

## Getting Started on Your FY17 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 late spring 2016 for the EPA Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) Brownfields Area-Wide Planning (BF AWP) grant program. The RFP will be released via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). From the date the RFP is released, applicants will have approximately 60 days to prepare and submit their proposal. All proposals must be submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

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 EPA Regional Brownfields Program contact to resolve any questions about brownfields site eligibility.

EPA hopes this information will help applicants prepare a thorough, well-organized, and timely proposal submission. If you have questions, please contact your [EPA Regional Brownfields staff](#) or [Aimee Storm](#) (OBLR's lead for the BF AWP grant program).

### General Suggestions

- **Learn how to submit a proposal via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).** All proposals must be submitted via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).
  - Applicants should obtain their organization's DUNS number and register in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) now. If an applicant is already registered in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov), the applicant must make sure the account is active.
  - Review the [applicant tools & tips](#) on the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website
  - Late proposal submissions will be rejected.
  
- **Review the RFP and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from the FY15 BF AWP competition** While the FY17 RFP will differ in some ways from the previous RFP, the FY15 RFP will give applicants a solid understanding of the goals and structure of the BF AWP grant program.
  - Carefully review the [FY15 RFP and FAQs](#) (scroll to bottom of the webpage).
  - Changes and updates that EPA will make for the FY17 RFP are intended primarily to clarify the RFP and improve consistency amongst threshold and evaluation criteria.
  - For FY17, EPA anticipates to award approximately 20 BF AWP grants, funding up to \$200,000 per grant.
  
- **Key program elements to consider when reviewing the FY15 RFP and FAQs:**
  - The core of an applicant's proposed BF AWP project needs to include community involvement and research activities within a designated project area. The project area must include one or more brownfield sites.
    - An applicant's proposed BF AWP project must focus around one or more catalyst, high priority brownfield site(s). Review the FY15 RFP to understand how EPA describes a catalyst, high priority brownfield site for the purposes of the BF AWP grant program.
    - All activities funded under the BF AWP grant must lead to the development an area-wide plan for the brownfield(s) and include specific strategies for how to

- implement the plan. The FY15 RFP provides examples of the types of activities applicants may consider for their project.
- Applicants should be very familiar with eligible and ineligible uses of grant funds.
    - Every activity that an applicant proposes must be consistent with research and/or technical assistance activities.
    - EPA's statutory authority for awarding BF AWP grants falls under §104(k)(6) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), which authorizes EPA to conduct research and/or technical assistance activities related to brownfields.
  - 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 various community stakeholders because EPA recognizes that strong partnerships are instrumental to developing a well-supported plan for brownfields revitalization 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 their efforts through their proposed BF AWP project, and describe the role of each partner in the BF AWP project.
    - Applicants should notify project partners and other project supporters that they will need each of them to write a letter of commitment to include with the proposal when it is submitted via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Each letter of commitment should highlight the role of the partner/supporter who provided the letter within the proposed BF AWP project.
  - **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 prepare a clear description of their proposed BF AWP project and begin gathering the information needed in order to clearly explain the community situation and proposed tasks/activities.
  - **Check out OBLR's Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities (TAB) providers.** 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.

### Expected FY17 BF AWP Grant Program Threshold Criteria

EPA expects the FY17 BF AWP Grant Program RFP will include the following six threshold criteria:

1. **Applicant must be an eligible entity.** Applicants should refer to Section III in the FY15 RFP for a list of who can apply for the BF AWP grant program.
  - If necessary, an applicant should gather the necessary information to document their eligibility status. Contact the [EPA Brownfields regional staff](#) with any questions on eligibility.
  - Any previous recipient of a BF AWP grant is ineligible to apply, with the exception of POWER+ communities. *POWER+ (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce Economic Revitalization) communities have experienced a recently closed (2008 or later) or closing coal-fired power plant. A POWER+ applicant must propose an eligible catalyst, high priority brownfield site within the same BF AWP project area as a recently closed (2008 or later) or closing coal-fired power plant.*
2. **Applicant must identify a specific and eligible BF AWP project area.** Applicants should be able to define the 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 neighborhood, a district (e.g., downtown, commercial area, arts, etc), a local commercial corridor, a community waterfront or specific city block(s) that are affected by one or more brownfield sites. BF AWP grant funding is not for comprehensive planning, city-wide or regional planning activities.
3. **Applicant must identify one catalyst, high priority brownfield site within the BF AWP project area around which the BF AWP project will focus.** 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\(39\)](#).
  - Applicants should discuss any site eligibility questions with the EPA Brownfields regional staff contact as soon as possible and well before the proposal submission deadline.
  - The applicant will 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 needs to make a request to their state that the state make a determination for petroleum site eligibility. Non-tribal applicants must provide the information required for a petroleum site eligibility determination to their state. The request must be made early on, well before the proposal submission deadline.
4. **Ineligible activities.** If a proposal includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for consideration and possible funding.
5. **Letter of commitment to the project.** At least one letter of commitment to the BF AWP project must be 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 community-based organization (this may include an appropriate nonprofit). If the applicant’s organization is a nonprofit entity, the letter of commitment must be from a relevant government entity.
6. **Substantial compliance with proposal submission instructions and requirements.** An applicant’s proposal must be submitted via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) on-time and must substantially conform to the instructions, requirements, outline and content as stated in the FY17 RFP.