Navigating FY26 Brownfields Grants: Eligibility, Threshold Criteria, & Application Strategies

US EPA R9 Brownfields Programs
The Center for Creative Land Recycling

Housekeeping

Agenda
1. Timeline Changes
2. Grant Offerings
3. NOFO Changes
4. Eligibility
5. Application Package
6. EPA Tips

1. CCLR Intro
2. CCLR's Services
3. Tips from CCLR
4. Data Platforms
5. More Resources

Reminders
1. Zoom webinar - you will not be able to turn on mic or video
2. Put your questions in the Q&A box. We will answer questions at the end

Disclaimer

During open solicitation, **EPA** personnel may **review threshold eligibility criteria**, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. However, EPA personnel cannot meet with individual applicants to discuss draft applications, provide informal comments on draft applications, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to Narrative Criteria. **CCLR** personnel can **review and provide comments on draft applications**, including responses to the Narrative Criteria.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- ❏ EPA **does not** supply an AI-generated summary of this training.
- ❏ An AI-generated summary **may not correctly capture** the training topics.
- ❏ Any AI-generated summary you might receive via email is not from EPA.

Meet our Presenters!

Brooklyn James, Env. Eng.
Project Officer
US EPA San Francisco Office
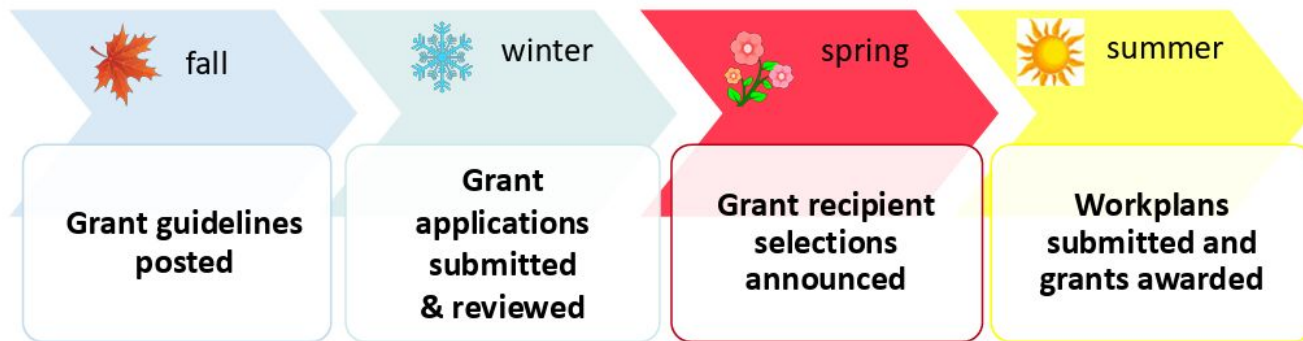
Devyn Rainwater
Program Manager, CCLR

Joelle Greenland, AICP
Sr. Planning Consultant, CCLR
Founder & Principal
Green Lands Consulting

Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR) "See Clear"

- National non-profit promoting the sustainable, equitable and responsible reuse of underutilized and environmentally impacted properties.
- Educate, advocate, assist and convene stakeholders to revitalize communities through land recycling.
- Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities provider R9 & R10

- Services are **FREE**
- Visioning & Planning
- Redevelopment process
- Environmental "Translations"
- Grant Writing Assistance & Reviews
- Grant Management & Reporting
- ACRES
- Webinars, workshops, online resources

Timeline Changes

fall — Grant guidelines posted

winter — Grant applications submitted & reviewed

spring — Grant recipient selections announced

summer — Workplans submitted and grants awarded

❑ **January 28, 2026: Application submission deadline**

❑ June 2026: Selections announced

❑ June – September 2026: Workplans and grant paperwork finalized

❑ September – October 2026: Grants awarded/funds become available

FY26 Brownfields Grant Offerings

Community Wide Assessment (CWA)

- Brownfields inventory, Phase I/II environmental site assessments, community engagement, cleanup/reuse planning. 4 year project period.
- **$500K**

CWA for States and Tribes (CWAGST)

- Brownfields inventory, Phase I/II environmental site assessments, community engagement, cleanup/reuse planning. 5 year project period.
- **$2M** – only available to States and Tribal Nations

Assessment Coalition (AC)

- Brownfields inventory, Phase I/II environmental site assessments, community engagement, cleanup/reuse planning. 4 year project period.
- **$1.5M** - one lead member, 2-4 non-lead members.

Cleanup

- Remediation, reuse planning, regulatory oversight fees. 4 year project period.
- **$500K** and **$4M**
- Applicant must be owner of the site, site must be fully characterized, applicant cannot be responsible party for contamination

Multipurpose (MP)

- At least one of each of the following:
  - Phase II environmental site assessment
  - Site cleanup
  - Overall revitalization plan/site specific reuse plan
- **$1M** up to 5 year project period.
- Target area may not include communities in distinctly different geographic areas.

FY26 Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, and Cleanup Grant Offerings

Grant Type	Maximum Project Period	Maximum Amount Per Grant	Estimated # of Awards	Total Per Grant Type	
				Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Funds	Regular Appropriated Funds
Multipurpose	5 years	$1,000,000	20	$20,000,000	
Assessment (Community-wide)	4 years	$500,000	70	$35,000,000	
Assessment (State/Tribal Level)	5 years	$2,000,000	18	$35,000,000	
Assessment Coalitions	4 years	$1,500,000	39		$58,700,000
Cleanup	4 years	$500,000	10	$5,000,000	
Cleanup	4 years	$4,000,000	26	$102,000,000	
			183	$197,000,000	$58,700,000
				$255,700,000	

NO COST SHARE

NOFO Changes - FY26 Assessment Coalition

Limitations on entities eligible to lead an assessment coalition grant have been removed.

Additions to the threshold criteria will require:

❏ Target areas must be identified for each coalition member, may not overlap, and must be in **at least three distinct municipalities or jurisdictions** (e.g., town, city, or Tribe)

❏ Lead member must have **legal authority to expend grant funds on behalf of the non-lead members** to conduct the proposed activities. If the lead member's geographic boundary does not encompass the non-lead members' geographic boundaries, the lead member must identify the relevant law(s), ordinance(s), or other documentation to demonstrate their legal authority to expend grant funds outside of their geographic boundary.

NOFO Changes - FY26 Cleanup Grant

Updates were made to the Site Characterization Threshold Criterion:

❏ For sites eligible to be enrolled in a voluntary response program, if additional assessment is needed to sufficiently characterize the site(s) for the remediation work to begin, the applicant should **include a statement** to that effect and affirm that there will be a **sufficient level of site characterization** from the environmental site assessment performed by **June 15, 2026**.

❏ See the Types of Funding webpage for more information.

Reminder - Cleanup grant site eligibility must be based on info provided in the application. Reviewers will not be able to use any outside sources to determine eligibility.

Applicant Eligibility

City, county, township, school district, local public authority, councils of government, special district

LLCs who's managing or sole members are non-profits 501c3.

| General Purpose Units of Local Gov. | Tribes | Non-profits 501c3 | States |

148 federally recognized Tribes in R9!

DTSC, ADEQ, NDEP, other 'state' as defined by CERCLA
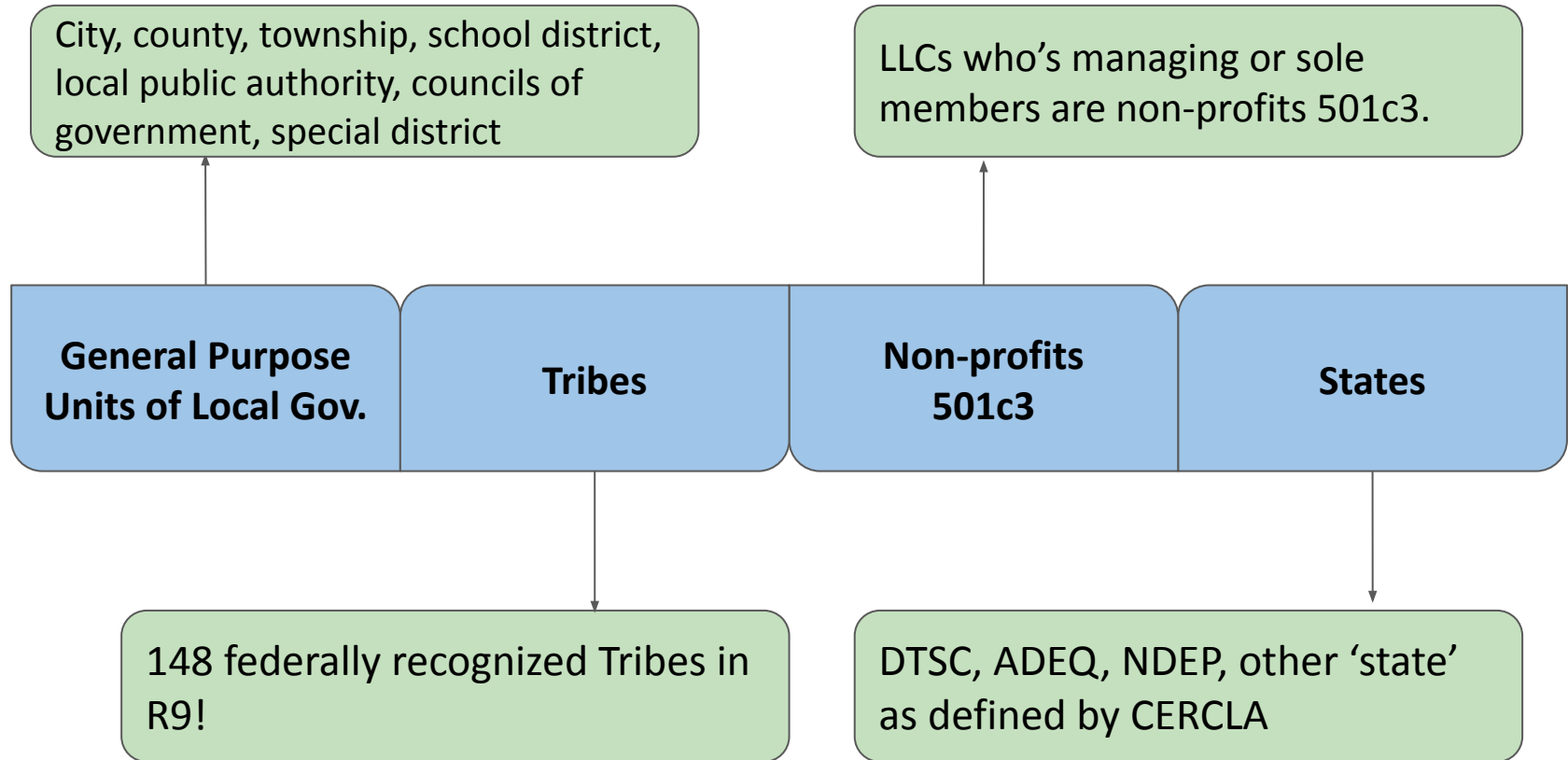
Applicant Ineligibility

Entities Liable for Contamination	For Profit and Individual Entities	Non-profit 501c4

Entities that are liable for contamination at the site where grant funding would be used.

501c4 that **lobby** for the federal government*

* If your entity is a non-profit 501c4 that does NOT lobby, you must also be one of the other eligible entities
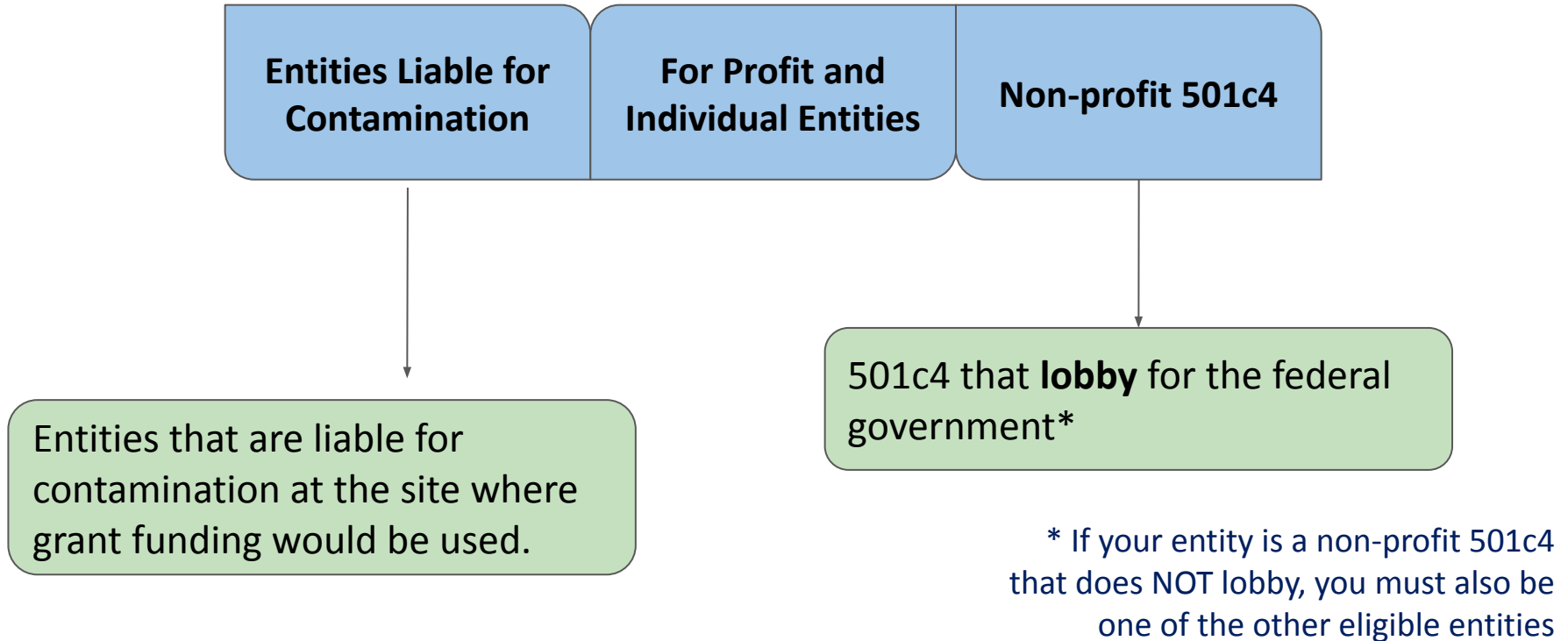
Threshold Requirements (General)

> **IMPORTANT: If one of the threshold criteria doesn't apply to you, <u>do not skip it</u>. State that it does not apply to you.**
>
> **Reach out to EPA for eligibility determinations!**

- ❏ Applicant Eligibility
- ❏ Restrictions on Multiple Applications
- ❏ Community Involvement
- ❏ Expenditure of Existing EPA Brownfields Funds
- ❏ Contractors and Subrecipients
- ❏ Application Submission Requirements
  - ❏ Federal Application Forms
  - ❏ Application Information Sheet (max 3 pages)
  - ❏ Narrative Proposal (max 10/12 pages)
  - ❏ **Threshold Criteria Response Page**
  - ❏ State or Tribal Environmental Authority Letter
  - ❏ Submitted through Grants.gov

Cleanup Grant Eligibility Requirements

❏ Applicant must be the sole owner of the site

❏ Applicant must be exempt from, or have a defense to CERCLA liability at the site (cannot be the responsible party!)

❏ Applicant must be an eligible entity

*Reach out to your **regional brownfields coordinator** for eligibility questions (Lisa Hanusiak in R9).

Cleanup Grant Eligibility Requirements

❏ Completed **Phase II Environmental Site Assessment** (or equivalent report)

❏ Draft **Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives** (ABCA) report or equivalent document

❏ **Letter from State or Tribal Environmental Authority** -ensuring that the site is sufficiently characterized and the status of the site in the state or Tribal voluntary response program

❏ Release a **Community Notification Ad** – must be placed no later than **14 days before application submission**

❏ Host a **Public Meeting** – must be held to discuss and **consider comments** on the Cleanup Grant application and draft ABCA. Applicants must be able to demonstrate how this feedback was considered

Your Application Package

REQUIRED FORMS

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424 A)
3. Pre-award Compliance Review Report (EPA Form 4700-4)
4. EPA Key Contacts (Form 5700-54)
5. Project Narrative Attachment Form, as one file (if possible) include:
   - Application Information Sheet
   - Threshold Responses (and related attachments)
   - Narrative (responses to Narrative/Ranking criteria)

OPTIONAL FORMS

6. Grants.gov Lobbying Form – To be submitted by applicants requesting more than $100,000 of EPA grant funding.
7. Negotiated/Proposed Indirect Cost Rate Agreement – submit using the Project Narrative Attachment Form.

Application Writing Resources

EPA's MARC Webpage

Summary of Guideline Changes

FAQs

MAC Grant Submission Checklist

Sample Federal Forms

Minimum Grant Requirements Videos

Tips from EPA

- ❏ Read the **entire** Guidelines!
- ❏ Write the app as though the reader knows **nothing** about your community.
- ❏ Respond to criteria where asked
- ❏ **Address all criteria. If it doesn't apply, state that and explain why.**
- ❏ Number pages and enumerate/identify the criterion
- ❏ The **quality** of the response is extremely important
- ❏ Organize attachments, ex:
  - ❏ Attachment A: Threshold Criteria
  - ❏ Attachment B: Cleanup Grant Levering Commitment(s)
- ❏ Use Application Checklist (do not submit checklist with application)
- ❏ Avoid using acronyms and technical/organizational jargon.
- ❏ Readability is important (1" margins, 12pt font, TNR/Arial/Calibri font)

EPA FY26 Brownfield Grant Application Review
Provided Cost-Free by Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) Providers

Cost-Free Grant Review Services
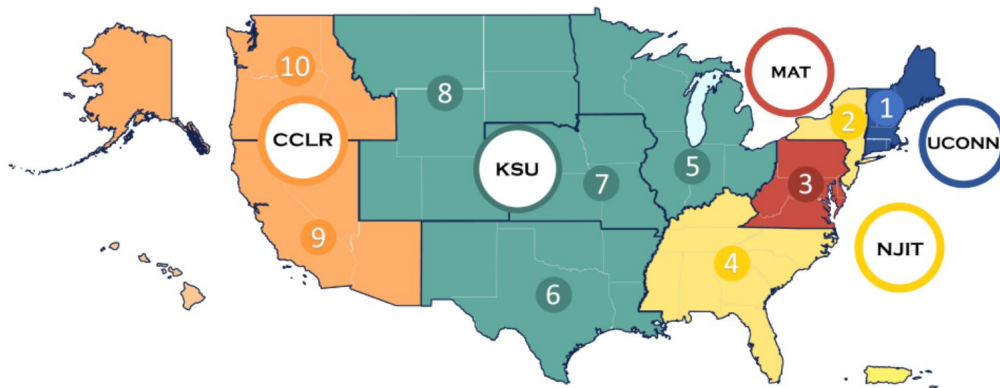
Region 1
University of Connecticut TAB
Email uconn-tab@uconn.edu to schedule assistance
Submit application for review

Region 3
Mid Atlantic TAB at West Virginia U.
Email wvutab@mail.wvu.edu or schedule a virtual consultation

Regions 9 & 10
Center for Creative Land Recycling
Schedule 1:1 technical assistance or email marcreview@cclr.org with questions/application for review

Regions 2 & 4
New Jersey Institute of Technology
Schedule a call with the TAB team
Contact Cailyn Bruno, 973-596-5519

Regions 5, 6, 7 & 8
Kansas State University TAB
Contact Scott Nightingale
TAB EZ and Helpful Hints Available 12/8

Center for Creative Land Recycling
(CCLR or "see clear")

CCLR is U.S. EPA's Technical Assistance to Brownfields Provider (TAB) for EPA Regions 9 and 10!

Our mission is to promote the sustainable, equitable and responsible reuse of underutilized and environmentally impacted properties. We educate, advocate, assist and convene stakeholders to revitalize communities through land recycling.

In 2024, we:

Provided Assistance to	Trained	Helped Secure
328	**2,790**	**$30.9M**
Unique entities/communities	Land reuse practitioners at events/webinars	In EPA brownfield grants, 91% of all R9/10 selectees

CCLR is Your Partner in Land Reuse!

Brownfields 101 Training, Custom Trainings, and Resource Dissemination

- Providing a primer for those who have never worked with brownfields and/or managed a brownfields grant.
- Beginning guide to understanding the brownfields redevelopment process.
- Understanding liability including CERCLA and the Brownfields Law.
- Primer on EPA grants and other funding opportunities in R10.
- Providing custom educational workshops or training on topics including grant writing, procurement, grant reporting, etc.
- Manages an **online resource center** with readily available information, webinar recordings, and documents to assist practitioners in navigating the different steps of the brownfield redevelopment process.

Redevelopment Planning

- Identifying, inventorying, and prioritizing brownfields for redevelopment.
- Creating strategic plans, work plans, and setting goals for property reuse.
- Assisting communities with demographic research, health, and environmental data
- Conducting economic market and feasibility analysis for brownfields properties.
- Helping practitioners assess and analyze existing plans and conditions to inform area-wide redevelopment plans.
- Evaluate the potential reuse of existing infrastructure; and identify sites that can help spur revitalization and economic development.

Redevelopment Financing; Grant Prep/Management; Procurement

- Identifying funding opportunities and creative financing approaches.
- Developing redevelopment roadmaps and funding matrices.
- Providing guidance during brownfields grant application preparation.
- Providing thorough review of draft grant applications.
- Supporting grant management and programmatic activities including quarterly/annual reporting, understanding and inputting data into ACRES, and reimbursements through ASAP.
- Assisting with understanding your Cooperative Agreement (CA) and Workplan.
- Assisting with and navigating the procurement process.
- Developing *RFPs* and *RFQs* including evaluation criteria and process of selecting contractors or consultants.

Remediation Support

- Procuring a contractor to conduct environmental site assessments and due diligence.
- Interpreting environmental technical reports including remedial investigations, Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, analysis of remediation alternatives, feasibility studies, and cleanup plans.
- Navigating and interpreting regulatory requirements by facilitating conversations with applicable state agencies.
- Understanding voluntary cleanup programs and their requirements.
- Assessing potential risk and liability associated with a brownfield property.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Facilitating and planning community involvement activities and developing community engagement plans.
- Helping practitioners communicate the reuse process, risks, and benefits to community stakeholders.
- Connecting and convening the community with other relevant stakeholders and practitioners including agency officials, consultants, attorneys, and more.
- Assisting with marketing sites, including developing Property Profile Sheets, to third parties interested in purchasing properties.

How CCLR Can Help – Grant Review

Help you plan out your application narrative approach

Help you engage stakeholders and partners

Help you navigate data platforms to tell your story

Connect you to grantees that have had success in applying for and managing MARC grants

Provide resources to help you navigate the application process and craft a compelling narrative

Provide a thorough review of your application including multiple rounds of edits

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"I learned so much through the process of working with ... CCLR and have been able to apply my learning to other grant applications as well! Thank you for your "tough love" and constructive feedback!"

- Grant Review TA Recipient

Example of a completed grant review scoring rubric. This always accompanies a redline-edited draft of your application narrative.

Access CCLR Grant Review

Grant Review Submission Instructions:

- Email the narrative of your FY26 EPA Brownfields Grant Application to marcreview@cclr.org by January 7, 2026 to provide time for two full rounds of comments. Drafts should be completed and within 2 pages of the page limit.

- Attach your application in Microsoft word (doc/docx) format.

- Name the file: **APPLICANT NAME_STATE_GRANT TYPE_Review Request**

  Ex: City of Whoville_OR_Cleanup_Review Request

- CCLR will also provide feedback on your Application Information Sheet, Threshold Criteria Response, and other application materials upon request.

- *To Consultants*: If you are sending CCLR an application on behalf of an eligible applicant, you must include the their contact and copy them on all communications with CCLR. We won't begin application review until the applicant is included!

Tips from CCLR: Writing an Effective Narrative

Know your "why"!
Your application should tell the story of why, what and how
(Why does this project exist? how does it align with federal priorities?
what resources are needed and where they will come from)

- Make it easy for reviewers to score you well! Articulate points clearly and concisely
- Use NOFO language and follow the framework provided
- Ensure all NOFO sections and related project components are represented
- Know grant requirements and deliverables (outputs & outcomes)
- Provide context - reviewer/s do not know your community or project
- Have an external reviewer provide comments
- Learn from winning applications

Tips from CCLR: Meeting Grant Requirements

- Include Threshold as a separate document!
- Understand programmatic requirements
- Understand Grant Timeline
- Identify your Team
- Understand Grant Administration
- Grant requirements
- Compliance
- Reporting obligations
- Have a "village" - you cannot do it alone

Be ready to manage an EPA grant!

- Honestly assess your organization's capacity
- Take the **EPA Grant Management Training**

Using Data to Support your Application

Resource: **Using Data to Make Your Case:** Resources to Jump-Start Your Journey to Revitalization

Build + Backup Your Narrative with Data:
- Show the **impact of brownfield sites** and histories of contamination
- Show **community demographics** including:
  - Health of Welfare of Sensitive Populations
  - Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease
  - Disproportionately Impacted Populations

National Resources

Government entities, nonprofits and research organizations offer an array of relevant environmental health and equity data. Many sites provide ready-made maps or charts or allow researchers access to metadata or self-serve mapping tools that allow them to pinpoint indicators tied to specific regions of interest, often down to the Census-tract level.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

CDC/ATSDR SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX (SVI)
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
The SVI is a place-based index, database and mapping application to identify and quantify communities experiencing social vulnerability across four themes:

➤ Socioeconomic Status,
➤ Household Characteristics,
➤ Racial & Ethnic Minority Status
➤ Housing Type & Transportation.

A previous version of this guide included the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) and EPA's Environmental Justice Screen (EJScreen) which are no longer available through the federal government.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES: FEDERAL GRANT NAVIGATION EQUITY DASHBOARD
National League of Cities
Dashboard with 200+ indicators related to health, education, workforce, and housing to measure vulnerability at each Census tract and overlay this with city-level demographic data. The tool helps consolidate a wide range of indicators and datasets to provide a granular data narrative.

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

ASSET LIMITED, INCOME CONSTRAINED, EMPLOYED (ALICE) ECONOMIC VIABILITY DASHBOARD & REPORT
United for ALICE
Dashboard and reports with indicators and tools to demonstrate financial hardship and community conditions beyond the limited framework of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and focuses on four main elements: work, housing, community, and gaps.

PUBLIC HEALTH

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS & ROADMAPS (CHR&R)
University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
Annual data for nearly every county in the U.S. with overall measures of local health across four sub-areas (Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social and Economic Factors, and Physical Environment) and Health Outcomes (length and quality of life).

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

CITY HEALTH DASHBOARD
NYU Langone Health
Data on 40+ measures of health and factors affecting health across five areas (Health Behaviors, Social and Economic Factors, Physical Environment, Health Outcomes, and Clinical Care) for 970+ cities across the U.S. (all 50,000+ population).

South Gate, CA — Change City
Population 91,836 • Region Pacific • City Type Diverse Ring Cities

City Overview | Metric Detail | Demographic Detail | Compare Cities

Metric Detail for Park Access in 2023
Percentage of population living within a 10 minute walk of green space MORE

South Gate had an estimated 59.6% of residents with park access in 2023, compared to an average of 57.8% across the Dashboard's cities.

South Gate, CA 59.6

City Health Dashboard — bit.ly/cityhealthdashboard

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Region 9 Resources

ARIZONA

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

ARIZONA ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING — QUICK REPORTS:
Arizona Department of Health Services
Sourced from various local, state, and federal sources, including the U.S. Census.

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

ARIZONA PROGRESS METERS:
The Center for the Future of Arizona
Sourced from various local, state, and federal sources, including the U.S. Census, and various additional publicly available data.

■ **PUBLIC HEALTH**
■ **SOCIAL CONDITIONS**
■ **ECONOMY**
■ **PUBLIC POLICY**

CALIFORNIA

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

HEALTHY PLACES INDEX 3.0 MAPPING TOOL:
Public Health Alliance of Southern California
Sourced from various local, state, & federal datasets, including US EPA, US Department of Housing & Urban Development, CalEPA, National Land Cover Database.

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

NEIGHBORHOOD DATA FOR SOCIAL CHANGE (NDSC):
USC Lusk Center for Real Estate
Sourced from original data from the Lusk Center and various local, state and federal datasets, including the U.S. Census.

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCREENING TOOL (CALENVIROSCREEN4.0):
California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) under CalEPA
Sourced from various local, state and federal datasets, including the U.S. Census, and various publicly available data.

HAWAII

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

UHERO.DATA and **ANALYTICS DASHBOARD:**
The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i (UHERO)
Sourced from original UHERO data, aggregated publicly available online data, and various local, state and federal datasets.

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

OAHU SOCIOECONOMIC VULNERABILITY INDEX AND RELATED MAPS:
The Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency
Sourced from original data from The O'ahu Resilience organization and various state and federal datasets, including the U.S. Census and CDC's Social Vulnerability Indexes.

NEVADA

DYNAMIC RESOURCE

LINCY INSTITUTE AND BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST DATA HUB:
Brookings Mountain West and the Lincy Institute
Sourced from original UNLV data and various local, state and federal datasets, including U.S. Census.

PACIFIC ISLANDS
Refer to National Data Sources

Additional Resources to Get Started

CCLR's Tips on Getting Started with MARC – This explores FY25's guidelines, but the tips are very relevant!

Successful EPA MARC grant examples

Return of the MAC - CCLR's Webinar on Writing a MAC application

EPA's Tips on Getting Started with MARC

EPA Grants Management Training - Browse to see if you are ready for grant management

CCLR's guide to writing a grant budget

Significant Support for Writing your Grant! – MARC Grant Helpful Hints from CCLR and KSU

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Tips

- Review past successful brownfields grants
- Tell a compelling story via narrative & budget
- Budget needs to be clear and tell its own story.
- Read <u>guidelines</u> & <u>instructions</u>; submit ALL required documents
- Answer all questions directly and concisely in the narrative sections.
- Assume reviewers know NOTHING about your community
- Ask for assistance early
- Assume reviewer/s know NOTHING about your community
- Pretend it's your money – would you select your application?

Upcoming MAC Events

EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar

December 17th at 10am PST

- Information on process of applying for MAC funding

National TAB: Tips from the TAB Programs

December 17th at 11:30am PST

- In a roundtable discussion, hear tips and ideas for tackling MAC from each of the TABs

Stay up to date on events at https://www.cclr.org/events/events

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

January 28th, 2026 11:59 PM ET

MUST be submitted through grants.gov

Contact Information

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THANK YOU & GOOD LUCK!