

1. Applicant Identification

Sampson County
406 County Complex Road
Clinton, NC 28328

2. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000

3. Location

a) City of Clinton b) Sampson County c) North Carolina

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

- Target Area Information: Census Tracts 37163970600, 37163970700, and 37163970800
- Priority Site Information:
 1. Clinton Rail Distribution, 100 A Fontana Street, Clinton, NC 28328
 2. Southwest Boulevard Staging Site, 1018 & 1105 Southwest Boulevard, Clinton, NC 28328

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Ray Jordan, Interim Economic Development Director
910-592-6451
rjordan@sampsonedc.com
406 County Complex Rd., Suite 130, Clinton, NC 28328

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Sue Lee, Vice Chairperson, Sampson County Board of Commissioners, District 3
910-592-6308
slee@sampsonnc.com
406 County Complex Rd., Suite 110, Clinton, NC 28328

6. Population

Clinton, NC: 8,383 (US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey)

NORTH CAROLINA'S
SAMPSON COUNTY
 OFFICE of the COUNTY MANAGER

7. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	4
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	5
At least 30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area.	9
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	NA

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority
 See Attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications
 Not Applicable.



NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

October 26, 2023

ROY COOPER

Governor

ELIZABETH S. BISER

Secretary

MICHAEL SCOTT

Director

Ray Jordan
Interim Economic Development Director
Sampson County
406 County Complex Rd. Suite 130
Clinton, NC 28328
rjordan@sampsonedc.com

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant – Sampson County

Dear Mr. Jordan

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS) acknowledges and supports Sampson County's application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We understand that your grant will primarily focus on the City of Clinton and, more specifically, the Clinton Rail Distribution and the Southwest Boulevard Staging properties. The purpose of the grant will be to bring revitalization to these long vacant properties, which would be a significant achievement for the County.

The BRS offers technical project guidance to help ensure assessments conducted utilizing grant funds are in accordance with our program requirements throughout the life of your project. Coordination with the BRS is critical to ensuring that the assessments make efficient use of the federal funds awarded. The BRS can also assist with evaluating the benefits of entering specific properties into our State Brownfields Program through a brownfields agreement. A brownfields agreement outlines the controls needed to make the site safe for the intended reuse and is often a marketing tool for developers and instrumental in securing redevelopment financing. Additional tax incentives are also available upon completion of Brownfields redevelopment if completed in the State's Program.

We hope that the City is successfully awarded this grant, but we will continue to support you in your Brownfields redevelopment efforts whether a grant is awarded or not. We truly believe successful Brownfields projects can rejuvenate a community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jordan L. Thompson'.

Jordan Thompson
Brownfields Project Manager

ec: NCDEQ Brownfields Public Outreach Team



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Waste Management
217 West Jones Street | 1646 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1646
919.707.8200



Sampson County, NC
FY24 Brownfields Assessment Grant
Narrative



1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Sampson County is highly regarded for its robust industrial and agricultural history, upon which the County's economy revolves. Geographically, the County is the largest in North Carolina. In its prime, the County provided eastern North Carolina with lush agricultural land and wide-open spaces for industry, which led to its prosperity. In 1740, early settlers from North Ireland set out in search of areas rich in farmland and flowing rivers. Among those early settlers was John Sampson and stepson, Richard Clinton, who proposed the name "Sampson" when Sampson County was established in 1784, after land was annexed from a neighboring county. Settlers to the area raved about the region's cropland and ample timber. The city of Clinton built its foundation from Sampson County's rich agricultural history. Textile mills and manufacturing industries also thrived during this time. Eventually, some manufacturing industries closed, other manufacturers chose to relocate elsewhere, and cropland, while still plentiful, began routinely being used in ways less than beneficial to the community. Concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) were established in the County, slowly becoming a leading industry. The CAFOs within Sampson County emit pollutants negatively impacting residents' health. The closing of the regional textile mills and manufacturing industries not only impacted the region economically, but as industries left, the negative effects of their operations lingered, impacting groundwater and soil many years later. As a result, Sampson County residents face a myriad of environmental challenges associated with industry leaving and increased CAFO use. The community also deals with the broader implications of environmental degradation, consistent devastating hurricanes, and the impact of former environmental practices that are currently unacceptable. The County is labeled as a Tier 1 community, as it is one of the top 40 most distressed communities based on economic well-being within the state.¹

The geographic boundary for this project is the Sampson County limits with a target area focused on the Justice 40 Disadvantaged Census Tracts (CT 37163970600, 37163970700, and 37163970800), which make up the city of Clinton. The target area, Clinton, is the county seat and the largest and oldest city in the county.² Like the County, Clinton has a considerable low-income population, and is racially diverse. The County recognizes a correlation between low educational attainment and poverty, a result that hits the minority and elderly populations hardest. When industry leaves a certain area, it makes space for another one to take its place. For the target area, CAFOs have become a leading industry and the contaminants released from CAFOs are linked to respiratory and cardiovascular ailments.³ The County, like many rural communities across the state is actively working to reinvent and reinvest within their community. According to an article published by Environmental Health Perspective, "concentration of agricultural operations tends to remove a higher percentage of money from rural communities than when the industry is dominated by smaller farm operations, which tend to circulate money within the community."⁴ The County intends to use the EPA Grant funding to assess and remove the environmental issues caused by CAFOs, making way for new companies to establish in the region, provide higher wages and local job opportunities, and mitigate the high poverty rate.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Sampson County is home to numerous abandoned and underused industrial properties. Many of these sites are environmentally impacted by past uses and are waiting to be returned to their former glory. These properties have often

¹ 2023 NC Commerce-Tier Designations Memo

² City of Clinton 2035 Comprehensive Plan

³ Environmental Health Perspectives <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/EHP11344>

⁴ National Library of Medicine <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1817697/>



remained idle for years, and this grant will provide tremendous benefits. Redevelopment of these idle properties, including the priority sites, is a crucial first step in achieving the County's goal of increasing local, quality jobs for residents and promoting nonresidential growth. **An initial windshield survey of the target area conducted by the County identified at least 20 potential brownfield sites.** These potential sites include several gas stations, manufacturing facilities, and hazardous waste sites, all of which pose a significant health risk to community members. Additional sites will be identified and placed on a grant-funded site inventory with a focus on properties closer in proximity to sensitive populations.

The first priority site is the 12.22-acre **Clinton Rail Distribution Site**, located at 100 A Fontana Street in a highly industrial area. The site has been razed and currently contains a vacant concrete slab. The site is surrounded by auto shops, warehouses, and an oil and propane company. The site was used by Hamilton Beach/Proctor Silex from 1963 to 1993 for the manufacture of small appliances in their former 200,000 square foot manufacturing facility. The property remained vacant from 1993 to 1996. In 1996, Hurricane Fran devastated Clinton, and the property sustained massive damage to the eastern half of the main manufacturing building. From 1998 to 2003, Recycling Solutions rented out the property. From 2003 to 2005, Diversified Recycling and Waste used the site. During this time, practices and processes for storage and disposal of hazardous materials varied greatly due to the lack of regulatory oversight across the state. Even though these practices are long gone, the associated contamination continues to impact the region. **Some hazardous materials known to have been used on-site are 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA), diesel fuel, methyl ethyl ketone (MEK), isopropyl alcohol, naphthalene, toluene, xylenes, lacquer thinner, paints, nitric acid, and hydraulic and automotive oils.** The past uses of this site indicate a potential for undiscovered environmental concerns. **Since 2006, the site has remained vacant and unused.** A fence runs the length of the road but does not encompass the entire property allowing full access to the site, which leads to public safety concerns. **The County has received site access to the property**, and they foresee the redevelopment of the site for industrial/warehousing use.

The second priority site is the **Southwest Boulevard Staging Site** (5.84 acres), located at 1018 and 1105 Southwest Boulevard. The site was formerly used as a Concrete Batch Plant called S&W Ready Mix Concrete and Faircloth Construction. **The cement manufacturing industry is the third largest industrial source of pollution and is known for their sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and carbon monoxide contaminants.**⁵ The site contained two former underground storage tanks, which can be directly tied to groundwater and soil contamination from petroleum constituents. No work has been completed to address the on-site contamination, and the status of the contaminants is unknown. The property is unused and vacant. A fence divides the property from the road, but portions of the fence are overgrown with bushes and weeds. As a result of the overgrown vegetation, the integrity of the fence may be compromised, and the public could easily access the property. Residential properties are located within a quarter mile of the property to the north and west. Additionally, there is a nursing and rehabilitation center located to the southeast of the property. **The County has site access to the property for assessment**, and they intend to redevelop it for industrial uses.

iii. **Identifying Additional Sites:** The County will focus on identifying sites for assessment throughout the target area, which is defined by **Climate Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) as Justice40 disadvantaged community.** In preparation of this grant application, the

⁵Cement manufacturing: <https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/cement-manufacturing-enforcement-initiative#:~:text=The%20cement%20sector%20is%20the,nitrogen%20oxide%2C%20and%20carbon%20monoxide>



County conducted a windshield survey of the target area and identified over **20 potential brownfield sites**. During this grant project, a more in-depth, grant-funded site inventory and evaluation ranking criteria process (Budget Task 2) will be established as the County works diligently with target-area residents to identify and prioritize sites within the underserved community. Those properties will be researched further by County staff using the property appraiser's website. The evaluation criteria used to determine which sites are added to the inventory will be based on community need, project partner and resident input, and CEJST and US Census data to ensure underserved communities are benefiting from the project. In the event all target-area sites have been addressed with grant funding, **the County will work with project partners and residents throughout the geographic boundary of the County limits to identify abandoned and underused properties**. Due to its history as primarily an industry- and agricultural-focused community, the County knows there are many underused/abandoned properties with potential for brownfield-related challenges in redevelopment. Once identified, the County will apply the already established evaluation ranking criteria (based on need of the underserved) to determine the order sites will be addressed.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: Sampson County intends to strengthen their industrial base to further support and sustain their local economy. The two priority sites are located within the target area, which is the city of Clinton. The Clinton *2035 Comprehensive Plan* was created in 2015. One of the most important aspects of this plan is to ensure that industry growth occurs within the target area's prime industrial locations. One of the main goals of Sampson County is to encourage nonresidential growth that will result in high quality jobs for residents that provide wages and benefits higher than the County average. With the use of grant funds to initiate development of the two priority sites, Sampson County can encourage infill redevelopment adjacent to these properties. **The Clinton 2035 Comprehensive Plan specifically targets brownfield redevelopment**. The Plan states that the target area's goal is to clean up and reinvest in these properties as doing so "increases local tax bases, facilitates job growth, utilizes existing infrastructure, frees impaired land for development, and improves/protects the environment."⁶ Redevelopment of these brownfields sites will not only enhance economic opportunity but will work to increase adjacent property values, stabilizing land use within the community.⁷

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: With this grant, the County has the potential to greatly benefit eastern North Carolina, which is crucial as this region is projected to grow an average rate of 0.35% per year to a population of 1.48 million by 2029.⁷ Assessment and safe redevelopment of the **Clinton Rail Distribution Site** will attract new industry to the region that seeks to provide a fair wage, good benefits, and safe working environment. This redevelopment will bring both construction and industrial jobs to the area.

Redeveloping the **Southwest Boulevard Staging Site** will entice outside industry to join the County and establish themselves within the community. Redeveloping this site will also provide the target area with permanent industrial jobs and temporary construction jobs. Assessing this site would ensure an accurate understanding of contaminants that remain on the property.

Establishing an economy that can support and sustain the projected growth in the region by providing industry and jobs is vital to the region's economic success. As part of the Justice40 initiative, redeveloping these sites for industrial reuse will create additional jobs so that the high rates of unemployment and underemployment are directly addressed. The County is currently at a

⁶ City of Clinton 2035 Comprehensive Plan

⁷ Eastern NC: <https://www.nceast.org/overview/demographics/>



rate of 9% unemployment, which is higher than the national average of 6%.⁸ Both redevelopments will use **energy efficiency measures** by using green infrastructure. Conditions found during assessment of the target area sites will allow for either renewable energy (RE) or energy efficient (EE) approaches to be incorporated during redevelopment activities.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: Sampson County has a successful history of leveraging funding resources on public projects that have a primary focus on economic development, commerce, and education. The state of North Carolina's Brownfields Redevelopment Section (NCBRS) is a key resource throughout the redevelopment process. If awarded the Assessment Grant, the County will apply for EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grants to address the myriad of sites with historic on-site contamination within the vicinity of each of the priority sites. The County can leverage the Opportunity Zone located near the priority site location and their Tier 1 status to further attract developer support and to use funds from other community grants for additional brownfield redevelopment purposes. The County will apply for Community Development Block Grant funds for demolition of blighted sites. Additional Assessment Grant funding will be sought in the future to assess the numerous other sites in the County. The County will seek out additional funding opportunities in the form of state, federal, and private funding.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The County intends to use existing infrastructure at both priority sites, including **water/sewer, transportation, and power**. The County has the necessary infrastructure to fully support redevelopment in the target area, specifically with a preexisting railway that runs adjacent to the Clinton Rail Distribution site and is within three-quarters of a mile of the Southwest Boulevard Staging site. Additional funds for infrastructure are not needed.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need i. The Community's Need for Funding: The target area has a small population of **8,124**.⁹ Unfortunately, the County does not have the means to address brownfield sites in a safe and effective manner due to the target area's operating budget being allocated for addressing CAFOs throughout the county, and other necessary priorities and services for residents. The County recognizes the need to address these sites because the public health and environmental concerns, financial barriers, clean-up considerations, reuse planning, all of which will continue to be a barrier to outside investment. The County requires the use of EPA Grant funding to take a proactive step toward addressing the numerous brownfield sites within the community. Adversity in the form of environmental contamination has impacted the County, especially the target area, for decades following the abandonment by former industrial operations.

This grant funding and the jobs leveraged from redevelopment of the priority sites will help address the **unemployment rate of 9%** (US 6%).⁹ The target area is in the **79th percentile for the number of unemployed people as part of the labor force**.¹⁰ **The target area's percentage of total households that receive Food Stamps/SNAP benefits is 28%** (US 11%), indicating far too many residents do not receive a living wage and, as a result, are unable to afford necessary food resources.⁹ **Approximately 21% of target area families are living below the poverty level** (US 8.9%).⁹ **Specifically, 28% of all people are below the poverty line** (US 13%).⁹ **The target area median household income is \$34,855**, which is nearly half the national median household income of \$69,021.⁹ **The target area is within the 76th percentile for people in households where their income is at or below the federal poverty level**.¹⁰ Both the County and target area are attempting to address these inequities by planning for new and expanded industrial parks to provide stable, local, high-quality jobs for County residents. Redevelopment of the priority sites will entice new

⁸ EPA EJ Screen Tool

⁹ US Census 2017-2021 American Community Survey

¹⁰ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool



industry to the area, creating permanent and temporary local jobs and helping to lower the unemployment rate.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Sampson County faces many challenges within its expansive footprint. The target area's **sensitive populations are the elderly, the impoverished, and minorities**. In the target area **28% of residents are above the age of 62** (US 20%); **39% are African American** (US 13%); and **28% of all people live below the poverty line** (US 13%).¹¹ The target area has seen increased hurricane-related concerns from progressively worsening storm systems like Hurricane Matthew and Florence (2016 & 2018), which showcase the critical service gap of medical locations, disproportionately high cumulative environmental impacts, and lack of community resilience. This grant will allow the County to properly address the welfare of sensitive populations and redevelop brownfield sites located within the County that have not been addressed.

Both priority sites rank above the **90th percentile for community members that have less than a high school education**.¹² The rates of educational attainment can be directly related to the need within the community for increased industrial and manufacturing jobs. The target area's high unemployment rate of 9% (US 6%) and low educational attainment can directly impact target-area safety.¹¹ Sampson County is in the 44th percentile for safety, meaning that 56% of municipalities within the state are more safe.¹³ The rate of crime within the target area is 40.53 per 1,000 residents during a standard year.¹³ Using the EPA Grant to assess the two priority sites will allow the County to safely encourage the redevelopment of the two sites that have long remained unaddressed. By utilizing this grant funding, the County can attain their goal of establishing jobs and leveraging additional resources for quality jobs to address the unemployment rates.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Both priority sites were formerly used for industrial purposes and are associated with the increased use of hazardous chemicals that were likely not appropriately stored, used, and disposed of. Sensitive populations are most at risk to impacts of environmental contamination, and these sites could be impacting all community members, especially if left unaddressed. The priority sites are located in areas above the 81th percentile for people ages 18 years and older who have been told they have heart disease.¹⁴ The **Clinton Rail Distribution Site** and its surrounding neighborhood is in the 74th percentile for low life expectancy, and the **Southwest Boulevard Staging Site** and its surrounding neighborhood is in the 85th percentile for low life expectancy.¹⁴ Both priority sites are located within the **75th weighted percentile of people who have been told they have asthma**.¹⁴ The chemical constituents historically used at both priority sites can be directly tied back to increased cases of **asthma**, most likely due to the ozone index of both sites being above the 40th percentile.¹² The number one leading cause of death in the County (**target area data is not available**) is **cancer** with a rate of 185.9 per 100,000 population, which is higher than the state's rate of 165.1.¹⁵ The EJ Screen Report shows the target area is in the **58th percentile in the state for cancer risk**. Many of the suspected brownfield properties, including both of the priority sites, have formerly used/stored petroleum products, which are known to have constituents that are carcinogenic. This grant will positively impact community members who are experiencing health conditions by allowing County staff to strategically target employers who will provide quality health care and diverse employment options to the community.

¹¹ US Census 2017-2021 American Community Survey

¹² EPA EJ Screen Tool

¹³ <https://crimegrade.org/safest-places-in-sampson-county-nc/>

¹⁴ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

¹⁵ County Health Department Strategic Plan 2022-2026 https://cms4files.revize.com/sampsoncounty/document_center/Health/2023/Strategic%20Plan%202022-2026%20Final.pdf



(3) Environmental Justice: a. Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: The target area is home to a large minority population that faces **environmental justice issues in the form of low income, persistent poverty, and high unemployment**. The County understands that in order to address Justice40 initiatives, they must address these concerns. The County and target area are also dealing with disproportionate impacts from climate change. The County is located in the North Carolina coastal plain and is constantly on the verge of yet another “100-year storm” and has been impacted with devastating flooding from Hurricanes Matthew and Florence in 2016 and 2018.

The priority sites are located within the 78th percentile of Risk Management Plan proximity and within the 52nd percentile of proximity to underground storage tanks.¹⁶ Both priority sites are above the 37th percentile of proximity to hazardous waste sites.¹⁶ Across the County, but specifically near the target area, there are numerous CAFOs. These operations have historically been located within **low-income communities and communities of color like Clinton**. The large corporations that operate the CAFO facilities are lured into small minority communities due to cheap real estate, minimal environmental oversight, and little pushback from residents who have a limited understanding of the negative impacts associated with the CAFO industry. These CAFO operations have been documented to create air, water quality, and mental health concerns across the region.¹⁷ **Within the target area, there are approximately 40 sites under the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) regulatory review.** NCDEQ sites located in the target area consist of various hazardous sites, filling stations, properties associated with underground storage tanks, dry cleaning facilities, and other waste facilities.

b. Advancing Environmental Justice: This grant money will lead to new employment opportunities that will directly impact environmental inequities by providing more accessible job opportunities. This grant will help directly determine how the community addresses environmental contamination by providing the community with increased economic capital that will directly impact the County’s economy. Additionally, the redevelopment of both priority sites **will not displace** any target area residents or active businesses.

b. **Community Engagement** i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles: The following local organizations are a sampling of the committed organizations who will assist in the site prioritization, identification, community outreach, and future reuse planning during this project.

Name of Org.	Point of Contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Clinton-Sampson Chamber of Commerce (CSCC)	Matt Stone, mstone@clintonsampsonchamber.org	The Clinton-Sampson Chamber aids in economic advancement within the region and will aid reuse planning . CSCC’s goal is to promote community growth through economic advancement and advocacy through fostering a pro-business climate and making positive impacts on the community.
Clinton 100	Chuck Spell, spell@hogslat.com	The Clinton 100 works to establish local community growth and will aid with site inventory .
South River EMC	Cathy O’Dell, codell@sremc.com	South River EMC is a locally owned and operated electric cooperative and will aid with outreach . South River EMC is a locally owned and operated electric cooperative with a mission to provide safe, reliable, and competitively priced electricity.
NC Southeast	Steve Yost, stevey@ncse.org	NC Southeast is an economic development organization providing leadership through marketing and collaborative regional initiatives that support the creation of new jobs, generate capital, and secure new business locations, and will aid outreach .
Sampson Connect	Lisa Turlington, lturlington@sampsoncc.edu	Sampson Connect is a local grassroots partnership created to establish organizations within the County and will aid with site inventory .

¹⁶ EPA EJ Screen Tool

¹⁷ NC Environmental Justice Network <https://ncejn.org/cafos/>



iii. Incorporating Community Input: The County believes that community support drives success and that a strong line of communication among all residents and community stakeholders is important. Underserved residents, those most affected by the project living within the target area of this grant, will be well-informed of brownfield decision-making and, in turn, will be afforded an opportunity to provide crucial input and suggestions. To further support the significant role the County and target area communities will play within the implementation of this grant, a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline planned community engagement activities, a plan for project scheduling, a project background, and the community stakeholders. The County is dedicated to transparent and inclusive communication with the local community, particularly underserved residents and groups directly impacted by the project. One of the goals of the target area’s 2035 Comprehensive Plan emphasizes involvement of its citizens in the decision-making processes, which can be achieved through community meetings. This was shown during the creation of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, when a diverse array of the target areas community members provided constructive feedback, allowing residents opinions to be heard and considered. The CIP will leverage various outreach methods, including online platforms, virtual town halls, and surveys, to ensure effective engagement. The County is committed to continuing its active soliciting, thoughtful consideration, and prompt responses to community input, fostering a meaningful alternative to in-person community engagement throughout the grant period. The Plan will establish community needs and ensure that tasks like writing down meeting minutes, recording community member input, and addressing suggestions are completed in an appropriate and timely manner. The County will conduct quarterly Brownfield Project Team meetings and address community input that will benefit the target area’s most sensitive populations. Community outreach will encourage residents to provide input for potential brownfield sites. Suggestions will be added to a running site inventory list for the community, and the County’s Brownfield Project Team and supporting partners will prioritize suggestions based on community need. If necessary, the County will communicate directly with target area residents to further discuss needs and suggestions.

Establishing effective community outreach is a top priority within the County. The County will inform residents of all brownfield-related decision-making through multiple forms of communication. Sampson County will include a specific brownfields page on their economic development website and will leverage various social media platforms to increase reach. By using multiple forms of communication, the County will convey information in an effective and efficient manner for all residents. The County has maintained a strong sense of community engagement by using these communication efforts, which have proven highly successful. County staff will provide updates and information regularly, including at County Commissioners meetings, community education meetings, and charrettes/visioning sessions. The County will post all contact information regarding all brownfield redevelopment projects so that the public may engage with their government officials through the redevelopment process. If social distancing practices are still in place, the County has the capacity to conduct virtual meetings, provide informational brochures, and update community members so they stay well informed.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Outreach	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The County’s Brownfield Project Director will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfield Project website, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). County staff will lead the community meetings to keep



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	the public informed about project plans and updates. Supplies are budgeted for the printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created within 3 months of award (upon completion, a more concrete schedule will follow). Community Meetings held in the 2 nd , 4 th , 6 th , 8 th , 10 th , 12 th , and 14 th quarters. Website and outreach materials will be created in the 1 st quarter and posted monthly throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> County: Ray Jordan, Interim Director Econ. Dev., Brownfields Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, Brownfield Website, 7 Community Meetings, Brochures/Handouts, Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA required Quarterly Reports.
Task 2: Site Inventory & Assessment	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The County’s Brownfield Project Director will work with the residents living in the target area to create a site inventory. Abandoned and underused properties identified by the residents will be researched further by County staff. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with County staff and residents to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine the order in which the sites will be addressed. The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs which will include the SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meeting held in the 2 nd quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process; the evaluation ranking process and assessments begin in the 3 rd quarter and continue throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the Sampson County: Ray Jordan, Interim Director Economic Development, Brownfields Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List, 20 Phase I ESAs; 1 Generic QAPP; 9 Phase II ESAs, including SS-QAPP; Site Access Agreements; and Property Eligibility Determinations.
Task 3: Remediation/Reuse Planning	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, developing an inventory of site assets and infrastructure, identifying potential brownfield site reuse options, assessing market conditions, analyzing opportunities and constraints, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the County in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions to be held for key properties. A planner will work with the underserved community to create Site Reuse Plans, a Market Study, and the Brownfield Revitalization Plan.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Charrettes begin in 6 th quarter and continue throughout grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from Ray Jordan, the Sampson County Interim Director of Economic Development, Brownfields Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 2 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 1 BF Rev. Plan, 2 Site Reuse Plans, 1 Market Study
Task 4: Programmatic Support	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The County will procure an EC to assist with the Brownfield Grant Project. The County’s Brownfield Project Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The consultant will assist the County in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the four-year term of the grant. The County staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend three national/regional/grantee brownfield training conferences/workshops.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> ACRES Reporting begins in the 1 st quarter, and Quarterly Reporting begins in the 2 nd quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting and Forms created in the 5 th , 9 th , and 13 th quarters, and during final close out.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Sampson County: Ray Jordan, Interim Director Econ. Dev., Brownfields Project Director



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iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three conferences.
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b. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project *based on past Brownfield Projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.* The budget for this project includes travel, supplies, and contractual costs only. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the budget will be spent on the **Site Inventory & Assessment Task**, and 33% of the budget will be spent on **area-wide planning and reuse activities through the Planning Task**. **Task 1 Outreach:** Contractual: Community Involvement Plan \$4,000 (32hrs x \$125); Brownfield Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Posts \$2,000 (16hrs x \$125); 7 Community Education Meetings \$10,500 (7 meetings @ \$1,500/meeting); Supplies: Outreach Supplies \$1,000 (Paper \$25/box, Color Printouts \$1/sheet). **Task 2 Site Inventory & Assessment:** Contractual: Brownfield Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool Creation \$10,000 (80hrs x \$125). 20 Phase I ESAs \$3,500 each for a total of \$70,000; 1 Generic QAPP \$5,500; 9 Phase II ESAs, including SS-QAPP at \$22,000 each for a total of \$198,000. **Task 3 Remediation/Reuse Planning:** Contractual: 2 ABCAs \$6,500 for a total of \$13,000; 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes \$5,000 (\$2,500/meeting); 1 Brownfields Revitalization Plan at \$85,000 (Planner: 300hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 75hrs x \$200, Environmental Professional: 125hrs x \$200); 2 Site Reuse Plans \$40,000 (Planner: 100hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 25hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 15hrs x \$125; \$20,000/plan); 1 Market Study \$20,000 (Planner: 100hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 40hrs x \$125). **Task 4 Programmatic Support:** Contractual: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$24,000 (192hrs x \$125). Travel: Two staff to attend three training events/conferences \$12,000 (flights at \$800, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/night, incidentals and per diem at \$75/day [4 days] x 2 attendees x 3 events).

Category	Tasks				Totals
	<i>Outreach</i>	<i>Site Inventory & Assessment</i>	<i>Remediation/Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	
Travel				\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$1,000				\$1,000
Contractual	\$16,500	\$283,500	\$163,000	\$24,000	\$487,000
Total Budget	\$17,500	\$283,500	\$163,000	\$36,000	\$500,000

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule, the County’s internal Brownfields Team, which will include the EC, will meet quarterly to track all **outputs identified in 3.a.** using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the projects schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site-specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. The outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not being completed in an efficient manner, the County has countermeasures in place to address this problem. The County will make monthly calls to their EPA Project Officer and, if needed, will create an EPA Corrective Action Plan to help the project to get back on schedule.



4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii. Description of Key Staff: Sampson County will use two staff members to guide and implement all necessary grant work with a goal of serving as a catalyst and resource for business development and growth within the County. **These employees have experience in brownfield redevelopment and have the explicit capacity to undertake and successfully implement the EPA Assessment Grant.** Ray Jordan, Interim Director of Economic Development for Sampson County, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Director** and will manage the day-to-day operations required of the grant. Mr. Jordan has worked for the County for 24 years and served as president of the Sampson Arts Council Board of Directors. David Clack, Director of Finance, will serve as the **Brownfield Finance Officer** and will be responsible for the successful expenditure of funds and allocation of appropriate resources. Mr. Clack has a degree in accounting and has held his current position as Director of Finance since 2009. The elected officials and appointed public officials form a strong web of support. A qualified environmental contractor will be used to ensure all technical and reporting aspects of the grant implementation are completed accurately.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The County will procure a qualified environmental contractor and subcontractors to assist with technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment. Procurement procedures will comply with both the local contracting and procurement process and also with EPA requirements for “Professional Service” including 2 CFR §§ 200 and 1500. Redevelopment of the target area will emphasize growth in the downtown area through its small businesses, creating permanent local job opportunities for residents. Additionally, during redevelopment activities, temporary construction jobs will be created and available to residents looking for work in that field. The County recognizes the importance of ensuring that the benefits of this grant extend beyond environmental improvement to meaningful economic and social impacts for the community. This is evident by its commitment to fostering strong labor practices, supporting local hiring and procurement by partnering with local hiring organizations, and creating educational and workforce opportunities as noted in their Comprehensive Plan.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements (1) Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2021, the County received a \$1.28 million grant from the NC Commerce Industrial Development Fund (IDF) for new road construction and a water and sewer extension project. This grant will be used to extend roadway into the newly acquired 120-acre site at the Sampson Southeast Business Center in the target area. This grant money will be used as part of an anchor to the County’s future economic development efforts. The project is on track for the year and is expected to be completed in November 2023. Sampson County was also awarded a \$265,112 grant for the Sampson Southeast Business Center SITE Development in 2022 from the Golden LEAF Foundation. This grant money will be used to aid Sampson County in clearing and grading an approximately 10-acre portion of a larger parcel within the 120-acre Sampson Southeast Business Center industrial park. The project is expected to create approximately 50 jobs and \$7.5 million in capital investment. The project is in its early stages the County is working to gain interested businesses. (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: Sampson County has successfully implemented all necessary work plans, schedules, terms and conditions, and any additional steps required regarding the implementation of the grants they have applied for. All grants have remained in compliance, and funding has been used to the extent possible. Mr. Jordan has a plethora of skills in regard to grant and project management and will be proactively monitoring all activities associated with the Assessment Grant.



Sampson County, NC
FY24 Brownfields Assessment Grant
Threshold Criteria



Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. The County of Sampson, North Carolina, is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a local government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64.
- b. The County is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement

Sampson County is working hard to continue to establish themselves as a thriving agricultural community. The County believes that community support drives success and that a strong line of communication among all residents and community stakeholders is important. Underserved residents, those most affected by the project living within the target area of this grant, will be well-informed of all brownfield decision-making and, in turn, will be afforded an opportunity to provide crucial input and suggestions. To further support the significant role the Sampson County and target area (City of Clinton) communities will play within the implementation of this grant, a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline planned community engagement activities, a plan for project scheduling, a project background, and the community stakeholders. The County is dedicated to transparent and inclusive communication with the local community, particularly underserved residents and groups directly impacted by the project. One of the goals of the target area's 2035 Comprehensive Plan emphasizes involvement of its citizens in the decision-making processes, which can be achieved through community meetings. This was shown during the creation of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, when a diverse array of the target areas community members provided constructive feedback, allowing residents opinions to be heard and considered.¹ The CIP will leverage various outreach methods, including online platforms, virtual town halls, and surveys, to ensure effective engagement. The County is committed to continuing its active soliciting, thoughtful consideration, and prompt responses to community input, fostering a meaningful alternative to in-person community engagement throughout the grant period. The Plan will establish community needs and ensure that tasks like writing down meeting minutes, recording community member input, and addressing suggestions are completed in an appropriate and timely manner. The County will conduct quarterly Brownfield Project Team meetings and address community input that will benefit the target area's most sensitive populations. Community outreach will encourage residents to provide input for potential brownfield sites. Suggestions will be added to a running site inventory list for the community, and the County's Brownfield Program Team and supporting partners will prioritize suggestions based on community need. If necessary, the County will communicate directly with target area residents to further discuss needs and suggestions.

Establishing effective community outreach is a top priority within the County. The County will inform residents of all brownfield-related decision-making through multiple forms of communication. Sampson County will include a specific brownfields page on their economic development website and will leverage various social media platforms to increase reach. By using multiple forms of communication, the County will convey information in an effective and efficient manner for all residents. The County has maintained a strong sense of community

¹ Clinton 2035 Comprehensive Plan



Sampson County, NC
FY2024 US EPA Brownfields Assessment Threshold Criteria

engagement by using these communication efforts, which have proven highly successful. County staff will provide updates and information regularly, including at County Commissioners meetings, community education meetings, and charrettes/visioning sessions. The County will post all contact information regarding all brownfield redevelopment projects so that the public may engage with their government officials through the redevelopment process.

If social distancing practices are still in place, Sampson County has the capacity to conduct virtual meetings, provide informational brochures, and update community members and residents so that the community is well informed. If social distancing or virtual meetings are required to ensure public safety, the County is able to ensure that community outreach continues throughout the grant project.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

Sampson County, North Carolina, affirms that the County does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not Applicable.