



**DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
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SECRETARY

RO6-24-A-020

**FFY2024 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States & Tribes  
Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Narrative Information Sheet**

**1. Applicant Identification:**

Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment (E&E) Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
5301 Northshore Drive  
North Little Rock, AR 72118-5328

**2. Funding Requested:**

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$1,000,000

**3. Location:** Geographic Boundary is the State of Arkansas with 3 initial target areas and 5 initial priority sites, and at least 5 additional sites identified throughout the 5-year performance period.

**4. Target Area and Priority Site Information:**

Target Areas	Priority Sites
<b>City of Earle</b> Census Tract: 05035031100	<b>1. Downtown Commercial Buildings</b> 1011-1027 Main Street Earle, AR 72331 <i>(located in Census Tract 05035031100)</i>
<b>West Memphis Historic Broadway Corridor</b> Census Tracts: 5035030201, 5035030102, 5035030101, 5035030502, 5035030501, 5035031200, 5035030302, 5035030301, 5035030202	<b>1. Former Auto Repair Site</b> 306 & 314 East Broadway West Memphis, AR 72301 <i>(located in Census Tract 05035030201)</i>
<b>East Little Rock</b> Census Tracts: 05119980400, 05119004600	<b>1. Former Fire Station #9</b> 2023 East 6th Street Little Rock, AR 72202 <i>(located in Census Tract 05119980400)</i>
	<b>2. Magness Oil</b> 1415 East 9th Street Little Rock, AR 72202 <i>(located in Census Tract 05119980400)</i>
	<b>3. Booker Arts Magnet School</b> 2016 Barber Street Little Rock, AR 72206 <i>(located in Census Tract 05119004600)</i>

**5. Contacts:**

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**6. Population:** The target of this Community-wide Assessment Grant will be the entire State of Arkansas (population 3,011,524), with a focus on 3 specific target areas located in the following cities:

City of Earle: 1,846

City of West Memphis: 24,497

City of Little Rock: 201,514

**7. Other Factors:**

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1, 2
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
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).	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	4, 5
The reuse strategy or project reuse of the priority site(s) considers resiliency measures.	5
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2012 or later) or is closing.	N/A

**8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:** Not Applicable—The applicant, DEQ, is the state environmental authority.

**9. Releasing Copies of Applications:** Sensitive information in the application includes the names, titles, email addresses, and phone numbers of Project Partners included in Section 2.b.i. (page 8). DEQ requests this information be redacted prior to releasing the document to the public.

## **Narrative/Ranking Criteria**

### **1. Project Area Description and Plans for Revitalization (40 points)**

#### **1.a. Target Areas and Brownfields (20 points)**

##### *1.a.i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas*

The Community-wide Assessment Grant will serve the State of Arkansas and will support DEQ’s existing Arkansas Brownfield Program (ABP), the state response program for brownfields. Arkansas is a largely rural state, with 41 percent of its population living in rural areas (compared to 14% nationally). The state has 500+ local municipalities, with only 39 having populations over 10,000. Small communities can often identify brownfields because they stand out as abandoned, blighted, or simply vacant lots. However, few communities have the staff, time, or knowledge to address brownfields on their own. Even in larger cities, limited funding and capacity may leave certain neighborhoods behind as development continues elsewhere. The ABP provides an entry point into the redevelopment process. Having an Assessment Grant in addition to DEQ’s 128(a) State Response Program grant will allow for seamless assessment, cleanup planning, and cleanup implementation activities under one brownfield program—creating more “redevelopment ready” sites in Arkansas.

DEQ has identified three Target Areas (TAs) needing brownfield assessments to jumpstart redevelopment: the City of Earle, the West Memphis Broadway Corridor, and East Little Rock:

##### **City of Earle—Pop. 1,846; 3.25 mi<sup>2</sup>; part of the Memphis, TN-MS-AR Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA); Census Tract 05035031100:**

The City of Earle TA is defined by jurisdictional boundaries (3.25 mi.<sup>2</sup>). Earle is a small community in Arkansas’s Delta region formed in the late 1800s around the local timber industry. As timber clearing produced plenty of farmland, Earle became increasingly agricultural. The last of the timber-related firms in Earle closed by 1957. Today, Earle is an agricultural community with some light manufacturing and retail.

One of Earle’s biggest challenges is its declining population. Earle’s population has been in steady decline, with a 40 percent loss from 2000 to 2020 (down from 3,036 (2000) to 1,831 (2020)), far below its highest recorded population of 3,517 in 1980. Small communities like Earle are overwhelmed by the numerous brownfield properties yet have few resources to tackle. Without support for the redevelopment process, brownfields in Earle remain vacant, dilapidated, and unsafe. Visible signs of neglect have a demoralizing effect on the residents, hinder economic growth, and create a cycle of population loss and disinvestment.

With this grant, DEQ will support the City of Earle’s revitalization efforts through the assessment of several dilapidated, former commercial buildings on Main Street. These activities will facilitate the cleanup and removal of blighted buildings. DEQ will provide planning services to help prepare reuse plans for the properties addressed under this grant.

##### **West Memphis Broadway Corridor— TA Pop: 22,239; 11.31 mi<sup>2</sup>; part of the Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA; Census Tracts: 5035030201, 5035030102, 5035030101, 5035030502, 5035030501, 5035031200, 5035030302, 5035030301 and 5035030202:**

The West Memphis Broadway Corridor consists of the 9 census tracts along Broadway Boulevard in West Memphis (11.31mi.<sup>2</sup>). West Memphis is a small city located on the west bank of the Mississippi River. The city’s growth has been hampered by repeated flooding and natural disasters throughout its history. In fact, its original location on the Mississippi River flooded almost annually and had to be rebuilt further from the river in 1912. Even after the construction of levees in the early 1900s, the city experienced devastating floods in 1913, 1927, and 1937. In December 1987, a tornado ripped through the city’s downtown, destroying over 100 homes, 35 businesses, and a school. Many of these vacant lots remain undeveloped to this day.

The availability of river and rail transportation combined with the junction of two major interstates, I-40 and I-55, made West Memphis the manufacturing and distribution hub of Crittenden County. The city grew quickly from 1930 to 1950. Broadway Boulevard, the city’s historic “main street” became a major commercial

thoroughfare, and many of the city's historic buildings were constructed during this time. The city is also famous for its Blues music, with 8th Avenue being referred to as "Beale Street West" during this same period. However, its current development pattern now dominated by auto-oriented neighborhoods and commercial areas. Since the 1980s, the Broadway Corridor has hollowed out, with few businesses remaining. This grant will allow DEQ to support the City of West Memphis's efforts to revitalize the Broadway Corridor, make it more pedestrian-friendly, and renew a sense of pride in the city's Blues history.

**East Little Rock—TA Pop: 747; 2.18 mi<sup>2</sup>; part of the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA; Census Tracts 05119980400 and 05119004600):**

The East Little Rock TA is a 2.24-mi.<sup>2</sup> area in Little Rock, bound to the north by the Arkansas River, to the east by Clinton National Airport, to south by East Roosevelt Road, and to the west by Interstate 30 (I-30). Little Rock is the state's capitol and most populous city. The East Little Rock TA is part of Little Rock's oldest and most heavily industrialized area, but also includes historically working-class neighborhoods like the Hanger Hill Historic District. Many historically significant homes and buildings in Hanger Hill have been demolished or condemned. East Little Rock is also characterized by industrial facilities and warehouses such as a very active rail line, a steel plant, scrap recycler, and tire recycler. I-30, completed in the 1970s, separates East Little Rock from the rest of the city. Living in close proximity to current and former industrial developments, the interstate, and Clinton National Airport means the TA's 747 residents, who are 81 percent minority and 66 percent low income, likely face possible exposure to environmental contamination. This grant will fund the assessment of several potentially contaminated properties in the TA and will facilitate cleanups that will reduce exposure to contamination while allowing for safe redevelopment.

*1.a.ii. Description of Priority Brownfield Sites (10 points)*

The priority sites in each TA represent only a portion of the need for assessments in these areas. In each of the TAs, DEQ has worked with the local community to identify and prioritize sites for assessment activities. DEQ's planning activities in each TA will include a local inventory of current brownfield sites. Prioritization of sites included in this grant application is based on their readiness for assessment, reuse potential, and their potential to have positive impacts on a disadvantaged community.

In the **City of Earle**, DEQ has identified 5 brownfield sites that are small (< 0.25-acres), vacant and dilapidated commercial and residential buildings likely containing hazardous building materials. These create opportunities for vandalism and illegal activity. These vacant buildings are the first priority in the City of Earle. DEQ has also identified 3 abandoned industrial-type buildings (all < 1 acre) along the railroad that could be investigated for potential reuse or demolition.

The **West Memphis Broadway Corridor** has a number of properties with vacant and dilapidated buildings or vacant lots, contributing to the hollowing out of the historical commercial corridor. Many of these sites were victims of the 1987 tornado that hit West Memphis. In addition to the priority site described below, DEQ has identified four (4) additional brownfield properties in the TA: two (2) former automotive dealerships (1.36 acres and 2.21 acres), the City-owned Boys and Girls Club (5.74 acres), and a recently closed school property (20.5 acres).

The **East Little Rock TA** is characterized by numerous former industrial developments dating back to the late 1800s, many of which have been demolished and are currently vacant lots. A large portion of the TA that is or was once industrially-developed has railroad spurs that could be a source of contamination. More recent brownfields include several abandoned gas stations, other petroleum-related businesses, and many vacant residential lots in Hanger Hill. DEQ and the City of Little Rock have identified three (3) potential sites in the TA, but a thorough inventory would likely identify many more.

Within the selected TAs, DEQ had identified the following priority sites:

<b>City of Earle Target Area (in the Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA)</b>	
<b>Downtown Commercial Buildings, 1011-1027 Main St., Earle, AR</b>	Size: 1.21 acres
<b>Background:</b> This site consists of nine (9) dilapidated buildings on Earle’s Main Street. The buildings were once used as commercial/retail space but are currently vacant and in a very poor condition. Several buildings have been boarded up to prevent trespassing and unwanted illegal activity. Currently, the buildings are contributing little to the local economy, are structurally unsound, likely contaminated, and are an eyesore that the community has expressed an interest in addressing.	
<b>Potential Environmental Issues:</b> asbestos, lead-based paint, and PCBs in building materials	
<b>West Memphis Broadway Corridor (in the Memphis, TN-MS-AR MSA)</b>	
<b>Former Auto Repair Site, 306-314 East Broadway Blvd., West Memphis, AR</b>	Size: 0.83 acres
<b>Background:</b> Located on West Memphis’ historic “main street,” this site is a former automotive sales and service facility that was developed prior to 1938. The building was removed around 2003. The site currently consists of paved foundations from the former building. The potential presence of underground storage tanks (USTs) and contamination from past automotive-related activities has prevented the site from being redeveloped for 20 years.	
<b>Potential Environmental Issues:</b> hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), metals, asbestos from brake repairs, PCBs from hydraulic oil	
<b>East Little Rock Target Area (in the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA)</b>	
<b>Fire Station #9, 2023 East 6<sup>th</sup> St., Little Rock, AR</b>	Size: 0.36 acres
<b>Background:</b> Built in 1930, this former fire station served East Little Rock until it closed in 1963. During its operation, the property also served as a polling place and was the center of the local community. Following closure of the fire station, the upper floor served as a meeting room for the Imperial Social Club of Little Rock, a local African American civil group. The property has been used as an industrial chemical supplier, automotive garage, and welding shop, indicating a strong potential for contamination. The building was listed on the National Historic Register in 2020. Reuse plans include redevelopment as the Arkansas Fire Fighters Museum and Education Center.	
<b>Potential Environmental Issues:</b> hydrocarbons, VOCs, metals, asbestos, lead-based paint, PCBs in hydraulic oil and building materials	
<b>Magness Oil, 1415 East 9<sup>th</sup> St., Little Rock, AR</b>	Size: 1.99 acres
<b>Background:</b> This site is a former bulk oil and chemical distribution facility that began operating in the 1940s and has been vacant since 2015. The site currently consists of an approx. 19,000-sf warehouse, paved parking areas, and a bulk storage area with multiple aboveground storage tanks (ASTs). Due to its location, this site is considered a highly marketable property for new business development.	
<b>Potential Environmental Issues:</b> hydrocarbons, VOCs, metals including lead from leaded gasoline	
<b>Booker Arts Magnet School, 2016 Barber St., Little Rock, AR 72206</b>	Size: 11.88 acres
<b>Background:</b> This site is a former public school built in 1963 and closed in 2022. It currently has a vacant approx. 77,000-sf school building with paved parking, basketball courts, playgrounds, and a running track with a football field. The track and field have been open to the public for decades. The community expressed concerns over losing access to these amenities when the school’s closure was announced. The City of Little Rock plans to reuse the property as a mixed-use facility with a community meeting space, co-working spaces, and City offices. The track/ grounds will remain open to the public.	
<b>Potential Environmental Issues:</b> Asbestos, lead-based paint, and PCBs in building materials	

*1.a.iii. Identifying Additional Brownfield Sites (5 points)*

DEQ regularly engages in outreach activities and communicates with local governments and planning organizations to identify sites for the program. DEQ will continue to attend annual conferences such as the Ark. Municipal League Conference, Ark. Rural Development Conference, and Assoc. of Ark. Counties Conference. DEQ also plans to host brownfields workshops annually. These activities, including outreach in



disadvantaged communities, ensure a pipeline of projects for assessment and cleanup planning under this grant in the event that funds remain after addressing the TAs and priority sites.

DEQ commits to prioritizing services in communities that have been historically underserved, including communities in Arkansas that have never benefitted from Brownfields grant resources in the past and non-MSA communities. Data to support the prioritization of sites comes from utilizing the appropriate available tools providing data to support the identification of these communities. Sites determined to be located in a disadvantaged census tract will be prioritized when limited funding is available for assessment and planning activities. If further prioritization is required, DEQ will prioritize sites in non-MSAs over sites in MSAs.

### **1.b. Revitalization of Target Areas (10 points)**

#### *1.b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans (5 points)*

DEQ will work with local partners to ensure that site reuses align with each community's vision and priorities. DEQ's overall strategy in applying for this Assessment Grant is to reserve existing 128(a) funds to provide more direct cleanups of contaminated properties, increasing the number of "ready for redevelopment" sites in Arkansas. This strategy will allow for seamless assessment, planning, and cleanups under the ABP.

Assessment activities funded by this grant will eliminate environmental unknowns in disadvantaged communities. By answering critical questions related to redevelopment, the grant will facilitate the reuse of brownfields, allow for the reduction of contamination/blight in disadvantaged communities. This will attract reuse funding and new businesses which will generate tax revenues and local jobs. For each of the priority properties, the projected reuse aligns with this overall goal of facilitating redevelopment in the state and with the local communities' revitalization goals:

The **City of Earle** has prioritized addressing blight by removing dilapidated buildings. This grant would provide funding for critical planning activities (inventorying and prioritizing sites, developing reuse plans, assessing infrastructure needs, etc.) and environmental assessments (asbestos, lead-based paint surveys) required prior to demolitions, specifically for Earle's **Downtown Commercial Buildings** priority site. Additionally, the activities conducted under this grant will allow the City to access funds from other sources by providing environmental clearance on redevelopment projects.

The City of West Memphis has a comprehensive city plan entitled "Grow West Memphis 2040," which includes revitalization of the **West Memphis Broadway Corridor** and incorporating Low Impact Stormwater Designs. Broadway was once a commercial core, but has been in decline since the 1980s. Development of newer commercial establishments along other corridors have left the traditional commercial core of Broadway hollowed out. Today, Broadway is a four-lane highway that is primarily vehicle-oriented rather than pedestrian-oriented. The City's plan for this area includes reducing a section of East Broadway to one-lane travel in each direction, with angled parking typical of a historic downtown. This includes the section of East Broadway with the **Former Auto Repair** priority site. This grant will allow DEQ to support West Memphis's plans by assessing and planning for cleanup at this site as well as others along the corridor. Following cleanup, this site and others will present opportunities for infill commercial developments in a mixed-use area.

Expansion of the I-30 corridor through Little Rock, adjacent to the **East Little Rock** TA, began in 2020. In February 2023, the City of Little Rock announced a plan to use federal infrastructure funds to build a new deck park over a portion of I-30, between 6th and 9th Streets, to reconnect neighborhoods on either side of the interstate. In October 2023, the City of Little Rock initiated a 9-month planning process to create a new Downtown Little Rock Master Plan. The planning area includes a portion of the **East Little Rock** TA (referred to as East Village). Over the planning period, the City will engage the community to conduct studies on improving walkability to make downtown Little Rock a more vibrant, connected urban core. This grant will allow DEQ to support these efforts in East Little Rock. As the city becomes more connected, addressing brownfield properties will play a key role in revitalizing the local economy, drawing new businesses to the area, and creating a renewed sense of community. This grant will fund necessary assessments for characterizing potential contamination at the former **Fire Station #9** site, which is planned to become a museum that will provide educational/recreational opportunities; at the **Magness Oil** site, which will become a marketable property for a new private business; and at the former **Booker Arts Magnet School**, which will become a

mixed-use property with a community meeting space, co-working spaces, City offices, a track, football field, basketball courts, and playgrounds open to the public for safe outdoor recreation.

*1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy (5 points)*

In the **City of Earle**, this grant will facilitate assessment and cleanup activities that will result in the demolition of unsafe **Downtown Commercial Buildings**. DEQ will assist the City in developing a reuse plan for the priority site, which may include marketing it to a private developer as a means of stimulating economic development or may include repurposing the site for a community use such as a greenspace.

In the **West Memphis Broadway Corridor**, this grant will support existing efforts to revitalize Broadway Boulevard by eliminating unknowns at the **Former Auto Repair Site**. The possible USTs and contamination at this site have prevented redevelopment for 20 years. Through assessment, DEQ will either eliminate these concerns to allow for redevelopment or will determine that a Cleanup Plan is needed and will conduct cleanup using DEQ's 128(a) funds. In either scenario, this grant will facilitate activities necessary to spur economic development at this site and along the corridor. Additionally, the reuse of this site and others along the corridor will incorporate climate adaptation strategies including Low Impact Stormwater Designs that will allow for natural flow and on-site infiltration, mitigating flooding while improving the health of local surface waters.

In **East Little Rock**, DEQ has identified 3 priority sites at which this grant will either support economic development or will create a new community asset. Upon cleanup of the **Former Fire Station #9**, the City will transform the property into a museum that provides educational/recreational opportunities as well as supporting the local tourism economy. Assessing and cleaning up (or planning for cleanup) at **Magness Oil** will allow the City to market the site to attract a new business which will provide local jobs. Assessing and cleaning up the **Booker Arts Magnet School** will allow the City to reuse the property as a mixed-use facility with community spaces, co-working spaces, City offices, and outdoor recreation areas. Reuse of the Booker Arts Magnet School may include energy efficiency upgrades through the Arkansas Energy Performance Contracting (AEPC) Program.

DEQ plans to execute this grant in accordance with EPA's Climate Smart Brownfields Manual. Reuses for sites assessed under this funding will incorporate resiliency and promote green construction.

**1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources (10 points)**

*1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse (5 points)*

DEQ's ABP receives 128(a) grant funding annually and intends to use 128(a) funding to support efforts of this Assessment Grant. DEQ will continue to fund all programmatic capacity building using 128(a) funding, which includes outreach activities. Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBAs) can also be funded using the 128(a) grant, or DEQ may request a TBA from EPA's Region 6 Brownfield Program as needed. Most importantly, the 128(a) grant can be used to provide direct cleanups of contaminated properties. Cleanup funding for the priority sites in the East Little Rock TA may also include Pulaski County's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), which can provide cleanup funding to private entities in the form of a loan. By utilizing an Assessment Grant in addition to the existing 128(a) grant, DEQ will be able to reserve more site-specific dollars in the 128(a) budget for cleanup activities, resulting in "redevelopment ready" sites in Arkansas.

Most funding sources for redevelopment, whether public or private, require environmental clearance. By addressing the unknowns at priority sites, the grant will stimulate further investment from other sources. Common sources of funding for brownfield redevelopment in Arkansas include the Arkansas Economic Development Commission's (AEDC's) Community Development Block Grant, Rural Services Block Grant, and/or Slum and Blight Removal grant. The **Downtown Commercial Buildings** in Earle will utilize AEDC's Slum and Blight Removal grant, which will require any asbestos-containing materials to be removed from the buildings before funding demolition. Subsequently, the site will be eligible for New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs) if redeveloped by a private entity.

The **Former Fire Station #9** site is eligible for State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (25% of rehab costs) and Federal Historic Tax Credits (20% of rehab costs), and qualifies for the Arkansas Department of Heritage Small Museum Grant Program. **Magness Oil** is eligible for NMTCs if redeveloped by a private entity. **Booker**

**Arts Magnet School** may qualify for the Arkansas Energy Performance Contracting (AEPC) Program, which is a funding mechanism that pays for energy efficiency upgrades up front, then uses energy cost savings to cover the up-front expenses over time.

*1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure (5 points)*

All priority sites will utilize existing infrastructure such as water, electric, communications lines, sewer/drainage systems, and roads. If infrastructure upgrades are needed, DEQ maintains relationships with local planning districts and KSU TAB which can assist in determining local funding availability.

**2. Community Need and Community Engagement (45 points)**

**2.a. Community Need (30 points)**

*2.a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding (10 points)*

Arkansas has 500+ local municipalities, only 39 of which have populations over 10,000. Many local governments operate on small budgets and must seek other sources of funding to addressing brownfields. Because most communities do not have the capacity to apply for or manage a grant, let alone the technical knowledge to provide environmental oversight, participating in the ABP is the best option for accessing resources to address brownfields. The table below demonstrates the need in each TA:

Target Area	Demonstration of Need
City of Earle	Low population: 1,846 Low income: 53%; \$18,114 per capita income
West Memphis Broadway Corridor	Low income: 55%; \$21,774 per capita income
East Little Rock	Low population in TA: 747 (total Little Rock population is 202,514) Low income: 66%; \$17,266 per capita income

*2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (20 points)*

*(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Population (5 points)*

Conditions such as a lack of jobs and affordable housing, exposure to contaminated properties, and elevated crime due to vacant buildings have real impacts on sensitive populations. All three of the selected TAs rank medium-to-high on the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index. The following data demonstrate the existence of sensitive populations in each TA:

	City of Earle	West Memphis Broadway Corridor	East Little Rock	US Average
<b>Minority populations</b>	72% Black 82% POC	61% Black 66% POC	80% Black 81% POC	13.6% Black 29% POC
<b>Low-income</b>	53%	55%	66%	11.6%
<b>Per capita income</b>	\$18,114	\$21,774	\$17,266	\$37,634
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	16%	10%	17%	3.9%
<b>Age 18 and younger</b>	27%	27%	22%	22.1%
<b>Age 65 and older</b>	19%	16%	12%	16.8%
<b>Persons with disabilities</b>	20%	27%	34%	13%

This grant will allow DEQ to assist each TA in identifying sites that may be contributing to negative health effects; by assessing and facilitating the cleanup of sites to reduce community exposure to contamination; and by facilitating redevelopments that will positively impact the communities by adding local jobs or community assets to improve overall health and welfare.



*(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions (5 points)*

Two of the TAs—the **City of Earle** and the **West Memphis Broadway Corridor**—are located in Crittenden County, which is part of the Arkansas Delta Region. While both Earle and West Memphis are considered urban due to their proximity to Memphis, health outcomes in Crittenden County are more typical of rural Arkansas counties. According to the County Health Ranking 2023 report from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Crittenden County ranks 68th out of the 75 Arkansas counties for Health Outcomes. **East Little Rock** is located in Pulaski County, which ranks 25th out of the 75 counties.

The **City of Earle** is located in a disadvantaged census tract and ranks in the 93rd percentile for asthma and in the 94th percentile for diabetes. The **West Memphis Broadway Corridor** consists of 9 census tracts, 8 of which are designated as disadvantaged. Within the TA, 8 out of 9 tracts rank at or above the 95th percentile for asthma and 7 out of 9 tracts rank at or above the 94th percentile for diabetes. The TA has the following pollution concerns: Toxic Releases to Air, RMP Facility Proximity, UST Proximity, and Wastewater Discharge. The average life expectancy in the TA is 56 years. **East Little Rock** covers two census tracts, both of which are designated as disadvantaged and rank in the 86th percentile for asthma and at or above the 93rd percentile for diabetes. The TA has the following pollution concerns: Particulate Matter, Diesel Particulate Matter, Air Toxics Cancer Risk, Air Toxics Respiratory Hazard, Traffic Proximity, RMP Proximity, Hazardous Waste Proximity, and Wastewater Discharge. Additionally, the East Little Rock TA ranks in the 74th percentile for Lead Paint.

This grant will directly impact sensitive populations in the 3 TAs by funding assessment and cleanup planning for contaminated properties. The activities funded by the grant will facilitate cleanup actions, which will remove environmental threats to people who live and work in proximity to the priority sites, especially vulnerable populations. The primary environmental threat reduction will be through removal of harmful contaminants that are known to cause cancers, birth defects, and respiratory issues.

*(3) Environmental Stewardship & Disadvantaged Communities (10 points)*

*(a) Identification of Issues (5 points)*

Over 60% of Arkansas’s census tracts are identified as disadvantaged (418 of the 868 census tracts), so the majority of DEQ’s brownfield projects take place in disadvantaged communities. This grant will help address any environmental disparities throughout the state. The selected TAs is located in a disadvantaged census tract.

*(b) Advancing Environmental Stewardship (5 points)*

Assessments conducted under this grant and subsequent cleanup actions will address sites that expose vulnerable populations in the TAs to contamination. The projected reuse for each priority site will either economically benefit the community or create a new community asset. Though DEQ’s outreach efforts, any underserved residents will have an opportunity to participate meaningfully in the decision-making process. By involving the community early and throughout the process, reuse plans will minimize the displacement of residents and businesses in the TAs.

**2.b. Community Engagement (15 points)**

*2.b.i. Project Involvement (5 points) and 2.b.ii. Project Roles (5 points)*

As the state response program for brownfield properties in Arkansas, DEQ’s ABP regularly engages with local partners throughout the state (in person, via video conferencing, and by phone) and participates in outreach activities.

DEQ’s proposed partners for the TAs in this grant application are:

Partner	Point of Contact	Project Role(s)
City of Earle	[REDACTED]	Local government contact; assisting with community outreach; identifying sites; providing cleanup/reuse input; ensuring reuse plans align with local plans and regulations
City of West Memphis	[REDACTED]	
City of Little Rock	[REDACTED]	
Pulaski County Brownfields Program	[REDACTED]	Local Brownfield Program with an RLF available to sites in the East Little Rock TA
East AR Planning and Development District (EAPDD)	[REDACTED]	Local planning organization; identification of sites; assistance in identifying and applying for additional sources of funding
Central AR Planning and Development District (CAPDD)	[REDACTED]	

*2.b.iii Incorporating Community Input (5 points)*

DEQ’s ABP regularly engages with local Brownfield grantees, local governments, and regional planning organizations to understand local challenges, identify brownfield sites, and to provide updates on site progress. DEQ plans to continue and enhance its typical outreach methods as they relate to site-specific activities funded with this grant. It is DEQ’s intention to provide a meaningful level of engagement to all Arkansans, which means making additional considerations when working in a disadvantaged community.

According to the Arkansas Brownfield Redevelopment Rule, public notice and a 30-day public comment period are required when a final cleanup remedy is selected for a brownfield site. Public Notice is published in the local newspaper and the administrative record for the site is published on the DEQ website and provided to a local library for public review. Comments are sent directly to DEQ, and each comment is responded to and/or incorporated into the final cleanup plan.

DEQ believes that the activities funded under this grant will benefit from additional engagement. The ABP will act as a pilot program for an agency-wide Public Participation Plan to standardize and enhance DEQ’s level of community engagement. DEQ will engage with local government contacts in each Target Area (TA) who will advise on the preferred methods of communication. DEQ will use its outreach & community engagement resources to engage in the best way. DEQ plans to provide at least quarterly updates to TA partners. Working with local leaders, DEQ will consider which channels of communication are preferred in the community (newspaper, social media, local news, etc.), where/when to hold public meetings or hearings, and when to provide information in languages other than English. When grant-funded activities are expected to directly impact members of a community (for example, neighbors of a brownfield site), DEQ will ensure those community members are notified and can contact DEQ for additional information. DEQ also partners with KSU TAB to provide community reuse visioning sessions & resource roundtables which may occur virtually or in the community.

**3. Task Descriptions, Cost Estimates, and Measuring Progress (45 points)**

**3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs (25 points)**

DEQ intends to use existing Brownfields 128(a) funding to cover all personnel, fringe, indirect, travel, supply costs, and any additional administrative costs associated with the successful implementation of this grant. 128(a) funding can also be used to provide direct cleanups of properties assessed using this grant.

<b>Task 1—Planning, Community Outreach and Engagement</b>
<p><i>3.a.i. Project Implementation (10 points):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Brownfield Planning Activities</u> (beginning with priority sites/TAs as needed, then moving to non-priority sites or other TAs)—work with local partners on planning activities such as: developing inventories; providing site reuse assessments, land use assessments, market studies, infrastructure evaluations; and prioritizing sites.</li> <li>• <u>Community Engagement</u> (beginning with priority sites/TAs, then moving to non-priority sites/other TAs which will include identifying additional sites for assessment)—engage with local partners and community groups to disseminate project updates, gather public input on cleanup/reuse plans, and respond to public input. DEQ will maintain and update the Brownfield stakeholder contacts list.</li> <li>• <u>Identifying Additional Sites</u>—work with local governments and regional planning organizations to reach municipalities in MSAs and non-MSAs throughout the state that do not have the capacity to manage a Brownfield grant themselves; identify additional TAs and sites, especially in disadvantaged census tracts. Engage with local community groups and residents to identify and prioritize additional sites. Site selection criteria includes: local partner/community support, readiness for assessment activities, reuse potential, site access, potential positive impacts to a disadvantaged community, ability for the project to act as a catalyst for additional revitalization; and other priorities as determined by the local community.</li> </ul>
<p><i>3.a.ii. Anticipated Project Schedule (5 points):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with TA partners and continue outreach to local governments and regional planning organizations on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the grant;</li> <li>• Develop a TA-specific community engagement plan including most effective means of communication, preferred frequency of meetings, etc. in coordination with local partners in each TA by Year 1 Quarter 2, and continue to update the engagement plan as needed;</li> <li>• Present at community meetings/webinars, at project milestones (start of project, prior to sampling, assessment completion, etc.) and as requested by local partners/the community throughout the grant period (beginning in Year 1 Quarter 1 and projected to occur quarterly).</li> </ul>
<p><i>3.a.iii. Task/Activity Lead (5 points):</i> DEQ’s (Applicant’s) ABP Coordinator</p>
<p><i>3.a.iv. Outputs (5 points):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of meetings with local partners (planned quarterly meetings with 3 TAs = at least 12 meetings per year or 60 meetings total; additional meetings as new TAs are identified)</li> <li>• Other planning activity deliverables (local inventories, plans, etc.) based on community needs;</li> <li>• Quarterly updates of DEQ’s Brownfields stakeholder contacts list.</li> </ul>
<b>Task 2—Environmental Site Assessments</b>
<p><i>3.a.i. Project Implementation (10 points):</i>  <i>Activities to be conducted using competitively-selected State environmental consultants/contractors.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Assessment Planning and Preparation</u>—submit Property Eligibility Determination requests to EPA, develop Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) for data collection activities.</li> <li>• <u>Conduct Environmental Assessments</u>—conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), Phase II ESAs or Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessments (CSAs), Asbestos Surveys, Lead-Based Paint Surveys, and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) surveys.</li> <li>• <u>Cleanup Planning</u>—develop Cleanup Plans including Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) and Community Relations Plans (CRPs).</li> </ul>

*3.a.ii. Anticipated Project Schedule (5 points):* Starting work in Year 1, Quarter 1; conduct 3 Phase I ESAs, 2 Phase II ESAs/CSAs, 3 Asbestos, Lead-Based Paint, and/or PCB Surveys, and 1 Cleanup Plan annually for a total of 15 Phase I ESAs, 10 Phase II ESAs/CSAs, 15 Asbestos and/or Lead-Based Paint Surveys, and 5 Cleanup Plans; submit site-specific QAPPs to EPA prior to data collection activities.

*3.a.iii. Task/Activity Lead (5 points):* DEQ’s ABP Coordinator and Qualified Environmental Professionals (State contractors)

*3.a.iv. Outputs (5 points):* Reports for 15 Phase I ESAs, 10 Phase II ESAs/CSAs, 15 Asbestos, Lead-Based Paint Surveys, and/or PCB surveys and 5 Cleanup Plans; submit site-specific QAPPs to EPA prior to data collection activities.

**Task 3—Program Management**

*3.a.i. Project Implementation (10 points):*

- Submit work plan and quarterly reports to EPA; update ACRES; submit annual MBE/WBE forms and Federal Financial Reports (FFRs) to EPA; ensure Agency Quality Management Plan (QMP) and Program QAPP are up-to-date and approved by EPA.
- Participate in EPA Region 6 grantee calls; attend National Brownfields Conference or Regional Brownfields Conference; attend Region 6 Brownfields Workshops as available
- Hold weekly internal meetings.

*3.a.ii. Anticipated Project Schedule (5 points):*

- Work plan negotiated before grant begins;
- Quarterly Progress Reports;
- Annual MBE/WBE and FFR Reports;
- ACRES updates as projects progress (at least monthly);
- Scheduled calls and conferences;
- Weekly internal meetings;
- Annual updates of QMP and QAPP as required.

*3.a.iii. Task/Activity Lead (5 points):* DEQ ABP Coordinator, E&E Fiscal Division and QA Officer

*3.a.iv. Outputs (5 points):*

- Work plan approved by EPA;
- Reports submitted on time (20 Qtrly. Progress Reports, 5 Annual MBE/WBE and 5 Annual FFR Reports);
- ACRES updates as least monthly;
- Participation in EPA calls and conferences as scheduled;
- Weekly internal meetings notes;
- Current QMP and QAPP.

**3.b. Cost Estimates (15 points)**

All personnel, fringe, indirect, travel, and supply costs will be covered by DEQ’s 128(a) Brownfield State Response Program grant.

**Task 1—Planning, Community Outreach and Engagement**

*Contractual:* Cost estimates are based on review of other state response program budgets for similar work:

- Planning activities for 2 communities/year for 5 years at \$20,000 per community = \$200,000

**Task 2—Environmental Site Assessments**

*Contractual:* Cost estimates are based on DEQ’s past experience funding TBAs in Arkansas:

- 15 Phase I ESAs, ~\$6,500 each = \$97,500
- 10 Phase II ESAs/CSAs including QAPP, ~\$52,500 each = \$525,000
- 15 Asbestos and Lead-Based Paint Surveys including QAPP, ~\$8,500 = \$127,500
- 5 Cleanup Plans including ABCA, QAPP, and CRP, ~ \$10,000 each = \$50,000

**Task 3—Program Management**



All costs to be covered by DEQ’s 128(a) Brownfield State Response Program grant.

Budget Category	Task 1: Planning and Outreach	Task 2: Assessments	Task 3: Program Management	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Fringe	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$200,000	\$800,000	\$0	\$1,000,000
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs	\$200,000	\$800,000	\$0	\$1,000,000
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Budget	\$200,000	\$800,000	\$0	\$1,000,000

**3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results (5 points)**

DEQ will track the outputs described in 3.a.iv. under Tasks 1, 2, and 3 in an Excel spreadsheet which will be used to complete quarterly reports to EPA and to update ACRES at least monthly. DEQ anticipates tracking outcomes including: the number of Brownfield Certificates of Completion (COCs) awarded, acres made ready for reuse, acres of greenspace created for communities, new jobs created and amount of funding leveraged through economic reuse of sites. These outcomes will be tracked in ACRES and reported to EPA quarterly.

**4. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (35 points)**

**4.a. Programmatic Capability (20 points)**

*4.a.i. Organization Capacity (5 points), 4.a.ii. Organizational Structure (5 points), and 4.a.iii. Description of Key Staff (5 points)*

As the state response program for brownfield properties, DEQ’s ABP currently manages a 128(a) grant with assistance from the various Offices within DEQ’s umbrella agency, E&E. With continued support from these Offices, DEQ has the capacity to also manage the programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements of this Assessment Grant.

The ABP is housed in the Assessment and Remediation (A&R) section of the Office of Land Resources (OLR) at DEQ. The Brownfield Program Coordinator, Addie Smith, has 6 years of experience in environmental assessments and remediation projects (1.5 years at DEQ) and is responsible for tracking EPA grant requirements, developing work plans and budgets, updating ACRES, conducting outreach, and submitting progress and closeout reports to EPA. The Brownfield Program employs 2 full-time Project Managers who handle daily communications with participants and contractors and assist with outreach. The A&R section has a full-time technical staff consisting of geologists, engineers, and risk assessors who provide support to Brownfield Program staff in reviewing all assessment work plans and reports. A&R management meets weekly to discuss programmatic and project-specific updates on brownfield sites. Administrative staff in the OLR also provide programmatic support such as reviewing invoices for contract work and procuring supplies.

E&E’s Fiscal Division provides financial oversight for the management of all grants, including DEQ’s 128(a) grant. The Fiscal Division is also responsible for FFR and MBE/WBE reporting. E&E’s Quality Assurance Officer, Jonathan Westmoreland, updates the E&E Agency QMP and the Brownfield Program QAPP and ensures they meet EPA standards. E&E’s Legal Services provides assistance in determining site and applicant eligibility, interpreting state rules, reviewing legal agreements between DEQ and program participants, and reviewing deed restrictions for sites being cleaned up under the ABP. E&E’s Office of Communications assists with outreach, which will likely expand to social media during the implementation of this grant. The Office of Communications will also assist in scheduling and attending community meetings.

*4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources (5 points)*

Assessments and cleanup planning will be conducted under DEQ’s ABP using the same competitively-selected contractors that currently provide TBAs.

DEQ maintains on-call contractors to provide Site Assessment and Remedial Design services for various programs within DEQ-OLR. The competitive bid process is overseen by the Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services (TSS). DEQ is in the process of negotiating final contracts with the selected firms: FTN Associates Ltd., Ensafe Inc., AECOM Technical Services Inc. and Tetra Tech Inc. All contracts will be in place by the beginning of the grant performance period.

**4.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments (15 points)**

*4.b.i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant (15 points)*

DEQ’s ABP is the state response program and receives 128(a) grant funding annually. DEQ currently has three open Cooperative Agreements (CAs):

<b>Grant: 128(a) State Brownfield Funding CA# RP-01F50701</b>		
<b>Amount:</b> \$1,239,204	<b>Funds Remaining:</b> \$395,192	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/2019 - 9/30/2024
<b>(1) Accomplishments:</b> Maintained and improved the state response program; provided outreach to local communities; provided technical oversight/assistance for over 25 sites during the life of the grant, including TBAs at eligible sites and oversight of voluntary assessments and cleanups by private parties; all TBAs and direct cleanups reported in ACRES.		
<b>(2) Compliance:</b> Current on progress reporting, FFR and MBE/WBE reports, ACRES and public record updated, current QMP and QAPP, and on track to meet work plan commitments. <b>Plan to Expend Funds:</b> DEQ requested an extension of the CA through the end of FY24 due to an increase in program activity and revised the CA budget to allow for more effective use of remaining funds. TBAs are in progress at 7 sites; cleanup planning is in progress at 2 sites; and additional assessment/cleanup planning/direct cleanups are anticipated in FY24 (using \$242,324 remaining in Contractual budget). The CA also will fund personnel (\$69,904), fringe (\$28,431), and indirect costs (\$63,682) for the remainder of FY2024. Upon spending down the CA funds, DEQ will begin funding activities using the new CAs below.		
<b>Grant: 128(a) State Brownfield Funding CA# RP-02F46101 (Annual Appropriations)</b>		
<b>Amount:</b> \$315,108	<b>Funds Remaining:</b> \$315,108	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/2023 - 9/30/2024
<b>(1) Accomplishments:</b> N/A—DEQ will expend the oldest funding in CA RP-01F50701 before drawing down funding from this CA.		
<b>(2) Compliance:</b> N/A—new CA, no progress reports due yet. <b>Plan to Expend Funds:</b> Per EPA CA work plan, \$51,614 in Personnel to maintain state response program, oversee voluntary assessments and cleanups by private parties, and to conduct outreach; \$19,273 in Fringe; \$7,125 in Travel for attending conferences and workshops; \$3,000 in Supplies for outreach/promotion; \$200,000 in Contracts for providing TBAs and direct cleanups; \$2,250 in Other for vendor booth registration at outreach events and conference registration; and \$31,846 in Indirect costs.		
<b>Grant: 128(a) State Brownfield Funding CA# RP-02F47601 (IIJA)</b>		
<b>Amount:</b> \$500,000	<b>Funds Remaining:</b> \$500,000	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/2023 - 9/30/2024
<b>(1) Accomplishments:</b> N/A—DEQ will expend the oldest funding in CA RP-01F50701 before drawing down funding from this CA.		
<b>(2) Compliance:</b> N/A—new CA, no progress reports due yet. <b>Plan to Expend Funds:</b> Per EPA CA work plan, \$77,422 in Personnel to maintain state response program and to conduct outreach; \$28,909 in Fringe; \$3,200 in Travel for visiting sites and communities in the state; \$5,000 in Supplies for outreach/promotion; \$336,000 in Contracts for providing TBAs, direct cleanups, and workshop assistance; \$1,500 in Other for providing medical monitoring to staff; and \$47,769 in Indirect costs.		





## **THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

### **1. Applicant Eligibility**

The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment (E&E) Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is an eligible applicant as a state government entity.

### **2. Community Involvement**

DEQ's Arkansas Brownfield Program regularly engages with local Brownfield grantees, local governments, and regional planning organizations to understand local challenges, identify brownfield sites, and to provide updates on site progress. DEQ plans to continue and enhance its typical outreach methods as they relate to site-specific activities funded with this grant. It is DEQ's intention to provide a meaningful level of engagement to all Arkansans, which means making additional considerations when working in a disadvantaged community.

According to the Arkansas Brownfield Redevelopment Rule, public notice and a 30-day public comment period are required when a final cleanup remedy is selected for a brownfield site. Public Notice is published in the local newspaper. The administrative record for the site is published on the DEQ website and provided to a local library for public review. Comments are sent directly to DEQ with each comment is responded to and/or incorporated into the final cleanup plan.

DEQ believes that the activities funded under this grant will benefit from additional engagement. The Arkansas Brownfield Program will act as a pilot program for an agency-wide Public Participation Plan to standardize and enhance DEQ's level of community engagement. DEQ will engage with local government contacts in each Target Area (TA) who will advise on the preferred methods of communication. DEQ will use its outreach and community engagement resources to engage in the best way. DEQ plans to provide at least quarterly updates to TA partners. Working with local leaders, DEQ will consider which channels of communication are preferred in the community (newspaper, social media, local news, etc.), where/when to hold public meetings or hearings, and when to provide information in languages other than English. When grant-funded activities are expected to directly impact members of a community (for example, neighbors of a brownfield site), DEQ will ensure those community members are notified and can contact DEQ for additional information. DEQ also partners with Kansas State University's Technical Assistance to Brownfields (KSU TAB) to provide community reuse visioning sessions and resource roundtables which may occur virtually or in the community.

### **3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

N/A—DEQ is not a current recipient of a Community-wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes.

**4. Target Areas and Priority Sites**

The three proposed target areas and five priority sites (with at least one priority site in each target area) are listed in the Narrative Information Sheet as requested in the RFA.

**5. Named Contractors & Subrecipients**

Contractors: N/A—Not required for State applications.

Subrecipients: N/A—Not named in application; no subrecipients planned.



# ARKANSAS

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

April 11, 2022

James McDonald  
Assistant Regional Administrator for Management Section (6MD)  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500  
Dallas, TX 75270-2102

Dear Mr. McDonald:

The systems and procedures used by the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment for travel and personnel meet all requirements by the State of Arkansas and provide necessary and appropriate internal controls in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidance. Further Arkansas State systems and procedures provide an accurate assessment and record of our personnel and travel costs and expenditures.

Please contact Keith Tarter, Fiscal Division Manager, at 501-682-0600, if you have any question or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Julie Linck'.

Julie Linck  
E&E Chief Administrator  
5301 Northshore Drive, North Little Rock, Arkansas, 72118