

1. Applicant Identification
Delta Agriculture Research & Sustainability District (DARSD)
112 Front Street
Vidalia, Louisiana 71373
2. Website URL: www.deltasustainability.com (lead), www.louisiana.gov/local-louisiana/east-carroll-parish (non-lead), www.madisonparish.org/ (non-lead), www.louisiana.gov/local-louisiana/tensas-parish (non-lead), www.louisiana.gov/local-louisiana/concordia-parish (non-lead)
3. Funding Requested
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Assessment Coalition
 - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$1,500,000
4. Location
 - a) City of Ferriday, Lake Providence Town, Richmond Village, Saint Joseph Town, Vidalia Town
 - b) East Carroll Parish, Madison Parish, Tensas Parish, Concordia Parish
 - c) Louisiana
5. Coalition Members' Target Areas and Priority Site Information
Target area (TA); census tract (CT)
 - DARSD – lead member (TA 1): CTs 22029000300 & 22029000400
 - Priority site: Former Church, 4450 Hwy 84, Vidalia, LA 71373
 - East Carroll Parish – non-lead member (TA 2): CTs 22035000300 & 22035000100
 - Priority Site: Former East Carroll Lumber Yard, 1001 Davis Street, Lake Providence, LA 71254
 - Madison Parish – non-lead member (TA 3): CT 22065960100
 - Priority Site: Former EZ Auto Sales, 118 Kimbrough Street, Richmond, LA 71282
 - Tensas Parish – non-lead member (TA 4): CTs 22107000300 & 22107000100
 - Priority Site: Former Tensas Rosenwald School, 148 Beech Street, St. Joseph, LA 71366
 - Concordia Parish – non-lead member (TA 5): CT 22029000200
 - Priority Site: Former Downtown Hotel, 114 Louisiana Avenue, Ferriday, LA 71334
 - Priority Site: Former Multi-Tenant Shop, 104 Louisiana Avenue, Ferriday, LA 71334



6. Contacts

a. Project Director

Mr. Yohannis Job, Project Manager
512-351-1967

████████████████████
112 Front Street
Vidalia, Louisiana 71373

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Dr. Jimmy Jones, Executive Director
318-423-0489
director@deltasustainability.com
112 Front Street
Vidalia, Louisiana 71373

7. Population

DARSD (lead member): Vidalia, Louisiana – 3,938
East Carroll Parish (non-lead member): Lake Providence, Louisiana – 3,424
Madison Parish (non-lead member): Richmond, Louisiana – 529
Tensas Parish (non-lead member): Saint Joseph, Louisiana – 709
Concordia Parish (non-lead member): Ferriday, Louisiana – 3,126
(US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey)

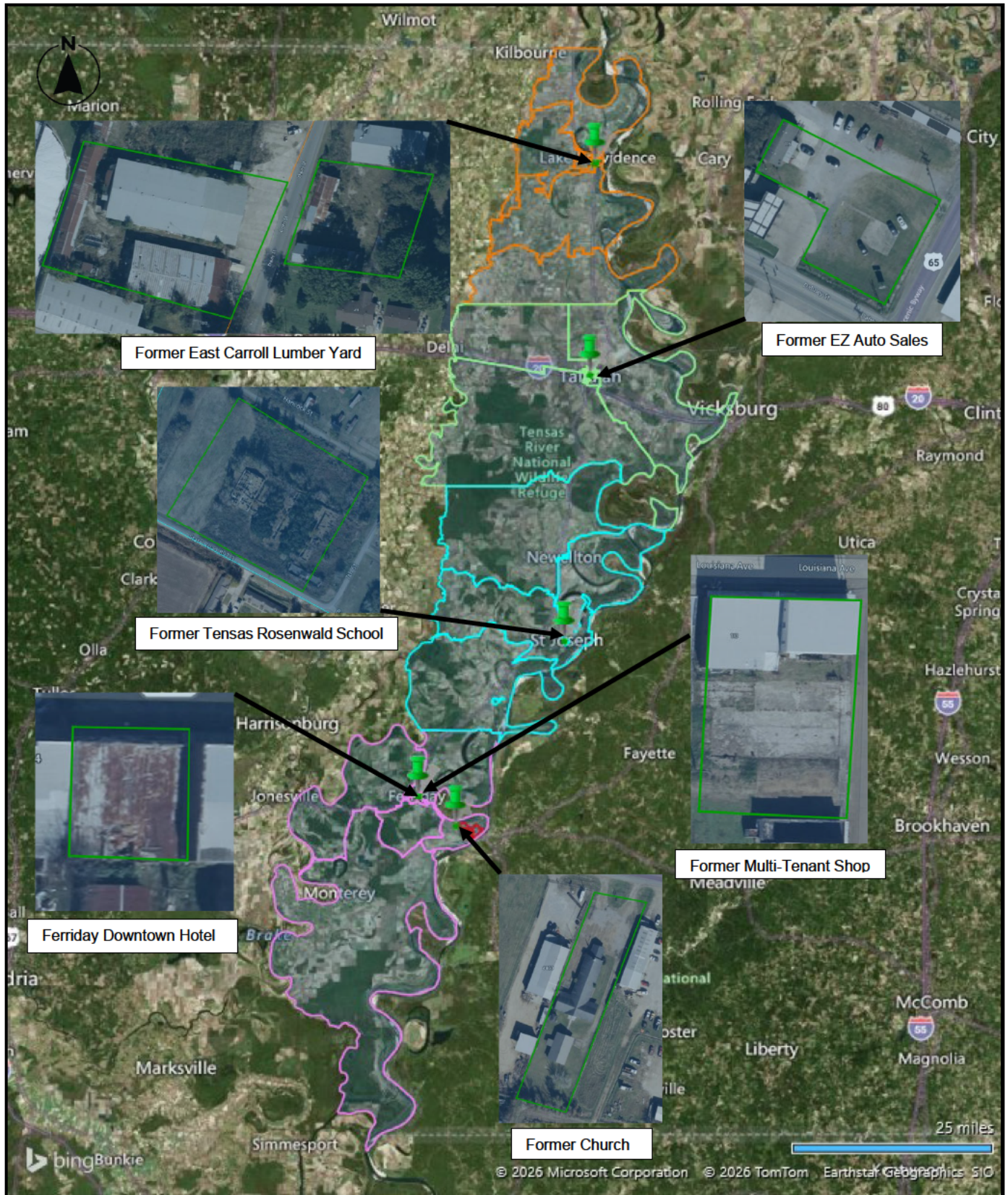
8. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	5
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.	5
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	5
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	5
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.	10, 11
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	N/A



9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority
See attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications
Not Applicable.



	East Carroll Parish
	Madison Parish
	Concordia Parish
	Tensas Parish
	Priority Site



Delta Agriculture Research & Sustainability District
Coalition Assessment Map

JEFF LANDRY
GOVERNOR



COURTNEY J. BURDETTE
SECRETARY

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

January 15, 2026

Dr. Jimmy Jones, Executive Director
Delta Agriculture Research and Sustainability District
112 Front Street
Vidalia, LA 71373

RE: Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality acknowledgement of Delta Agriculture Research and Sustainability District's FY26 Community-Wide Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant Application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Dear Dr. Jones:

Thank you for your efforts to enhance Louisiana's environment, economy, and quality of life by addressing environmental concerns at vacant and underutilized sites in your community through the Brownfields Program. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) acknowledges Delta Agriculture Research and Sustainability District's (DARSD's) application for a Community-Wide Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant to address sites under the federal Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act and the Brownfields Utilization, Investment and Local Development Act, and recognizes that DARSD will be conducting assessment activities in LDEQ's jurisdiction. In addition to providing regulatory oversight of your projects, LDEQ will provide technical assistance to your Brownfield Program as resources permit.

We look forward to partnering with you to facilitate the redevelopment of Brownfield sites in Louisiana! Please contact me at (504) 736-7069 or Rebecca.Otte@LA.gov if you have any questions or need further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Otte".

Rebecca Otte
Brownfields Coordinator
Remediation Division, Office of Environmental Assessment

LDEQ AI# 178641: Topic File - Brownfields General



**Delta Agriculture Research and Sustainability District, LA
FY26 Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant
Narrative**

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Coalition Members, Target Areas, and Brownfields. a. Coalition Members: The lead applicant, Delta Agriculture Research & Sustainability District (DARSD), serves four parishes: East Carroll, Madison, Tensas, and Concordia Parish. These parishes will be the non-lead members of the coalition. All non-lead members are general-purpose units of local government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64. The non-lead members are located along the west bank of the Mississippi River in north and central Louisiana and are committed to working in partnership with DARSD to create a much-needed Brownfield Program. DARSD was created by the Louisiana legislature to address the part of the state with **generational economic, educational, and health disparities**. The district's severe agricultural industry decline since the COVID-19 pandemic plus its high youth and elderly population (together 53%/US 43%), low-income individuals (per capita income \$22,384/US \$43,289), high poverty levels (all people 37%/US 12%), and decreasing tax base has put disproportional stress on the four parishes to provide basic services to the community.¹ These four non-lead rural parishes operate on razor-thin budgets without the capacity to prepare competitive grant applications, much less manage their own grants. With the help of DARSD, desperately needed opportunities like this EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant are now within reach.

b. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas: **The geographic boundary for this Assessment Coalition Grant is the jurisdiction of DARSD, which includes the four parishes**; however, the Town of Tallulah (located in non-lead member Madison Parish) has been excluded from the geographic boundary due to an existing Brownfield Grant. The parishes are among the most rural of all 64 parishes in Louisiana, with a combined population of 39,269 people.¹ Across these four rural parishes, brownfield sites are densely packed within towns and villages, creating blight, dismal economic conditions, and health risks to the community. With assistance from a Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant, redevelopment plans for the priority brownfields described in this application aim to address the community's greatest needs: **increase quality jobs, improve housing options, support the downtown commercial districts' rebuilding, and expand diverse commercial opportunities for small business growth.**

Coalition Member	Target Area	Census Tracts	# of Potential Brownfield Sites
DARSD (Lead)	Town of Vidalia	22029000300 & 22029000400	29
East Carroll Parish	Town of Lake Providence	22035000300 & 22035000100	16
Madison Parish	Madison Parish River Delta	22065960100	18
Tensas Parish	Saint Joseph Historic District	22107000300 & 22107000100	27
Concordia Parish	Ferriday Entertainment District	22029000200	46

Town of Vidalia (Lead DARSD). This target area (TA) includes the Town of Vidalia, which, due to its unique history and unlike many of the other settlements along the Mississippi (MS) River, lacks a historic downtown. Following catastrophic floods in 1927, the Army Corps of Engineers undertook a massive river-widening endeavor, constructing levees and canals and moving the entire town one mile inland. The area remained a critical river crossing, and a bridge over the MS River was finally built in 1940, expanding the town's industrial and agricultural industries as well as making it a popular gateway for the rest of the delta. Thus, numerous fuel stations and repair shops cropped up along the main highway, many of which now **pose brownfield challenges** for redevelopment. Brownfield properties throughout the town have documented impacts from fuel

¹ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey

stations, dry cleaners, and industrial park operations along the MS River.

Town of Lake Providence (Non-lead East Carroll Parish). This TA is dominated by agricultural business, primarily cotton. The town centers on a 50-acre property with a 100-foot-tall grain elevator and was deemed “**poorest place in America**” by *Time* magazine in 1994 due to its poverty rate and median household income. In 2013, *CNN* called Lake Providence the “**Most Unequal Place in America**” due to a large wealth gap between the high-income agricultural class and the rest of the population. Former agricultural operations are scattered across town, **creating brownfield challenges.**

Madison Parish River Delta (Non-lead Madison Parish). Much like its neighboring parish to the north that holds the Lake Providence TA, this TA has a rich history in row-crop agriculture production. It is best known for its “agricultural experiment station” that first used airplanes to control cotton pests and eventually gave birth to Delta Airlines. Unregulated herbicides and pesticides are a common past-use contaminant found in Madison Parish’s rural towns.

Saint Joseph Historic District (Non-lead Tensas Parish). This TA is a diamond in the rough located centrally to the four parishes. Saint Joseph is a historic riverboat town that had the wherewithal in 1980 to register much of its town in the National Register of Historic Places. Since that time, the community has worked tirelessly to preserve as many of its buildings as it could afford. While there are some bright spots, many historic brownfield properties remain. These former buildings housed everything from dry cleaners and mechanic shops to old fuel stops, many of which contain also asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) and lead-based paint (LBP).

Ferriday Entertainment District (Non-lead Concordia Parish). Unlike the other TAs in this coalition, the Ferriday Entertainment District was formed around rail shipping and receiving operations. Rich in culture and history, Ferriday’s economy has declined due to the clearing of timber in the 1970s, the abandonment of the railroad, and hardship for farmers. As a once-popular destination on the rail, the entertainment district was home to hotels and shops, many of which sit abandoned, with brownfields comprising two out of every three buildings. The town has completed extensive planning and as much investment as possible to ignite a spark of revitalization, but it desperately needs help addressing environmental concerns in this historic area.

c. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites: DARSD and the non-lead coalition members have **identified 136 potential brownfield sites within the TAs**, including foundries, fuel stations, dry cleaners, former agricultural facilities, railroad facilities, river port facilities, and a variety of vacant older buildings. Environmental concerns include ACM, LBP, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), petroleum hydrocarbons (PHs), metals, herbicides, pesticides, and chlorinated solvents. Due to the sheer number of sites identified during a TA windshield survey, the coalition is in dire need of resources from EPA funding to address these challenges. **Each priority site** represents the greatest potential in its TA to be returned to use and generate further revitalization, **is vacant, and has site access granted for assessment from the property owner.**

Member: Target Area	Priority Site(s)	Site Description	Contaminants
DARSD: Town of Vidalia	Former Church	Vacant 7,500 sq. ft. church with 2,000 sq. ft. support building, both built 1960–1970. Vacant since 2018, the property is bounded on either side by diesel and marine mechanic and metal fabrication shops.	ACM, LBP, VOCs, PHs, metals
East Carroll Parish: Town of Lake Providence	Former East Carroll Lumber Yard	Former lumber yard and hardware store on three overgrown, partially fenced acres, bound by residences and a church. Vacant since 2017.	ACM, LBP, VOCs, PHs, metals, herbicides,

		with eight buildings in various states of condition containing ~40,000 sq. ft. of space. Prior chemical storage, equipment maintenance operations, hazardous building materials.	pesticides
Madison Parish River Delta	Former EZ Auto Sales	Former auto sales and mechanic shop on 0.82 fenced acres. The 4,500 sq. ft. metal shop building has been vacant since 2021 and is bound by a baseball field and residences to the south and east. History of light industrial uses with chemical storage, auto maintenance operations, and hydraulic lifts.	VOCs, PHs, metals
Tensas Parish: Saint Joseph Historic District	Former Tensas Rosenwald School	A former Black high school established in 1926 and built through the 1940s. Permanently closed in the 1990s. The unfenced property is heavily overgrown, and portions of buildings are collapsing. Adjacent to an elementary school and affordable housing. Hazardous building materials were likely used in construction.	ACM, LBP
Concordia Parish: Ferriday Entertainment District	Former Downtown Hotel	Downtown, pre-1920s, two-story brick building with a 3,800 sq. ft footprint, boarded-up doors, broken windows, and damaged roof. Vacant since the 1980s.	ACM, LBP, PHs from heating oil tanks, chlorinated solvents from adjacent drycleaner
	Former Multi- Tenant Shop	Downtown, pre-1920s, two-story building, with 8,400 sq. ft. footprint, boarded-up doors, broken windows, and damaged roof. Former dry cleaners. Majority of the site has been vacant since the 1990s, and the rest was vacated in 2018.	ACM, LBP, chlorinated solvents

d. Identifying Additional Sites: Prior to this application, the coalition prepared a site inventory based on a windshield survey of all the TAs and compiled a list of **136 potential brownfield sites**. During this grant project, sites will be added to the inventory with community member assistance, and a more in-depth, grant-funded evaluation ranking criteria process will be established. Properties will be researched further by staff using the various local parish assessor websites. The evaluation criteria used to determine the order in which sites will be addressed will be based on community need, project partner and resident input, and **US Census data** to ensure **distressed communities** are benefiting from the project. In the event all TA sites have been addressed, the coalition will work with project partners and residents throughout the **geographic boundaries of the four parishes** to identify abandoned and underused properties. Once identified, the coalition will apply the already established evaluation ranking criteria, with priority given to the **distressed areas**.

Revitalization of the Target Areas. e. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The *2025–2030 DARSD Macro District Strategic Plan (Plan)* sets the revitalization strategy framework along with supporting focused plans that include the *North Delta Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)* and the *Ferriday Entertainment District Comprehensive Plan*. The plans commonly aim to revitalize the TAs by **increasing quality jobs, improving housing options, supporting the downtown commercial districts’ rebuilding, and expanding attractive and diverse commercial opportunities for small business growth**. As can be seen in

the table below, priority site reuse plans were carefully considered, and those that aligned with revitalization plans were selected.

Member: Target Area	Priority Site(s)	Reuse Plans	Alignment with Revitalization Plans
DARSD: Town of Vidalia	Former Church	commercial reuse	Supports the plan to expand attractive and diverse commercial opportunities for small business growth by providing office/light-industrial commercial property.
East Carroll Parish: Town of Lake Providence	Former East Carroll Lumber Yard	local grocery store and community park	Aligns with plans to increase quality jobs, support rebuilding the downtown commercial districts, and expand attractive and diverse commercial opportunities for small business growth.
Madison Parish River Delta	Former Auto Sales	commercial reuse	Will support the plan to expand attractive and diverse commercial opportunities for small business growth by providing office/light-industrial commercial property.
Tensas Parish: Saint Joseph Historic District	Former Tensas Rosenwald School	affordable housing with community park	Directly supports the plan and CEDS goals to improve housing options across the district.
Concordia Parish: Ferriday Entertainment District	Former Downtown Hotel	free Wi-Fi coffee shop	Both reuses align with plans to increase quality jobs, support rebuilding the downtown commercial districts, and expand attractive and diverse commercial opportunities for small business growth.
	Former Multi-Tenant Shop	space for small business growth	

f. **Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy:** The brownfield sites across the parishes are in prime locations for reuse, but they await assessment to determine the specifics needed to address potential contaminants. The reuse plans are expected to result in the following economic and noneconomic outcomes/benefits:

Increase in quality jobs. All six of the priority sites will bring employment opportunities (economic benefit). The local grocery store in Lake Providence will bring 12 full-time jobs and is in walking distance of a distressed community, many without transportation (20% households with no access to a vehicle vs. US 8%).² The priority sites in the Ferriday Entertainment District are expected to bring another 8–10 jobs; however, the community is hopeful that many more will be generated as this special area of town continues to see vacant downtown buildings repurposed.

Improve housing options. The Former Tensas Rosenwald School priority site redevelopment may include up to 20 affordable housing units (both economic and noneconomic benefit), mirroring the blueprint of the housing complex directly across the street. This site also has plans to include a small park (noneconomic benefit) to commemorate the former Black school located on its grounds.

Support rebuilding the downtown commercial districts. Because these communities are located along the MS River, the downtown areas are older than many other rural towns in the state and are important to preserve not only as history, but also as economic drivers. Investment in the Ferriday Entertainment District TA will ensure two historic structures are preserved while also providing restaurants and shops to increase tax revenue for the town.

Expand attractive and diverse commercial opportunities for small business growth. Given the blight and vacancy rates across the TAs, investment in existing real estate such as the Former Church in Vidalia and the Former Auto Sales in Madison Parish is critical to attracting new

² US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

businesses to the area. Both priority sites are in prime locations, and once environmental encumbrances are removed, the sites will be attractive options for a small business.

Due to the extreme weather events, the TAs (as an average) suffer from **71st percentile for expected agriculture loss, 87th percentile expected building loss rate, and 71st percentile for flood risk, which in turn has caused an 82nd percentile for expected population loss rate.**³ The coalition will work with developers to ensure planned redevelopment also improves local resilience concerning the **impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters**. Park and recreation redevelopments will **use renewable energy and be built in a sustainable manner, while the new construction and renovation projects will incorporate renewable and efficient energy in the form of LED lights, green building materials, energy-efficient materials, and reuse of old buildings**. By working to ensure developers are using **energy-efficient measures** in their redevelopment designs, **promoting sustainability**, encouraging use of **renewable energy** through use of **solar energy**, the parishes will be sure to build a resilient community that will grow **sustainably** for many years.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources. g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: DARSD and the non-lead coalition members (parishes) are local government organizations and are eligible to apply for state and federal grant funding to further brownfield redevelopment. The Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant will help stimulate several funding sources to support the completion of the project. The coalition will leverage a variety of funding sources for successful implementation and administration of this assessment opportunity and subsequent cleanup. DARSD has identified the following grant opportunities to assist redevelopment and rehabilitation of priority sites. The parishes and TA towns can solicit the Louisiana Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for funds that are available for blight removal, demolition, infrastructure, and affordable housing redevelopment. The parishes have access to the Community Water Enrichment Fund (CWEF) to support the addition of water lines, meters, and other items to ensure access to safe drinking water. The coalition will also seek to specifically use the Targeted Brownfields Assessment of Louisiana's Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) that assists in funding any additional assessments, as well as some cleanups that may be needed. Once sites are assessed, the coalition will apply for EPA Brownfield Cleanup funding. In addition to these grant funding opportunities, a number of tax incremental financing (TIF) districts across the parishes can be leveraged to conduct cleanup, demolition, and infrastructure improvements.

h. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The coalition intends to use pre-existing infrastructure within all priority sites, including water/sewer, transportation, broadband, buildings and power. All coalition members will be able to support the proposed redevelopments in the target area, and because of that, additional funds will not be needed to establish any form of additional infrastructure. If additional infrastructure improvements are found to be necessary during the redevelopment, the parishes will look to state and federal funding.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need. a. The Community's Need for Funding: The target areas are vast but experience many of the same difficulties in each of their respective communities. The residents of these areas suffer from **high unemployment and low income**. Additionally, the **populations are small**, with each of the TAs having less than 4,000 people.⁴ The information in the table below shows a high disparity between the TAs and US income averages.⁴ The TAs average in the **86th percentile for low income** and the **65th percentile for unemployment**.⁴ Due to the small

³ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#11.37/31.5724/-91.5006>

⁴ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

populations, high unemployment, and low-income status, coalition partners are unable to increase taxes on their residents to cover environmental assessments. All funds of the parishes are allocated

In percentages Per US Census	DARSD TA	East Carroll TA	Madison TA	Tensas TA	Concordia TA	US
Youth	24	29	27	23	29	22
Elderly	23	26	32	27	21	21
Black	27	73	19	58	67	12
Female	51	57	56	55	58	51
Unemployment	10	11	2	8	15	5
All families (Poverty)	27	34	16	32	39	9
All people (poverty)	29	39	21	38	50	12
All families with children under 18 (poverty)	31	52	32	59	90	16

to necessary services like police and fire departments; these costs are demanding due to the areas' high crime rates. Without added funding for assessments, these distressed communities will continue to endure the **harmful health effects and blight** currently plaguing the target areas. With the EPA funding, the coalition will be able to break the cycle of poverty and despair that these **communities** endure, while improving the health of the communities, and revitalizing the economy to serve the residents.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The target areas are made up of several **sensitive population** groups. See the table in the section above for TA percentages compared to the US levels.⁵ Many **youth, elderly, and female residents** suffer from poverty, high unemployment, and depend on food-stamp government assistance. In addition, there is a high Black population throughout the target areas.

Welfare issues such as **poverty and food-stamp assistance** are worsened by difficulty accessing fresh groceries, as the TAs are all considered **USDA food deserts**. Limited access to fresh food makes healthy living difficult, and TA residents also have to deal with unsafe drinking water. The target areas average in the **98th percentile for drinking water noncompliance**.⁶ The **Town of St. Joseph** was the focus of a case study on drinking water safety after unsafe levels of lead were found in 2016 throughout many homes in the town, and the governor had to issue a Public Health Emergency Proclamation.⁷ In **East Carroll Parish**, 22 contaminants were found in drinking water, 11 of which exceeded the state health guidelines, and in 2021, the water utility was determined to be in **serious violation of federal health-based drinking water standards**.⁸ Similar issues are rampant throughout the remaining TAs, making clear the vital need to assess and remediate the pervasive contamination caused by brownfield sites.

Crime is a major concern in all the target areas. **Violent and property crime is significantly higher than the national averages (US 23, 35 – see table below)**.⁹ Fear of walking around outside due to the threat of crime keeps many people indoors, which can lead to sedentary lifestyles that worsen many health conditions. By removing blight and abandoned buildings, which often serve as bases for criminal activity, this grant will improve the safety of the areas and encourage residents to explore their communities once more. An EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant will be a catalyst for healthy change for TA residents by

Parish	Violent	Property
East Carroll	51	18
Madison	23	32
Tensas	29	40
Concordia	33	57

⁵US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey

⁶ <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>

⁷ <https://leanweb.org/citizens-guide/your-water/drinking-water/drinking-water-case-study-town-of-st-joseph-tensas-parish-louisiana>.

⁸ <https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/system.php?pws=LA1035007>.

⁹ https://www.bestplaces.net/crime/county/louisiana/east_carroll; <https://www.bestplaces.net/crime/county/louisiana/madison>; <https://www.bestplaces.net/crime/county/louisiana/tensas>; <https://www.bestplaces.net/crime/county/louisiana/concordia>.

not only drawing attention to the health and welfare issues the sensitive populations struggle with but also providing a means to mitigate the causes.

c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: The rural parishes included in the coalition have a long history with agricultural and MS River transit industries creating adverse health conditions. Conditions have worsened, and the TAs have not seen brownfield sites cleaned up at a rate compared to the rest of the state due to the lack of investment in the populated areas and the abundance of land for greenfield development. The TA residents suffer from various health conditions including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. The TAs average in the **80th percentile for asthma** and **92nd percentile for diabetes**.¹¹ Also contributing to asthma symptoms are asbestos and petroleum hydrocarbons (PHs) found at many TA properties. The populations are also in the **94th percentile for heart disease**.¹⁰ The many carcinogens found at the priority sites and the other brownfield sites throughout the target areas are contributing to a **cancer rate of 469 cases per 100,000 people**, which is higher than the **national average of 444 cases per 100,000 people**.¹¹ This rate is further compounded by the TAs ranking in the **97th percentile for drinking water noncompliance**.¹² While many factors contribute to cancer rates, the contamination that plagues the TAs is only worsening this tragic reality. The March of Dimes Report Card indicates that a maternal and infant health crisis is worsening and shows the state suffers from rates of infant mortality of 7.4/1,000 live births versus the US of 5.6/1,000 (TA data not available). Louisiana has a Preterm Birth Grade of an F, with a preterm birth rate of 13.4%.¹³ Contaminants, including herbicides and pesticides found at agricultural properties, are suspected to contribute to birth defects. By assessing and ultimately cleaning up TA brownfields, TA redevelopment through the Brownfield Grant will improve the health and wellbeing of the local community.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: The EPA Brownfield funding will provide assessment and cleanup planning to remediate and revitalize target-area communities that are both **economically distressed and disproportionately burdened by environmental consequences** from past industrial and commercial activities. The district's severe agricultural industry decline since the COVID-19 pandemic plus its high youth and elderly population (together 53%/US 43%), low-income individuals (per capita income \$22,384/US \$43,289), high poverty levels (all people 37%/US 12%) and decreasing tax base has put disproportional stress on the four parishes to provide basic services to the community.¹⁴ Residents in these rural parishes face limited economic opportunities and ongoing health risks from blight and contaminants, making them especially vulnerable. This grant project directly addresses these inequities by removing environmental hazards, reducing threats to public health, and supporting redevelopment that improves quality of life. By focusing on the community's greatest needs, quality jobs, safe housing, and sustainable business growth, the project will foster resilience and economic opportunity. Because of the rural nature of the coalition, redevelopment is expected to strengthen community cohesion rather than cause gentrification, as small towns work together to restore their downtowns and attract new residents and businesses. Through brownfield identification, assessment, and remediation, this grant will help remedy longstanding environmental and socioeconomic challenges and create a healthier, more prosperous generational future for these distressed populations.

¹⁰ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#8/0/0>

¹¹ <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/incidencrates>.

¹² <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>

¹³ March of Dimes Report Card. <https://www.marchofdimes.org/report-card>

¹⁴ US Census 2019-2023 American Community Survey.

Community Engagement. e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles: Local community partners, with a strong presence in the target areas, will play key roles in outreach and education, site inventory selection and ranking, and cleanup and reuse planning.

Name of org.	Entity's mission	Point of contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Stew Pot	Provide compassionate assistance to people in need of nourishment in the City of Vidalia and surrounding community	Marcus Archer, Director Ntzstewpot@gmail.com	Assistance/Decision Making: future site-reuse planning and community education and outreach activities.
Louisiana Center Against Poverty	Develop and implement projects and programs to help people out of poverty in the East Carroll and surrounding parishes	Joann Thompson, Secretary Lacapl116@gmail.com	Assistance/Decision Making: site identification and future reuse planning.
Together For Hope Louisiana	Work to change the causes of economic disparity within the East Carroll Parish community	Kyle Kelley, Interim Coordinator kyle@tfh-la.org	Assistance/Decision Making: site identification, reuse planning, and community education and outreach activities.
Tensas Parish Council on Aging	Enhance the quality of life for seniors in the Tensas Parish community	Thelma Bradford, President tenscoa@yahoo.com	Assistance/Decision Making: community education and outreach activities.
Delta Community Action	Provide resources and foster partnerships the area's low-income communities	Carl Smith, Director csmith@deltacommunityaction.com	Assistance/Decision Making: site identification, reuse planning, and community education and outreach activities.
Madison Parish Council on Aging	Enhance the quality of life for seniors in the Madison Parish community	Mike Rome, Director (318) 574-3666	Assistance/Decision Making: community education and outreach activities.
Pentecostal of the Miss-Lou	Demonstrate God's love through actively ministering to the needs of everyone	Bishop Gary Howington pomlchurch@gmail.com	Assistance/Decision Making: community education and outreach activities.

g. Incorporating Community Input: DARS D and its coalition members understand the need for community input to run a successful Brownfield Program, and in the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025, it announced its intention of applying for a Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant. The coalition members have been discussing the potential for redevelopment of their respective brownfield properties and were happy to share their vision with the local communities. The coalition members will continue to be transparent with the community and seek feedback throughout the project. They will engage the residents and community partners in educational and project-update meetings as well as request their input on brownfield site identification and prioritization. Community input and suggestions will be documented during coalition-member community meetings. Community member suggestions will be discussed during quarterly brownfield coalition meetings, and the responses will be posted on the Brownfield Program webpage. Target-area, resident-identified sites will be added to the inventory, evaluated with project partner input, and prioritized based on need, project goals, and the future land-use redevelopment plans. The comments and questions solicited and gathered from residents during meetings, especially those from residents most affected by the project, will be addressed through the webpage, brownfield website, and at the parish meetings **monthly** throughout the grant period. Community information will be offered through coalition-member and project-partner websites,

social media, local/regional publications, and distributed print material to ensure dispersal throughout the coalition member areas. A Brownfield Program webpage will be developed as part of this grant to allow residents access to periodic updates on the program’s status. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline the coalition’s Brownfield Program information and will detail community engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players. The CIP will be available for review in the DARSD office, coalition members’ offices and on the brownfield webpage. A Brownfield Program brochure explaining the program will be shared throughout the community at coalition members’ public meetings held within the target areas and local libraries; these brochures will be especially helpful for those residents without internet access. The Program Director will provide project information during regularly scheduled monthly council meetings, community educational meetings, and charrettes/visioning sessions. Meetings will be promoted through the Brownfields Program webpage, from local and state officials, email distribution lists, church groups, and social media. To continue to promote community involvement, community outreach will be conducted via virtual and in-person meetings to discuss the grant and engage the community.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

- ***All tasks listed below are eligible and allowable EPA-funded expenses.***

Task 1: Outreach & Site Inventory	
a.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The DARSD Brownfield (BF) Project Director will develop a CIP, outreach materials, and a BF webpage and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). DARSD staff will lead community meetings to keep the public informed on project plans and updates. Supplies are budgeted for the printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant. The DARSD BF Project Director will work with residents during community meetings to create a site inventory. Abandoned and underused properties identified by the residents will be researched further by DARSD staff and appropriately compiled, with priority given to sites located within areas of sensitive populations. The EC will work with DARSD staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine, with the help of residents, the order in which the sites will be addressed.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created in the 1 st quarter. One community meeting per year held in each coalition member’s target area. Website and outreach materials created in the 1 st quarter and posted quarterly. The community meeting held in 1 st quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process. The evaluation ranking process takes place in the 2 nd quarter and will continue throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> DARSD: Dr. Jimmy Jones, BF Project Director / Finance Director
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, BF webpage, 15 community meetings, brochures/handouts, social media posts, summary of community meetings in EPA-required quarterly reports, evaluation ranking tool, site inventory.
Task 2: Assessment	
a.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs, which will include Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs). Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation will be addressed when applicable.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessments start in the 2 nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the DARSD: Dr. Jimmy Jones, BF Project Director / Finance Director.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 32 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 24 Phase II ESAs including SAP, site access agreements and property eligibility & Section 106 determinations (if needed)
Task 3: Reuse Planning	
a.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, developing an inventory of site assets and infrastructure, identifying potential brownfield site reuse options, assessing market conditions, analyzing opportunities and constraints, calculating cleanup costs, and determining

	site-appropriate remediation/reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the coalition in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions. A planner will work with the community to create Land Use Assessments, Site Reuse Assessments, Market Studies, and BF Revitalization Plans.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & charrettes begin in the 6 th quarter and continue throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the DARSD: Mr. Yohannis A. Job, J.D, BF Project Manager.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 4 vision sessions, 4 Site Reuse Assessment, 5 Land Use Assessments, 4 Market Studies, and 3 BF Revitalization Plans

Task 4: Programmatic Support

a.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The DARSD will procure an EC to assist with the BF Grant Project. The DARSD's BF Project Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement work plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The EC will assist in completing ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, and all additional programmatic support for the four-year term of the grant. Travel budget allows for four staff to attend three events.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Procure EC 1 st quarter. ACRES & quarterly reporting begins 1 st quarter and continues throughout the grant. Annual reporting and forms created in the 5 th , 9 th , and 13 th quarters and during final closeout.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> DARSD: Dr. Jimmy Jones, BF Project Director / Finance Director
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES database reporting, 4 annual financial reports, 16 quarterly reports, programmatic support for the four-year grant period. four staff to attend three conferences.

Task 5: Administrative Indirect Cost: a. – d. See below for the cost breakdown.

e. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project *based on past brownfield projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.*

- ✓ **Sixty percent (60%) will be spent on site-specific work and 30% of the budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities.**
- ✓ **Approximately 2.7% of the budget will be spent on administrative indirect costs.**
- ✓ **Personnel per-hour rate is \$50/hr and fringe rate is 25%.**

Task 1 Outreach & Site Inventory: Personnel (\$50/hr): CIP \$1,000 (20hrs); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$2,500 (50 hrs); 15 community education meetings \$6,000 (8 hrs × 15 meetings); site inventory \$1,900 (38 hrs). Fringe: \$2,850 (25% rate). Contractual: CIP \$1,020 (6 hrs × \$170); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$1,020 (6 hrs × \$170); 15 community education meetings \$15,000 (\$1,000/meeting – 6.67hrs x \$150 per meeting); BF site inventory and evaluation ranking tool creation \$18,190 (107 hrs × \$170). Supplies: \$532 (printed brochures \$200 [200 × \$1.00]; poster printouts \$200 [2 × \$100 each]; notebooks, paper, pens, other miscellaneous office supplies \$132).

Task 2 Assessment: Personnel (\$50/hr): 57 report reviews \$2,850 (1hr/report). Fringe: \$713 (25% rate). Contractual: 32 Phase I ESAs \$144,000 (\$4,500 each); 1 Generic QAPP \$7,000; 24 Phase II ESAs including SAP \$720,000 (\$30,000 each).

Task 3 Reuse Planning: Personnel (\$50/hr): vision sessions \$2,000 (10 hrs per session × 4 sessions); 20 report reviews \$2,000 (2 hrs/report). Fringe: \$1,000 (25% rate). Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$28,000 (\$7,000 each); 4 vision sessions/charrettes \$12,000 (\$3,000/meeting); 4 Site Reuse Assessments \$100,000 (\$25,000 each [Senior Planner 50 hrs × \$200, Project Management Planner 50 hrs × \$175, Support Personnel 50 hrs × \$125]); 5 Land Use Assessments \$30,000 (\$6,000 each [Senior Planner 15 hrs × \$200, Project Management Planner 10 hrs × \$175, Support Personnel 10 hrs × \$125]); 3 BF Revitalization Plans \$225,000 (\$75,000 each [Principal Planner 100 hrs × \$250, Senior Planner 100 hrs × \$200, Project Management Planner 100 hrs × \$175, Support Personnel 100 hrs × \$125]); 4 Market Studies \$80,000 (\$20,000 each [Senior Planner 40 hrs × \$200, Project Management Planner 40 hrs × \$175, Support Personnel 40 hrs × \$125]).

Task 4 Programmatic Support: Personnel (\$50/hr): \$17,500 (350 hrs). Fringe: \$4,375 (25% rate). Contractual: ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, programmatic support for the four-year grant period \$10,150 (58 hrs × \$175). Travel: four staff to attend three conferences/events \$21,000 (flights at \$600, 3 nights in hotel at \$250/night, incidentals and per diem at \$100 per day [4 days] × 4 staff × 3 events). Other: conference registration \$2,400 (\$200 each × 4 attendees × 3 events).

Task 5 Administrative Indirect Costs: Other: Costs of operating and maintaining facilities \$20,000 (based on average costs), Personnel: general administration consisting of the salaries of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting \$20,000 (\$50 × 400hrs).

Tasks						
Category	<i>Outreach & Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	<i>Administrative Indirect Costs</i>	Totals
Personnel	\$11,400	\$2,850	\$4,000	\$17,500	\$20,000	\$55,750
Fringe	\$2,850	\$713	\$1,000	\$4,375		\$8,938
Travel				\$21,000		\$21,000
Other				\$2,400	\$20,000	\$22,400
Supplies	\$532					\$532
Contractual	\$35,230	\$871,000	\$475,000	\$10,150		\$1,391,380
Total	\$50,012	\$874,563	\$480,000	\$55,425	\$40,000	\$1,500,000

f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule, the **Brownfield Advisory Board (BAB)**, comprised of the EC and staff from each coalition member as well as each community partner organization, will meet quarterly to track all **outputs identified in 3.d.** using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the projects schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site-specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. The outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not being completed efficiently, DARSD has countermeasures in place to address this problem, such as making monthly calls to its EPA Project Officer and, if needed, creating a Corrective Action Plan to get back on schedule.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability. a. Organizational Capacity, b. Organizational Structure, & c. Description of Key Staff: Delta Agriculture Research & Sustainability District (DARSD) is a regional government organization created by state statute that seeks to improve economic development in northeast Louisiana through agricultural and sustainability research. The District is a research district designated as a pilot project for the State of Louisiana, where private business, government, and university come together to conduct research. DARSD has a long history of grant management expertise with local, state, regional, and federal grants. The DARSD Director, **Dr. Jimmy Jones**, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Director** and the **Brownfield Finance Director**. He has nine years of experience in managing both state and local grants as well as critical infrastructure development. In his current role he manages the DARSD organization and oversees the finances. He will be responsible for the day-to-day activities, timely and successful expenditure

of funds, and completion of administrative and financial requirements including all draw downs through ASAP.gov for this EPA Grant project. He will be assisted by the **Brownfield Project Manager, Mr. Yohannis A. Job, J.D.** He is a seasoned higher-education enrollment strategist and sponsored-program leader with over a decade of executive experience in enrollment, admissions, and financial aid operations and brings expertise in compliance, federal program administration, grant budgeting, and KPI-driven evaluation frameworks. He will leverage his background and degrees in business administration, public service, and law to drive community engagement and economic development initiatives. A qualified environmental contractor (EC) will handle all technical aspects of the project.

The coalition will be supported by the **Brownfield Advisory Board (BAB)**, which currently acts as the DARSD Board. The proposed BAB includes representatives from each coalition member and project partner. The BAB will advise on the implementation of this grant and use of funds in respect to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed on by coalition partners. The coalition partners will work in conjunction to identify sites for assessment and support local communities; fund assessment needs; work with private, public, nonprofit, and local stakeholders to create awareness of the coalition and their associated resources; and provide regular reporting for granting agency requirements. DARSD will hold, administer, and disperse loan funding in a way that abides by the coalition's MOU and best practices. The BAB will work to ensure adequate representation from the coalition members and other vital parties so the distressed population is represented. The coalition will welcome prospective members who have brownfield assessment, clean-up, and development experience and will work collaboratively to address the brownfield sites across the parishes.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources: Using local contracting requirements and procurement process, DARSD will procure a qualified EC to assist with technical and reporting portions of the Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant in addition to any other contractors needed to complete the project. DARSD will ensure compliance with the EPA's Professional Service procurement process.

Past Performance and Accomplishments. f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements: (1) Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2023, DARSD received a \$150,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority that was used to create a strategic plan and three feasibility studies for Clean Energy Initiatives, Rural Utility Expansion, and Housing Blight. All funds have been expended, and the grant closed in December 2024. DARSD was also the recipient of a \$500,000 Thriving Communities grant from the US Department of Transportation in 2024 for the creation of a regional transportation network. The grant is still being implemented with a closeout date in 2027. DARSD was awarded another \$500,000 grant in 2024 from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. The grant financed a feasibility study of a 120-mile bike trail and closed out in 2025. (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: DARSD is on schedule for all active grants. DARSD has been compliant with grant work plans, schedules, grant reports, budgets, terms and conditions, and is highly efficient. DARSD is skilled in project management and will monitor all grant activities to ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements. Dr. Jimmy Jones and Mr. Job are well versed in grant reporting and will input all project information into ACRES.



**Delta Agriculture Research and Sustainability District, LA
FY26 Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant
Threshold Criteria**

Threshold Criteria

1. Eligibility of Lead and Non-Lead Coalition Members

- a. Delta Agriculture Research & Sustainability District (DARSD) (lead) of Louisiana is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant as a regional government organization created by state statute as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64. **Please see attached documentation.** Non-lead members of this Assessment Coalition Grant are East Carroll Parish, Madison Parish, Tensas Parish, and Concordia Parish, Louisiana. All entities are local units of government pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.64 and are eligible to participate in this project.
- b. DARSD and the non-lead members are not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Target Areas

All target areas are unique, do not overlap, and are in four distinct jurisdictions.

Census tract (CT)

- DARSD (lead member): CTs 22029000300 & 22029000400 located in the Town of Vidalia
- East Carroll Parish (non-lead member): CTs 22035000300 & 22035000100 located in the Town of Lake Providence
- Madison Parish (non-lead member): CT 22065960100 located in the Madison Parish River Delta
- Tensas Parish (non-lead member): CTs 22107000300 & 22107000100 located in the Saint Joseph Historic District
- Concordia Parish (non-lead member): CT 22029000200 located in the Ferriday Entertainment District

3. Non-lead Member(s) that Never Received an EPA MARC Grant

None of the non-lead members have ever received an EPA Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, or Cleanup (MARC) Grant.

4. Legal Authority to Expend Grant Funds on Behalf of Non-Lead Coalition Members

- a. DARSD, as the lead coalition member, attests that it has the legal authority to receive and administer EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant funds on behalf of the non-lead coalition members to conduct the proposed grant activities. This authority is granted through DARSD's organizational structure and governing documents, which authorizes regional program administration and expenditure of funds for multijurisdictional projects.
- b. Not Applicable.

5. Coalition Agreement

Letters signed by each non-lead coalition member citing the agreement to participate in the EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant are attached.

6. Community Involvement

DARSD and its coalition members understand the need for community input to run a successful Brownfield Program, and in the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025, it announced its intention of applying for a Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant. The coalition members have been discussing the potential for redevelopment of their respective brownfield properties and were happy to share their vision with the local communities. The coalition members will continue to be transparent with the community and seek feedback throughout the project. They will engage the residents and community partners in educational and project-update meetings as well as request their input on brownfield site identification and prioritization. Community input and suggestions will be documented during coalition-member community meetings. Community member suggestions will be discussed during quarterly brownfield coalition meetings, and the responses will be posted on the Brownfield Program webpage. Target-area, resident-identified sites will be added to the inventory, evaluated with project partner input, and prioritized based on need, project goals, and the future land-use redevelopment plans. The comments and questions solicited and gathered from residents during meetings, especially those from residents most affected by the project, will be addressed through the webpage, brownfield website, and at the parish meetings **monthly** throughout the grant period. Community information will be offered through coalition-member and project-partner websites, social media, local/regional publications, and distributed print material to ensure dispersal throughout the coalition member areas. A Brownfield Program webpage will be developed as part of this grant to allow residents access to periodic updates on the program's status. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline the coalition's Brownfield Program information and will detail community engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players. The CIP will be available for review in the DARSD office, coalition members' offices and on the brownfield webpage. A Brownfield Program brochure explaining the program will be shared throughout the community at coalition members' public meetings held within the target areas and local libraries; these brochures will be especially helpful for those residents without internet access. The Program Director will provide project information during regularly scheduled monthly council meetings, community educational meetings, and charrettes/visioning sessions. Meetings will be promoted through the Brownfields Program webpage, from local and state officials, email distribution lists, church groups, and social media. To continue to promote community involvement, community outreach will be conducted via virtual and in-person meetings to discuss the grant and engage the community.

7. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

DARSD and all non-lead coalition members affirm that they do not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

8. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not Applicable.