



TAB
Technical Assistance
to Brownfields

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Grant Ready: Overcoming Common Pitfalls in EPA Brownfields ARC Grants

Get grant ready to stand out in a
highly competitive year.

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LAND RECYCLING**
RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.

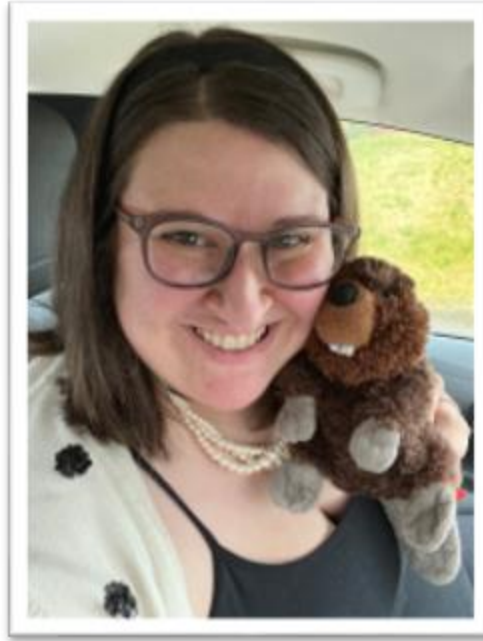


Speakers



Elise Molleur

Brownfields Redevelopment
Specialist, NJIT TAB Program



Carrie Staton, MPA

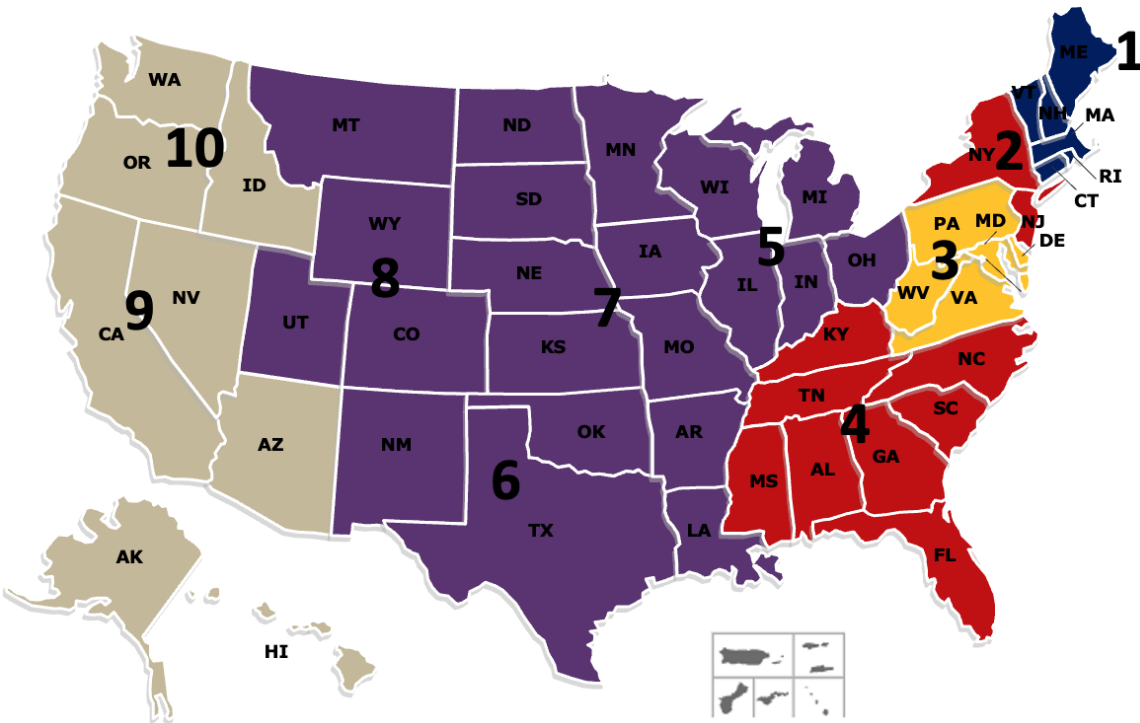
Director of Mid-Atlantic
TAB Program



Randi Mendes, Ph.D.

Executive Director of
UConn TAB Program

Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB)



What is TAB?

- A national program funded by U.S. EPA
- Dedicated TAB services provider for each EPA region & a dedicated TAB services provider for all federally recognized Tribes & Alaska Native villages
- Services provided are **FREE** and tailored to address specific community needs
- Assist communities and tribes with the brownfield assessment, cleanup and redevelopment process
- Planning, environmental and economic development expertise
- Webinars, workshop, e-tools (e.g., BiT, TAB EZ) and online resources
- And much, much more...

Who are the TAB Service Providers?

[University of Connecticut](#) – EPA Region 1

[New Jersey Institute of Technology \(NJIT\)](#) – EPA Regions 2 & 4

[Mid-Atlantic TAB](#) – EPA Region 3

[Kansas State University \(KSU\)](#) – EPA Regions 5, 6, 7, & 8

[Center for Creative Land Recycling \(CCLR\)](#) – EPA Regions 9 & 10

[KSU – ITEP – ANTHC](#) – Tribal TAB



Goals for Webinar

Announced changes to FY27 Grant Applications

Cover common pitfalls each TAB provider often sees

- Within the threshold criteria
- Within the narrative
- From debrief notes shared with us from previous applicants

Open discussion for questions for upcoming grant cycle



New FY27 Grant Updates

Cost Share, State Letters, and Community Meetings

Grant Type	Maximum Project Period	Maximum Amount Per Grant	Estimated Awards	Total Per Grant Type
Community-wide Assessment	4 years	\$500,000	30	\$15,000,000
Assessment Coalitions	4 years	\$1,000,000	13	\$13,000,000
Community-wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes	5 years	\$1,000,000	12	\$12,000,000
Revolving Loan Fund	5 years	\$1,000,000	10	\$10,000,000
Cleanup	4 years	\$500,000	28	\$14,000,000



Cost Share

- It's back!
- 20% Required on **RLF** and **Cleanup Grants**
 - RLF – talk to Grow America!
- Potential sources:
 - State funding
 - Philanthropic funding
 - General fundraising
 - Staff time not charged to grant
 - Some federal programs
- Government entities with populations of 50,000 or fewer, Tribes, eligible Tribal, and nonprofit organizations may request EPA to waive the 20% cost share requirement based on hardship
 - EPA will consider requests on a case-by-case basis and intends to approve such requests on an extremely limited basis



[CCLR Cost Share Webinar Recording](#)

Guideline Announcements

Current Grantees

- To apply, must have at least 70% of the funds in each current Assessment and Multipurpose cooperative agreements drawn down AND disbursed by October 1, 2026

Assessment & Coalition Grants

- Threshold eligibility requirement, FY27 Coalitions must include at least one non-lead member that has
 - never received an EPA Brownfields MARC Grant,
 - or whose most recent EPA Brownfields MARC Grant period of performance ended in 2015 or earlier.
 - applicants may search the [Brownfields Grant Fact Sheet Tool](#) to obtain information on entities selected to receive an EPA Brownfields MARC Grant.



Guideline Announcements

Cleanup Grants

- Site Ownership: Applicants who own the site in fee simple must **provide the date the deed was recorded**.
 - If the deed was not recorded yet, applicants must **cite the State or local law that establishes ownership has been conveyed and attach a copy of deed**.
 - Ownership documentation must be attached for any other ownership arrangement or property transfer method
- Sufficient Site Characterization: Characterization Letters are no longer required from State and Tribal Environmental Authority
 - Applicants **must affirm that an Environmental Professional** (as defined in [40 CFR § 312.10](#)) has certified there is a sufficient level of site characterization for remediation to begin on the site(s), or affirm it will be sufficient before the grant is awarded.

Guideline Announcements

Cleanup Grants

- Community Notification: Applicants must **hold a public meeting no later than 7 days before the application deadline** to discuss the draft application, including the draft ABCA (or ABCAs if proposing multiple sites), and **consider public comments prior** to the final submittal of the application.
- The **community notification ad must be published no later than 7 days before the public meeting.**
- Waiver of the \$500,000 Limit: Applicants that plan to only address one brownfield site may request a waiver of the \$500,000 limit and request up to \$650,000. EPA will consider requests on a case-by-case basis and intends to approve such requests on an extremely limited basis.



Threshold Criteria

Debrief Notes, Grant Reviews, and Word-of-Mouth

Threshold Criteria – General Notes

- Must pass or the rest of application will not be reviewed
- Make sure you are eligible!
 - Get questions answered by EPA NOW!
- Common mistakes:
 - forgetting to include the threshold criteria document
 - Not answer all questions and criteria - even it doesn't apply to you, still include/answer it



Section 1 and 2

Debrief Notes, Grant Reviews, and Word-of-Mouth

Section I – General Notes

- Common mistakes:
 - Not explaining appropriate Geographic Boundary >> Target Area>> Priority Site(s)
 - Speaking highly about the target area
 - Not listing the # of brownfields in the community
 - Overloading the section
 - Not setting the stage --> the reviewer is likely unfamiliar with your community
 - What is written here must connect back to other sections
 - Not tying reuse back into sensitive populations or need for grant



Section I – General Notes

- Assessment Grant Specific Mistakes
 - Not addressing how you will identify additional sites
 - Not connecting the community and sensitive populations to why a priority site is a priority
 - Target areas for coalition members cannot overlap
- Cleanup Grant Specific Considerations & Mistakes
 - Picking your new target area --> Specific to Cleanup Grants and reduced funds
 - Consider subdividing property
 - Consider treating any buildings as separate
 - Be descriptive in Section 1 on the layout of the site
 - Not explaining how the reuse of the site will benefit the sensitive populations



Section II – General Notes

- Common Mistakes
 - Not including data comparisons for required data—Need to provide comparisons between state and nation (see TAB provider for help finding data)
 - Not connecting the challenges of community members & sensitive population to justification for need
 - Section reads more like a "data dump" and not a narrative/story
 - Information in incorrect sections --> common in public health section
 - Need to connect sensitive populations back to burdens from brownfields back to how this grant will support them
 - Missing strong reuse plans that ALSO connect to community need
 - Missing community-based organizations (CBOs) or direct partners to community in the partners table
 - CWA : Brownfield Steering Committee



Section II – General Notes

- Common Mistakes - Cleanup Grant Specific
 - Missing proper documents for community meeting
 - Not including how you will respond to feedback received from the community
 - Not including how to accommodate those who cannot attend the meeting
 - Not including how you will continue communication with community
- Common Mistakes - Assessment Grant Specific
 - Missing community involvement in identifying additional brownfield sites
 - Using tables can be helpful for comparing data, but make sure you explain what's in the table and how it fits into the context of your grant



Section 3: Budget

Debrief Notes, Grant Reviews, and Word-of-Mouth

Section III – General Notes

- Common Mistakes
 - Math does not match across budget table and task breakdown
 - Must match statements across Section 1 and 2
 - Not enough description explaining how you came to cost estimate
 - Add source of estimate
 - Avoid "backing into a number"
 - Leveraging Funds Section – Not enough to say you are eligible
 - Not the same as cost share
 - Looking for information on leveraging reuse
 - Missing Justification for Demo – Always include in narrative and cite ABCA
 - Be aware of when you need a narrative vs. Table vs. Detailed breakdown
 - "See ABCA for cost breakdown" is not allowed
 - Not using the correct budget table

Sample Format for Budget

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)				Total
		(Task 1)	(Task 2)	(Task 3)	(Task 4)	
Direct Costs	Personnel					
	Fringe Benefits					
	Travel ¹					
	Equipment ²					
	Supplies					
	Contractual					
	Other (include subawards) (specify)					
Total Direct Costs ³						
Indirect Costs ³						
Total Federal Funding (not to exceed \$5,000,000)						
Total Budget (Total Direct Costs + Indirect Costs + Cost Share)						

¹ Travel to brownfields-related training conferences is an acceptable use of these cooperative agreement funds.

² EPA defines equipment as items that cost \$5,000 or more with a useful life of more than one year. Items costing less than \$5,000 are considered supplies unless the recipient has a lower threshold for accounting for supply costs. Generally, equipment is not required for Brownfield cooperative agreements.

³ Administrative costs (direct and/or indirect) cannot exceed 5% of the total EPA-requested funds.

EPA Budget Format – Including Cost Share

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)				
		Task 1: Program Oversight	Task 2: Community Outreach	Task 3: Remedial/ Reuse Planning	Task 4: Site Clean Up	Total
	Travel ¹	\$1,000.00	-	-	-	\$1,000.00
	Supplies	\$450.000	\$450.000	-	-	\$900.00
	Contractual	\$10,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$431,000.00	\$500,000.00
	Other (include subawards)	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Direct Costs ²		\$11,550.00	\$2,450.00	\$55,000.00	\$431,000.00	\$500,000.00
Indirect Costs ²		-	-	-	-	-
Total Federal Funding (not to exceed \$500,000)		\$11,550.00	\$2,450.00	\$55,000.00	\$431,000.00	\$500,000.00
Cost share (20% of requested federal funds) ⁴		\$32,400.00	\$11,250.00	\$36,350.00	\$20,000.00	\$100,000.00
Total Budget (Total Direct Costs + Indirect Costs + Cost Share)		\$43,950.00	\$13,700.00	\$91,350.00	\$451,000.00	\$600,000.00
¹ Travel to brownfields-related training conferences. ² Administrative costs equal <1% of total Federal Funding requested. ³ MUB is not requesting a cost share waiver. ⁴ Cost estimates are based on market rates in the Morgantown area and as provided in the ABCA.						



Leveraging Funds

- Strong applicants will provide a detailed outline of the leveraged sources they plan to use and present a compelling plan for how they will attain these resources.
- Allocating leveraged funds towards reuse planning
- Sources of funding secured for leveraged funds should be written as though they are confirmed
 - Leveraged funds and cost share funds are not the same but can change throughout the grant award period as long as they match the required amount

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are limited to 5% of total budget.

Direct Administrative Costs

- Salaries, benefits, contractual costs, supplies, and data processing charges, are costs that are not included in the recipient's indirect cost pool and are necessary to comply with the provisions of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR Part 200.
- Examples:
 - Record-keeping associated with equipment purchases
 - Preparing revisions and changes in the budgets, scopes of work, program plans, and other activities
 - Maintaining and operating financial management systems
 - Preparing payment requests and handling payments
 - Financial reporting
 - Non-federal audits
 - Closeout, with the exception of preparing the recipient's final performance report.

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are limited to 5% of total budget.

Indirect Administrative Costs



Costs that are not specifically related to implementing the EPA award and are not readily identified with a specific project or organizational activity but incurred for the joint benefit of both projects and other activities.



Overhead costs are a typical example of an indirect cost. Indirect costs are usually grouped into common pools and charged to benefiting objectives through an allocation process/indirect cost rate; 2 CFR § 200.414 and other provisions of the Uniform Guidance.

Cost Estimates

- More than numbers – how did you get there?
- Show a breakdown of costs:
 - Personnel – hourly/FTE
 - Travel – transportation, lodging, per diem
 - Assessment – estimated cost per ESA
 - Cleanup – cost estimates from ABCA work
- How did you get this information?
 - Past experience
 - Peer conversations
 - Estimates from contractor or QEP
 - GSA rates (per diem)



Section 4

Debrief Notes, Grant Reviews, and Word-of-Mouth

Section IV – General Notes

- Organizational Capacity
 - Possibly reviewed first
 - Needs to be solid --> address every point
 - Try not to fall under Category 4f (never received any type of federal or non-federal assistance agreements)
- General Note: Language
 - Adjust to current guidelines, do not rely on previous guidelines due to priority area shifts
- Coalition grant: This section is for the applicant



Application Submission & Getting Prepared

Debrief Notes, Grant Reviews, and Word-of-Mouth

General Application Considerations

Is the ARC grant right for you right now?

Templates does not replace reading the NOFO

Don't exaggerate the impact. That can be a turn off to some reviewers.

Check your file naming and that you have all files

Check eligibility now!

Don't wait for the NOFO to come out to get started

Meet with your TAB provider to make sure you are ready



Where to submit review requests for your region: Region 1

- Grant review information/submission:
<https://tab.program.uconn.edu/funding-resources/>
 - We offer several rounds of review of narrative, threshold criteria, and info sheet.
 - Deadline for last chance review is usually a week before the deadline.
- We also offer application packages that have the guidelines, templates, FAQs, past successful examples, state and national public health, economic, and demographic data, and a checklist.
- Review request should go through the form on the above (will be live shortly)
- We will have office hours throughout the guideline duration for people to pop on and ask questions
- There are past webinar to help people prepare that can be found on our website
- To set up an appointment or ask questions email: uconn-tab@uconn.edu



Where to submit review requests for your region: Regions 2 & 4

- Send your grant application in a Word document to tab@njit.edu. A deadline for last chance review will be set upon release of NOFO (usually ~1 week before the deadline).
- Offers review of the applicant's narrative, threshold criteria, and info sheet.
- Email tab@njit.edu if you would like to set up a meeting to discuss your grant application.
- NJIT TAB Brownfield Academy: online resources available at <https://www.njit.edu/tab>
 - How-To Videos such as "Finding the Right Data," "Brownfield Grant Basics," and "Building a Grant Project Team" available at <https://www.njit.edu/tab/how-to-videos>
 - Learning modules for Brownfield Inventorying and Brownfield Planning available at <https://www.njit.edu/tab/learning-modules>
 - Previously-recorded webinars available at <https://www.njit.edu/tab/webinars>
 - Successful Grant Applications from FY23 through FY25 available at <https://www.njit.edu/tab/sample-grant-applications>
 - Note: Due to changes on our website, successful FY26 MAC grant applications have not been uploaded. To receive sample FY26 successful applications, please email tab at the email address above

Where to submit review requests for your region: Region 3

- [Submit here](#) or email directly to wvutab@mail.wvu.edu.
- Drafts submitted for review at least 2 weeks before the EPA deadline are guaranteed a review. Drafts will be reviewed as quickly as possible and in the order they are received.
- Editable documents, such as Word documents, are preferred where possible for easier review and commenting.
- Questions on the application, review process, or other grant-related items can be submitted to us at wvutab@mail.wvu.edu at any time.
- [Set up a grant consultation meeting directly with our team through this link.](#)



Where to submit review requests for Regions 5, 6, 7, & 8

- KSU TAB offers reviews of the draft information sheet, narrative, and threshold criteria. (EPA Regional Staff should be contacted for eligibility determinations.)
- Draft application materials should be sent, by the ARC Grant applicant, to Scott Nightingale, KSU TAB, at scottnight@ksu.edu.
- Please provide the draft application as a Word document.
- KSU TAB will provide review of the materials within 3-5 working days. Reviewers will subsequently be available to discuss comments/suggestions.
- The deadline to request draft application reviews will be about one week prior to the application due date. This date will be finalized upon release of the NOFO. If time allows, an applicant may request a second review.



Where to submit review requests for Regions 9 & 10

- Email the narrative of your FY2027 EPA Brownfield Grant Application to marcreview@cclr.org.
- Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received, **CCLR recommends sending drafts as early as possible** to provide time for two+ rounds of comments.
- Drafts should be complete 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. (Exp. City of Stocktown_AZ_Cleanup_Review Request)
- **Application review requests must come directly from the applying entity even in cases where the grant draft was written by a consultant.** Applicants are welcome to CC their consultant in the review request.
- [Schedule a meeting with CCLR to discuss your application](#)

Where to submit review requests for RLF Grants

- [Submit here](#) (see QR code too)
- Submit your draft application for an RLF-specific review before submitting it to your regional TAB provider.
- Drafts submitted for review at least 3 weeks before the EPA deadline are guaranteed a review. Drafts will be reviewed as quickly as possible and in the order they are received.
- Editable documents, such as Word documents, are preferred where possible for easier review and commenting.
- Questions on the application, review process, or other grant-related items can be submitted to us at epa-rlf-tab@growamerica.org at any time.



**Open for Questions
from Audience**



We Want to Hear Your Feedback

Please provide feedback on today's event:

1. Click this link
https://kstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1LzV0wTMucGQcLk?Q_CHL=qr
2. Click the link provided in the chat box
3. Scan this QR image from your smartphone





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Thank You

For joining us today. Please get in touch if you have any questions!

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