FY2027 Helpful Hints for EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grants



Criteria RLF	Helpful Hints (HH)
1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION (45 POINTS) A common pitfall of this section is to write too much upfront in 1.a. and lose point in other sections: Be Concise: Start with a brief introduction for the overview that sets the context. Avoid lengthy explanations and plan to expand on the details throughout the grant narrative. This keeps the reader engaged and assist you with a "cohesive" grant narrative. Use Minimal Statistics in this section and compare and contrast data. For example, "City unemployment is 10% compared to county unemployment at 4%." Always provide sources for your statistics.	
Target Areas and Brownfields (20 points)	
1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area (5 points)	Include area description and population size of the community so the reviewer gets an idea if this is an urban area or small rural community. If community has less than 15,000 residents, refer to the page number in your Other Factors Checklist. ● Clearly identify and describe your target area for the focused grant activities. Make sure that the reviewers have a clear idea where your target area is located within your community. Examples include proximity to a known body of water, interstate(s), direction from downtown, major industry (like a port), or known landmarks. *If the target area is already included in an active EPA grant, consult with your EPA region.* When discussing brownfields challenges and their impacts on the city(ies), town(s), or target area, **(why do you have these brownfields, why are they a problem, who is affected and how)**: ● Describe what specific brownfield challenges have affected this area, such as job loss, increased poverty and adverse health conditions. Reference data that is relevant to the targeted site(s) as well as the target area(s) and community as a whole (e.g. high unemployment, abandoned properties, higher crime rate, food desert, etc.) to describe the challenges posed by your brownfield site(s). ● Support your statements by highlighting only key statistics (e.g. population loss over time, poverty, unemployment, job loss, etc.) that you present in Narrative Criteria 2.a. Community Need. The information you provide here should **support the statements** you make about revitalization goals and community need in the following sections of your application.

	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**. You want to show that the brownfield sites are significantly impacting your communities or target areas and the specific types of challenges/impacts for/on the community. Please see FAQ C.12 from FY2027 FAQs for additional links.
1.b. Description of Priority Brownfield Sites (10 points)	When highlighting the property(ies) selected for cleanup within the target area(s): ● Describe the location of your brownfield(s), e.g., center of town, outskirts, close to or near neighborhoods/schools, densely populated impoverished/minority neighborhoods, etc. ● Clearly identify proposed brownfield site(s) and describe in detail why they are a priority for cleanup and subsequent reuse (significant environmental/health/community concerns, unsafe structures/property conditions, good redevelopment potential, etc.) and who determined them to be a priority (did the community have input?). ● Indicate the previous property use(s) and how it is related to the contamination. ● Briefly describe if the **existing contamination impacts surrounding residents, sensitive populations, or waterways (stormwater runoff, wind-blown sediments, potential vapor intrusion).**Use available environmental reports such as remedial investigations, site characterization, or Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, or your environmental agency, as resources to describe the contamination that you intend to clean up with the grant funds. Demonstrate knowledge of clean up requirements, such as the types of contaminants, their extent, structures that need to be removed or reused, how exposure to the contaminants impact surrounding residents, businesses, waterways, wildlife, etc. Please see Section III. Environmental Information for Targeted Area and Priority Sites in: *Grant Data Research | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields* Take a look at the Other Factors check list and see if any of those factors apply (i.e. is the site adjacent or near a body of water or federally designated floodplain, is the site impacted by mine-scarred lands, etc.). If they do, state it here. Bodies of water can be large or small and might include lakes, rivers, creeks, marshes, wetlands, or floodplains. Do not include demographic and health data here - refer the reader to the Section 2 subsection where this information is detailed.
1.c. Identification and Prioritization of Additional Sites (5 points)	Describe the selection process and prioritization criteria (immediate job creation, removal of contaminants to prevent exposure, motivated developer, data sources, etc.). Criteria should include consistency with the existing targeted brownfield sites.
Revitalization of the Target Area (15 points)	
1.d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans (10 points)	Clearly describe the reuse strategy or projected reuse for the proposed site(s). Provide enough detail to show the reviewer that the proposed reuse on the site aligns with local government land use and revitalization plans or community priorities. Include if the plans are specific to the Target Area(s). ● Address why cleanup of the site(s) makes the most sense or how critical the site(s) is/are to the overall revitalization plan for the target area. ● **Demonstrate how these plans were inclusive of community voices and preferences**.

	○ Describe how the community was meaningfully involved in the development of master plans, reuse strategy, vision, or other decision-making efforts. ● Include any sustainable community revitalization measures considered as part of the reuse strategy and refer to the page number in your Other Factors Checklist (section V.B. of the Guidelines). ● Indicate whether or not the site is in a federally designated floodplain and justify the reuse strategy/project reuse is an appropriate reuse option. If possible, try to give the reviewer a strong sense that reuse/redevelopment is likely to happen after the cleanup. **The proposed reuse/redevelopment of the site(s) should align with solutions to the challenges** presented in Narrative Criteria 1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area. Please see Section V. Alignment with Sustainability and Resiliency in: *Grant Data Research | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields*
1.e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy (5 points)	Link the outcomes and benefits of the project(s) **consistent with the issues described in Narrative Criteria 1.a. (Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas) and Narrative Criteria 2.a.(Community Need)**, to your target community. ● Provide specific anticipated outcomes and economic improvements, such as X% increase in tax base, number of jobs this project may create, etc. Specify how many acres of reusable land will be created if all site(s) is/are cleaned up. If you cannot be specific, provide a realistic estimate based on reliable resources. ● If the cleanup will potentially benefit the local economy, describe how. This can be quantified as noted above, or qualitatively, e.g., cleanup is on a potentially catalytic site necessary for revitalization of the target community. ● If applicable, describe how the project preserves greenfields, creates or adds to a park, greenway, recreational property or other property used for non-profit purposes. Provide metrics such as X acres of new greenspace in a low-income neighborhood, X number of pocket parks in developed areas, X square miles protected from sprawl, etc. ● If applicable, describe space for not-for-profit, governmental or charitable organizations, including amount and type of space provided, and how these improve the livability of community residents. Will the proposed project facilitate renewable, geothermal energy, or incorporate energy efficiency measures? ● How will the project potentially incorporate renewable energy or energy efficiency measures? Will renewable energy be used as part of the site reuse? Will building codes require certain energy efficiency measures or standards? Visit EPA's Renewable Energy or Energy-Efficient Approaches in Brownfield Redevelopment Fact Sheet for more information. ● If you have considered any measures that will facilitate the use of renewable energy, or improve energy efficiency as part of the reuse strategy, mention it in this section and include the page number in your Other Factors Checklist.

	Check out *FY2027 FAQs* ***for "Brownfields, Public Health, Extreme Weather, and Natural Disasters" (Section S) and "Benefits of Brownfields Projects" in Section T for helpful information.*** Additional Resources can be found in Section IV. and Section V. in: *Grant Data Research | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields*
Strategy for Leveraging Resources (10 points)	
1.f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse (5 points)	Use positive and active verbs, such as "we are working on...", "we will commit...", "we have applied for..."All leveraged funding should be easily identifiable including the source of the funding, activity being funded, and amount. Do not just list random funding received/sought, but make sure the reviewer can clearly see how it links to your assessment, cleanup and redevelopment project. ● Focus on funding resources that can be used to support the completion of assessment, remediation, and reuse at the priority sites. ● Describe possible local, State, Tribal, Federal or regional resources that are committed or that you are pursuing. ● Explain your eligibility for and the likelihood of obtaining the funding you are pursuing, including whether you've accessed that type of funding in the past. Provide information on how often the funding is offered. ● Make clear how the leveraged funding/resources you have identified are relevant to this project. In other words, do not just list random funding received/sought, but make sure the reviewer can clearly see how it links to your remediation project. ● Local commitments are especially important. Think about what your partners, if you have any, can contribute and discuss it here. Preferably commitments by partners should be firm and have an associated value. Reference secure commitments made by partners. ● If cleanup of the proposed site will catalyze additional redevelopment in the target area, highlight the catalytic qualities of the target site(s) along with discussing the community's commitment. ● ***See C.8. in the FY2027 FAQs for more leveraging information.*** ● Show that the project WILL be completed if EPA provides cleanup funding. ***Note, a response may not earn full points if the applicant duplicates sources that are listed in 3.d.-3.g. under Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs or sources used to meet the cost share.***
1.g. Use of Existing Infrastructure (5 points)	Describe the state of the existing infrastructure at the priority site(s) and/or within the target area(s). Indicate if the infrastructure in place (water, sewer, electricity) was built for large capacity industrial or commercial activities and whether you believe it can be used for your proposed reuse. Infrastructure refers to roads and utilities (sewer, water, electricity, broadband, etc.); transportation (bus, train or air); other energy and telecommunications and even housing and business services needed to support redevelopment. Be as inclusive as possible. Explain how this grant will facilitate the use of the existing infrastructure. The benefits of using existing infrastructure may include: ● money and energy savings, reuse/recycling of materials, etc.

	● avoiding construction noise, dust and traffic associated with building new infrastructure. ● preservation of history and culture of an area ● if applicable, explain how your project can/will lead to any sustainable reuse of buildings or structures. If additional infrastructure or upgrades are needed, discuss what is needed and the plan for how funding for it will be sought or provided. Please see the Infrastructure Evaluation (epa.gov) for definition of infrastructure needed during redevelopment. The benefits of infrastructure upgrades may include: ● energy efficient building construction (energy efficient lighting, heating, cooling, building materials ● energy efficient replacement of lead pipes or updated septic or sewer systems ● connections to public drinking water sources for residential developments ● traffic and pedestrian safety features, energy savings that result in cleaner air and water, etc. ● mitigation of vehicle congestion and air pollution ● updated lighting, walkways, and trails to promote connectivity
2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (35 POINTS) This section focuses on communities within your geographic boundaries and in your target area(s) that cannot secure funding because of small populations and/or low income needs and needs to **tie back to Narrative Criteria 1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area.**	
Community Need (20 points)	
2.a. The Community's Need for Funding (5 points)	***Note, if the response does not demonstrate why the community's small population or low income has resulted in an inability to draw on other sources of funding, then the response may only earn up to 2 points.*** This section should be consistent with the descriptions written in 1.a.. (Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area). Explain how this grant would meet needs of the community. Describe the need for funds: ● how economic conditions limit the funding available for addressing your brownfields sites ● support your statements by highlighting key statistics (population loss over time, poverty, unemployment, job loss,) ● if applicable, because community either has a small population (15,000) or low income. ● why the community has no other source of funding for the proposed assessment, remediation or redevelopment activities. ● describe the economic impacts of your brownfields. For example: did prospective employers back out because of environmental unknowns of the property they were looking at? Does the community have to pay for maintenance of the brownfield site(s), is there an increase in policing required because of the brownfields? ***How will this grant address these issues?*** Use statistics (with citations) to support your statements about small population, low income or other relevant demographics that show need. Include the targeted community as well as the community, as a whole, to describe the economic impacts of your brownfields:

	● reviewing sales tax data, or assessed valuations of property to identify downward trends that demonstrate that brownfields have been a partial cause of financial impact to the target area and made other funding from taxes unavailable. ● focus your census data and describe the adverse impact of brownfields on a subset of the population (consider using census blocks rather than census tracts). ***Please see C.12. in the FY2027 FAQs for additional examples and links to resources for demographic information.*** Also, please see Sections I. and IV.: "Demographic Information" and "Community Need and Economic Information" in: *Grant Data Research | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields* . If applying for an RLF coalition grant, make sure it is clear how the RLF funding will help coalition members that would not otherwise have access to these funding resources.
2.b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations (5 points)	Sensitive populations include "children, pregnant women, minority or low-income communities, or other sensitive populations. However, there is no one definition of a sensitive population. ***See S.4. in the FY2027 FAQs for more information about sensitive populations.*** Additional information can be found in Section II. Health and Welfare of the Community in: *Grant Data Research | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields* Include demographics on sensitive populations (children, elderly, or people with chronic conditions) in the target area. If the sensitive populations statistics do not support your application favorably, focus on those statistics that reflect the challenges faced by the community (lack of medical services, food desert, veterans population, etc.). Discuss the proximity of residential areas, hospitals, schools, daycare facilities or elder care and assisted living facilities to brownfield site(s). Discuss how you will protect the health of sensitive populations living near or adjacent to your proposed cleanup site(s) during cleanup activities (i.e. dust control, appropriate truck routes, perimeter vapor monitoring, if applicable, fencing, etc.). For smaller communities use any and all available information to provide a picture of the impact brownfields have on communities in target areas. Note that the information provided needs to tie back to Narrative Criteria 1.a. Severity of health **or** welfare: ● Include health effects in the community that are possibly directly or indirectly caused by contaminants present at the brownfield sites in the target area. This can include infant mortality rate, incidence of asthma and cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, low life expectancy, etc. ● Do not forget mental health (depression may be linked to the presence of brownfields). ● Is the brownfield site an attraction to crime or unsafe activities or located in an area of high crime – will the project reduce these threats?

	Contact your local health department for any statistics that support your discussion. If data is not available at the target area level, explain how the data used (i.e. city or county level data) is representative of the target area. If your community has a Community Action Program (CAP) that serves sensitive populations, review their Community Needs Assessment. Local and Regional Hospitals also provide a Community Health Needs Assessment for communities. ***See C.12. in the FY2027 FAQs for more examples of health, welfare, environmental, and other demographic information that may help you provide information about your community, and C.13 provides examples of health and/or welfare issues that may result from extreme weather and natural disasters.*** See Section II. *"Health and Welfare" in* *Grant Data Research | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields* Describe how the grant funds will address these threats, i.e., if greenspace is created, correlate how it will promote outdoor recreation, exercise, etc. that will improve the health and welfare of these sensitive populations. Discuss how your project and associated reuse strategy will identify and mitigate human health risks (i.e. via removal of contaminants, prevention of pollution (via zoning, codes, etc.) and prevention of future brownfields through sustainable redevelopment). Can also include the addition of sidewalks or bike lanes that will provide pedestrian safety, better walkability, and transportation alternatives.
2.c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions (5 points)	***Note, if the response does not quantitatively demonstrate that the populations in the target area(s) suffer from a greater-than-normal incidence of cancer, asthma, or birth defects, then the response may only earn up to 2 points.*** If other statistics are elevated, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, lower life expectancy, etc.; mention it and make a potential connection with your brownfields. Work with the local or state health department to gather data on incidence of disease and adverse health conditions for your target area(s). Use negative trends or disproportionate percentages to demonstrate negative health impacts in your target area(s). Compare local data to regional, state and federal statistics. Discuss any higher-than-average health effects in the community that may be caused by contaminants present at the proposed cleanup site(s). For example: if it is known that there is lead in soil, talk about childhood lead exposure and statistics about lead levels in blood, which causes neurological issues and learning difficulties. ***In the FY2027 FAQs, see C.12 for tools for locating this information for your community and Section S "Brownfields, Public Health, Extreme Weather, and Natural Disasters*** Other resources can be found in Section II. Health and Welfare of the Community and Section V. Alignment with Sustainability and Resiliency in: *Grant Data Research | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields* Describe how you have and/or will prioritize brownfields that contribute to impacts on residents who are already experiencing greater cumulative public health threats or greater than normal incidence of disease or adverse health conditions. i.e., if a community is potentially impacted by proximity to a power plant or heavily used highway, as well as

	proximity to brownfields, explain this situation and the urgency for alleviating impacts to their health, such as asthma or heart conditions. Indicate that this grant will allow you to identify and address those issues for those residents impacted. Describe how the cleanup and reuse strategy may help improve the health of the target population. Include elimination of exposure to contaminants through cleanup and any site improvements that will benefit the community, like parks for recreation, trees for air quality, healthy food, or other social determinants of health incorporated into reuse plan.
2.d. Disaster Preparedness (5 points)	Briefly describe any extreme weather events and/or natural disasters that have occurred and explain how they impacted the people living in the target area(s). Describe how this project will improve local resilience to extreme weather and natural disasters: • Projects may include upgrading stormwater controls to reduce local flooding in the target area, increasing local food production, providing landscaping with trees, or landscaping with climate-appropriate native plants and maximizing green space to minimize urban heat index, etc. • See *Plan for Brownfields Redevelopment Success: Resilient Brownfields Planning* • See Section S "Brownfields, Public Health, Extreme Weather, and Natural Disasters" in the FY2027 FAQs for more information. Please refer to Section II "Health and Welfare of the Community" and Section V. Alignment with Sustainability and Resiliency *in Brownfields Grant Research Links* • See *Brownfield Grants as a Tool for Disaster Planning and Recovery* - www.cclr.org If you have considered any measures that will improve local resilience to extreme weather events and natural disasters, mention it in this section and include the page number in your Other Factors Checklist.
Community Engagement (15 points) Use the sample format provided in Section 4.C.2 of the guidelines or use a format that is legible and includes the information on the table provided in the guidelines. This clearly and concisely provides the information requested by EPA and will facilitate the review for those reviewing your application.	
2.e. Program Involvement (5 points)	Identify a variety of *local* partnerships *relevant* to the project. • Partners should have a key interest, commitment and role in the proposed project. For example, if your projected reuse is on housing then you should have a partner with relevant expertise in housing. • Diversify your partnerships by covering multiple aspects of your project to include at least one community-based organization representing residents directly affected by the work in the target area(s). For example, there may be state organizations, governmental departments, health departments, local organizations and businesses, nonprofit organizations, community groups, etc. • Sometimes quality is better than quantity when it comes to partnerships. • If your community is small or remote and no local community organizations exist, address this in this section and show how your community is engaged with someone such as your local/County Chamber of Commerce, citizen groups, environmental organizations, schools, etc. who may be considered as an acceptable substitute for community organizations in this unusual situation. • Have your partners review and provide input on your application! EPA may randomly check up on partners to ensure they are fully aware and knowledgeable of their role in the project.

	• Meet with and discuss your application with your potential partners early. • Include names, if possible, to demonstrate the partners are indeed committed. If your partners are hesitant to provide personal information, such as an email, this information can be claimed as confidential business information (CBI) and will not be part of the final application made available to the public. CBI claims must be asserted at the time the application is submitted (see 4.B.10 in the guidance for more information. • ***See E.4, E.5, and E.6 in the***FY2027 FAQs ***for more information about roles partners may play in the grant process.*** Additional resources include: KSU TAB "Community Engagement Process".pdf and U.S. EPA: Capacity Building Through Effective Meaningful Engagement
2.f. Program Roles (5 points)	Each identified local organization/entity/group should have a *meaningful role* in the project for *site selection, cleanup, and future reuse of the brownfield site(s)*. Meet with and discuss your application with your potential partners early. Explain each organization's role is in decision making. If the development organization will have no role in cleanup decisions, state so. Letters of Commitment from your partners are no longer required. • Discuss how each project partner will be engaged and informed • *See FAQs E.4, E.5, E.6 in* FY2027 FAQs *for more information on "local organizations/entities/groups", partner roles, and meaningful involvement.* • Diversify your partnerships by covering multiple aspects of your project to include at least one community-based and/or community liaison representing residents directly affected by the work in the target area(s). Their roles could be direct discussions with residents to provide site selection information, cleanup disruptions in the area, and opinions regarding site reuse. • Aim to include a broad mix of partners—local citizen groups, environmental organizations, developer associations, chambers of commerce, property owners, and public-sector entities involved in brownfield redevelopment such as local health departments, community colleges or universities, economic development agencies, and local or regional environmental/brownfield programs. Each partner can contribute technical expertise aligned with their discipline. • If your community(ies) is small or remote and no local community organizations exist, address this in this section and show how your community is engaged with someone such as your local Chamber of Commerce, citizen groups, environmental organizations, schools, etc. who may be considered as an acceptable substitute for community organizations in this unusual situation. ***RLF Coalition applications: discuss your plan to keep non-lead coalition members engaged and informed throughout this program***
2.g. Incorporating Community Input (5 points)	Describe the plan to **communicate project progress** to the community, and residents directly affected by the project work. Discuss **how** involved organizations/entities/groups are effective and appropriate to assist with engagement. Some examples of involving the affected/target community include:

	• In-person meetings may be more successful if held in or proximal to each target area or priority brownfield site. • Discuss how you have intentionally involved the community with regards to the brownfield sites in the target area. Mention all the ways you have engaged them in any of the steps of the redevelopment process. • Holding public meetings where the progress/result of the assessment project is explained, engage the community up front in site selection/prioritization and with re-use planning for the sites and target area. • Indicate if you already have a process or community engagement plan that you've successfully used in your community. Explain how your methods are appropriate for your community; i.e., most of your community members work during the day so you schedule your meeting in the evening when more are available to attend; you offer childcare to encourage parents to attend, etc. • Address any language barriers within your targeted community, i.e., provide translation services (meeting invitations, meetings, documents) as needed. If all of your community speaks English, then be sure to mention this so the reviewer doesn't think you've missed this aspect. • Address the needs of sensitive populations - for example, provide ADA accessible meeting space if your targeted community consists of a high percentage of seniors. • Develop a clear, complete and robust community engagement program. *See Section 6 "Community Engagement" in the Brownfields Grant Research Links* • See KSU TAB "Community Engagement Process".pdf and U.S. EPA: Capacity Building Through Effective Meaningful Engagement, Also, socially_distant_engagement_ideas.pdf (epa.gov) is another good resource if needed in your communities. How will you meaningfully solicit, consider, and respond to community input: • ***Just collecting community input is not enough*** – you need to respond to it and use it in a meaningful way. Discuss how you will seek feedback from the community and how those comments will be addressed. EPA places emphasis on community engagement as well as seeking and responding to community input so make sure you address how comments from community members will be addressed to receive maximum points for this section. Do not forget to describe how you incorporated community and partner input into your project. • Public meetings, web sites, social media, newspaper and newsletters are mechanisms you can use to provide updates to the community and ask for feedback/comments. Offer opportunities to provide feedback around the clock (online, email, etc.) to allow people to become familiar with the project and offer comments on their own schedule. • Include frequency of communication and how input will be solicited, considered, and responded to using the various methods described above. • Consider various and alternative methods of reaching and receiving feedback from sensitive populations, such as remote videoconferences, radio, newspapers, street fairs, surveys, etc.
3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS (65 points)	
Program Description and Marketing Strategy (20 points)	
3.a. Program Management (5 points)	• Discuss how your RLF program will operate. Include basic information such as who will fill major roles (RLF Manager, Qualified Environmental Professional, etc.) and what contingencies you have in place if one of your key players leave.

	● What criteria will you use to select borrowers/grantees? *For coalition RLF*s: how will coalition partners be involved in the selection process? ● Discuss how your RLF program will operate. Include basic information such as who will fill major roles (RLF Manager, Qualified Environmental Professional, etc.) and what contingencies you have in place if one of your key players leave. ● Describe your initial plans for loan/subgrants (such as interest rates, loan terms and other financial underwriting conditions). While you'll want to remain flexible, you'll want the reviewer to get a sense for how the RLF will likely operate. ● Discuss your lending practices (i.e., loan processing, documentation and approval, servicing, administrative procedures, and collection and recovery actions) and underwriting principles (i.e., establishing interest rates, repayment terms, fee structures, and collateral requirements) and how you will obtain proof of adequate financial security from borrowers. ● Remember that RLF loans are typically made to borrowers at sites where traditional loans are not available, so the RLF loans should be structured with flexible loan terms which are more likely to meet the needs of the typical brownfield borrower. Whenever possible, consider including an RLF loan or subgrants within a redevelopment financing package. ● As site cleanup financing is often a challenge, structuring a brownfields cleanup RLF loan within part of a larger financing package can make the deal more attractive.
3.b. Revolution of the RLF Program (10 points)	● Discuss the prudent lending practices you intend to incorporate into your RLF to ensure it revolves. For example, discuss your plan for loans vs. subgrants, repayment terms, and other strategies to ensure the fund remains whole and available to make future loans. ● Discuss your RLF Program in the long term and how you plan to make sure it continues to revolve using program income and how you'll report results of the funded projects (outcomes and outputs) to EPA after the cooperative agreement has been closed out.
3.c. Marketing Strategy (5 points)	● Discuss the types of applicants and projects you are targeting for your program. For marketing purposes, it is important to understand which entities will be most interested in receiving an RLF loan or subgrants and/or will be the best candidates for the RLF program. ● Potential borrowers include expanding businesses, local developers, national developers, nonprofit organizations, and public and quasi-public entities. Potential subgrantees can be nonprofit organizations; Indian tribes, or eligible government entities. ● Talk about potential borrowers or subgrantees that have expressed interest in a loan or subgrant for the priority site(s) ● Discuss how you plan to market the program. Marketing outreach can include print-based promotion-such as brochures, newsletters, advertisements and web pages or people-based approaches such as public meetings and invited stakeholder seminars, conferences, and direct telephone calls. Once interest is generated, one-on-one meetings allow potential borrowers and subgrantees to ask questions specific to their projects. ***Please note, a project that does not have interest from borrowers or subgrantees will be evaluated less favorably.***
3.b. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs (25 points)	

Suggest using the Sample Format for Tasks/Activities in Section 4.C.3 for your responses to 3.d through 3.g.	
3.d. Program Implementation (10 pt.)	Confirm that the EPA-funded tasks are eligible, clearly defined, and aligned with your project goals—*and* show that you have a solid plan for addressing the *priority* site(s) in the target area(s). • See the FY2027 FAQs J.1-5 for the explanation of eligible costs for assessment grants and G.11, G.12 in for more information on ineligible activities and uses of brownfield grant funds. • Be realistic with your tasks and number of outputs. If you know that a priority site requires a complex ABCA and cleanup, then consider that in your budget. • Review previous successful grants Resources | KSU TAB - Technical Assistance to Brownfields to get ideas for how to present information in this table in a succinct way. *If applicable*, define which tasks/activities or services will be provided by subawardee(s) • Subawards may be conveyed to eligible entities, such as nonprofits, local government, etc., and must clearly support the project. For more information see Grants Policy Issuance (GPI) 16-01: EPA Subaward Policy for EPA Assistance Agreement Recipients | US EPA *If applicable*, describe the process for setting appropriate stipends for community liaisons, tracking and documenting participant support payments (including receipts), and ensuring these costs don't duplicate support from other Federal, state, Tribal, or local programs. • Indicate the process you will use to determine which entities will receive participant support costs, the reason, and the method of providing assistance. *If applicable*, explain how outside resources (beyond the EPA grant) will support or enhance the project and help ensure the grant is successfully completed. • If a key activity associated with your project is not going to be included in your budget, explain why. For example, if another part of your organization or project partners will be taking care of community involvement activities as an in-kind contribution and is not charging this to the grant, note that. Otherwise, reviewers may wonder how key activities will get accomplished and think you've failed to include key information.
3.e. Anticipated Project Schedule (5 points)	How to describe achievable milestones: • Describe the anticipated project schedule by months or quarters - not years. For example: "Community engagement activities will begin in the 2nd Quarter of the First Year"." Public meetings providing updates on the cleanup will occur bi-annually in Years 2, 3 and 4." • Include a timeline/schedule of milestones demonstrating how you will complete the proposed activities within 5 years. Set realistic milestones. Keep in mind that if you are awarded a grant, the Cooperative Agreement and Workplan that follows will be based on your application. • Include all key activities in your schedule, i.e. such as procuring a Fund Manager and Qualified Environmental Professional, marketing the RLF, community engagement, managing the RLF and loan servicing, etc.
3.f. Task/Activity Lead (5 points)	Identify activity lead(s) and how they are qualified for the roles:

	• **Task lead should be within the applicants' organization**, providing oversight to contractors or sub-awardees as appropriate. If a lead is not with the applicant's organization, include a justification.
3.g. Outputs (5 points)	Clearly identify and quantify the expected outputs for each task—*and* demonstrate a clear connection to the proposed project. • **Outputs are work products that are measurable** and will be done on a set schedule or by a set date. Refer to Section 3.A.(4) of the guidelines for more information. • Avoid listing outputs that will ultimately be unattainable based on the budget (i.e., high number of loans). Keep in mind that if you are awarded a grant, the Cooperative Agreement and Workplan that follows will be based on your application. • If possible, consult with someone knowledgeable about the costs for environmental costs. Your State Brownfield or Tribal Authority may assist you with determining costs. • Correlate outputs with project objectives. If you proposed completing 5 Phase IIs, then you should have 5 Phase II reports at the end of the grant. Examples of deliverables can include: - Generic and site-specific quality assurance plans, as required by the EPA Region - Quarterly progress reports - Loan/subgrant documents (at least initially) - Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) - Administrative Records
3.h. Cost Estimates (15 points)	USE the budget sample table. It will clearly and concisely present your budget in a way that will facilitate review by the EPA reviewer. Do not change the "Budget Categories" in the table, as these are the standard federal budget categories. If a budget category is not relevant, then leave it blank, but do not delete. Link budget amounts to specific tasks discussed in 3.d. and include the basis for each of your estimated costs. ● Feel free to add additional Tasks in the budget table if more than four Tasks are needed. However, too many Tasks may be difficult for reviewers to follow. Typical tasks can be combined, such as Marketing and Community Engagement, Cleanup and Site Oversight, Cleanup Loans and Subgrants Costs: ● Make sure it is clear to the reviewer how you calculated and arrived at the costs for each budget item. ● Explain and justify equipment and/or supply budget items. If you have "supplies", do not exceed $10,000. Anything over $10,000 is considered "equipment" and will require EPA Project Officer approval. Be specific about supplies, not just "miscellaneous supplies." Examples include: markers, pens, post-it notes, ink for printing, and name tags for public meetings. ● Double check that your proposed budget only includes eligible costs. ● At least 50% of the budget must be used to provide loans for the cleanup of eligible brownfield sites and for associated eligible programmatic costs

- Cost estimates that are included that are not reasonable or realistic to implement the grant will be evaluated less favorably. The degree of clarity on how each cost estimate was developed (including direct and/or indirect administrative costs, when applicable) and the extent to which costs per unit are presented in detail. The extent to which each proposed cost estimate is reasonable and realistic to implement the project/grant and clearly correlates with the proposed tasks/activities.
- Check/re-check your MATH! Your budget needs to add up correctly. Cross reference costs outlined in the Budget Table with costs described for each Task for accuracy.
- Be realistic! Do not request unrealistic amounts of money for a task. The reviewer wants to see that you plan to use the funding prudently and efficiently. At the same time, include what you actually think it will cost based on past assessment work in your area. For example, if you live in an area where costs generally run high, explain this and the reason why in your basis of cost statement.

Reminder: Section 3.A.(2) of the EPA RLF Grant Guidelines explains that a local government (NOT state or tribal governments) may use up to 10 percent of its grant funds for health monitoring of populations exposed to hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants from the brownfield site; monitoring and enforcement of any institutional control used to prevent human exposure to any hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant from the brownfield site.

Davis Bacon rates may apply to construction activities associated with cleanup and may inflate cleanup costs if these rates had not been considered for cost estimating in the ABCA. See The Davis-Bacon Act and Brownfields | US EPA for more information.

See FY2027 FAQs C.16 – C.24 for more information on construction costs and Davis Bacon rules.

Travel to the EPA National Brownfields Conference, regional brownfields conferences and other related educational meetings/conferences are legitimate budget items under "Travel". Grantees are expected to attend the National Brownfields Conference. ***See G.8 and G.9 in the FY2027 FAQs for more information about pre-award costs.***

Avoid easy ways to lose points:

- *What's the source of the costs? Provide rationale for the values.*
- *Unit costs in the wrong area, not in Cost Estimates*
- *Indirect costs were not fully explained.*
- *Break down costs per unit. For example- hours x rate = $$*
- *Include details on how costs are developed, with rates for personnel.*
- *If you include any supply costs, specifically identify the supplies.*

Check/re-check your MATH! Cross reference costs outlined in the Budget Table with costs described for each Task for accuracy.

3.i. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results (5 points)	Outputs are work products that are measurable and will be done on a set schedule or by a set date. Make sure outputs correlate with the proposed project and are likely to be achieved in the 4-year grant period. For example, an output could be "conduct 3 community meetings" or "finalize the ABCA" or "complete 1 site cleanup", "# of Remediation Completion Documents", # tons of excavated hazardous waste", "# of acres ready for reuse". Outcomes are results from carrying out the grant; i.e. jobs created and funding leveraged through the economic reuse of sites; acres made ready for reuse; acres of greenspace created for communities; infrastructure investments leveraged, and the minimized exposure to hazardous substances and petroleum contamination. Systems to Track: • Describe a plan and mechanism for tracking and evaluating progress. Specify personnel and mechanisms, such as project management software or spreadsheets, to track your anticipated project schedule. • Examples of tracking, measuring and evaluating are the use of quarterly and annual reports, progress tracking software, team meetings to evaluate progress and make corrections where necessary, ACRES, etc. • Most outcomes are realized after the grant closes out. If applicable, describe how you will report outcomes after closeout, i.e. send photos of groundbreaking, press releases, send progress, and before/after photos and updates. • Don't forget to include how you plan to report progress to ACRES. • Mention how you will monitor progress and implement corrective actions as necessary to get back on track. You may use the KSU TAB Brownfields Inventory Tool (BIT) etools.ksutab.org/tools/bit for tracking progress. **Note: You must be logged into your free ksutab.org account to access BiT.**
4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE (40 points)	
Programmatic Capability (25 points) Applicants may consolidate information for 4.a. – 4.c. into one response.	
4.a. Organizational Capacity (5points)	Describe your organization's capacity and experience with grants, programs, loans, and tasks of similar scale and function. Provide information that will give the reviewer confidence that your organization has the experience and capacity to manage this RLF. • Describe the tools and procedures, i.e. internal audits, management software, etc., that ensure operational and programmatic success. • Describe stability of the organization, city/town, or department. Give the reviewer confidence that the organization or coalition can manage this grant by describing experience with similar programs.
4.b. Organizational Structure (5 points)	Explain how the organization structure will facilitate timely and successful expenditure of funds *and* complete the grant's technical, administrative, and financial requirement. • Describe your organization's structure and departments' roles that will support management of this grant. For example, highlight existing capacity in key functions (technical, administrative, project management, financial, etc.). Outline past grants/projects of similar scale and purpose that your organization has successfully completed. *For RLF Coalition grants*, make sure you also include information on the governance/decision-making structure of coalition partners to document meaningful involvement of all members.

4.c. Description of Key Staff (10 points)	Describe key staff's expertise, qualifications and experience to ensure successful *administration* of the grant. • Include information highlighting staff availability, roles, expertise, qualifications and experience. Include assignments to key roles and the expertise / qualifications / experience of assigned staff. Include their education, years of experience, or other similar projects they have worked on and managed. • Communicate how the level of expertise/qualifications/experience of your key staff will result in timely and successful expenditure of funds as you complete all technical, administrative and financial requirements of the grant: • Present the personnel with specific skills relevant to managing an RLF, including technical oversight, grant administration/reporting, and finance. • Discuss contingency plans in case of key staff turnover or illness. Indicate if there are replacements (and who) or if cross training will occur.
4.d. Acquiring Additional Resources (5 points)	Present a plan for acquiring any additional resources (subrecipients and contractors) that you know you will need for successful completion of the proposed project. ● Describe your organization's system(s)to appropriately acquire any additional expertise and resources (i.e., contractors or subrecipients) required to successfully complete the project. (***Note, if an applicant has selected a contractor or subrecipient without complying with applicable requirements as described in Section 2.B.5., the response will be evaluated less favorably.)*** ● If contractors are needed, state that you will follow required competitive Procurement Standards in 2 CFR 200.317-326 when hiring contractors. For more information see Brownfields Grants: Guidance on Competitively Procuring a Contractor (epa.gov) ● ***See Section D. in the*** FY2027 FAQs ***for more information on Consultant Services and Procurement.*** For more information see Brownfields Grants: Guidance on Competitively Procuring a Contractor (epa.gov)
Past Performance and Accomplishments (15 points) In evaluating an applicant's response to this criterion, in addition to the information provided by the applicant, EPA may consider relevant information from other sources including information from EPA files and/or from other federal or non-federal grantors to verify or supplement information provided by the applicant.	
4.e. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant That Closed in 2016 or Later (15 Points) Do not include information on Targeted Brownfields Assessments, Area-Wide Planning Grants, Job Training Grants, subawards from another Brownfields Grant recipient, or experience as a non-lead member of an Assessment Coalition Grant or RLF Coalition Grant. Do not include information on Brownfields MARC or 128(a) Grants that closed in 2015 or earlier.	
(1) Accomplishments (5 points)	For recipients of an EPA Brownfield Assessment, Cleanup, Revolving Loan Fund, Multipurpose and/or 128(a) Grant, use the three most recent grant(s)(up to 3), and specify the grant number, grant type, year received and period of performance, and amount of grant: ● Highlight the number of sites that were assessed and/or cleaned up. For sites that have been assessed or cleaned up with these grant funds and are now back into productive use, describe their impacts on the surrounding community (jobs created, tax revenue, etc.). ● Include specific outputs and outcomes and if this information isn't accurately reflected in ACRES, explain why.

	• If you are not up to date on ACRES, and/or have no completed ACRES in the past, explain why, and list measures to comply in the future.
(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements (10 points) *This criterion is broken into 2 parts* EPA is likely to check if your reports were submitted as outlined in the cooperative agreement, and accomplishments were reported and reflected in ACRES.	
Compliance (10 points)	Describe the history of your compliance with the workplan, schedule, and terms and conditions under the current/most recent grant(s): • Indicate if expected results were achieved on a timely basis, and progress had been adequately documented in ACRES and/or quarterly reports. • Explain any deviation(s) from the workplan and schedule, and reporting related to past/current brownfield grants and effectiveness of corrective measures taken. Discuss history of submitting all ACRES, quarterly and annual reports, and explanations for untimely reporting. • If the expected results were not achieved, explain how it was resolved and communicated. • Discuss history of completing and submitting deliverables and explain why targets may not have been met. For all open EPA Brownfields Grants, indicate the grant period (start and end date), if funds remain, and the plan to expend the funds on eligible activities by the end of the grant. For all closed EPA Brownfields Grants (including RLF Grants that closed without a Closeout Agreement), indicate if there were funds remaining, the amount of remaining funds, and a brief explanation for why any remaining funds were not expended within the period of performance.
Or 4.f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements That Closed in 2016 or Later (15 points) The period of performance for the organization's financial assistance agreement(s) must have ended in 2016 or later to qualify for this category. Applicants should identify and describe each of their organization's current and/or most recent federally and non-federally funded financial assistance agreements (no more than three) that are most similar in scope and relevance in terms of structure, community engagement, and/or deliverables to the proposed project.	
(1) Purpose and Accomplishments (5 points)	Do not include federal or non-federal assistance agreements where you were a subawardee or partner. You must have been the recipient of the assistance agreement. • Describe the granting entity, amount, activity funded, years of performance. • Describe the history of managing these grants, i.e., federal, state, local, foundation, etc. and accomplishments of that grant. • Describe the scope, outputs, outcomes, and other measures of success, under those grants. • Describe what was accomplished with the funding including whether the expected results were achieved. • Highlight a grant that has an environmental scope or is similar to an EPA Brownfields grant. EPA wants to have confidence your organization knows how to manage grant dollars and meet project outcomes. Try to avoid falling into 4.g. (below) which results in a neutral score.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements (10 points)	Describe your work plan and schedule, and outputs, and if you complied with the terms and conditions: ● Describe the organization's history and progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes within the schedule. ● Confirm that accomplishments are reflected in the required reports ● Include your organization's compliance with timely and acceptable reporting, as required by the awarding agency ● Provide a reasonable explanation for not achieving grant objectives and any corrective measures taken to effectively remedy the situation

Or 4.g. No or Limited Financial Assistance Agreements (8 points)

Affirm that your organization has never received any type of federal or non-federal assistance agreement If your organization has never received a Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreement but you have someone on staff who has managed these types of awards, state that here and refer the reviewer back to Narrative Criteria 4.c. where that person's qualifications should be explained.

Or, Affirm the only financial assistance agreement closed over 10 years ago. If someone on staff has managed these types of awards, state that here and refer the reviewer back to Narrative Criteria 4.c. where that person's qualifications should be explained.

Or, Affirm that your community recently received a grant that has not been completed or not enough time has elapsed to conduct reporting or produce outputs or outcomes, explain here, and provide information on the granting agency, amount, purpose, period of performance, and any other relevant information.

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement (41-84066501) to Kansas State University. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the EPA endorse trade names or recommend the use of commercial products mentioned in this document.