



Equitable Development Activities

Successful brownfields revitalization doesn't just happen. It's planned for.

Approach brownfields revitalization through creative, inclusive, and efficient planning activities.

- Early in the site selection process, consider the range of realistic site reuse options.
- Create a brownfields revitalization plan based on the community's need and vision, and site and surrounding area conditions such as environmental, economic, real estate market, assets, challenges and vulnerabilities. These factors will directly influence how the site is assessed and remediated.

Planning activities focused on brownfields revitalization and as described in this fact sheet are eligible under an EPA Brownfields Assessment or Multipurpose Grant.

Our community needs to:

- Ensure brownfields redevelopment benefits existing residents by addressing the potential for gentrification and displacement.
- Ensure community members' interests and priorities are incorporated into the decisions made about brownfields assessment, cleanup and reuse.

How establishing equitable development priorities can help: Ensuring historically underserved communities benefit from brownfields reuse requires a deliberate process. By directly engaging the residents affected by the brownfield site and prioritizing their needs, the redevelopment process will better serve existing community members.

Influence on brownfields assessment, cleanup, and reuse: Creating an inclusive process for planning and decision-making enhances the voices of community members who may be at risk of displacement. Their priorities will influence which sites are assessed, as well as when and how sites are cleaned up.

What is involved? Community engagement and planning practices that are designed to advance equitable development include:

- Community problem-solving conversations around displacement and gentrification issues.
- Community interviews to gain an understanding of community perceptions, site history and experience, contamination concerns and local aspirations for the future use of the site.
- A community benefits agreement developed via multi-stakeholder engagement which articulates what a community is seeking as remediation and establishes how the community will benefit from a proposed redevelopment.
- Participant support cost stipends for time and expertise shared at workshops and visioning sessions, as well as providing child care and light refreshments, to reduce a barrier to their involvement and help foster an inclusive and sustainable future within their neighborhoods. See [EPA's guidance](#) for providing participant support cost stipends under brownfield grants.
- Environmental justice (EJ) goals setting that prioritize quality of life, community health, local wealth building and engagement in decision-making. Setting EJ goals provides a benchmark to evaluate policies and creates a clear guideline for how community engagement should look and feel.
- A project framework that includes environmental, economic, and social benefits of brownfields redevelopment based on community priorities (such as parks, housing, public health, food access, art, and job opportunities).
- A change-focused action plan that includes the partnerships, funding sources, and implementation steps needed to produce a fair, inclusive and just outcome for the existing community.

When to conduct? Equitable development activities are designed to prevent displacement from redevelopment rather than **react to** displacement after redevelopment occurs. These planning and engagement activities are most helpful in early discussions of brownfield site reuse, e.g., prior to site assessment decisions.

What does it typically cost? Equitable development activities require a robust budget for various and sustained community engagement. Costs will range based on the needs and desires of community members affected by the brownfield site(s). Prioritizing these activities may cost \$50,000-\$100,000 or more.

Who should participate? Typically requires a diverse multi-disciplinary team including community representatives, community engagement specialists, planners, landscape architects, market analysts, financial strategists, and environmental professionals, among others.