



# CENTER FOR CREATIVE LAND RECYCLING

RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.

Turning abandoned land from  
**liability to possibility**



# 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

**328**

Unique entities/communities

Trained

**2,790**

Land reuse practitioners at  
events/webinars

Helped Secure

**\$30.9M**

In EPA brownfield grants,  
91% of all R9/10 selectees



# 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*

Criteria	Pts	Description	11/6	Date	Date
<b>1. Project Area</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>(2-3p)</b>			
a. Target Area & Brownfields	20				
a.i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area(s)	5	Identify the geographic boundary(ies) where you are proposing to conduct eligible activities	1		The extent to which the geographic boundary(ies) is clearly identified. The extent to which the brownfield challenges are clearly discussed and the degree to which the brownfield challenges impact the area(s) in the geographic boundary(ies). The extent to which this grant will potentially help address those challenges and impacts. The extent to which the applicant clearly identifies and describes the specific target area(s) within the geographic boundary(ies) where it plans to focus grant activities.
		discuss the brownfield challenges and their impacts.	3		
		Overview of how this grant will potentially help address those challenges and impacts	2		
		Within these city(ies), town(s), or geographic area(s), identify and describe the specific target area(s) where you plan to perform assessment activities, such as a neighborhood, district, corridor, or census tract. Depending on the scope and design of your project, one or more target areas may be presented.	3		
a.ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)	10	Provide an overview of the brownfield sites in the target area(s) with information such as number, size, and environmental concerns.	1		The extent to which the response provides a clear overview of the brownfield sites. The degree to which one or more sites are highlighted as a priority. The degree to which the priority site(s) is clearly described. The degree to which it is clear why the site(s) identified as a priority (for assessment and reuse) has been selected.
		Specifically highlight one or more sites that are a priority	1		
		Discuss why the site(s) is a priority for assessment and reuse	1		
		Include information such as past and current land uses, current site conditions (including structures), and potentially related environmental issues.	1		
a.iii. Identifying additional Sites	5	Describe the plan to identify additional sites for eligible activities throughout the geographic boundary(ies) identified in 1.a.i. in the event that grant funds remain after addressing the target area(s)/priority site(s). Identify the criteria that will be used to prioritize additional sites for selection. All applicants except Tribes or eligible Tribal entities – Describe how your prioritization criteria will consider whether a site is located in an underserved community or disadvantaged census tract.	2		The extent to which there is a clear plan to identify additional sites for eligible activities and the degree to which the prioritization criteria that will be used to select additional sites are identified.
b. Revitalization of the Target Area	10				
b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans	5	Describe the reuse strategy, or projected reuse, for the priority brownfield site(s) to be assessed	2		The extent to which a reuse strategy/projected reuse is clearly identified for the priority brownfield site(s). The extent to which the reuse strategy/projected reuse clearly aligns with and advances the local government's land use and revitalization plans or related community priorities.
		Discuss how the reuse strategy/projected reuse aligns with the local government's land use and revitalization plans or related community priorities.	3		
b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy	5	Describe the potential of the proposed project or revitalization plans to stimulate economic development upon completion of the cleanup of the priority sites; and/or how the grant will facilitate the creation of, preservation of, or addition to a park, greenway, undeveloped property, recreational property, or other property used for nonprofit purposes	3		Given the type of community being served (e.g., urban, rural, tribal, etc.), the degree to which the proposed project or revitalization plans will potentially stimulate economic development in the target area(s) upon completion of the cleanup of the priority site(s) and/or the degree to which the grant will facilitate the creation of, preservation of, or addition to a park, a greenway, undeveloped property, recreational property, or other property used for nonprofit purposes in the target area(s). The degree to which these outcomes clearly correlate with the applicant's reuse strategy/projected site reuse(s). The extent to which the proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments. When applicable, the extent to which the reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy, or will incorporate energy efficiency measures.
		If applicable, describe how the reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy, or will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3		
		If the proposed project or revitalization plans may potentially cause the displacement of residents and/or businesses, describe the strategies and/or policies that will be implemented to minimize displacement.	3		
c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources	10				
c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse	5	Describe your access to monetary funding from other resources and how the grant will stimulate the availability of additional funds for environmental site assessment or remediation, and subsequent reuse.	1		The extent to which the applicant has access to monetary funding from other resources, and the extent to which the grant will stimulate the availability of additional funds to support the completion of the environmental site assessment or remediation, and subsequent reuse strategy at the priority site(s). (Note, a response may not earn full points if the applicant duplicates sources that are listed in 3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs.)
c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure	5	Describe how work performed under this grant will facilitate the use of existing infrastructure at the priority site(s) / target area	1		The extent to which work performed under this grant will facilitate the use of existing infrastructure at the priority site(s) and/or within the target area(s). When additional infrastructure needs or upgrades are needed, the extent to which a clear description of the infrastructure needs/upgrades and the extent to which the identified funding resources that will be sought to implement the work are relevant to the project.
		If additional infrastructure needs or upgrades are key to the revitalization plans for the priority site(s), describe the infrastructure needs/upgrades, and describe the funding resources that will be sought to implement that work.	3		

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



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# How to Access CCLR Grant Review

## Grant Review Submission Instructions:

- Email the narrative of your FY26 EPA Brownfields Grant Application to [marcreview@cclr.org](mailto: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





# 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](#)

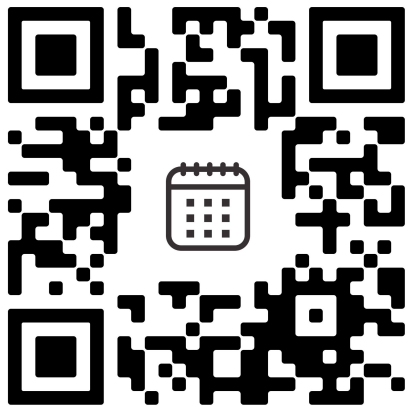
Criteria	Pts	RFA Question	Helpful Hints
1. Project Area Description and Plans for Revitalization (2-3p)	40	Your grant will be reviewed by people not familiar with your area or with your city or situation. A person from a different EPA region will review your application to California could review a grant from Nebraska. Do not assume that the reviewer, for example, will know that shops, factories, etc. in your community closed and base. Discuss relevant facts but provide sufficient context to tell your story. This will help the reviewer understand why your community really needs this grant to	
a. Target Area & Brownfields	20		
a.i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area(s)	5	Identify the geographic boundary(ies) where you are proposing to conduct eligible activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Describe the location of your brownfields, i.e., in the center of town, outskirts, close to or in neighborhoods/schools, in a historic section, along a reinvestment corridor, or near other sensitive populations, etc.</li></ul>
		Discuss the brownfield challenges and their impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstrate the cumulative impact of brownfields on the surrounding community and how residents are overburdened when compared to the rest of the city/town, region, or larger geographic area.</li><li>Support your statements by highlighting key statistics (population loss over time, poverty, unemployment, job loss, environmental justice issues) that you present in Section 2. (Sources: See Statistics and Census Information in the current MARC FAQs)</li></ul>
		Overview of how this grant will potentially help address those challenges and impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Focus on the brownfields challenges for the impacted community (blighted properties, higher crime rate, job loss, etc.) and how this grant will help alleviate or address those challenges.</li><li>Include a discussion on the extent you plan to address these sites with the funding requested.</li></ul>
a.ii. Description of the Priority	10	Within the geographic area(s), identify and describe the specific target area(s) where you plan to perform assessment activities, such as a neighborhood, district, corridor, or census tract. Depending on the scope and design of your project, one or more target areas may be presented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide a description based on physical surroundings. Examples include proximity to a known body of water, interstate(s), direction from downtown, major industry (like a port), or known landmarks.</li><li>If you have more than one target area, make sure they do not overlap.</li><li>If the target area is already included in an active EPA grant, consult with your EPA region.</li></ul>
		Provide an overview of the brownfield sites in the target area(s) with information such as number, size, and environmental concerns. Include information such as past and current land uses, site conditions (including structures), and potentially related environmental issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide a clear overview of the brownfield sites in the target area. (Include properties like longtime-vacant lots, blighted or aging buildings, historic dry cleaners, historic gas stations, etc.)</li><li>Describe the extent of the brownfields problem including their potential relationship to the health and well-being of people in the target area. Search state databases for contaminated sites in the target area and describe how these and underutilized sites significantly impact the target area and the specific types of challenges/impacts they are causing to the community.</li><li>Do not include demographic and health data here - refer the reader to the Section 2 subsection where this information is detailed.</li></ul>



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# Connect with CCLR!



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Visit [www.CCLR.org](http://www.CCLR.org)  
For more information on  
our events & services



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List**



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