



# **FY2017 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 2016 (updated)**

## 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](http://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*

Submit your complete proposal package through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) no later than December 22, 2016 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance, with original signature (no page limit (see Section IV.C.1.))	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cover Letter (2-page limit) (see Section IV.C.2.)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cover Letter Attachments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regional Priorities Form (located in Appendix 3), if applicable (see Section IV.C.2.g.)</li> <li>○ Other Factors Checklist (located in Appendix 3), if applicable (see Section IV.C.2.g.)</li> <li>○ Letter from the state or tribal environmental authority (see Section IV.C.2.h.)</li> </ul>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Narrative Proposal, which includes the responses to ranking criteria (15-page limit) (see Section IV.C.3.)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrative Proposal Attachments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Documentation indicating committed firm leveraged resources, if applicable (see Section IV.C.3.2.c.)</li> <li>○ Letters of commitment from all community organizations identified in the <i>Partnerships with Community Organizations</i> ranking criterion (see Section IV.C.3.3.c.ii.)</li> </ul>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentation of all applicable threshold criteria (see Section III.B.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Documentation of applicant eligibility if other than city, county, state, or tribe (see Section III.B.1.)</li> <li>○ Letters of commitment from assessment coalition members, if applicable (see Section III.B.1.)</li> <li>○ Property-Specific Determination request, if applicable (see Section III.C.5.)</li> <li>○ Petroleum eligibility determination information, if applicable (see Section III.C.6.(b))</li> <li>○ Justification for requested waiver of the \$200,000 limit for a Site-specific Assessment, if applicable (see Section 1.A.2.)</li> </ul>	

## **REQUIRED INFORMATION AND THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

Your responses to these items are required and must be included as an attachment to your proposal.

### **I. DATA UNIVERSAL NUMBER SYSTEM (DUNS) VERIFICATION**

(See Section III.B., *Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants*, in the Assessment Guidelines.)

- Did you ensure the DUNS number listed on the application is the correct DUNS number for the applicant's organization? *Note, if the correct DUNS number is not included on the application, the application may be deemed ineligible.*

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### **2. LETTER FROM THE STATE OR TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY**

(See Section IV.C.2.h., *Letter From the State or Tribal Environmental Authority*, in the Assessment Guidelines.)

- 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 assessment grant proposal?

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### **3. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

(See Section III.B., *Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants*, in the Assessment Guidelines.)

- 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?

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### **4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

(See Section III.B., *Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants*, in the Assessment Guidelines.)

- 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?

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## **SITE-SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ONLY:**

### **5. SITE ELIGIBILITY AND PROPERTY OWNERSHIP ELIGIBILITY**

(Refer to Section III.C., *Additional Threshold Criteria for Site-Specific Proposals Only*, in the Assessment Guidelines.)

#### *I. Basic Site Information*

- Did you identify the following:
  - name of the site;
  - address of the site, including zip code; and
  - current owner of the site?

## 2. Status and History of Contamination at the Site

- Did you identify the following:
  - whether the site is contaminated by petroleum or hazardous substances;
  - 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?

## 3. Brownfields Site Definition

- Did you affirm that the site is:
  - not listed, or proposed for listing, on the National Priorities List;
  - 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
  - not subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the United States government?

## 4. 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?

## 5. Sites Requiring a Property-Specific Determination

- Did you affirm that your site does not require a property-specific determination?
- Alternatively, if your site requires a property-specific determination, did you attach the information requested in the Brownfields FAQs? (See Appendix I, Section I.5.)

## 6. Site Eligibility and Property Ownership Eligibility

### (a) Hazardous Substance Sites

#### (1) 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?
- Did you explain why you are not potentially liable?

#### (2) Information on Liability and Defenses/Protections

##### 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?

Applicant Owns or Will Own the Site During the Performance of the Grant:

a. 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?

b. 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?

c. 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:
  - types of site assessments performed, dates of each assessment, and entity for which they were performed;
  - who performed the AAI investigation or Phase I environmental site assessments and identify his/her qualifications; and
  - affirming that you conducted the appropriate updates in the original assessment (if conducted more than 180 days prior to the date you acquired the property) in order to take advantage of the BFPP, innocent landowner, or contiguous property owner provision.

d. 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:
  - names of all current and prior users during the time of your ownership;
  - dates of all uses;
  - details of each use, including the rights or other reason pursuant to which the use was claimed or taken; and
  - your relationship to the current and prior users?

e. 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:
  - stop any continuing releases;

- prevent any threatened future release; and
- 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?

**(b) Property Ownership Eligibility – Petroleum Sites**

(Note: Disregard this item if you do not have a petroleum site.)

*(1) Information Required for a Petroleum Site Eligibility Determination*

*a. Current and Immediate Past Owners*

- Did you identify current and immediate past owners of the site?

*b. Acquisition of Site*

- Did you identify when and by what method the current owner acquired the property?

*c. 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?

*d. 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?

*e. 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?

*f. Judgments, Orders, or Third Party Suits*

- Did you provide information that no responsible party is identified for the site?

*g. Subject to RCRA*

- Did you identify whether the site is subject to any order under section 9003(h) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act?

*h. 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 PROPOSAL/RANKING CRITERIA**

(See Section IV.C.3., *The Narrative Proposal/Ranking Criteria*, in the Assessment Guidelines.)

### **I. COMMUNITY NEED**

- Assessment 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?

#### **I.a. Target Area and Brownfields**

##### *I.a.i. Community and Target Area Descriptions*

- 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 a specific area where you plan to perform assessment activities; such as a neighborhood, district, corridor, census tract or other locality?

##### *I.a.ii. Demographic Information and Indicators of Need*

- Did you provide and compare census-based demographic data as requests in the table?
- Did you provide a compelling basis/explanation for why you selected the target area?
- Did you clearly cite the sources of your data?

##### *I.a.iii. Brownfields and Their Impacts*

- Did you describe your brownfields in your target area?
- Did you highlight sites that are a priority?
- Specifically, did you provide information on the:
  - brownfields’ proximity to residents in the target area?
  - 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?

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#### **I.b. Welfare, Environmental, and Public Health Impacts**

##### *I.b.i. Welfare Impacts*

- Did you discuss the welfare issues by the target area?

*I.b.ii. Cumulative Environmental Issues*

- In addition to the presence of brownfields sites, did you provide a summary of the various cumulative environmental issues (e.g. siting of industry, power plants, incinerators, landfills, congested highways, or other sources of air, water and land pollution) or environmental justice concerns (such as overburdening from existing sources of pollution) which may be present?

*I.b.iii. Cumulative Public Health Impacts*

- Did you discuss the public health impacts from cumulative sources and the brownfields sites?
  - Did you provide information on the threats to sensitive populations potentially who are potentially subject to environmental exposures, including from brownfields?
  - Did you include citations for all data?
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**I.c. Financial Need**

*I.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?
- Did you explain how small population, low income or other factors in the target area prevent you from funding this work?
- 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?

*I.c.ii. Economic Effects of Brownfields*

- Did you discuss the key economic effects of the brownfields on the target area (e.g. reduced tax base, lost jobs and business opportunities, depressed property values, ongoing costs to secure vacant properties, etc.)?
  - To the extent possible, did you include quantitative estimates and statistics?
  - Did you clearly cite all data sources?
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**2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND FEASIBILITY OF SUCCESS**

**2.a. Project Description, Timing and Implementation**

*2.a.i. Project Description and Alignment with Revitalization Plans*

- Did you describe the project that will be funded under this grant?
- Did you describe how the project aligns with the target area's land use and revitalization plans?
- Did you discuss how you will incorporate equitable development practices or sustainable practices, such as the HUD-DOT-EPA Livability Principles?
- Did you describe the redevelopment strategy, or projected redevelopment, for the property(ies) the will be assessed?
- Did you describe how you will make use of existing infrastructure?



### 2.a.ii. Timing and Implementation

- Did you describe the timing and implementation of the key activities to ensure that all grant funding will be expended within three years?
  - Did you describe who will be responsible for implementing and completing the activities?
  - Specifically, did you discuss the timing and implementation of:
    - (a) Contractor procurement (including the internal steps that must be taken within your organization and approvals from departments or elected officials)?
    - (b) For **Community-wide proposals** and **Assessment Coalition proposals**, the development of site inventory or site identification process, and site prioritization and selection process?  
For **Assessment Coalition proposals**, the proposed governance structure among your coalition partners which will be implemented to prioritize and select sites to assess.  
For **Site-specific proposals**, the existing conditions of the property you plan to assess with this funding.
    - (c) Obtaining and securing site access?
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### 2.b. Task Descriptions 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/target community?*

#### 2.b.i. Task Descriptions

- Did you list the tasks required to implement the proposed project?
- Did you distinguish between the work you and your contractor will be performing?
- Did you describe the grant-funded work that will take place under each task?
- If any additional work or services are necessary, did you discuss how those tasks will be funded?
- Did you describe and enumerate specific outputs from the project?
- Did you provide a cost estimate for each grant-funded task?
- Did you provide for how each line item cost estimate was developed under each budget category shown in the budget table?

- Where appropriate, did you present unit costs and quantify work products (e.g., Contractual Costs: Conduct Phase I assessments on five sites at a cost of \$2,500 each for a total of \$12,500; Personnel Costs: \$45/hr × 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?
- Community-wide applicants – Are the majority of the funds allocated towards assessment related field activities?
- Site-specific applicants – did you demonstrate that the task descriptions and budget justify the need for requested grant funds?
- Assessment 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?
  - Do all totals add up correctly?
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#### 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) you expect to utilize to the achieve assessment, cleanup, and/or redevelopment needs of brownfields sites?
  - Did you attach copies of letter or documentation that substantiate firm commitments 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)?
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### 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. Engaging the Community

##### 3.a.i. Community Involvement Plan

- Did you discuss your plan for involving the community in the target area 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 community members?
- Did you explain how the identified communication plans are appropriate and effective for the community(ies) in the target area(s)?

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#### 3.b. Partnerships with Government Agencies

##### 3.b.i. Local/State/Tribal Environmental Authority

- Did you identify and provide information on the agency which runs the relevant brownfields, voluntary or another similar cleanup program at the local/state/tribal level (i.e., the environmental agency and/or other health agency)?
- Did you describe 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 describe the role the other relevant governmental agencies will play to ensure your brownfields project is successful?
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### 3.c. Partnerships with Community Organizations

#### 3.c.i. Community Organization Description & Role

- Do the organizations identified meet the Brownfields Program's definition of a Community Organization (CO)?
- Are the COs relevant to your proposed project?
- Did you include a brief description of each CO?
- Did you discuss each COs role in and commitment to the planning and implementation of your project?
- If COs do not exist in your area, did you state that and discuss how the community is engaged and will continue to be involved in your 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 provide documentation to demonstrate how the community is engaged and will continue to be involved in your project?
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### 3.d. Partnerships with Workforce Development Programs

- Did you describe 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?
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## 4. PROJECT BENEFITS

### 4.a. Welfare, Environmental, and Public Health Benefits

- Did you describe the future welfare benefits anticipated from this grant (or broader project)?
  - Did you describe the future environmental benefits anticipated from this grant (or broader project)?
  - Did you describe the future public health benefits anticipated from this grant (or broader project)?
  - Did you describe how these benefits will address the welfare, environmental, and public health challenges and sensitive populations discussed in the Community Need section?
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### 4.b. Economic and Community Benefits

- Did you discuss potential specific outcomes and the economic benefits, non-economic benefits, and other community benefits which may be achieved through the redevelopment of sites under this grant?

- Are the outcomes and benefits relative to the challenges discussed in the Community Need section?
  - When possible, did you provide quantitative estimates of the potential outcomes and benefits?
  - Did you explain how these benefits align with community revitalization plans?
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## 5. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

### 5.a. 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?
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### 5.b. 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?
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### 5.c. Measuring Environmental Results: Anticipated Outputs/Outcomes

- Did you discuss how you plan to track, measure and evaluate your progress in achieving project outcomes, outputs, and project results?
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### 5.d. Past Performance and Accomplishments

**\*Respond to the correct category\*** (Note: Refer to Section IV.C.3.5.d. when responding to this section.)

#### 5.d.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? (No more than five of your most recent grants.)

##### *5.d.i.1. 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 the Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) at the time of this proposal submission? And if not, did you explain why?

##### *5.d.i.2. Compliance with Grant Requirements*

- Did you discuss your compliance with the:
  - work plan,

- schedule, and
- terms and conditions?
- Did you explain the progress you have made, or are making, towards achieving the expected results of the grants in a timely manner?
- If you have not made progress, did you discuss what corrective measures you took, or are taking, and how the corrective measures were effective, documented and communicated?
- Did you discuss your history of timely and acceptable quarterly performance and grant deliverables, as well as, ongoing ACRES reporting?
- Did you explain your need for additional funding?
- For all open EPA Brownfields grant(s), did you indicate:
  - the grant period (start and end date),
  - if there are funds remaining, and
  - the plan to expend funds by the end of the grant period?
- For all closed EPA Brownfields grant(s), did you indicate:
  - if there were funds remaining at the time of closure,
  - the amount of remaining funds, and
  - a brief explanation of why the funds were not expended?

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**5.d.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 five of your most recent grants?

***5.d.ii.1. 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 specific outputs and outcomes) and specific measures of success?

***5.d.ii.2. Compliance with Grant Requirements***

- Did you discuss your compliance with the:
  - work plan,
  - schedule, and
  - terms and conditions?
- Did you explain the progress you have made, or are making, towards achieving the expected results of the grants in a timely manner?
- If you have not made progress, did you discuss what corrective measures you took, or are taking, and how the corrective measures were effective, documented and communicated?

- Did you discuss your history of timely and acceptable reporting, as required by the awarding agency/organization?
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5.d.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 assistance agreement (grant)?
-