

**Deborah C. Stone, Director**

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Email: environment@cookcountyl.gov • www.cookcountyl.gov/environment

NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET (3-page limit, single spaced)

1. Applicant Identification:

Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability
69 West Washington Street, Suite 1900
Chicago, Illinois 60602

2. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type Indicate: Assessment Coalition
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$1,481,595

3. Location:

The geographic boundary of the project will include the south and southwest portions of suburban Cook County, which is a county located in northeastern Illinois. For the purposes of this application, the geographic boundary will consist of the following political townships in suburban Cook County: Rich Township, Bloom Township, Thornton Township, Bremen Township, Orland Township, Lemont Township, Palos Township, Worth Township, Stickney Township and Lyons Township.

Lead applicant: Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability (Geographic area includes all of Cook County)

Coalition member: Southwest Conference of Mayors (Geographic area includes the following municipalities within Cook County, Illinois: Village of Alsip, Village of Bedford Park, City of Blue Island, Village of Bridgeview, City of Burbank, Village of Chicago Ridge, Village of Crestwood, Village of Evergreen Park, City of Hickory Hills, City of Hometown, Village of Justice, Village of Lemont, Village of Merrionette Park, Village of Oak Lawn, Village of Orland Hills, Village of Orland Park, City of Palos Heights, City of Palos Hills, Village of Palos Park, Village of Willow Springs, and Village of Worth)

Coalition member: South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (Geographic area includes the following municipalities within Cook County, Illinois: City of Blue Island, Village of Burnham, City of Calumet City, Village of Calumet Park, City of Chicago Heights, Village of Ford Heights, Village of Glenwood, City of Harvey, Village of Hazel Crest, Village of Homewood, Village of Lansing, Village of Lynwood, Village of Matteson, Village of Midlothian, City of Oak Forest, Village of Olympia Fields, Village of Park Forest, Village of Phoenix, Village of Richton Park, Village of Robbins, Village of Sauk Village, Village of South Holland, Village of Steger, Village of Summit, Village of Tinley Park, and the Village of University Park)

Coalition member: Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation (Geographic area includes all Southland municipalities within suburban Cook County, including: Village of Alsip, Village of Bedford Park, City of Blue Island; Village of Bridgeview, Village of Burnham; City of Calumet City; Village of Calumet Park, Village of Calumet Park; City of Chicago Heights; Village of Chicago Ridge, City of Country Club Hills, Village of Crestwood, Village of Dixmoor, Village of Dolton, Village of East Hazel Crest, Village of Evergreen Park, Village of Flossmoor, Village of Ford Heights; Village of Forest View, Village of Glenwood, City of Harvey, Village of Hazel Crest, City of Hickory Hills, City of Hometown, Village of Homewood; Village of Justice, Village of Lansing;

TONI PRECKWINKLE

PRESIDENT

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Lemont, Village of Lynwood, City of Markham, Village of Matteson, Village of Merrionette Park, Village of Midlothian, City of Oak Forest, Oak Lawn, Village of Olympia Fields, Village of Orland Hills, Village of Orland Park, City of Palos Heights, City of Palo Hills, Village of Palos Park, Village of Park Forest; Village of Phoenix, Village of Posen, Village of Richton Park, Village of Riverdale, Village of Robbins, Village of Sauk Village, Village of South Chicago Heights, Village of South Holland, Village of Steger, Village of Summit, Village of Thornton, Village of Tinley Park, Village of University Park, and Village of Worth.

4. Coalition Members' Target Areas and Priority Site Information

Coalition Member	Target Area	Priority Brownfield
Cook County	Village of Robbins	Abandoned grocery store: 3050 S Claire Boulevard Robbins, IL
	Village of Posen	Closed gas station in Posen: 2350 Walter Zimny Drive Posen, IL
Southwest Conference of Mayors	City of Blue Island	Former Landfill: 12255 Division St, Blue Island, IL 60406
	Village of Alsip	Industrial Property, Fleet Maintenance: 4190 West 123rd Street Alsip, IL
South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority	Calumet City,	Former Sears Department Store & Auto Center: 2 River Oaks Center Dr, Calumet City, IL 60409
	Village of Burnham	Former Wire Mill Property: 14146 South Mackinaw Ave Burnham, IL
Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation	Village of Park Forest	Former Shopping Center with Drycleaner, Current Vacant Lot: 2470 S Western Avenue Park Forest, IL
	City of Chicago Heights	Future Senior Housing Site: 1802 Aberdeen Street Chicago Heights, IL

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Ms. Cristin Williams

(312) 603-4944

Cristin.Williams@cookcountyil.gov

Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability

69 West Washington Street, Suite 1900

Chicago, Illinois 60602

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Ms. Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President

(312) 603-6400

Pamela.Cummings@cookcountyil.gov

118 North Clark Street, Room 537

Chicago, Illinois 60602

6. Population

Cook County Total Population (per 2020 Decennial Census): 5,275,541

Coalition Member	Target Area	Population (per 2020 Decennial Census)
Cook County	Village of Robbins	4,629
	Village of Posen	5,632
Southwest Conference of Mayors	City of Blue Island	22,558
	Village of Alsip	19,063
South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority	Calumet City	36,033
	Village of Burnham	4,046
Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation	Village of Park Forest	21,687
	City of Chicago Heights	27,480

V.B. Other Factors and Considerations

Other factors include:

- whether the community population is 10,000 or less – Robbins, Posen, and Burnham have populations below 10,000. **See p. 6, Section 2.a.i**
- whether 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); **See p. 2, Section 1.a.ii.**
- whether the priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain; **See p. 4, Section 1.a.iii.**
- whether reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy; **See p. 3, Section 1.a.iii; p. 6, Section 1.b.ii**



**Subject: State Acknowledgement Letter for the Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability
FY2024 US EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant Application**

11/8/2023

Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability
ATTN: Deborah Stone
69 West Washington Avenue, Suite 1900
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Deborah Stone,

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has received your request for a letter of acknowledgement for an upcoming Assessment Coalition Grant application to U.S. EPA. (Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability (Lead Applicant), Southwest Conference of Mayors, South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority, and the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation) is applying for a \$1,481,595 Assessment Coalition Grant.

The grant will be an Assessment Coalition grant for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum.

Illinois EPA acknowledges Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability's efforts to obtain federal Brownfields funds for this project. If you have any questions, I may be contacted at the above address or telephone numbers below, or at Jacob.fink@illinois.gov.

Sincerely,

Jacob Fink
Brownfield Program Administrator
Bureau of Land/Office of Site Evaluation
Office# (217) 785-8726
Cell# (217) 986-0818
Jacob.fink@illinois.gov



1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

1.a. Coalition Members, Target Areas, and Brownfields

1.a.i. Coalition Members: The Coalition grant members consist of the Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability (CCDES) as the lead member and non-lead members including the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA), the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation (CSEDC), and the Southwest Conference of Mayors. The Coalition is applying for \$1,481,595 in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Coalition Assessment Grant funds for environmental site assessment activities. This funding will enable the Coalition's resource-constrained non-lead members to utilize CCDES's expertise, maximize resources, and benefit from a coordinated brownfields effort. *The non-lead members do not have technical staff to assess and cleanup brownfields or manage contracts and vendors to conduct these activities.* CCDES has operated a brownfield program since 2013 and has demonstrated the ability to lead impactful brownfield projects throughout Cook County. The **Southwest Conference of Mayors (SWCM)** is comprised of the Chief Elected Officials from 21 communities in southwest suburban Cook County. The SWCM was formed to improve services for their citizens and to promote managerial expertise for the individual and joint benefit of the Member Municipalities. The following municipalities are included: Alsip, Bedford Park, Blue Island, Bridgeview, Burbank, Chicago Ridge, Crestwood, Evergreen Park, Hickory Hills, Hometown, Justice, Lemont, Merrionette Park, Oak Lawn, Orland Hills, Orland Park, Palos Heights, Palos Hills, Palos Park, Willow Springs, and Worth. The **South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA)** is an intergovernmental agency established in 2012 that facilitates the redevelopment of acquired properties through strategic partnerships with developers, community organizations, lenders, and local governments. The SSLBDA operates in formal partnership with the Southland Development Authority, a not-for-profit organization designed by business, civic, and political leaders across southern Cook County working to grow the economy of the South Suburbs. It focuses on investment in industry, workforce, housing, and communities. The mission of the SSLBDA is to reduce vacancy, stabilize the tax base, and enhance economic activities in the Southland Region through the acquisition and redevelopment of under-utilized properties in partnership with local governments. The Land Bank has the following members: Blue Island, Burnham, Calumet City, Calumet Park, Chicago Heights, Ford Heights, Glenwood, Harvey, Hazel Crest, Homewood, Lansing, Lynwood, Matteson, Midlothian, Oak Forest, Olympia Fields, Park Forest, Phoenix, Richton Park, Robbins, Sauk Village, South Holland, Steger, Summit, Tinley Park, and University Park). The mission of the **Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation (CSEDC)** is to identify, organize and mobilize public and private resources that will result in the creation and expansion of manufacturing and logistics companies along with new retail and commercial growth, thereby providing economic growth and sustainable careers in the Southland. The CSEDC promotes economic growth and sustainable careers through the creation and expansion of manufacturing and logistics companies and new retail/commercial growth. The CSEDC promotes smart growth of all communities in Cook County's Southland Region, such as the Alsip, Bedford Park, Blue Island; Bridgeview, Burnham; Calumet City; Calumet Park, Calumet Park; Chicago Heights; Chicago Ridge, Country Club Hills, Crestwood, Dixmoor, Dolton, East Hazel Crest, Evergreen Park, Flossmoor, Ford Heights; Forest View, Glenwood, Harvey, Hazel Crest, Hickory Hills, Hometown, Homewood; Justice, Lansing; Lemont, Lynwood, Markham, Matteson, Merrionette Park, Midlothian, Oak Forest, Oak Lawn, Olympia Fields, Orland Hills, Orland Park, Palos Heights, Palos Hills, Palos Park, Park Forest; Phoenix, Posen, Richton Park, Riverdale, Robbins, Sauk Village, South Chicago Heights, South Holland, Steger, Summit, Thornton, University Park, and Worth.

1.a.ii. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas: Cook County first saw significant economic growth in the early 1900s. The Southland attracted large-scale heavy industrial employers including Inland Steel, Thrall Car Manufacturing Company, the Stauffer Chemical Company, and Ford Motors. During World War II, the area's factories produced steel, chemicals, and other critical war materials. Vibrant residential communities with ample jobs, the area was home to a mix of blue-collar workers – Italian, Polish, Slovak, Irish, and African American – and boasted rich retail, arts, and cultural amenities. After World War II, planned communities designed for returning veterans sprung up throughout the Southland. For example, the Target Area of Park was the first post-war planned community, and its innovative design has been recognized and used as a model for towns throughout the world. In Park Forest, the 1950s saw the construction of thousands of small, single-family starter homes. However, for nearly 40 years, Park Forest remained a somewhat transient community, with upwardly mobile families moving to large homes in neighboring suburbs. By the 1970s, factories and businesses were closing or moving out of the Southland on a large scale as the steel industry quickly declined amid

increasing foreign competition. The exodus of heavy industry left behind large swaths of vacant, blighted land – sites that remain today as potentially contaminated brownfields. Residents moved elsewhere in search of jobs, with many relocating to Indiana or Chicago’s northern suburban region. Once bustling commercial retail plazas in the Southland saw a gradual decline, with the area seeing the closure of significant regional shopping malls over the past 50 years, including Dixie Square Mall in Harvey (closed 1978), Brenttown Mall in Tinley Park (closed circa 1993), and Lincoln Mall in Matteson (closed 2015). Some remaining shopping centers, such as River Oaks Center in Calumet City, have faced years of decline following the closure of major anchor retail stores.

Many communities in the Southland Region have experienced over 50 years of declining populations, resulting in decreasing in tax bases and significant financial challenges. Although many Southland municipalities have ambitious corridor redevelopment plans, they have limited capacity to implement such work without assistance from County, State, and Federal resources. Assessment of abandoned and underutilized sites in the Southland will help reduce or eliminate the environmental risk associated with these properties. Removing this significant technical and financial hurdle will help spur much-needed reinvestment in Target Area communities.

The Target Areas for the grant include **Robbins and Posen**. These communities are located south of the adjacent Calumet-Saganashkee Channel. The Cal-Sag Channel, as it is more commonly known, is a 16-mile drainage and barge shipping canal which serves to connect the Little Calumet River and Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Following years of industrial use, the Cal-Sag Channel is classified as an “Impaired Waterway” by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) due to the elevated presence of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), mercury, bacteria, as well as low dissolved oxygen content. Robbins and Posen are neighboring municipalities, geographically separated by Midlothian Creek and Metra commuter rail lines. Major roadway systems cut through these communities, including Interstate 294, Interstate 57, and Illinois Route 83. The entire municipalities of both Robbins and Posen are identified as disadvantaged per the Council on Environmental Quality’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). According to the IEPA Document Explorer, seven regulated sites were identified in Robbins, with 19 regulated sites present in Posen. These sites include Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Program sites, voluntary Site Remediation Program (SRP) sites, and other potentially contaminated sites. According to data collected using USEPA’s EnviroMapper, at least 11 facilities in Robbins and 26 facilities in Posen have reported hazardous waste handling under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

The Target Areas of SWMC include **Blue Island and Alsip**. These communities are adjacent to each other and also border the Cal-Sag Channel. Major highways transect the area, with Interstate 294 running through Alsip, and Interstate 57 located in Blue Island. Several interstate freight rail lines run through Blue Island, with Metra commuter rail also present. The areas function as a transportation hub has spurred significant commercial and industrial development since the early 1900s. Several census tracts in Blue Island are identified by CEJST as disadvantaged. Alsip is bordered to the south by disadvantaged census tracts. IEPA has 59 identified regulated sites or facilities in Blue Island, with 95 located in Alsip. According to data collected using USEPA’s EnviroMapper, at least 89 facilities in Blue Island and 169 facilities in Alsip have reported hazardous waste handling under RCRA.

The Target Areas of Coalition SSLBDA include **Calumet City and Burnham**. These two municipalities are located adjacent to each other, in far eastern Cook County. The Indiana State line serves as the eastern boundary of both municipalities. The Grand Calumet River runs through both Calumet City and Burnham, a river which is comprised almost entirely of industrial and municipal effluent. The Grand Calumet River is also classified as an Impaired Waterway by IEPA, due to a number of water quality issues including, but not limited to elevated acidity, elevated ammonia, low dissolved oxygen, presence of heavy metals, PCBs, and pesticides. The histories of Calumet City and Burnham have been shaped by their roles as industrial transportation hubs and position adjacent to heavy industrial development along the southern shore of Lake Michigan. According to the CEJST mapper, the entire municipality of Burnham is identified as disadvantaged, while most of Calumet City’s land area is also identified as disadvantaged. IEPA has 11 identified regulated sites or facilities in Burnham, with 69 present in Calumet City. According to data collected using USEPA’s EnviroMapper, at least 89 facilities in Burnham and 95 facilities in Calumet City have reported hazardous waste handling under RCRA.

The Target Areas of CSEDC **Park Forest and Chicago Heights**. These municipalities are located adjacent to each other and are positioned near the southernmost portion of Cook County. Lincoln Highway, which passes through both Park Forest and Chicago Heights, was one of the first transcontinental highways in the United States. While

Park Forest was designed as a planned residential community to serve returning World War II veterans, Chicago Heights has a history of significant industrial and commercial development. According to the CEJST mapper, a significant portion of both Park Forest and Chicago Heights is identified as disadvantaged. IEPA has 23 identified regulated sites or facilities in Park Forest, with 175 present in Chicago Heights. According to data collected using USEPA's EnviroMapper, at least 28 facilities in Park Forest and 166 facilities in Chicago Heights have reported hazardous waste handling under RCRA.

1.a.iii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites: Priority Brownfield Sites located within the Cook County Target Areas of Robbins and Posen include:

- An abandoned former grocery store **in Robbins** was identified as an opportunity site by municipal staff. The property consists of 0.91 acres of land, is developed with an approximately 9,000 square-foot building and is owned by the Village of Robbins. The property is located within a disadvantaged census tract, per the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CJEST). Horace Mann Elementary School borders the site to the east, while the property to the west is currently undergoing construction as part of a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District stormwater drainage project. In 2023, CCDES funded a pre-demolition asbestos survey for the onsite building wherein asbestos was detected in floor tile, an exterior transite eave, and in caulking. Other environmental assessment work, such as a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) has not been undertaken at this site, and property history is not well-understood. Given the absence of healthy food options in Robbins, as well as the absence of any full-service grocery stores, municipal staff have suggested that the site could be redeveloped with a new grocery store and café for the community.
- An underutilized former gasoline station in **Posen** has been identified as a potential brownfield property. According to conversations with municipal staff, the site consists of 0.34 acres, is developed with an approximately 2,000 square-foot building and is owned by the Village of Posen. The property is located within a disadvantaged census tract, per the CJEST Mapper. It is suspected, though not confirmed, that multiple underground storage tanks (USTs) remain in the ground at this property. The Village currently uses the site for miscellaneous storage. Several local businesses have expressed interest in purchasing this site; however, the environmental threat posed by historical gas station operations has deterred these potential buyers.

Priority Brownfield Sites located within the SWCM Target Areas include:

- A former landfill in Blue Island is a brownfield site which previously underwent environmental assessment using EPA and IEPA brownfield grants. The property consists of approximately 26 acres, is owned by the City of Blue Island, and is not currently developed with any structures. The property is located within a disadvantaged census tract, per the CJEST Mapper. Based on initial review of available environmental reports, additional Phase II ESA work will be necessary before the site can be reused or capped and redeveloped. Suggested future uses for this site have included renewable energy use (solar), use as a community park with soccer fields, and/or use in stormwater management.
- A potential brownfield was identified by CCDES at 4190 West 123rd Street in Alsip. This property consists of 0.71 acres and is improved with a 6,500 square-foot warehouse building and 1,000 square-foot office building. In recent years, this property has been utilized as a masonry and concrete contractor's yard. The site is zoned for Fleet Maintenance and Repair by the Village. Historical onsite industrial operations may have resulted in subsurface impacts. Additionally, adjacent properties have been identified on the IEPA LUST database. Brownfield assessment work at this site would help potential buyers understand the level of environmental risk associated with the property.

Priority Brownfield Sites located within the SSLBDA Target Areas include:

- According to CCDES's conversations with municipal staff, a priority brownfield site for Calumet City is the former Sears Department Store & Auto Center located at 2 River Oaks Center Drive in Calumet City. This site consists of approximately 27 acres, is owned by the municipality, and is currently developed with an approximately 170,000 square foot former Sears Department Store retail build and a stand-alone 25,000 square-foot former automotive repair center building. The property is bordered on all sides by disadvantaged census tracts, per the CJEST Mapper. A Phase I ESA has been performed for the site, in which additional

environmental assessment was recommended. Developers are interested in renovating the retail store building for future community recreation use; however, forward progress has been slowed by assumed environmental concerns associated with the automotive repair center and an adjacent former gasoline station.

- An abandoned former wire mill facility is a priority brownfield site for Burnham. The wire mill site consists of approximately 1.3 acres in the floodplain of the Grand Calumet River. The property is developed with a 16,000 square-foot abandoned and partially collapsed industrial building and is owned by the municipality. The property is located within a disadvantaged census tract, per the CJEST Mapper. In 2014, Brownfield funding from the IEPA allowed for the preparation of a subsurface investigation report for the site in pursuit of regulatory closure. However, the 2014 assessment did not include interior soil borings due to significant structural concerns with the abandoned wire mill building. Demolition of the structure and removal of the debris will allow for environmental drilling to take place within the building's former footprint. Additional subsurface environmental assessment will be necessary at the site. Possible future use of the site includes municipal storage, greenspace and/or a waterfront community park.

Priority Brownfield Sites located within the CSEDC Target Areas include:

- A former commercial retail strip center at 2470 S Western Avenue in Park Forest has been identified as a priority brownfield site for the Village of Park Forest. The site is owned by the municipality, and consists of approximately 14 acres of vacant, grassy land. The site was previously developed with Norwood Square Shopping Center. The property is located within a disadvantaged census tract, per the CJEST Mapper. Previous IEPA Brownfield Program-funded assessment activities performed at this site identified subsurface solvent impacts related to the operations of a former onsite dry cleaner. The site was granted regulatory closure from the IEPA in 2007; however, impacts were permitted to remain onsite and the future use would be restricted to industrial or commercial operation. According to conversations with municipal staff, there has been significant interest in redeveloping this property for multifamily residential use. Additional environmental assessment activities would be necessary to determine if portions of the site could be used for residential purposes.
- A known brownfield site in Chicago Heights has been identified as an opportunity site for future senior housing use. This property consists of approximately four acres of land and is owned by the municipality. The property is located within a disadvantaged census tract, per the CJEST Mapper. Historical uses of the site included a tile and lumber yard, woodworking operations, and automotive repair. In 2020, CCDES's Brownfield Program funded Phase II subsurface assessment activities at this four-acre, municipally-owned site. Results of the investigation determined that the site would only be suitable for industrial or commercial uses. If the municipality were to pursue future use as a senior housing development, additional assessment and remediation would be necessary.

1.a.iv. Identifying Additional Sites: Coalition partners will prioritize brownfield sites in their geographic areas. CCDES will consult with Target Area municipalities to identify and prioritize additional brownfield sites. Properties nominated for assessment using EPA Brownfield Assessment funds will be evaluated using the following considerations including confirmation brownfield applicant is not responsible for causing environmental contamination at the prospective brownfield site (requirement); Legal property access must be provided to CCDES and its contractors (requirement); Estimated cost to complete the necessary environmental assessment activities; Estimated human health risk presented by known or suspected environmental contaminants at the site; Prioritization of sites located in underserved communities and disadvantaged census tract, as identified by the CJEST Mapper; Anticipated redevelopment for the site positive impact on the community; Project has demonstrated community and municipal support.

1.b. Revitalization of the Target Areas

1.b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle launched the 5-year Cook County Policy Roadmap in 2018, and subsequently updated and renewed in 2023. The Roadmap is a comprehensive, policy-driven strategic plan to provide sustainable benefits to Cook County residents. It takes an expansive view of the challenges and opportunities Cook County faces, as well as the steps to be taken as a region to promote greater prosperity, equity, and resident wellbeing. The Roadmap identifies six policy priorities including Healthy, Open, Safe & Thriving, Smart, Sustainable, and Vital Communities. The

Coalition activities will be guided by the Sustainable Communities portion of the Roadmap that focuses on Environmental Sustainability by prioritizing environmental justice, addressing climate change, investing in clean energy and green jobs, and creating equitable access to open space. The Roadmap is for the entirety of Cook County; however, the Coalition Target Area will focus on the south suburbs of Cook County, an area of historic disinvestment resulting in an economically distressed area with Environmental Justice (EJ) issues and growing sensitive populations. Grant funding will advance the Justice40 Initiative to conduct brownfield activities primarily in disadvantaged communities in the Coalition area. The Coalition will assess brownfield sites in the Target area to determine their potential to attract employers to redevelop the sites, with an emphasis on industrial infill redevelopment that leverages existing extensive transportation and logistics assets in the Target Area, generate living wage jobs, create new public open green space, and eliminate food deserts. The Coalition activities will help foster livable, vibrant communities that are safe, healthy, and amenity-rich for all residents, regardless of age, race, or income level. The Coalition activities are in alignment with *USEPA's FY2022-2026 Strategic Plan* Goal 6: Safeguard and Revitalize Communities, Object 6.1 Cleanup and Restore Land for Productive Uses and Healthy Communities.

This project is in alignment with regional, county, sub-regional, and local development plans and will be *used to fill gaps* in these plans where the uncertainty regarding brownfield sites inhibit their development and connection to assets in the area. *Regional land use plans* include CMAP comprehensive "GO TO 2040" plan that explicitly identifies brownfields redevelopment as a strategy for regional growth. "ON TO 2050", CMAP's follow-up regional plan, suggests a focus on inclusive growth and promoting reinvestment in disinvested areas. In addition the Cook County Policy Roadmap, *Cook County land use plans* in the Coalition area include the County's Long-Range Transportation Plan (which includes the County Freight Plan), and the Lincoln Highway Logistics Corridor Study, that focuses on the three communities in the Coalition area and the opportunities for enhancing and developing its rail and road transit assets. The County also launched the Industrial Growth Zone (IGZ) initiative to increase transparency about a site's environmental conditions, determine preparations needed to make the site "shovel-ready," and reduce the amount of uncertainty about the site to better inform prospective developers. Several *sub-regional redevelopment plans* focus on Cook County's southern suburbs. *Municipal land use and redevelopment plans* in the Coalition communities are also in alignment with this project. Chicago Heights' 2015 Comprehensive Plan recommends focusing efforts on the redevelopment of underutilized and vacant properties, and the City has moved forward to re-zone parts of the city center from commercial to mixed-use development to expand development opportunities. The Chicago Heights Park District Master Plan (2013) recommends the addition of new public open space throughout the community.

1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: Priority sites whose main benefits will be jobs and economic development include the Posen site (where interested developers have been deterred by the USTs), and Robbins (which will also provide fresh food in an area that lacks it), and Alsip. The primary benefit of the Burnham and Calumet City sites will be open space and recreation. The Park Forest and Chicago Heights sites will provide badly needed housing, and the Blue Island site is ideal for solar installation.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: CCDES will leverage funding from existing county resources including its Build Up Cook program and Solid Waste Management Fund. The Build Up Cook program was launched in October 2023 and provides \$20M to assist municipalities in the south and west suburbs with infrastructure projects. Improved infrastructure is vital to attract redevelopment and reuse of brownfield sites in these areas. The Solid Waste Management Fund receives approximately \$800K annually in revenue through associated fees and is used for solid waste impact sites and programs including brownfield assessment and remediation.

As with previous grants and through other department efforts, CCDES will continue to leverage the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. The Partnership was formed in July 2012 with three primary goals - reducing costs, improving services and engaging the business community. Its employment services are available to all residents and businesses within Cook County.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: All of the priority sites represent urban infill and reuse of existing infrastructure. In addition, the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDOTH) conducts numerous infrastructure projects in the south suburbs of Cook County. Cook County’s transportation system is one of its greatest assets – key to the national and international movement of people and goods and to the economic vitality of the region. In 2023 CCDOTH released its 2023-2027 Proposed Transportation Improvement Plan that provides a five-year outlook regarding transportation investments in the region. The Plan has \$1.31B in revenue from the Illinois Motor Fuel Tax, REBUILD Illinois program, and other locals grants and reimbursements. Many brownfield sites in the south suburbs are in close proximity to these transportation assets and enhancement of these assets increases the redevelopment potential of sites.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a. Community Need

2.a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding:

Communities in which the Priority Brownfield Sites are located are both small (three, Robbins, Posen and Burnham, have populations less than 10,000, with most of the rest less than 25,000) and low income.

Target Areas	Percent Population Change 2000-2020	Unemployment*	Persons in Poverty**	Median Household Income***
Alsip	-3.40%	7.60%	8.20%	\$ 59,123.00
Blue Island	-3.90%	12.20%	18.30%	\$ 51,989.00
Burnham	-3.00%	10.00%	11.10%	\$ 50,556.00
Calumet City	-7.80%	12.00%	21.50%	\$ 52,994.00
Chicago Heights	-16.20%	13.30%	22.80%	\$ 54,870.00
Ford Heights	-47.50%	14.80%	37.60%	\$ 37,885.00
Park Forest	-7.60%	7.80%	15.00%	\$ 58,657.00
Posen	19.10%	13.90%	7.20%	\$ 55,371.00
Robbins	-30.20%	14.30%	36.90%	\$ 34,760.00
Cook County	-1.90%	7.30%	13.80%	\$ 72,121.00

As a result of size and income, combined with a history of

*(per 2017- 2021 American Community Survey)

** (per 2021 American Community Survey 5- Year Estimates)

*** (per 2021 American Community Survey 5- Year Estimates)

disinvestment, all these communities are severely deficient in resources most commonly used to fund local government in Illinois: property and sales tax. The equalized assessed value of property per capita in these communities ranges from \$5,650 to \$11, 825, or from 35% of the County average on the high end, to as low as 17% of the County average (Park Forest). Sales per capita are as low as 13% of the County average (Robbins, Park Forest), 35% of the County average (Burnham), with almost all the towns having less than 50% of the per capita sales as the County average. In addition, none of these communities have the staff expertise or capacity to manage brownfield activities.

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Due to limited resources and except in areas where the County has assisted, the Coalition members have not conducted detailed environmental assessment and sampling at the brownfield sites in their communities. However, based on past use and industries formerly located on many of the brownfield sites, which range from chemical manufacturers and metal processors to gas stations and hospitals, suspected contaminants include heavy metals, PAHs, and VOCs. Adverse health effects related to exposure to chemicals potentially present in the Coalition brownfield sites include: central nervous system damage, delays in physical development, lower IQ level, shortened attention spans, behavioral problems, asthma, and cancer. These adverse health problems *disproportionately affect sensitive populations including children, the elderly, and minorities*, and also contribute to an increase in rates of asthma and low birth weight. The percentage of residents over 65 and minority population in the Coalition area has increased since 2000. Broadly, health

challenges are reflected **in high mortality rates** from all causes in the Coalition communities, ranging from 878 to 1,100 per 100,000 people as compared to 746 per 100,000 and 749 per 100,000 in Illinois and the U.S., respectively. Specific health issues are as follows. **Asthma/Respiratory Issues:** The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) found air toxins in Cook County dramatically increase chronic health problems that include lung cancer, asthma, heart attacks, premature birth, and death. Respiratory illnesses like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) have been linked to poor air quality. The average lifetime risk of cancer for a resident of Cook County is 1 in 1,600, which puts **the risk at 600 times greater than USEPA's acceptable cancer level**. Cancer rates in the Coalition area ranged from 190 to 210 per 100,000 people, as compared to 179 in Illinois and 172 in the U.S. According to the IDPH, the most common form of cancer was Lung & Bronchus cancer. Further, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services document "Asthma Care Quality Improvement, A Resource Guide for State Action," Cook County has **one of the worst asthma mortality rates in the United States**. **Low Birth Weight/Nutrition Issues:** Many coalition communities have high minority populations that disproportionately experience low birth weight (LBW). Because of the larger number of vacant and potential brownfield sites in this area, retail business (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) necessary to support the residential community are scarce. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has identified several census tracts in the Coalition communities as "**food deserts**." The average distance to fresh produce is 5 to 7 miles for all Coalition communities, where living 'close' to a grocery store in a non-rural setting is defined as less than one mile (USDA Economic Research Service). Food deserts have resulted in detrimental impact on health outcomes, such as LBW. This is evident in LBW for the Coalition communities ranging from 8.0% to 12.4%, as compared to 6.3% in Illinois and the U.S. (IDPH Natality Files, 2008 – 2012).

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: With its history of heavy industry and with ongoing industrial activity, the Coalition Target Area has environmental issues relating to air, land, and water. This raises serious Environmental Justice (EJ) issues for the large numbers of minority and low-income residents that call the area home. Several issues, such as air pollution from fine particulate matter (PM) and non-point pollution from storm water runoff, are worsened by brownfields. **Air:** Cook County is designated as a Clean Air Act (CAA) **non-attainment area** for Ozone and PM, both of which have serious health consequences for its residents. Cook County also has high levels of ammonia, nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds (VOC), and PM of all the surrounding counties, and the south suburbs have high coal dust and metals concentrations. **Land:** IEPA documents five former landfills in the Coalition area. These landfills were known to accept a variety of industrial pollutants. A large number of active solid waste transfer stations in the area and illegal dumping incidents potentially contribute to groundwater as well as air pollution. Abandoned sites in the Coalition area are a **haven for illegal dumping** of waste and tires. **Water: Heavy metals affect 69% of watersheds in Cook County.** Water quality issues can be traced, in part, to legacy contamination from brownfield sites.

(3) Environmental Justice

(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: Former industrial sites in Coalition partner area became closely interknit with blue-collar residential communities, some (Robbins, Phoenix) founded as African American havens during the Great Migration. With "white flight" from these suburbs to the exurbs in the 1970's and more African-American influx from Chicago's South Side (especially as public housing closed), and new waves of Latine residents, the region became more heavily minority. The region is rapidly becoming the location of a large number of intermodal facilities, causing air quality and other issues.

Of the 8 priority sites, 6 are directly in Disadvantaged census tracts per CEJST, and two are immediately adjacent to Disadvantaged census tracts. The brownfield site at 3050 S Claire Dr. in Robbins is an abandoned grocery store. Environmental assessments have revealed the building contains asbestos. The community wants the site redeveloped as a market, as the area currently lacks access to healthy foods. This census tract is **Disadvantaged in all categories**, including Health and Workforce Development. The census tract ranks in the 94th percentile for low life expectancy, 22nd for high school diplomas, 90th for low income and 95th for unemployment. The tract is 92% African American. CCDES is coordinating with Robbins including planning for a Resilience Hub as well as green infrastructure installation.

The abandoned wire mill at 14146 S, Mackinaw in Burnham is in a Disadvantaged census tract in the Legacy Pollution, Water and Wastewater, and Workforce categories, and which is 62% African American and 24% Hispanic/Latino. It is in the 65th percentile for low income, and the 94th for both Proximity to Risk Management

Plan Facilities and Proximity to Superfund Sites, 93rd percentile for wastewater discharge, 91st for unemployment and 13th for high school education.

The site at 1802 Aberdeen St., Chicago Heights, is planned for Senior Housing. The tract, 70% Hispanic/Latino and 23% African American, qualifies as Disadvantaged under Energy, Housing, Legacy Pollution and Workforce Development. It ranks in the 91st percentile for energy cost burden, 93rd for housing cost burden, 94th for low income, 93rd for proximity to Risk Management Plan Facilities, 95th for low median income, 97th for unemployment, and 27th for high school education.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: The priority brownfield sites, along with many of the Coalition target communities (and many of the other communities within the geography of the Coalition members), are Disadvantaged areas. Brownfield work in these areas will help remove sources of pollution from airborne and waterborne contaminants (the south suburbs are particularly vulnerable to flooding) but removes blighted properties that invite illegal dumping and hamper economic development in the entire region. As seen above, many of the target brownfields are in areas with high unemployment, low income, and high energy and housing cost burden. Benefits of the planned redevelopment of priority sites will specifically address the categories for which the Target areas are disadvantaged, including workforce development, housing, legacy pollution, and health.

2.b. Community Engagement

2.b.i. Project Involvement: CCDES is committed to meaningful and sustained community involvement to ensure the project is successful. This is especially critical in the Coalition communities where minority and low-income populations may not previously have been involved in brownfield projects in their respective community and/or may perceive they do not have a voice. The Coalition partners (SWCM, SSLBDA, and CSEDC) were selected as they represent a diverse membership including municipalities and their residents, businesses, financial institutions, and local political representatives. Under previous USEPA grants CCCDES a hosted brownfields workshops using the Technical Assistance for Brownfields (TAB) program. This educational workshop included representatives from USEPA, IEPA, and local government agencies presenting a discussion of the history of industrialization and how it led to brownfields, a brief overview of the assessment, remediation, and cleanup processes, and examples of brownfields that have been successfully redeveloped. The workshop was designed to build community capacity to identify possible brownfield opportunities and resources. Further, Cook County is finalizing a formal community-engagement policy including compensation for community member involvement.

2.b.ii. Project Roles: The Coalition partners will be involved in implementation of the grant. As the partners coordinate daily with their partners and member, they will be integral assisting with site identification and screening, community outreach, hosting and supporting community meetings, assist with providing updates to local municipalities through board meetings and other forums. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be signed by all the Coalition partners that will discuss each member's role and methods for conducting the grant activities. The MOA will also document the site selection process. Sites will be selected in consultation with the Coalition members, the public in the Coalition communities, and by analyzing data already gathered through existing planning activities, such as the Southwest Corridor Trucking study by CCDOTH. CCDES will host planning meetings with Coalition members to achieve the following: 1) educate the public on brownfields & reuse opportunities; 2) discuss available site-specific information currently available for site screening and selection.

2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input: The Coalition partners will communicate progress to the community and other concerned parties throughout the grant period. The Coalition will issue public notices and seek public involvement in the grant activities through: Meetings (at least three site selection meetings with Coalition members and the public); eight biannual public meetings to inform the public of the project status and receive input; press releases and FAQ sheets; posts to Cook County's website and blog and distribution through County's social media; articles in CCDES's quarterly e-newsletter, which is sent to over 10,000 constituents, businesses, nonprofits, public agencies, interested individuals; coalition members will post information for their residents on their websites; and collaboration with local organizations, such as municipal chambers of commerce and community groups.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

3.a.i. Project Implementation: The Coalition will utilize the grant funds to conduct four tasks – (1) programmatic activities and community outreach, (2) brownfield site inventory and prioritization, (3) Phase I and II environmental site assessments (ESA), and (4) prepare remedial action plans (RAP). Each task will be conducted throughout the 4-year period of the grant. CCDES has existing staff to conduct these activities. Furthermore, **CCDES has previously managed a Coalition Assessment grant** from the USEPA from FFY18-23 and will be the lead for the Coalition on all key activities. CCDES will leverage existing resources to implement the grant:

(a) Contractor: CCDES has a consultant under contract to conduct Phase I/II ESAs and remediation planning. The consultant was selected utilizing Cook County Department of Procurement Services fair and open competitive selection procedures that meet federal procurement requirements.

(b) Program Management: CCDES currently has staff implementing its brownfield program. The staff will be utilized to continue its coordination with municipalities and other partners in the south suburbs on brownfield sites. The Coalition members have already conducted site-selection activities as part of their local redevelopment plans including purchasing property or identifying owners of targeted parcels for access agreements. The MOA signed by the Coalition partners will discuss each member’s role in program management.

3.a.ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: The Coalition will utilize the grant funds to conduct four tasks – (1) programmatic activities and community outreach, (2) brownfield site inventory and prioritization, (3) Phase I and II environmental site assessments (ESA), and (4) prepare remedial action plans (RAP). Each task will be conducted throughout the 4-year period of the grant. CCDES has existing staff to conduct these activities. CCDES and the Coalition partners will collaborate on Tasks 1 and 2. CCDES has an environmental consultant to assist with Tasks 1 and 2 and conduct the activities in Tasks 3 and 4. During the grant period CCDES anticipates conducting 80 Phase I ESAs, 40 Phase II ESAs, and preparing 20 RAPs. CCDES and the consultant have sufficient resources including staff and vendors (drilling and laboratory) to conduct multiple Phase I and II ESAs simultaneously. Based on past grant performance, the identified Target Areas and additional areas to be identified through continued community outreach and brownfield site inventory and prioritization, the proposed activities will be completed within the 4-year period of performance for the Coalition Assessment grant.

3.a.iii. Task/Activity Lead: CCDES will use its current experienced department staff as the lead manager for the four tasks proposed for the Coalition Assessment grant funds. The respective CCDES manager will maintain communication with the Coalition partners to involve them in each task. For example, the CCDES manager will coordinate with the SSLBA to identify and screen potential brownfield sites for acquisition through the Cook County tax scavenge process. The screening process will involve factors such as nature and extent of contamination based on past site uses and remediation/reuse options. CCDES will also coordinate with the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) to access local health and associated data when screening sites and developing RAPs. As County Departments, CCDES and CCDPH already collaborate on numerous projects such as the Cook County Sustainability Plan, Equity Task Force, environmental justice, and air quality monitoring.

3.a.iv. Outputs: Cook County has a robust performance measurement program and CCDES reports monthly on a variety of metrics including brownfield acres assessed. For the Coalition Assessment grant, CCDES will track the following outputs as part of each task: Task 1 (Programmatic Activities and Community Engagement) - # of public meetings, # Coalition meetings; Task 2 (Inventory and Prioritization) - # of Brownfield sites identified; Task 3 (Phase I/II ESA) - # of Phase I ESAs completed, # of Phase II ESAs completed, # of acres assessed; Task 4 (Remediation Planning) - Acreage made ready for reuse, # green remediation options identified.

3.b. Cost Estimates

Task 1: Programmatic Activities and Community Engagement: CCDES will conduct grant programming and community engagement sessions to inform participants regarding the opportunities and benefits of the brownfield program. The proposed budget includes:

- Personnel and Fringe Benefits
 - CCDES will **leverage current County funding** for department staff to administer the cooperative agreement, manage consultants, and track grant outputs/outcomes. CCDES estimates a portion of the grant funding will be required for department staff in the 4th year of the grant.

- Participate in brownfields workshops and conferences
- Provide coordination and support for site selection meetings with Coalition members and the public, quarterly update meetings with Coalition members and partners, biannual public meeting, media releases and frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheets.
- Travel to attend the USEPA Brownfield conference

Task 2: Inventory and Prioritization: CCDES will collect and review available data to select and prioritize sites for further environmental investigation. CCDES will **leverage current County funding** for department staff to review data, maintain the site inventory database, and manage site information in USEPA’s Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) database. CCDES estimates a portion of the grant funding will be required for department staff in the 4th year of the grant.

Task 3: Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments: Sites will be selected under Task 2 for further investigation through Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESA). CCDES will conduct 80 Phase I ESAs in compliance with All Appropriate Inquiry and ASTM E 1527-21 standard practice for Environmental Site Assessments. It is estimated 40 sites (approximately 50% of the sites evaluated for Phase I ESAs) will be selected for Phase II ESA. The proposed budget includes:

- CCDES will **leverage current County funding** for department staff to review and approve Phase I/II ESA documents. CCDES estimates a portion of the grant funding will be required for department staff in the 4th year of the grant.
- Contractual for consultant to conduct 80 Phase I ESAs and 40 Phase II ESAs

Task 4 – Remediation and Redevelopment Planning: Data from Phase I and II ESAs will be used to develop RAPs for sites. Sites selected for RAPs will be enrolled by CCDES in the IEPA Voluntary SRP or Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) program. CCDES anticipates implementing green cleanup activities using strategies and technologies described in sources including IEPA’s green cleanup matrix, USEPA’s Green Remediation Focus website and Green Demolition Toolkit, and the ASTM Standard Guide for Greener Cleanups. It is estimated 20 sites (approximately 50% of the sites evaluated for Phase II ESAs) will be selected for development of RAPs. The proposed budget includes:

- CCDES will **leverage current County funding** for department staff to meet with state agencies, property owners, community stakeholders and coalition members, and consultants to develop RAPs and analysis of cleanup alternatives. CCDES estimates a portion of the grant funding will be required for department staff in the 4th year of the grant.
- Develop RAPs for 20 sites
- Incorporate CCDES’s Demolition Debris Diversion Ordinance, which requires deconstruction and material recycling in remediation plans as needed.

Budget Category	Task 1: Programmatic Activities & Community Engagement	Task 2: Inventory and Prioritization	Task 3: Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments	Task 4: Remediation Planning	Total
Personnel	\$3,083	\$1,814	\$91,595	\$11,789	\$108,282
Fringe Benefits	\$1,172	\$689	\$34,806	\$4,480	\$41,147
Travel	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$0	\$0	\$1,143,758	\$139,745	\$1,283,503
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Total Direct Costs	\$10,255	\$2,503	\$1,270,159	\$156,014	\$1,438,932
Indirect Costs	\$1,215	\$715	\$36,088	\$4,645	\$42,663
Total Budget	\$11,470	\$3,218	\$1,306,248	\$160,659	\$1,481,595

Personnel Costs include funding for a Brownfield Manager in the 4th year. The first 3 years will be funded with Cook County funds. The annual salary of the program manager in FFY28 will be \$108,282.

Fringe Benefits include Mandatory Medicare, Workers' Compensation, Pension, Unemployment, and Insurance benefits, calculated based on the FY23 Cook County Board Approved rate. The rate is 38%.

Travel includes site visits and the annual conference for Brownfields.

The contractual budget category will fund services related to Brownfield assessment activities. Cook County currently has a contract to procure the services.

The indirect rate is calculated based on the Cook County-approved ICRP rate. The rate is 39.40% and is only applied to Direct Salary and Wage, which is 3% of the 5% cap for administrative costs.

3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: CCDES will track the Coalition's work plan and report to the Coalition partners on a quarterly basis. CCDES will update the ACRES database with site information and submit quarterly/final reports to USEPA. Tracking and reporting will include the following outputs/outcomes:

Outputs	Outcomes
# of public meetings	# of people with reduced exposure to contaminants
# Coalition meetings	# of jobs created/retained
# of Brownfield sites identified	# of cleanups completed
# of Phase I ESAs completed	# of acres available for redevelopment or green space
# of Phase II ESAs completed	Increase in Assessed Value in Coalition communities
# of acres assessed	# of training opportunities for green remediation jobs
Acreage made ready for reuse	
# green remediation options identified	

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a. Programmatic Capability

4.a.i. Organizational Capacity: CCDES's previous two Coalition Assessment grants were completed within the period of performance for the respective grants. CCDES completed all the technical requirements of the grant; accomplishments are outlined under b. below. CCDES is a 50-person department with a \$3M operating budget and multiple federal grants, within the second largest County in the U.S. CCDES accesses multiple County resources to meet grant goals of the grant, such as: an existing contract for brownfield assessment services; Job Order Contracts held by the County's Bureau of Asset Management and available to CCDES for brownfield assessment and remediation; experienced planning and economic development staff within the Department of Planning & Development, and contract/grant specialists in the Department of Budget and Procurement.

4.a.ii. Organizational Structure: The CCDES brownfield program manager will maintain frequent contact with the Coalition partners. The program manager will conduct quarterly meetings with the Coalition partners to provide updates and coordinate on grant activities including sites under assessment and remediation planning, funding expenditures and balances, and outputs/outcomes. The program manager will coordinate with the CCDES financial manager to track the grant financial status. The CCDES financial manager coordinates with the Cook County Bureau of Finance to set budgets, obtain board-approved appropriations, execute contracts through coordination with the Cook County Department of Procurement Services, and invoice payment.

4.a.iii. Description of Key Staff

Cristin Williams, Brownfields Program Manager, will be the grant program manager. Ms. Williams currently serves in an Environmental Engineer III role with CCDES and manages daily operations of CCDES's Brownfield Program. She performs outreach to municipalities and organizations, evaluates proposed brownfield sites, collaborates with environmental consultants and professional engineers to advance remediation projects, and contributes to several department sustainability programs. Prior to joining CCDES, Cristin spent 10 years working in the private sector as an environmental consultant and project manager, specializing in the management of portfolio due diligence and equity-level assessments. She graduated from Indiana University in 2012, focusing on Environmental Management, is a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM).

Kevin Schnoes, Deputy Director, will assist with grant management. Mr. Schnoes managed CCDES's previous brownfield Coalition Assessment and Revolving Loan Fund grants and has over 33 years of experience in the investigation and cleanup of contaminated sites. He has worked extensively guiding sites through IEPA's SRP and LUST programs. Prior to CCDES, he managed the program at the City of Chicago responsible for the cleanup of numerous sites. He has a B.S. in Geology, an M.S. in Environmental Mgmt, and is a Licensed P.G. in Illinois.

Julia Theis, Director of Financial Control, will manage purchasing, financial tracking, and expenditure reporting. She has 16 years of experience in government and private business administration and has an MBA in Finance.

Jacqueline Lopez, Business Manager, will have responsibility for timely invoice review and payment, and support to the Director of Financial Control and other project staff.

4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: CCDES has a consultant under contract to conduct Phase I/II ESAs and related brownfield activities. The consultant was selected utilizing Cook County Department of Procurement Services fair and open competitive selection procedures that meet federal procurement requirements. Cook County also has a job-order contract (JOC) to provide a variety of services, including remediation and construction cost design and implementation. JOC consultants were also selected using the County's fair and open competitive selection procedures.

4.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

4.b.i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant: CCDES was the recipient of a FY2014 Brownfield Coalition Assessment grant for \$600,000. CCDES led a coalition of seven municipal partners from Cook County's Western Suburbs – Bellwood, Forest Park, Franklin Park, Melrose Park, Maywood, Northlake, and Schiller Park. CCDES was the recipient of a FY2018 Brownfield Coalition Assessment grant for \$600,000 for a coalition of three municipal partners in Cook County's southern suburbs – Chicago Heights, Ford Heights, and Sauk Village. CCDES is also the recipient of an FY2014 Revolving Loan Fund grant for \$751,000. CCDES is in the process of administering this grant through FY24.

(1) Accomplishments: Under the FY2014 Coalition Assessment grant, there were 54 potential brownfield sites identified and screened; Phase I/II activities were conducted at 24 sites; and seven RAPs were prepared to navigate sites through IEPA's SRP program. CCDES entered site information in ACRES. Approximately 130 acres were assessed with 120 acres undergoing remediation and development resulting in approximately 400 jobs created/retained. Under the FY2018 Coalition Assessment grant, there were 34 brownfield sites identified and prioritize; Phase I/II activities were conducted at 27 sites; and seven RAPs prepared to navigate sites through IEPA's SRP Program. CCDES entered site information in ACRES. Approximately 273 acres were assessed with 200 acres undergoing remediation and development resulting in approximately 100 jobs created/retained.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: For both Coalition Assessment grants CCDES was in full compliance with the grant requirements. All grant funds were utilized within the approved period of the grant. The activities under the previous Coalition Assessment grant were conducted in accordance with the grant workplan and approved QAPP. Quarterly grant reports were submitted in a timely manner and relevant data was entered in ACRES. Progress was achieved towards the grant outputs such as # of Coalition meetings, # of brownfield sites identified, # of Phase I/II ESAs completed, # of acres assessed, acreage made ready for reuse, and # of green remediation options identified. Progress was also made toward the grant outcomes including # of cleanups completed, and # of acres available for redevelopment.

ATTACHMENT: THRESHOLD CRITERIA RESPONSES

1) **Applicant Eligibility**

- a) Cook County, Illinois is a county government, also known as a “general purpose unit of local government” as defined in 2 CRF 200.64. Cook County is eligible to receive a USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grant and serve as the lead member of a brownfield assessment coalition.
- b) Cook County is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. **Number and Eligibility of Non-lead Coalition Members**

Three (3) non-lead coalition members are partnering with Cook County for the FY24 Assessment Coalition Grant. All non-lead coalition members are eligible for an FY24 Assessment Coalition Grant.

Southwest Conference of Mayors is a council of government (COG) and non-profit entity as identified by the Illinois Secretary of State. The organization exists to function as a coordinating body for suburban municipalities located in the southern portion of Cook County. Documentation of not-for-profit entity status is provided as an attachment.

South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority is an intergovernmental agency established in 2012 which facilitates the redevelopment of acquired properties through strategic partnerships with developers, community organizations, lenders, and local governments. The SSLBDA also formally partners with local not-for-profit agency and 501(c)3 organization, Southland Development Authority. Documentation of entity status is provided as an attachment.

Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation is an economic development corporation and non-profit entity as identified by the Illinois Secretary of State. The organization works to facilitate economic growth and sustainable careers in the Southland, which is a geographic area consisting of the south and southwestern Chicago suburbs. Documentation of entity status is provided as an attachment.

None of the above-listed non-lead members are exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

3. **Target Areas**

Coalition Member	Target Area	Priority Brownfield
Cook County	Village of Robbins	Abandoned grocery store: 3050 S Claire Boulevard Robbins, IL
	Village of Posen	Closed gas station in Posen: 2350 Walter Zimny Drive Posen, IL

Southwest Conference of Mayors	City of Blue Island	Former Landfill: 12255 Division St, Blue Island, IL 60406
	Village of Alsip	Industrial Property, Fleet Maintenance: 4190 West 123rd Street Alsip, IL
South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority	Calumet City,	Former Sears Department Store & Auto Center: 2 River Oaks Center Dr, Calumet City, IL 60409
	Village of Burnham	Former Wire Mill Property: 14146 South Mackinaw Ave Burnham, IL
Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation	Village of Park Forest	Former Shopping Center with Drycleaner, Current Vacant Lot: 2470 S Western Avenue Park Forest, IL
	City of Chicago Heights	Future Senior Housing Site: 1802 Aberdeen Street Chicago Heights, IL

4. Existing Brownfields Grants to Non-lead Members

None of the non-lead coalition members have an open Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, or Cleanup (MARC) Grant, nor did they have a MARC grant which closed in 2016 or later.

5. Coalition Agreement

Each non-lead coalition member has submitted a signed letter to Cook County in which they have agreed to participate in the Brownfield Assessment Coalition. Please find copies of the letters included as attachments.

6. Community Involvement

CCDES is committed to meaningful and sustained community involvement to ensure the project is successful. This is especially critical in the Coalition communities where minority and low-income populations may not previously have been involved in brownfield projects in their respective community and/or may perceive they do not have a voice. The Coalition partners (SWCM, SSLBDA, and CSEDC) were selected as they represent a diverse membership including municipalities, businesses, financial institutions, and local political representatives. CCDES already coordinates with the Coalition partners on county initiatives and works directly with municipalities on brownfield sites. SSMMA is a local council of government (COG) that represents municipalities in the south suburbs on issues ranging from planning and infrastructure to economic development. CCDES hosted a brownfields workshop at SSMMA on 11/2/17 with the Technical Assistance for Brownfields (TAB) program. This educational workshop included representatives from USEPA, IEPA, and local government agencies presenting a discussion of the history of industrialization and how it led to brownfields, a brief overview of the assessment, remediation, and cleanup processes, and examples of brownfields that have been successfully redeveloped. The workshop was designed to build community capacity to identify possible brownfield opportunities and resources.

Cook County will issue seek public participation by:

- Meetings - site selection meetings with Coalition members and the public; biannual public meetings to inform the public of the project status and receive input
- Press releases and FAQ sheets
- Posts to Cook County's website and blog and distribution through County's social media.
- Articles in CCDES's quarterly e-newsletter, which goes to approximately 10,000 constituents, businesses, nonprofits, public agencies, interested individuals, etc.
- Coalition members will post information for their residents on their websites.
- Collaboration with local organizations, such as municipal chambers of commerce and community groups

7. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

Cook County does not currently have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

8. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Cook County has a consultant under contract to conduct environmental assessment and remediation action planning activities. The consultant was selected utilizing Cook County Department of Procurement Services fair and open competitive selection procedures that meet federal procurement requirements.

In accordance with Cook County Procurement procedures, contract opportunities are posted on the Cook County Government Office of the Chief Procurement Officer website. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted seeking a "Consultant for Brownfield Assessment Services." The consultant was selected based on the proposal submitted and evaluated by Cook County Representatives. Cook County Board of Commissioners approval is sought if the contract resulting from the process is equal to or exceeds \$150,000. The Cook County Board of Commissioners approved the contract in June of 2019.

Certified Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) are encouraged to participate in Cook County procurement. The County's utilization for non-public work contracts is 25% for MBEs and 10% for WBEs. These goals apply the current environmental consultant under contract.

The Consultant for Brownfield Assessment Services RFP was posted to the Cook County Procurement website on January 9, 2019. Proposals were due on February 6, 2019. One firm was requested for the contract. Proposals were submitted by 12 firms, with all 12 proposals undergoing evaluation by Cook County representatives.

Following a competitive bid and review process, Weaver Consultants Group North Central, LLC was awarded the contract in 2019, and also received a multi-year contract extension via amendment in 2022.