



# White River Planning & Development District, Inc.

(870) 793-5233 P.O. Box 2396 Batesville, Arkansas 72503-2396  
Fax: (870) 793-4035

The White River Planning & Development District, Inc. is pleased to submit this proposal for FY2026 Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant funding. Below we provide the information requested.

## 1. Applicant Identification:

White River Planning & Development District, Inc.  
4441 Harrison Street  
Batesville, AR 72501

## 2. Website URL:

(a) Website URL for Lead Applicant White River Planning and Development District, Inc.:

<https://www.wrpdd.org>

(b) Website URL for Coalition Members:

- White County: <https://whitecounty.ar.gov>
- Woodruff County: <https://woodruffcountyar.gov>
- Jackson County: <https://jacksoncountyar.com>

## 3. Funding Requested:

(a) Assessment Grant Type: Assessment Coalition

(b) Federal Funds Requested: \$1,500,000

## 4. Location:

(a) City: Amagon, Ash Flat, Augusta, Bald Knob, Batesville, Beebe, Beedeville, Bradford, Calico Rock, Campbell Station, Cave City, Cherokee Village, Clinton, Concord, Cotton Plant, Cushman, Damascus, Diaz, Evening Shade, Fairfield Bay, Fifty-Six, Garner, Georgetown, Greers Ferry, Griffithville, Grubbs, Guion, Hardy, Heber Springs, Higden, Highland, Higginson, Horseshoe Bend, Hunter, Jacksonport, Judsonia, Kensett, Letona, Mammoth Spring, Magness, McCrory, McRae, Melbourne, Moorefield, Mountain View, Mount Pleasant, Newark, Newport, Oil Trough, Oxford, Pangburn, Patterson, Pineville, Pleasant Plains, Quitman, Rose Bud, Russell, Salem, Searcy, Shirley, Sidney, Southside, Sulphur Rock, Swifton, Tuckerman, Tupelo, Viola, Weldon, West Point, Williford

(b) County: Cleburne, Fulton, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Sharp, Stone, Van Buren, White, and Woodruff Counties.

(c) State or Reservation: Arkansas



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## 5. Coalition Members' Target Areas & Priority Site Information:

Coalition Members	Priority Site Address(es)	Target Area
White River Planning and Development District	Former Gas Station, 810 Harrison St., Batesville, AR 72501	City of Batesville
	Old White-Rodgers Building 2895 Harrison St., Batesville, AR 72501	
White County	Searcy Industrial Cluster, 200 Sherman Way, Kensett, AR	I-57 Corridor (CT05145070802 and Town of Higginson)
Woodruff County	Tire Pile-Highway 17, Cotton Plant, AR, 72036	Town of Cotton Plant
	178 Main Street, Cotton Plant, AR, 72036	
Jackson County	Former Nursing Home 2809 Neil Street, Newport, AR 72112	Town of Newport
	Former Assisted Living Center 419 Calhoun St., Newport, AR 72112	

## 6. Contacts:

### (a) Project Director:

Name: Jan Smith, Executive Director

Phone: (870) 793-5233 | Email: [jan@wrpdd.org](mailto:jan@wrpdd.org)

Mailing Address: 4441 Harrison Street, Batesville, AR 72501

### (b) Chief Executive:

Name: Jan Smith, Executive Director

Phone: (870) 793-5233 | Email: [jan@wrpdd.org](mailto:jan@wrpdd.org)

Mailing Address: 4441 Harrison Street, Batesville, AR 72501

## 7. Population:

- Population of Target Areas:
  - City of Batesville: 11,539
  - Town of Newport: 8,049
  - Town of Cotton Plant: 411
  - I-57 Corridor: 3,500



# White River Planning & Development District, Inc.

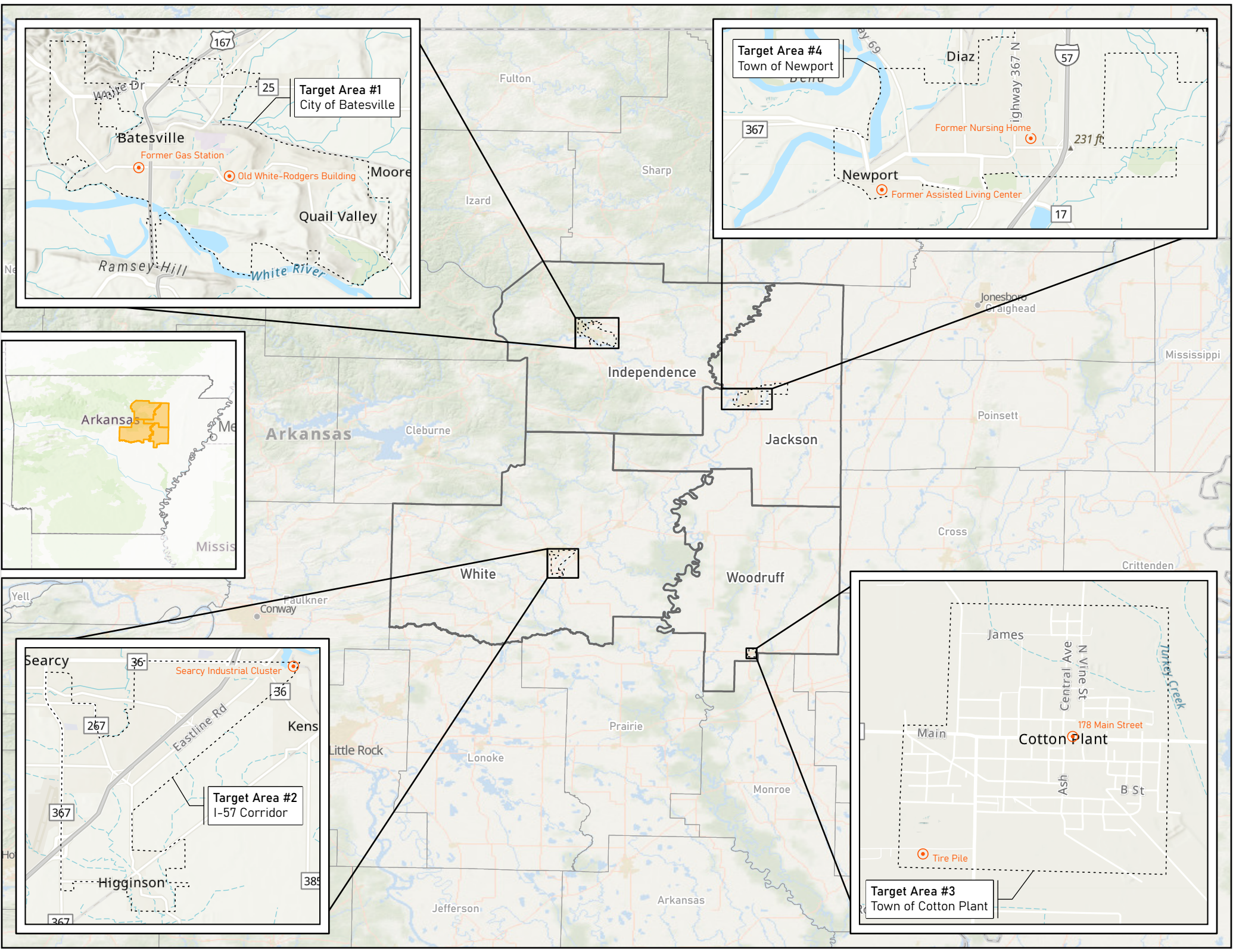
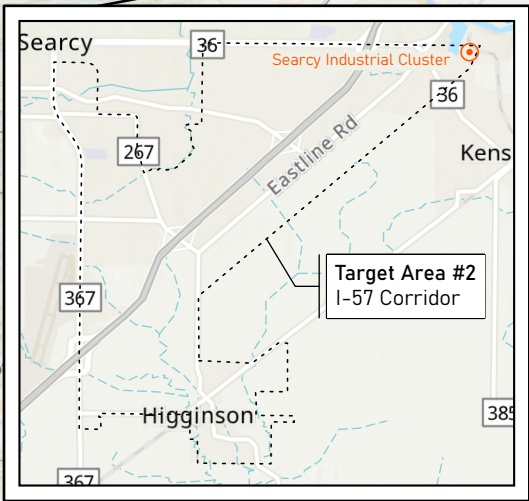
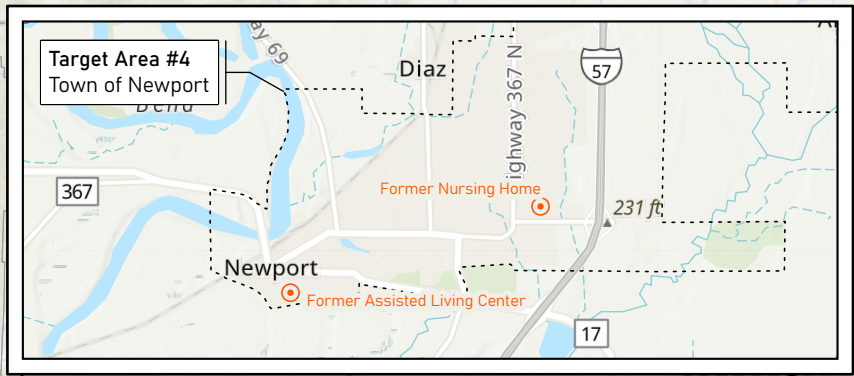
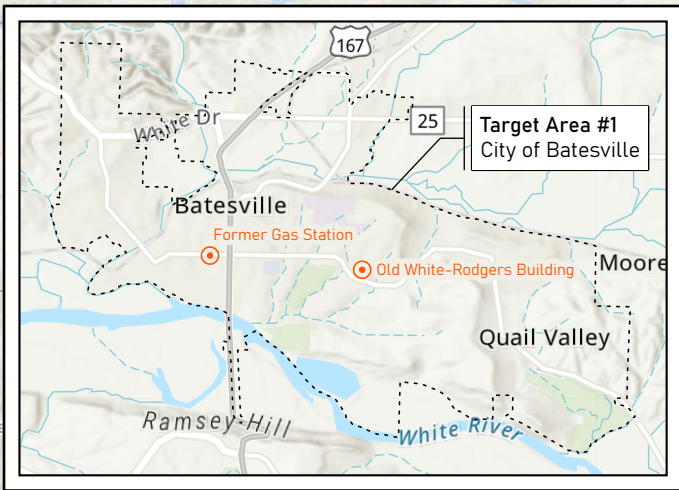
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## 8. Other Factors:

Other Factors Criteria	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	Pg. 5
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
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).	
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section 3.A.(2), for priority sites within the target areas.	Pg 10
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	

**9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:** A letter of acknowledgement from the Arkansas State Department of Energy and Environment is attached.

**10. Releasing Copies of Applications:** Not applicable. No confidential, privileged or sensitive information is presented in the grant application.





**DIVISION OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
GOVERNOR

Shane E. Khoury  
SECRETARY

January 5, 2026

Electronic Mail Only

Jan Smith, Executive Director  
White River Planning and Development District, Inc.  
P.O. Box 2396  
Batesville, AR 72503

**RE: Letter of Support for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 EPA Brownfield Assessment  
Coalition Grant Application**

Dear Ms. Smith:

The Division of Environmental Quality Office of Land Resources (DEQ) is pleased to provide this letter in support of the White River Planning and Development District, Inc.'s (WRPDD's) application as the lead entity for a Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant in Federal Fiscal Year 2026. DEQ understands that the coalition partners for the application are Jackson County, Woodruff County, and White County.

If awarded, grant funding will facilitate environmental assessments of brownfield properties in the communities of Batesville, Newport, and Cotton Plant. The funding will also be used for area-wide planning, reuse and cleanup planning, and community involvement activities.

As the state response program, DEQ's Arkansas Brownfield Program will continue to support local brownfield redevelopment efforts by providing technical assistance and regulatory oversight, as well as Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBAs) and cleanup assistance when CERCLA Section 128(a) funding is available. Properties assessed by WRPDD may also be eligible for participation in the Arkansas Brownfield Program to obtain liability protections under Arkansas law.

Please feel free to contact me at (501) 682-0616 or by email at [addie.mcclain@arkansas.gov](mailto:addie.mcclain@arkansas.gov) if further assistance is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'A. McClain'.

Addie McClain, Brownfield Program Coordinator  
Division of Environmental Quality

### **1.a. Coalition Members (5 points)**

The Coalition is led by the **White River Planning & Development District (WRPDD)**, a regional planning and development organization covering ten counties, with **White County, Woodruff County, and Jackson County** serving as non-lead general-purpose local government coalition members. All three counties are rural, fiscally constrained jurisdictions without dedicated brownfield programs. None has in-house environmental staff, a full-time grant manager for federal cooperative agreements, or experience administering an EPA cooperative agreement. Day-to-day staff are focused on essential services such as public safety, roads, solid waste, and basic government functions, with little capacity to prepare competitive applications, manage procurement, oversee consultants, or meet federal reporting requirements. These counties currently rely on ad hoc environmental due diligence when a project sponsor can afford it; most suspected brownfield sites remain unassessed. Planning capacity is largely regulatory and permit-driven rather than programmatic. As lead, WRPDD provides centralized grant management, consultant procurement, and technical oversight that the non-lead members cannot support independently, enabling access to EPA Brownfields resources that would otherwise remain out of reach. As lead, WRPDD provides the regional grant management, environmental consulting procurement, and technical oversight the non-lead members cannot support on their own, giving them access to Brownfields Grant resources that would otherwise remain out of reach.

### **1.b. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas (5 points)**

The geographic boundary for the proposed coalition assessment grant is the jurisdiction of the WRPDD, a region of ten counties shaped by work, movement, and production across much of the twentieth century when rail spurs cut through towns, cotton and timber moved through warehouses, and small factories and highway commerce sustained local economies. From the 1930s through the 1970s, communities across the WRPDD developed around manufacturing, agricultural processing, timber operations, rail service, and highway-oriented trade. Beginning in the late 1970s and accelerating through the 1980s and 1990s, plant closures, agricultural consolidation, mechanization, and changes in freight movement reshaped the region. By the early 2000s, many industrial and commercial properties were left vacant or obsolete, often with unresolved environmental conditions and little local capacity to address them. These long-term economic shifts produced a persistent legacy of brownfield properties that continue to constrain redevelopment and reinvestment across the WRPDD jurisdiction. These conditions persist today and continue to constrain redevelopment and reinvestment. Within the WRPDD jurisdiction, the coalition has identified four target areas where distinct economic upheavals produced lasting brownfield challenges and where focused assessment activities will have the greatest impact.

**Target Area 1: City of Batesville (Independence County):** Batesville functioned as a regional manufacturing and distribution center from the 1940s through the 1970s, supported by rail access, warehousing, and light industry. During the 1980s and 1990s, manufacturing downsized or relocated, leaving former plants and warehouses near the city's core. Unlike smaller towns, Batesville retained population and services, but many industrial properties became functionally obsolete rather than abandoned. Aging structures, suspected hazardous substances, petroleum contamination, and legacy building materials have limited reuse despite strong infrastructure and market access. Brownfields in Batesville reflect transition, not collapse; sites waiting on environmental clarity before reinvestment. **Target Area 2: City of Newport (Jackson County):** Newport's economy was historically anchored by river commerce, rail transport, and manufacturing, particularly from the 1930s through the 1980s. The late 1980s and 1990s brought sharper disruption as river shipping practices changed, rail consolidated, and manufacturing employment declined. Large industrial and commercial properties near downtown and transportation corridors were left vacant. Population and employment losses reduced redevelopment pressure, while environmental uncertainty reinforced prolonged vacancy. In Newport, brownfields are concentrated, visible, and closely tied to the contraction of multiple transportation-dependent industries. **Target Area 3: Town of Cotton Plant (Woodruff County):** Cotton Plant developed around cotton production and small-scale agricultural processing, with peak activity between the 1940s and 1960s. The 1970s and 1980s brought mechanization and consolidation that eliminated the need for local processing facilities. In a town of this size, these closures had an outsized impact. Vacant agricultural-industrial buildings remain embedded in the town's core, and limited fiscal capacity has prevented environmental assessment. Cotton Plant's brownfields are the enduring physical legacy of agricultural restructuring rather than short-term economic fluctuation. **Target Area 4: I-57 Corridor (Higginson & Searcy) (White County):** The I-57 Corridor covers all of the Town of Higginson and the adjacent Census Tract 05145070802 in the City of Searcy. This area developed during the 1960s through the 1980s around highway commerce, trucking services, and light industry. These uses depended on pass-through traffic and regional freight movement. By the 1990s, logistics consolidation and route changes reduced demand for many corridor properties. Smaller operations closed, leaving underutilized parcels with suspected environmental issues. This corridor reflects the impacts of

transportation and logistics restructuring, compounded by concentrated socioeconomic distress that intensifies the effects of disinvestment.

Across the WRPDD jurisdiction, brownfields are the cumulative result of decades of economic transition, industrial decline, agricultural consolidation, and shifting transportation systems. Properties that no longer serve their original purpose remain difficult to reuse without environmental assessment. This coalition assessment grant will address these challenges by supporting assessments, prioritizing sites shaped by historic economic change, and enabling reuse planning aligned with current conditions. By reducing environmental uncertainty, the grant will help communities move forward from legacy land uses toward productive reuse.

**1.c. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites (10 points)**

Across the WRPDD, the Coalition has identified brownfield sites that did not fail all at once, but slipped into vacancy by attrition. Buildings emptied as industries moved on, institutions closed their doors, and maintenance stopped before the lights ever went out. These sites remain, holding the physical memory of work, care, and production, now stalled by environmental uncertainty and fiscal limits. They are scattered across downtowns, neighborhoods, and corridors where people still live, work, walk, worship, and wait. They are not remote. They are close enough to touch. These sites are prioritized based on documented or suspected contaminated, proximity to sensitive populations, redevelopment potential, and local interest. **Table 1** summarizes the Coalition’s priority brownfield sites, including at least one site in each member’s target area, selected because environmental assessment is the necessary first step to interrupt vacancy, reduce risk, and return these properties to productive use. Despite the rural nature of our area, these sites sit in working class neighborhoods, and are attractive nuisances for young people, potentially exposing themselves to unseen contaminants. They are unavoidable as we live with them right next door and walk by them daily in our lives, but there is too much uncertainty for limited local finances take on such projects.

<u>Coalition Member</u>	<u>Target Area</u>	<u>Priority Sites</u>	<u>Past and Current Use</u>	<u>Suspected or Known Environmental Issues</u>	<u>Exposure &amp; Sensitive Populations</u>
<b>WRPDD</b>	Batesville	Former Gas Station, 810 Harrison St.	Historically used as a gas station and automotive repair facility. No documentation exists on if tanks were ever registered or properly closed.	Based on the past uses, USTs are suspected of being located on site and the potential for a release to occur or have occurred. Additional, automotive repair frequently involves chemicals with VOCs, SVOCs, and metals.	The site is at the entrance to, and up gradient, of a residential neighborhood immediately behind it. It is also situated along a main commercial thoroughfare surrounded by other land uses.
		Old White-Rodgers Building 2895 Harrison St.	Industrial manufacturing; recently closed after 46 years.	Known or suspected release from historic industrial use	Industrial corridor near working-class neighborhoods
<b>White County</b>	I-57 Corridor	Searcy Industrial Cluster, 200 Sherman Way	Industrial park since 1930s; flooring manufacturing, drilling-fluid mixing, warehousing	Petroleum products, unknown chemicals, ASTs, drums	Large multi-building site near residences; potential worker and off-site exposure
<b>Woodruff County</b>	Town of Cotton Plant	Tire Pile Highway 17, Cotton Plant, AR	Former agricultural-industrial property. Prolonged illegal dumping of tires.	Approximately 400,000 tires have been illegally dumped at the site over several years.	Embedded near town core and adjoining a State of Arkansas Medical Marijuana Farm.
		178 Main Street, Cotton Plant, AR	Historic downtown commercial now abandoned after a fire in April 2025.	Severely fire damaged, likely friable asbestos, lead-based paint.	Adjacent to library and public spaces; children and pedestrians nearby must walk under its awning on the sidewalk.
<b>Jackson County</b>	Town of Newport	Former Nursing Home 2809 Neil Street, Newport, AR 72112	Institutional healthcare; abandoned.	Asbestos, lead-based paint, PCBs, mold. Structurally unstable.	Working-class neighborhood; unsecured structure
		Former Assisted Living Center 419 Calhoun St., Newport, AR 72112	Abandoned residential healthcare facility.	Asbestos, lead-based paint, PCBs, mold. Structurally unstable.	Adjacent to church, low-income housing, playground

**1.d. Identifying Additional Sites (5 points)**

The Coalition will identify additional sites within the geographic boundary by maintaining a unified regional inventory drawing from four sources: **(1) nominations from coalition members, residents, and community organizations; (2) code enforcement records, nuisance property lists, tax-delinquent parcels, and publicly controlled properties; (3) publicly available environmental databases including ADEQ records, EPA’s Facility Registry Service, and ECHO; and (4) historic industrial and commercial land-use screening.** Each nominated property will be reviewed for eligibility under EPA’s brownfield definition and added to the shared inventory. To prioritize sites for assessment, the Coalition will apply develop a scoring matrix adapted from EPA’s Brownfields Property Prioritization approach, ATSDR guidance, and established site-readiness frameworks. Criteria will include community benefit, redevelopment potential, environmental risk, ownership and timing, and leveraged value.

**1.e. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans (5 points)**

The Coalition’s reuse strategy is designed to advance specific, adopted components of local and regional planning documents, rather than merely align with them in concept. For many Coalition members, WRPDD serves as the

**Table 2: Alignment with Reuse Plans**

<b>Priority Sites</b>	<b>Projected Reuse Strategy</b>	<b>Local Plan / Community Priority</b>	<b>How Reuse Advances Local Goals</b>	<b>Economic Function or Benefit Restored</b>	<b>How Assessment Enables Reuse</b>
Former Gas Station, 810 Harrison St.	Adaptive reuse for civic, institutional, or commercial purposes, or demolition and redevelopment depending on assessment results	WRPDD CEDS Goal 3: Infrastructure Improvements; CEDS Action Plan – Reinvestment in Existing Communities	Enables reinvestment in existing built infrastructure and supports revitalization of a regional core community	Downtown employment, services, and property utilization	Removes environmental uncertainty preventing reuse or disposition of a prominent downtown gateway site
Old White-Rodgers Building 2895 Harrison St.	Continued or reactivated industrial/commercial use or redevelopment for employment activity	WRPDD CEDS Goal 4: Competitive Living Wages; Action Plan – Job Growth & Industrial Retention	Supports employment-generating reuse and strengthens existing industrial land rather than greenfield expansion	Job-generating industrial/commercial space	Clarifies environmental constraints on an existing industrial parcel, enabling reinvestment decisions
Searcy Industrial Cluster, 200 Sherman Way	Municipal services, light industrial reuse, or employment-oriented redevelopment	WRPDD CEDS Goal 3: Infrastructure Improvements; Action Plan – Cluster Development	Concentrates employment uses in infrastructure-served industrial areas identified in the CEDS	Employment concentration in an infrastructure-served corridor	Enables continued productive use of existing industrial land without greenfield expansion
Tire Site 525248 Highway 17, Cotton Plant, AR	Productive agricultural or employment supporting reuse.	WRPDD CEDS Goal 4: Competitive Living Wages; Action Plan – Job Growth	Advances economic stabilization through reuse of legacy industrial land in a rural community	Stabilization of limited rural employment land	Document site conditions, resolve regulatory uncertainty, and establish path for cleanup.
178 Main Street, Cotton Plant, AR	Demolition or rehabilitation of fire damaged building for commercial or civic use	WRPDD CEDS Action Plan – Community Leadership & Downtown Revitalization	Addresses unsafe structures and supports downtown stabilization in line with community development priorities	Incremental downtown reinvestment and safety	Removes blight that suppresses adjacent property values and activity
Former Nursing Home 2809 Neil Street, Newport, AR 72112	Residential, institutional, or neighborhood-compatible reuse	WRPDD CEDS Goal 6: Rural Access to Quality Healthcare; Action Plan – Community Facilities	Enables reuse or clearance of obsolete healthcare facilities while protecting nearby residential neighborhoods	Reuse of a large, underutilized institutional property	Enables disposition and reuse decisions that are stalled by environmental unknowns
Former Assisted Living Center 419 Calhoun St., Newport, AR 72112	Clearance or reuse for residential or institutional purposes	WRPDD CEDS Goal 6: Rural Access to Quality Healthcare; Action Plan – Community Facilities.	Advances reuse of former institutional property embedded in a residential and community-serving area	Community-serving redevelopment near existing facilities	Removes barriers to reinvestment near churches, housing, and services

primary entity responsible for translating planning goals into implementable projects. This role is formalized through the WRPDD 2024–2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which establishes the

District's goals and action priorities related to infrastructure, employment, community facilities, and economic resilience. The CEDS identifies Infrastructure Improvements (Goal 3) and Competitive Living Wages (Goal 4) as core priorities, supported by Action Plan strategies focused on job growth, cluster development, and reinvestment in existing communities. Environmental assessment of priority brownfield sites directly advances these components by preparing existing industrial, commercial, and institutional properties for reuse in locations already served by infrastructure.

In Batesville and Searcy, assessment of industrial and institutional sites supports CEDS strategies emphasizing cluster development and infrastructure-served employment areas, enabling job-generating reuse consistent with regional economic goals. In Cotton Plant, reuse of Highway 17 and Main Street properties advances Action Plan priorities related to job growth, community leadership, and downtown stabilization, addressing unsafe structures while supporting long-term economic viability in a small rural town. In Newport, assessment of former healthcare facilities advances CEDS Goal 6: Rural Access to Quality Healthcare by enabling appropriate reuse or clearance of obsolete institutional properties adjacent to residential neighborhoods and community facilities. By tying site-specific reuse decisions to defined CEDS goals and action strategies, the proposed assessments advance, not merely reference, adopted planning priorities. EPA Brownfields funding provides the mechanism that allows these plan components to move from intent to implementation by resolving environmental uncertainty that would otherwise prevent action.

#### **1.f. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy (5 points)**

The proposed project is designed to stimulate economic development while protecting human health and the environment by removing environmental uncertainty that prevents productive reuse of priority sites in the target areas. In these rural and small-town communities, the absence of site-specific environmental information is often sufficient to halt reinvestment, even where properties are well-located and consistent with local land-use plans. Post-cleanup, if needed, the priority sites are positioned to support employment-generating industrial and commercial activity, municipal and institutional uses, and downtown reinvestment, consistent with the reuse strategies identified for each site. In Batesville and Searcy, cleanup enables reinvestment in existing downtown and industrial corridors, reinforcing local economic centers and supporting employment without extending infrastructure or encouraging greenfield development. In Cotton Plant and Newport, cleanup allows small but critical sites to reenter the market, where even modest reinvestment can have a meaningful local economic effect.

These outcomes clearly correlate with the Coalition's reuse strategy. Sites identified for industrial or employment reuse are located in established industrial areas, while downtown and institutional sites are targeted for reuse or clearance that supports incremental economic activity and community stability. Cleanup transforms these sites from liabilities into assets by enabling acquisition, financing, redevelopment, or safe disposition; actions that are not feasible while environmental conditions remain unknown. Across the target areas, the economic impact of cleanup is realized not through large-scale redevelopment, but through restored function: properties returning to use, jobs being supported or created, tax-base erosion slowing or reversing, and communities regaining control over prominent vacant sites. EPA Brownfields funding provides the essential step that allows these outcomes to occur by replacing environmental uncertainty with the clarity required for economic decision-making.

#### **1.g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse (5 points)**

The Coalition is eligible for, and likely to obtain, additional public and private resources to support environmental assessment, remediation, and subsequent reuse of priority sites; however, access to these resources is contingent on completion of environmental due diligence. EPA Brownfields assessment funding is therefore the critical trigger that allows other funding sources to become available. Following assessment, priority sites will be eligible for participation in the Arkansas Brownfield Program, administered by the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), which provides regulatory oversight, technical assistance, and a pathway toward cleanup planning and liability protections. EPA-funded Phase I and Phase II ESAs generated through this project will supply the documentation required for state program enrollment and cleanup decision-making. ADEQ has acknowledged that current assessment demand exceeds available capacity, indicating a high likelihood that EPA-funded community-wide assessments will be used and acted upon.

Funding	Eligibility Trigger	Typical Funding Scale	Likelihood of Success	How EPA Funding Stimulates Access
Arkansas Brownfield Program (ADEQ)	Completed Phase I/II ESAs; site eligibility documentation	Technical assistance; cleanup pathway support; potential state funding	High	EPA assessments provide the documentation required for program enrollment and cleanup decision-making
EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grants	Site-specific environmental data; defined cleanup scope	~\$500,000–\$? per site (competitive)	Moderate-High	EPA assessment produces cleanup-ready sites eligible for cleanup funding
EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessments	Prioritization and demonstrated assessment need	~\$100,000–\$300,000 per site	Moderate	Community-wide assessment identifies and justifies sites for follow-on EPA assistance
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Environmental clearance; defined demolition or redevelopment scope	~\$250,000–\$1,000,000	Moderate-High	Environmental due diligence allows CDBG funds to support demolition and blight removal
Arkansas Brownfield Cleanup RLF	Defined environmental conditions and cleanup scope	~\$250,000–\$1,000,000	Moderate	Assessment defines scope and risk needed for underwriting
Private Capital / Conventional Lending	Documented environmental conditions; bounded risk	Variable	Moderate	Assessment reduces risk to a level where lending discussions can occur

Completion of assessments will also position priority sites to compete for additional EPA Brownfields resources, including EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grants and, where available, Targeted Brownfields Assessments. These resources are not accessible at the planning stage and become available only after site-specific environmental conditions are documented, making EPA assessment funding the prerequisite for eligibility. Beyond EPA programs, assessment results will stimulate access to other public and private funding sources commonly used to implement cleanup and reuse strategies. Environmental clarity is required for use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for demolition and blight removal and for participation in state cleanup financing tools, including the Arkansas Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund.

**1.h. Use of Existing Infrastructure (5 points)**

The priority sites were intentionally selected because they are already served by existing public infrastructure, including water, sewer, electric service, and roadway access, and do not require major infrastructure extensions

or upgrades to support reuse. In the target areas, extending new infrastructure to undeveloped land is often cost-prohibitive; therefore, prioritizing sites with established service was a deliberate strategy to ensure that

Indicator	Batesville	Newport	Cotton Plant	I-57 Corridor	Arkansas	United States
Total Population	11,539	8,049	411	3,500	3,088,354	340,110,988
Median Household Income (\$)	54,424	12,043	54,424	48,000	58,773	78,538
Per Capita Income (\$)	28,001	19,772	28,001	25,500	33,147	41,261
Persons in Poverty (%)	24.4	29.3	56.5	27.5	15.5	10.6
Persons Under 18 (%)	27.6	17.3	26.6	22	22.7	21.9
Persons 65 Years and Over (%)	13.5	14	24.5	14.5	18.2	17
Persons with a Disability (%)	21.9	23.3	18.2	23.7	18.1	13.7

redevelopment can occur efficiently and within the fiscal capacity of local governments. All priority sites are located within developed areas or established corridors where utilities, streets, and access are already in place.

**2.a. The Community’s Need for Funding (5 points)**

The communities served by WRPDD exist at a scale where fiscal margin does not exist. Population counts measured in the hundreds, thousands, and a single modest corridor produce tax bases too small to absorb environmental risk. There is no reserve. There is no cushion. There

is only delay. As shown in **Table 4**, population size across the target areas ranges from a small regional center to

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2019–2023 5-Year Estimates. Tables S1901 (Income), S1701 (Poverty), S1810 (Disability), DP05 (Demographic Characteristics).

towns measured in the hundreds, creating tax bases that are orders of magnitude smaller than those of typical communities able to independently finance environmental due diligence. In these places, population scale alone limits the ability to accumulate reserves, issue debt, or underwrite assessment activities without federal assistance. Income disparities compound this constraint. Median household income across the target areas falls between approximately **15 percent below and more than 80 percent below the national median**, depending on the community. In the most economically constrained target areas, **median household income is roughly one-fifth of the U.S. benchmark**, while even the stronger-performing communities remain below the national average by double-digit margins. Per capita income tells the same story: all target areas fall below the U.S. benchmark, with gaps ranging from approximately **30 percent to more than 50 percent lower than national levels**, reflecting limited household capacity to absorb environmental costs or support privately financed predevelopment work.

Poverty rates reveal the full magnitude of the funding gap. Across all target areas, poverty exceeds both state and national benchmarks. In one community, the poverty rate is more than three and a half times the Arkansas average and over five times the national rate, meaning that economic hardship is not concentrated but pervasive. In the remaining target areas, **poverty rates range from approximately 35 percent to nearly 90 percent higher than the state benchmark**, leaving little discretionary capacity at either the household or municipal level to fund environmental assessment or remediation.

By providing assessment resources to communities that cannot draw on other funding sources because they are small in population and significantly below state and national income benchmarks, the grant converts entrenched economic disadvantage into actionable opportunity. Absent EPA Brownfields funding, environmental conditions would continue to suppress reinvestment, and the disparities documented in **Table 4** would remain locked in place.

### **2.b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations (5 points)**

Children, older adults, and persons with disabilities are not edge cases in the target areas. They form a large share of the population, and in several communities they define it. As shown in **Table 4**, these sensitive populations are present at rates that meet or exceed state and national benchmarks across every target area. Children remain a significant portion of the population, with under-18 shares near or above the Arkansas average in multiple communities. This places environmental uncertainty in daily contact with residents who are physiologically more sensitive to pollutants and less able to recognize, avoid, or mitigate exposure. In small towns where brownfield sites sit near homes, schools, libraries, and downtown corridors, proximity is unavoidable. Older adults intensify this vulnerability. In one target area, residents age 65 and over account for more than one-third of the population. In others, senior shares meet or exceed state and national benchmarks. Older adults are more likely to have chronic conditions, rely on fixed incomes, and remain in place due to housing and care constraints. In communities with limited healthcare access, unresolved environmental conditions carry longer duration and greater consequence

Disability prevalence further intensifies these vulnerabilities. As documented in **Table 5**, the share of residents with a **disability exceeds the national benchmark by roughly 30 to 70 percent** across the target areas and exceeds the Arkansas benchmark in multiple communities. **In one target area, nearly one in four residents lives with a disability**, a rate that is well above both state and national levels. These conditions indicate a population with reduced capacity to avoid exposure, limited flexibility to relocate, and increased reliance on stable, safe local environments.

The intersection of these factors; **high shares of children, elevated proportions of older adults, and disability rates that exceed state and national norms creates a cumulative welfare burden**. Environmental uncertainty therefore functions not as a background condition, but as an active stressor on community health and welfare. This funding would directly address these risks by enabling environmental assessment in areas where sensitive populations are most concentrated. By identifying environmental conditions, clarifying potential exposure pathways, and supporting informed reuse decisions, the grant helps reduce uncertainty that disproportionately affects children, seniors, and persons with disabilities. In communities where vulnerable populations represent a significant share of residents, assessment is not merely a technical exercise, it is a necessary step toward protecting health, stabilizing neighborhoods, and supporting equitable reuse.

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

Across the target areas, the prevalence of adverse health conditions exceeds state and national benchmarks in ways that are numerically consistent, geographically widespread, and compounded by other vulnerabilities. As shown in the health indicators table, **adult asthma prevalence in the target areas ranges from 9.8 percent to 10.0 percent, compared to 8.4 percent nationally**. While the absolute difference appears modest at first glance, this

Target Area	Adults with Asthma (%)	Adults with Cancer (%)	Pop. with Disability (%)	Population Age 65+ (%)	Uninsured Households (%)
Batesville	9.8	7.5	19	19	10
Newport	9.9	7.3	20	18	10
Cotton Plant	10	7.9	19	37	8
I-57 Corridor	9.9	7.6	23.7	14.5	9
Arkansas	9.1	6.8	16	17	8
United States	8.4	6.3	13	16.5	8.5

represents an increase of approximately 17 to 19 percent above the national benchmark, indicating a respiratory disease burden that is materially elevated across multiple communities rather than isolated to a single location.

Cancer prevalence follows a similar pattern. **Adult cancer prevalence in the target areas ranges from 7.3 percent to 7.9 percent, compared to 6.3 percent nationally. This translates to rates that are approximately 16 to 25 percent higher than the U.S. benchmark, and consistently above the Arkansas average.**

When viewed at the population level, differences of this magnitude indicate a greater-than-normal incidence of adverse health conditions, particularly in small communities where even incremental increases affect a meaningful share of residents. These elevated disease burdens do not occur in isolation. The same communities experiencing higher asthma and cancer prevalence also show substantially elevated **rates of disability, with disability prevalence exceeding the national benchmark by roughly 30 to 55 percent.** Disability prevalence at this scale reflects a population with **reduced baseline health resilience, increased sensitivity to additional stressors, and limited capacity to avoid or recover from environmental exposures.** Age structure and access to care further intensify these conditions. In several target areas, older adults comprise a larger share of the population than at the state or national level, and rates of uninsured households meet or exceed national benchmarks. Together, these factors increase the likelihood that chronic conditions persist untreated or undiagnosed and that exposure-related health risks have longer duration and greater impact. This application does not presume causation between specific sites and specific diseases. However, **EPA guidance recognizes that populations with greater-than-normal incidence of asthma, cancer, and other adverse health conditions face heightened risk when exposure pathways associated with hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or petroleum are present or uncharacterized.** In the target areas, environmental uncertainty coincides with health burdens that already exceed normal conditions by measurable margins.

This EPA funding addresses these threats by enabling environmental assessment as a risk identification and risk reduction mechanism. **By clarifying site conditions and potential exposure pathways in the target areas, assessment activities reduce uncertainty that disproportionately affects populations experiencing elevated disease prevalence and limited health resilience.** Where risks are identified, assessment results will guide cleanup planning and reuse decisions that reduce the likelihood that existing health burdens are further intensified by unresolved environmental conditions.

**2.d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations (5 points)**

Describe how this grant and reuse strategy or projected site reuse(s) will address, or help identify and reduce, related threats to populations in the target areas that are economically impoverished and or disproportionately share the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and or commercial operations or policies. The quantitative data presented in **Table 4** and the health indicators table demonstrate that the populations in the target areas experience economic impoverishment and environmental burden at levels that are substantially above state and national norms, and that these conditions overlap spatially. **Poverty rates in the target areas range from approximately one-quarter of residents to more than one-half of residents,** compared to 15.5 percent statewide and 10.6 percent nationally. At the high end, **this represents poverty levels that are more than three times the national rate,** establishing communities where **economic hardship is not marginal, it is dominant.**

Health indicators show that these same communities bear disproportionately high illness burdens. As shown in **Table 5,** adult asthma prevalence in the target areas exceeds the national rate by approximately 17 to 19 percent, while adult cancer prevalence exceeds the national benchmark by roughly 16 to 25 percent. Disability prevalence is

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). PLACES: Local Data for Better Health, 2022 release; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2023.

higher still, exceeding the U.S. rate by approximately 30 to more than 50 percent. These are not isolated variances. **They are consistent, multi-indicator signals that adverse health conditions are more common in the same places where economic hardship is most severe.**

The overlap of these conditions magnifies environmental risk. **In small communities where poverty affects a large share of residents, illness limits physical resilience, and population size restricts political and financial leverage, the negative environmental consequences of historic industrial, commercial, transportation, and governmental operations persist longer and fall more heavily on the same populations.** Environmental uncertainty remains concentrated because neither the market nor local resources can absorb the cost of assessment and risk resolution.

This grant directly addresses that imbalance by targeting environmental assessment to areas where the data show the greatest convergence of economic impoverishment and health vulnerability. By identifying site conditions, clarifying the presence or absence of contamination, and defining potential exposure pathways, assessment activities reduce uncertainty that currently affects populations already experiencing **poverty rates two to five times higher than national levels and disease prevalence that exceeds national norms by double-digit percentages.** This grant uses data-driven targeting to ensure that environmental risk is no longer concentrated by default in economically impoverished communities simply because the scale of disparity has left them without alternatives.

**2.e. Project Involvement (5 points) & 2.f. Project Roles (5 points)**

Name of Organization	Entity's Mission	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement
City of Newport	To focus on quality of life while fostering a strong economic development environment for the citizens of Newport	Derrick Ratliffe Mayor	Site Selection and Reuse Planning
City of Searcy	To take exceptional care of our community through compassion, accountability and professionalism	Mat Faulkner, Mayor	Site Selection and Reuse Planning
City of McCrory	To provide essential city services and maintain vital infrastructure while maintaining a safe, thriving, focused environment	James Jackson, Mayor	Site Selection and Reuse Planning
White River Area Agency on Aging	To advocate for and develop programs helping older adults live independently while focusing on improving quality of life	Ted Hall, Executive Director	Site selection and housing reuse planning for the senior population in the White River 10-county district.
White River Housing Authority	To build strong, inclusive sustainable communities by providing affordable, subsidized housing	Katie Blevins, Executive Director	Site selection and housing reuse planning for low-income individuals in the White River 10-county district
Newport Chamber of Commerce	To promote Newport and Jackson County by fostering business growth, community involvement and educational opportunities	Jon Chadwell, Newport Economic Development Director	Site selection and reuse planning
BOLD Cultivation	To increase quality of life by providing prescription medical marijuana to assist with healing and support.	Annie Iselin, Director of Operations	Site Selection/Particularly the Cotton Plant target area for removal of tires in area where expansion is needed.

**2.g. Incorporating Community Input (5 points)**

The Coalition will implement a structured community engagement program to ensure residents directly affected by assessment activities, local organizations, and public partners have meaningful opportunities to receive information and provide input throughout the project period. Community engagement will be coordinated through a

Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC), which will serve as the primary forum for community input, coordination, and communication. The BAC will include representatives from each Coalition member, other counties within the WRPDD jurisdiction, and project partners. The BAC will meet quarterly and will support site nomination, review of prioritization criteria, assessment sequencing, and consideration of reuse options, consistent with the roles described in Section 3. The BAC will provide structured input at defined project milestones and will not replace the decision-making authority of WRPDD as the Cooperative Agreement lead.

Project progress will be communicated through quarterly public updates issued no less than once every three months. Updates will summarize completed assessment activities, identify sites scheduled for upcoming work, and outline next steps. Information will be posted on local government websites, shared through official social media accounts, distributed electronically through partner organizations, and made available in print at city halls, libraries, and community centers within each target area.

The Coalition will conduct at least one in-person public meeting or open house per target area during the grant period. Meetings will be held outside standard business hours and will include a structured presentation on site status and assessment activities. A virtual participation option will be provided. Meeting materials and recordings will be posted online within ten business days, and written comments will be accepted for fourteen calendar days following each meeting. For sites near residential areas, WRPDD will provide direct notice to nearby residents at least two weeks prior to field activities, describing the nature and duration of assessment work and providing a point of contact. Community input will be solicited at defined milestones, including site prioritization, assessment planning, and reuse consideration. All comments will be logged, reviewed by the project team, and responded to directly, with explanations provided when input cannot be incorporated.

The Coalition will also coordinate with local governments and community organizations through scheduled check-ins at least twice per year to align assessment activities and reuse planning with local priorities. This approach ensures consistent communication, documented consideration of community input, and clear alignment between engagement activities and project goals.

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

All proposed EPA-funded tasks are fully eligible under the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant program and are directly aligned with the project’s goals of reducing environmental uncertainty and preparing priority sites for reuse. EPA funds will be used only for allowable activities, including site inventory development, Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), supplemental investigations, cleanup planning, and reuse planning. The scope of work is structured to deploy assessment resources efficiently and responsibly. Phase I ESAs will be conducted to confirm eligibility and identify data gaps. Where Phase I findings identify Recognized Environmental Conditions, Phase II ESAs will be performed to define the presence or absence of contamination through targeted soil, groundwater, and building material sampling. Supplemental assessments will be conducted as needed to resolve remaining uncertainties. Cleanup planning and conceptual cost estimates will be prepared only for sites with sufficient assessment data. This phased approach ensures that EPA funds are applied sequentially and only where warranted.

Priority sites have been pre-identified based on vacancy, suspected contamination, proximity to sensitive populations, and alignment with local and regional plans. Assessment sequencing will be revisited at defined milestones, allowing adjustments based on findings, site readiness, and community input while maintaining a clear and disciplined work plan. This project does not include participant support costs or stipends for community liaisons.

<b>Task 1: Project Mgmt and Reporting</b>
i. <b>Project Implementation:</b> EPA-funded tasks/activities: WRPDD will oversee consultant activities and manage all aspects of the project in accordance with the terms and conditions established in the CA with EPA. At WRPDD’s direction, a consultant, to be hired, will assist with compliance reporting (Quarterly and final reports, acres updates, annual reports) and other eligible project activities identified in the CA workplan. WRDD will facilitate monthly check-in meetings with the consultant and Coalition to ensure project is progressing as planned. We anticipate 3 people from WRPDD attending 2 conference and 2 people attending a third. Non-EPA-Funded: execution of MOA, procurement of consultant.
b. <b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities will be ongoing throughout the project period
c. <b>Task/Activity Lead:</b> WRPDD with assistance from the non-lead coalition members and QEP.

d. **Outputs:** 16 Quarterly Performance Reports, 4 Annual Performance Reports, 1 Final Performance Report, ACRES updates as required per EPA reporting schedule, 4 Federal Financial Reports, attendance at 3 Brownfields Conference. A selected QEP.

**Task 2: Community Engagement**

i. **Project Implementation:** EPA-funded tasks/activities: The community engagement program (described in 2.g) includes creating a Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) comprised of the coalition members, the other counties in WRPDD jurisdiction, and project partners. WRPDD and the consultant will facilitate one on one meetings with property owners before and after assessment activities to explain the process and present the findings and recommended next steps. Additionally, WRPDD will create an initial inventory of potential brownfield sites for public awareness along with outreach materials, a scoring matrix for ranking priority sites, and a community involvement plan (CIP).  
 Non-EPA grant resources needed: Meeting space will be provided by community partner organizations.

ii. **Anticipated Project Schedule:** CIP completed in 1st quarter; outreach material distribution and quarterly BAC meetings throughout the project period. Site nominations will be accepted and inventory updated throughout the project term to assist with future brownfield projects. Webpage established in year one along with prioritization matrix. Signs and posters in years 1-4.

iii. **Task/Activity Lead:** WRPDD with support from the QEP and BAC

iv. **Outputs:** 1 CIP; 1 inventory, 16 BAC meetings; 1 Community Involvement Plan, 1 Site Prioritization Matrix, 12 Posters, 1 Site Sign 1 Project Webpage with ongoing updates.

**Task 3: Assessment and Cleanup Planning**

i. **Project Implementation:** EPA-funded tasks/activities: We estimate prioritizing a total of 20 sites that will progress to a Phase I ESA. Of those, we anticipate prioritizing 12 for Phase II ESAs and Regulated Building Materials (RBM) Surveys. All work will be completed under one master/generic QAPP, with site eligibility confirmed with EPA prior to site specific work. Of the prioritized sites, we anticipate creating cleanup plans for up to four.

ii. **Anticipated Project Schedule:** Year 1: 1 Grant Generic QAPP, 5 Phase 1 ESAs, 1 Phase II & RBM survey | Year 2: 10 Phase I ESAs, 3 Phase IIs and RBM surveys, Year 3: 5 Phase IESAs, 5 Phase IIs and RBM surveys, 2 cleanup plans/ABCAs | Year 4: 3 Phase IIs and RBM surveys, 2 cleanup plans/ABCAs.

iii. **Task/Activity Lead:** QEP will lead all technical activities with oversight by WRPDD

iv. **Outputs:** 20 eligibility requests, 20 Phase I ESAs, 1 Master QAPP, 12 Site-Specific QAPPs/Workplans, 12 Phase II ESAs, 12 Building Material Surveys, 4 Cleanup Plans/ABCAs.

**Task 4 Site-Specific and Area Wide Planning**

i. **Project Implementation:** The QEP will develop site reuse plans/redevelopment feasibility studies for 4 catalyst sites, one in each target area in support of advancing redevelopment goals and adaptive reuse. The AWP will focus on one of the target areas determined by WRPDD and the Coalition once assessments are ongoing to determine need.

ii. **Anticipated Project Schedule** Year 1: 1 Reuse Plan | Year 2 2 Reuse Plans | Year 3 1 reuse plan | Year 4 AWP

iii. **Task/Activity Lead:** The QEP will lead all technical activities at the direction of WRPDD

iv. **Outputs:** 4 site reuse plans, 1 AWP deliverable.

**3.f. Cost Estimates (15 points) Approximately 76% of funds go into site-specific work.**

**Task 1: Project Management: Cost Breakdown (\$73,280.71 direct | \$3,664.04 indirect):** Personnel and Fringe: includes 576 hours based on an average of 2 meetings per month (one with EPA one with Contractor/consultant), for 48 months, average 2 hours of prep/meeting/follow up time for 3 staff at an avg. personnel rate of \$35.31 and avg. fringe rate of 53.8% for CA oversight, contractor management, and reporting activities. (total \$20,388.56)

Budget Categories	Task 1: Project Mgmt & Reporting	Task 2: Community Involvement	Task 3: Assessment and Cleanup Planning	Task 4: Reuse and Area Wide Planning	Total
Personnel	\$20,338.56	\$16,948.80	\$11,440.44	\$1,412.40	\$50,140.20
Fringe Benefits	\$10,942.15	\$9,118.45	\$6,154.96	\$759.87	\$26,975.43
Travel	\$14,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$14,800.00
Supplies	\$0.00	\$4,990.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,990.00
Contractual	\$27,200.00	\$83,125.00	\$1,066,340.80	\$155,000.00	\$1,331,665.80
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$73,280.71</b>	<b>\$114,182.25</b>	<b>\$1,083,936.20</b>	<b>\$157,172.27</b>	<b>\$1,428,571.43</b>
<b>Indirect Costs (5%)</b>	<b>\$3,664.04</b>	<b>\$5,709.11</b>	<b>\$54,196.81</b>	<b>\$7,858.61</b>	<b>\$71,428.57</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$76,944.74</b>	<b>\$119,891.37</b>	<b>\$1,138,133.01</b>	<b>\$165,030.88</b>	<b>\$1,500,000.00</b>

personnel/ \$10,942.15 fringe). **Travel:** includes attendance at a national and regional conferences for three ppl. Two trips of 3 ppl x \$700 airfare (\$2100) + lodging at \$200/night x 3 ppl x 3 nights (\$1,800) + 1 rental car at \$100 per day x 4 days (\$400), per diem of \$100 per day x 3 ppl x 4 days (\$1,200). Two people will attend a third brownfield conference: 2 ppl x \$700 airfare

(\$1,400) + lodging a \$200/night x 2 ppl x 3 nights (\$1,200) + 1 rental car at \$100 per day x 4 days (\$400), per diem of \$100 per day x 2ppl x 4 days (\$800) + 1 rental car for 3 days at 100/day. Contractual: project meetings (12 mtgs/year x 4 years x 2hrs[prep/meeting/follow up] = 96hrs @ \$200 hr = \$19,200. Acres updates/quarterly reports (32hrs x \$175hr) = \$5,600 and preparation of annual and final forms (12hrs x \$200) = \$2,400. Indirect: 5% @ \$73,280.71 direct costs = \$3,664.04.

**Task 2: Community Involvement (\$114,182.25 direct | \$5,709.11 indirect):** Personnel and Fringe: BAC & stakeholder meetings (360hrs), factsheets/webpage content (40 hrs), and brownfield site inventory and prioritization (80 hrs) at an avg rate of \$35.31 and avg fringe rate of 53.8% x 350 hrs total (\$16,948.8 personnel and \$9,118.45 fringe). Supplies: Printing for 3,500 b&w at \$0.35; 1,500 color at \$0.75, 12 large-format posters, and one weather-resistant site sign (\$4,990 total). Contractual: BAC meetings and stakeholder meetings (200 hrs), creating project factsheets, site nomination forms, and web page content (100 hrs) and creating a brownfield site inventory and site prioritization matrix (175hrs) at an average rate of \$175/hr = \$83,125. Indirect: 5% @ \$114,182.25 direct costs = \$5,709.11.

**Task 3: Assessment Activities and Cleanup Planning (\$1,083,936.2 direct | \$54,196.81 indirect):** Personnel and Fringe: Coordination with property owners and consultant oversight, 80hrs an average personnel rate of \$35.31 and ag. fringe rate of 53.8% = \$2,824.80 personnel and \$1,519.74 fringe. Contractual: 20 Phase I ESAs @ an average of \$5,500 (\$110,000), 20 site eligibility determinations an average cost of \$240 per site (\$4,800), 1 master/generic QAPP @ \$10,000, 12 site-specific QAPPS/workplans @ \$5,000 each (\$60,000), 12 Phase II ESAs @ an average of \$61,362 (\$736,342), 12 regulated building material surveys @ avg of \$8,500 (\$102,000), 4 cleanup plans/ABCAs @ \$10,000 (\$40,000) for a total of \$1,066,340.80. Indirect: 5% @ \$1,083,936.20 direct costs = \$54,196.81.

**Task 4: Site Reuse & Area Wide Planning (\$157,172.27 direct | \$7,858.61 indirect):** Personnel and Fringe: Review and input on deliverables, 40hrs an average personnel rate of \$35.31 and ag. fringe rate of 53.8% = \$1,412.40 personnel and \$759.87 fringe. Contractual: 3 site-specific reuse plans @ \$25,000 (\$75,000), and 1 area wide plan deliverable @ \$80,000 for a total of \$155,000. Indirect: 5% @ \$157,172.27 direct costs = \$7,858.61.

### 3.f Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results (5 points)

The Coalition will track, measure, and evaluate progress using an output-based system directly tied to the approved workplan, schedules, and deliverables described in Sections 2 and 3. Evaluation focuses on completion of eligible assessment activities and documentation of environmental conditions, which are the appropriate measures of success for a Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant. **Tracking of Outputs:** Progress will be measured through completion of defined outputs associated with each task, including development of a regional brownfield inventory; completion of Phase I and Phase II ESAs; regulated building materials surveys; cleanup plans and ABCAs; site reuse plans; an area-wide planning deliverable; required reports; and ACRES updates. WRPDD will maintain an internal tracking log documenting site status, assessment stage, completed deliverables, and upcoming activities. Progress will be reviewed during monthly coordination calls with the QEP and through regular check-ins with Coalition members. Output completion will be verified through consultant deliverables, EPA eligibility determinations, and approved reports. **Measurement of Environmental Results:** Environmental results will be evaluated based on the extent to which assessment activities reduce uncertainty and define site conditions. Key indicators include documentation of site conditions, identification or resolution of Recognized Environmental Conditions, and completion of cleanup planning where contamination is confirmed. Success is measured by advancing sites from unknown conditions to a documented status sufficient to support reuse planning, cleanup funding, regulatory enrollment, or disposition decisions. **Evaluation of Results and Outcomes** Overall results will be evaluated by whether completed assessments and planning activities advance the reuse strategies and community priorities described in the Narrative. Longer-term outcomes such as cleanup or redevelopment are expected to occur beyond the grant period and will not be treated as required performance measures; however, follow-on actions will be documented when they occur.

**4.a. Organizational Capacity (5 points), 4.b Organization Structure (5 points):** WRPDD employs professional staff with expertise in planning, business and economic development, geographic information systems (GIS), accounting, and administrative support. As demonstrated through past EPA Brownfields and other federal grant awards, WRPDD has the capacity to successfully carry out and manage the programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements of this Coalition Assessment Grant. As the Coalition lead, WRPDD will be responsible for overall management of the Cooperative Agreement and compliance with all grant terms and conditions, including oversight of the consultant team, reporting to EPA, financial management, stakeholder engagement, coordination with Coalition members and the Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC), management of an equitable site prioritization process, and coordination of site access. WRPDD will utilize a dedicated management structure to oversee all aspects of the project to ensure timely completion of key milestones.

WRPDD has already executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Coalition members to execute the grant. The MOA documents the roles and responsibilities of each Coalition member and commits to the use of grant funds at a minimum of two priority sites within the jurisdiction of each member. WRPDD will continue to use a collective governance structure that includes facilitating regular check-in calls with all Coalition members to ensure each partner is meaningfully involved in all aspects of the project and that clear internal objectives are established to support timely and successful expenditure of grant funds. The BAC (see Section 2.b), which convenes regularly, includes a representative from each Coalition member as well as other project partners who guide the site prioritization and project decision-making process.

**4.c. Description of Key Staff (5 points) :**

**Jan Smith** and **Carrie McIntosh** bring seasoned regional development leadership and practical grant management experience to the White River PDD brownfields project. **Jan Smith** will serve as **Program Director**. With 46 years of experience in land management and redevelopment and a degree in Psychology, Jan’s long tenure reflects deep institutional knowledge of North Central Arkansas and the complexities of multi-county economic planning. Over decades, she has guided WRPDD through infrastructure planning, community development, environmental enhancement programs, and coordination with federal, state, and local partners. Her career spans strategic planning, comprehensive economic development efforts, and overseeing programs that address water/sewer, solid waste management, job creation, and community facility improvements across a ten-county rural region. This breadth positions her to ensure the brownfields grant aligns with regional development goals and complies with federal planning standards. **Carrie McIntosh** will serve as **Project Manager**. She holds a degree in Business Administration and brings 18 years of experience in environmental compliance and redevelopment activities, including coordinating community development programs and grant initiatives. As Community Development Coordinator at WRPDD, Carrie supports planning efforts, technical assistance, and project implementation across key sectors. Her environmental and compliance expertise ensures meticulous oversight of brownfields assessments, reporting, and regulatory requirements, while her long working relationships with stakeholders helps facilitate community engagement and interagency collaboration. Together, Jan and Carrie combine institutional leadership with hands-on project management to expertly steward the brownfields grant from planning through successful implementation.

**4.d Acquiring Additional Resources (5 points):** WRPDD has established systems to acquire additional technical and financial resources necessary to complete the Cleanup Grant. Environmental consultants and contractors, including the QEP and licensed abatement contractor, will be procured in accordance with federal procurement requirements and Montgomery County’s adopted procurement policies and retained on a project-specific basis.

**4.f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements (15 points) , 4.d.2 Compliance with Grant Requirements (10 points)**

Funding Name	Amount	Purpose	Accomplishments	Compliance
Economic Development Administration (EDA) Funding	\$5,000,000	Construction of a new Health Training Center on the Arkansas State University-Newport Campus	The construction of a 24,000 square foot building to be utilized by ASUN to provide hands-on skill training in high demand health careers such as medical assistant, nursing assistant, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, medical records and coding.	EDA has specific regulations and requirements that must have been followed and met throughout the grant process that include compliance in the following: Audit, uniform act, civil rights, environmental, administrative, reporting and post-award activities.
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	\$4,700,000	Drainage improvements in various areas of the city of Heber Springs.	Key drainage improvement projects were completed in historically flood-prone neighborhoods and along critical transportation corridors, addressing long-standing capacity and maintenance challenges.	WRPDD has complied with all FEMA requirements including the Uniform Guidance 2 C.F.R Part 200 which provides requirements for financial management, procurement standards, cost share requirements, environmental compliance, civil rights compliance, audit, reporting and closeout requirements
Arkansas Economic Development Commission Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Funding	\$4,500,000	Construction of a new 12,000 square foot senior citizens center in Independence County, Arkansas	The senior center was constructed on property formerly occupied by a dilapidated building (used as a bus barn). The building was demolished and the new senior building was constructed which resulted in a positive land use change.	WRPDD has complied with all HUD requirements including the Uniform Guidance 2 C.F.R. Part 200 as well as Financial management systems, procurement standards, fair housing, civil right requirements, Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements, environmental reviews, reporting and audit compliance and closeout requirements.

# Threshold Criteria for Assessment Coalition Grants

## **(1) Eligibility of Lead and Non-Lead Coalition Members:**

### **a.**

The White River Planning and Development District (WRPDD) is the lead entity and a regional planning nonprofit in north central Arkansas that was recognized by the Arkansas Legislature in 1967 (**Attachment A**) to encourage coordinated economic and community development across its ten-county region. It was established to efficiently use scarce economic resources, support local governments with planning, and help communities secure and manage state and federal funding for projects. WRPDD is one of eight planning and development districts in Arkansas that carry out regional development, grant assistance, and strategic planning efforts to improve economic conditions across multicounty areas of the state. Therefore, WRPDD is an eligible entity.

The non-lead county members Jackson, White, and Woodruff, as County Governments, are a “general purpose unit of local government” as defined in 2 CFR 200.64 and, therefore, eligible to receive EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funding.

### **b.**

WRPDD is not a 501(c)(4) organization that lobbies the federal government. The non-lead coalition members are county governments and therefore not subject to this provision.

## **(2) Target Areas:**

As directed in the guidelines, this information is provided on the Application Information Sheet.

## **(3) Non-lead Member(s) that Never Received an EPA MARC Grant:**

The non-lead coalition members of Jackson, White, and Woodruff County have never received an EPA MARC grant.

## **(4) Legal Authority to Expend Grant Funds on Behalf of Non-Lead Coalition Members**

**a.** WRPDD attests it has legal authority to expend grant funds on behalf of the non-lead members to conduct the proposed grant activities.

**b.** Not applicable, WRPDD’s jurisdiction encompasses all non-lead members.

## **(5) Coalition Agreement:**

Executed Memorandum of Agreements between WRPDD, Jackson, White, and Woodruff Counties are included as **Attachment B**. The executed MOs designate WRPDD as the lead coalition member, define roles and responsibilities, and authorize WRPDD to apply for and manage EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funds on behalf of the coalition.

## **(6) Community Involvement:**

The Coalition will implement a structured community engagement program to ensure residents directly affected by assessment activities, local organizations, and public partners have

## Threshold Criteria for Assessment Coalition Grants

meaningful opportunities to receive information and provide input throughout the project period. Community engagement will be coordinated through a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC), which will serve as the primary forum for community input, coordination, and communication. The BAC will include representatives from each Coalition member, other counties within the WRPDD jurisdiction, and project partners. The BAC will meet quarterly and will support site nomination, review of prioritization criteria, assessment sequencing, and consideration of reuse options, consistent with the roles described in Section 3. The BAC will provide structured input at defined project milestones and will not replace the decision-making authority of WRPDD as the Cooperative Agreement lead.

Project progress will be communicated through quarterly public updates issued no less than once every three months. Updates will summarize completed assessment activities, identify sites scheduled for upcoming work, and outline next steps. Information will be posted on local government websites, shared through official social media accounts, distributed electronically through partner organizations, and made available in print at city halls, libraries, and community centers within each target area.

The Coalition will conduct at least one in-person public meeting or open house per target area during the grant period. Meetings will be held outside standard business hours and will include a structured presentation on site status and assessment activities. A virtual participation option will be provided. Meeting materials and recordings will be posted online within ten business days, and written comments will be accepted for fourteen calendar days following each meeting. For sites near residential areas, WRPDD will provide direct notice to nearby residents at least two weeks prior to field activities, describing the nature and duration of assessment work and providing a point of contact. Community input will be solicited at defined milestones, including site prioritization, assessment planning, and reuse consideration. All comments will be logged, reviewed by the project team, and responded to directly, with explanations provided when input cannot be incorporated.

The Coalition will also coordinate with local governments and community organizations through scheduled check-ins at least twice per year to align assessment activities and reuse planning with local priorities. This approach ensures consistent communication, documented consideration of community input, and clear alignment between engagement activities and project goals.

### **(7) Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:**

Neither WRPDD nor any non-lead coalition member has an open EPA Brownfields Assessment or Multipurpose Grant.

### **(8) Contractors and Named Subrecipients:**

**Contractors:** None

**Subrecipients:** None