolition and tank removal activities...are these activities eligible?

A: The primary factor for petroleum sites is that it is low-risk so have you gotten confirmation from the state on that? Federal UST funds to states can't be used on anything but hi-risk sites so if you know of other state funding that may be leveraged on the site, then that would be okay. Talk with the state and give me a call.

Q: Can State UST funds be used on low priority sites?

A: UST funds can be used on low priority sites. They just generally don't have enough to get to that part of the list. Also, remember UST eligibility is also based on history of site ownership, so you'll want to make sure your phase I includes that. It depends on the state. No for some Region 4 states.

Q: What constitutes a "site"? Is a "site" one lot? Can apply for funds for clean up for up to three "sites." Can that be, say, three lots on the same block and that are all part of the same project?

A: We allow the applicant to define your "site". I encourage you to contact your regional brownfield contact since they will evaluate your threshold response. A single applicant can apply for up to 3 cleanup grants during a competitive cycle. As Jerry said, we encourage you to contact your Regional EPA office for more specific discussion concerning the site(s).

COMMUNITY NEED CRITERION

Q: Getting health data for communities under 50,000 in pop. is hard. Any suggestions?

A: State and county health departments and then try to focus on the contaminants and what the health risks might be. Qualify the lack of resource info in the narrative if necessary.

PROJECT/PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND FEASIBILITY FOR SUCCESS CRITERION

Q: If a state is applying as part of a coalition, does the state need to talk about examples of sites in each the jurisdiction of each member in the coalition? For example, if a state has a coalition with several counties or regional planning coalitions, does the state application need to include a site in each of these areas?

A: As a coalition throughout the proposal there should be some discussion of the potential sites in each of the target areas of the coalition.

Q: Do properties identified in the RLF application have to be sites that take out a loan if we are awarded or are they sample properties that might use the program?

A: The properties identified in the RLF are just a snapshot in time, they may turnout to be someone that needs a loan or a subgrant.

Q: Does a QAPP have to be in place prior to submitting an assessment grant application?

A: No, a QAPP does not have to be in place for an assessment proposal.

Q: Do site access agreements have to be in place for the possible brownfields properties identified in the grant proposal?

A: Site access agreements have to be in place before literally going on site, (sampling, etc.) but are not needed before proposals are submitted.

Q: What are examples of Other Costs? Do training and registration for RLF conferences go into travel?

A: Examples of 'other fees' include legal fees, fees for ads. You can include registration fees under "other," but I've also seen successful applicant include just a "travel" line item.

Q: Where do the outcomes and output go in the narrative? There are several sections that ask for them. Seems redundant.

A: The tracking of outputs and outcomes should be addressed under Project Description. We also request information on outcomes in the Project Benefits section - yes it is redundant!!

Q: Our redevelopment commitment documentation is expected to be completed three days before the application is due. If we cannot produce the documentation at the time of submission, but that commitments have been made in front of the necessary committees and are on the way to city council, how much will it hurt our application to describe the

commitment without documentation? Can we describe the commitment and not include the documentation.

A: If you do not have the actual document, try to explain that as best as possible in your narrative.

Q: Does a comprehensive community wide brownfield inventory have to be in place prior to submitting an assessment grant application?

A: An inventory is an eligible expense, however proposals that allocate the majority of the funding toward site assessment work will be reviewed more favorably. Applicants that are more successful can demonstrate previous activities and that Brownfields funding is just a small piece of the pie - the further along you are the better.

Q: Do we have to procure a consultant for an awarded cleanup grant project? We'd like to sole source and not use grant funds to pay them for cleanup oversight services.

A: You have to do a competitive bid for the cleanup contractor.

Q: Can you use cleanup grant funds to pay staff salaries?

A: Yes, grant funds can be allocated towards personnel. Please keep in mind that budgets in which the majority of funds will be allocated towards direct cleanup activities will be reviewed more favorably.

Q: Slide 50 - "Quantify any in-kind support" - does this pertain to Assessment Grants? I know match is not required - should we still identify "in-kind"?

A: If (and only if) additionally services are necessary to complete the tasks discussed in your Task Description response, then you should discuss and quantify in-kind support. The discussion should be included in the Task Description and NOT included in the budget table.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS CRITERION

Q: Lack of partnerships has been a problem in our area, we hope to use this effort to build partnerships. Are we incorrect to try for this funding?

A: Keep building those partnerships! And more importantly, your partners should be RELEVANT to your proposed project.

PROJECT/PROGRAM BENEFITS CRITERION

Q: Do employment opportunities have to be related to environmental work? Can it be hiring associated with site redevelopment or new jobs created after redevelopment (e.g. new grocery store or new dentist office)?

A: Employment opportunities certainly can be from redevelopment after cleanup.

PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE CRITERION

Q: If past grantees have had to get time extensions due to economic development projects "ripening" over time, should we talk about this? Could this negatively impact an application?

A: Time extensions do not have a negative impact on proposal selection; provided there was an acceptable reason the grant was extended.

SITE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Please direct site-specific questions to the Regional Brownfields Contact listed in Section VII of the Guidelines.

Q: My brownfield site has a bridge on it that has asbestos in it. Would we be able to use the assessment grant to fund studies and assessments to ascertain how much asbestos is in the bridge? Also, if we can do that, how much should I talk about the history and background of the bridge vs the brownfield site overall on the application?

A: Please call Tom Stolle to discuss your specific site. His number is 215-814-3129.