



NIAGARA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

NIAGARA COUNTY COURTHOUSE
 LOCKPORT, NEW YORK 14094-2740
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NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

The Niagara County Economic Development department and our Coalition members (Niagara University, Lockport Main Street Inc. and Oliver Street Merchant's Association) are pleased to submit this proposal for FY2024 Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant funding. Below we provide the information requested.

Applicant Identification:

Legal Name: Niagara County Department of Economic Development

Doing Business as Name: **Niagara County**

Physical & Mailing Address: 6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Sanborn, New York 14132

Funding Requested:

Assessment Grant Type: Assessment Coalition

Federal Funds Requested: \$1,500,000

Location: The target areas for all coalition members are located within Niagara County (pop. 212,666)

Cities: Niagara Falls (pop. 47,993), Lockport (pop. 20,602) and North Tonawanda (pop. 30,235)

County: Niagara

State or Reservation: New York

Priority Target Areas:

Priority Site Name & Address	Size	Site Description & Environmental Concerns
Lower Highland Cluster 1104, 1108, 1110, 1114 & 1120 Grove Ave, 2515 & 2525 Highland Ave	7 parcels (0.89 acres)	Vacant land. Formerly occupied by sheet metal operation, print shop, paint and varnish shop, and other commercial operations. City acquired through tax foreclosure. Phase II ESA done.
Center Court 1329,1709,1713,1715,1717,1719, 1721,1723,1725,1727,1729, 2003, 2005,2007 Centre Ave	14 parcels (17.5 acres)	Vacant land that was formerly a rail yard. Bordered by rail road tracks and residential properties. City acquired through tax foreclosure. Phase II ESA done on 1329 Centre Ave.
Amtrak Station 2201,2231 Whirlpool St; 2204,2220 & 2302 Main St, 825 Depot Ave	6 parcels (3.59 acres)	Vacant land. Past uses as a gas station, auto repair and dry cleaner. City acquired via tax foreclosure. Phase II ESA done.
Main Street 2001, 2002, 2011, 2018, 2019, & 2025 Main St; 855 Niagara Ave; 916 Cleveland Ave	8 parcels (1.73 acres)	Vacant city block with mixture of empty lots and vacant 2 and 3 story buildings. Formerly dry cleaners, manufacturing, gas stations, and various commercial uses.
West and Park Avenues 553, 621, 625, 635, & 641 West Ave; 505, 511 & 515 Park Ave	8 parcels (3.6 acres)	Vacant block with mix of empty lots and vacant 1 story buildings. Formerly auto repair facility, gas station, manufacturing, and various commercial uses. Phase II ESA done on 641 West Ave.

South Niagara Quarry 400 & 456 South Niagara St	2 parcels (10.39)	Vacant land previously used as a quarry and landfill.
22 Mechanic Street	1 parcel (4.6 acres)	Landfill, scrapyard and spot for illegal dumping. Not fenced. Adjacent to low income housing.
5th Avenue Block 654, 657, 661, 664, 665, 667, 668 & 671 Oliver St	8 parcels (0.7 acres)	Block of vacant and underutilized commercial and residential buildings including ones destroyed by fire. Various commercial uses, dry cleaners.

Contacts:

Project Director:

Name: Amy Schifferli

Phone: (716) 278-8754 | Email: Amy.Schifferli@niagaracounty.com

Mailing Address: 6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Sanborn, New York 14132

Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:

Name: Rebecca Wydysh, Chairman Niagara County Legislature

Phone: (716) 439-7124 | Email: Rebecca.Wydysh@niagaracounty.com

Mailing Address: 175 Hawley, Lockport, NY 14094

Population: All target areas are located within the County of Niagara (population 212,666).

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	NA
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or US territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	4
The reuse strategy or project reuse of the priority site(s) considers climate adaptation and/or mitigation measures.	4, 9
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	10
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2012 or later) or is closing.	NA

NA = Not applicable.

Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: A letter of acknowledgement from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is attached.

Releasing Copies of Applications: Not applicable.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Environmental Remediation, Bureau of Program Management

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October 30, 2023

Amy E. Schifferli, AICP, Brownfield Program Manager
Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development
Vantage Centre – Suite One
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive
Sanborn, NY 14132

Dear Ms. Schifferli:

This is to acknowledge that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) received a request from Niagara County, dated October 24, 2023, for a state acknowledgement letter for a Federal Year 2024 United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields grant.

I understand that Niagara County plans to submit a Brownfield Coalition Assessment Grant application for hazardous substances and petroleum in the amount of \$1,500,000 with coalition partners of Lockport Main Street, Inc, Niagara University Levesque Institute, and Oliver Street Merchants Association. Focus of the funding will be to conduct Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments in target areas throughout Niagara County. Funding will also be allocated for reuse planning and community involvement activities.

DEC encourages initiatives to redevelop brownfields with the goal of mitigating any environmental and health impacts that they might pose.

Sincerely,



Karen Diligent

Director, Bureau of Program Management

ec: T. Wesley, USEPA Region 2
Y. DeJesus, USEPA Region 2
M. Cruden, DEC Albany
A. Caprio, DEC Region 9
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R. Poczalski, DEC Region 9



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

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

1.a.i. Coalition Members – The Niagara County Department of Economic Development (NCDED) has formed a Coalition with 3 community-based non-profit organizations (CBOs) that represent 3 cities in Niagara County, NY: **Niagara University (NU - University), Lockport Main Street Inc. (LMS – Main St) , and Oliver Street Merchants Association Inc. (OSMA - Oliver), located in Niagara Falls (NF), Lockport (Lkpt) and North Tonawanda (NT), respectively.** They were identified as key partners for the EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant because of ongoing partnerships with the NCDED and the collective goal of improving the quality of life in the most underserved communities in Niagara County (County). Part of University’s mission is to revitalize NF through early childhood development, community outreach, health and wellness, and revitalizing neighborhoods. Main St is dedicated to community and economic development in Lkpt through community programming, special events, tourism, and marketing. Oliver’s mission is restoration and revitalization of the Oliver Street Business Corridor for residents and businesses.

As small CBOs, with limited to no staff, both Main St and Oliver have very limited financial and staff resources to apply, fund and manage an EPA Brownfield Grant and/or brownfield redevelopment activities on their own. University is focused on education and community outreach and lacks the expertise to manage its own EPA brownfields grant. All of these CBOs form essential partnerships to identify and advocate for critical projects in their service areas, but are unable to fund environmental site assessment (ESA) and cleanup planning (CP) activities to move projects forward due to limited budgets solely devoted to funding educational and/or community engagement activities. This EPA Grant will be a valuable tool in helping the Coalition catalyze projects by quantifying unknown environmental conditions that deter developers. The ability to fund these activities and create shovel-ready sites is a significant challenge, but one that this funding will assist to overcome.

1.a.ii. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas - The County (pop. 212,650) is located in New York State (NYS) with borders along Lake Ontario, Niagara River and Ontario, Canada. The County contains 3 municipalities where the target areas (TA) are located. As a result of cheap hydropower electricity, chemical manufacturing companies located along the Falls' waterfront and produced phosphorus, chlorine bleach, abrasives, ammonia, and hydrochloric acid. When the hydropower plant was destroyed in 1956, local factories were forced to relocate resulting in a loss of over 10,000 manufacturing jobs from 1958-1963. The city never recovered, and what remained was over 1,500 acres of closed factories, i.e. brownfields. Lockport's location along the Erie Canal and Eighteen mile Creek was attractive for cotton, paper, steel, and sawmills, most of which closed leaving 111 acres of brownfields. As a result of disruptions in the automotive industry, 6,000 jobs were lost at the General Motors Delphi Harrison plant. In Tonawanda, the Erie Canal and Niagara River provided water necessary for power and cargo shipping to support steel and iron manufacturers, chemical companies, and the lumber industry. Changes in the manufacturing process and access to truck routes forced these companies to close, leaving 152 acres of brownfields. When industry left, businesses also followed resulting in a deluge of vacant and abandoned buildings. The departure of heavy manufacturing industries in all 3 cities left a legacy of toxic contamination that has significantly challenged the County’s environmental quality. In 1978, Niagara Falls gained national notoriety when contamination at Love Canal caused the evacuation of hundreds of residents and sparked the creation of the Federal Superfund Program.

The grant focus area is 4 targeted areas (TAs) in Niagara County. The TAs have high concentrations of vacant and blighted properties with suspected contamination in the middle of residential neighborhoods. Brownfield sites are not only a threat to those who live in the TAs, but they also impede economic development and redevelopment of surrounding properties. The census tracts (CTs) in all 4 TAs have been identified as disadvantaged communities according to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) and EPA’s EJScreen. Each Coalition member represents a different area of Niagara County where grant efforts will be focused. EPA grant funding will allow the Coalition to focus resources in the areas that will have the greatest impact on community members and advance revitalization goals. The TAs are described in more detail below.

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NCDED TA – Highland Area (CT 202) (pop. 2,608): Located in the northwest portion of the Falls, the area is a mix of residential, heavy industrial, and vacant land. More than half the acreage is brownfields and the census tract suffers from historic underinvestment per CEJST.

Univeristy TA – Mid-Town (CTs 204, 205 & 206) (pop 5,116): Located in the Falls, the area has a compact framework of dense residential neighborhoods alongside former industrial and commercial uses putting residents in close proximity to brownfield sites. There is a high number of vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and substandard housing.

Main St TA – Industrial Core (CT 236 & 237) (pop 5,922): The business and industrial center of Lockport, this area has a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial properties in various states of disrepair.

Oliver TA – Oliver Street Corridor (CT 230.1, 231, & 232) (pop 7,501): Over the past 4 decades, Oliver Street in North Tonawanda has declined from a thriving business and economic hub into an underutilized and blighted 2 mile corridor with a mix of vacant commercial, residential, and industrial properties.

1.a.iii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites - In 2023, the County completed an updated brownfields inventory identifying 52 sites in Lockport, 61 in Tonawanda, and 579 in the Falls. Brownfields in the County are heavily concentrated in the TAs. A variety of past uses (see chart below) plague the sites that range in size from 0.1 acre to 33 acres. Most of the sites are located immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods with minimal to no screening since housing was often built within walking distance to employment opportunities. Through extensive revitalization planning (see **Section 1.b.i.**), the sites below have been identified as catalysts for economic development. All of the sites are within a disadvantaged CT (per CEJST), and grant funds are needed to complete an assortment of activities (see chart below) in support of redevelopment opportunities. Several sites have been selected due to their size and ability for possible land assemblage to attract investment

Priority Site Name & Address	Size	Site Description & Environmental Concerns	Contaminants	Activity
Highland Area (NCDED Target Area)				
Lower Highland Cluster 1104, 1108, 1110, 1114, 1120 Grove Ave, 2515 & 2525 Highland Ave	7 parcels (0.89 acres)	Vacant land. Formerly occupied by sheet metal operation, print shop, paint and varnish shop, and other commercial operations. City acquired through tax foreclosure. Phase II ESA done.	Petroleum, Metals	ABCA, RP
Center Court 1329, 1709, 1713, 1715, 1717, 1719, 1721, 1723, 1725, 1727, 1729, 2003, 2005, 2007 Centre Ave	14 parcels (17.5 acres)	Vacant land that was formerly a rail yard. Bordered by rail road tracks and residential properties. City acquired through tax foreclosure. Phase II ESA done on 1329 Centre Ave.	SVOCs, PAHs, Metals	Phase I/II ESAs, ABCA, RP
Mid-City (University Target Area)				
Amtrak Station 2201, 2231 Whirlpool St; 2204, 2220 & 2302 Main St, 825 Depot Ave	6 parcels (3.59 acres)	Vacant land. Past uses as a gas station, auto repair and dry cleaner. City acquired via tax foreclosure. Phase II ESA done.	Petroleum, Metals, SVOCs	ABCA, RP
Main Street 2001, 2002, 2011, 2018, 2019, & 2025 Main St; 855 Niagara Ave; 916 Cleveland Ave	8 parcels (1.73 acres)	Vacant city block with mixture of empty lots and vacant 2 and 3 story buildings. Formerly dry cleaners, manufacturing, gas stations, and various commercial uses.	Petroleum, SVOCs, Metals, ACM, LBP	Phase I/II ESAs, RBM Surveys, ABCA, RP
Industrial Core (Main St Target Area)				
West and Park Avenues Block 553, 621, 625, 635, & 641 West Ave; 505, 511 & 515 Park Ave	8 parcels (3.6 acres)	Vacant block with mix of empty lots and vacant 1 story buildings. Formerly auto repair facility, gas station, manufacturing, and various commercial uses. Phase II ESA done on 641 West Ave.	Petroleum, SVOCs, Metals, PCBs, ACM	Phase I/II ESAs, RP, ABCA,
South Niagara Quarry 400 & 456 South Niagara St	2 parcels (10.39)	Vacant land previously used as a quarry and landfill.	SVOCs, Metals, PCBs, Pesticides	Phase I/II ESAs, RP, ABCA
Oliver Street (Oliver Target Area)				
22 Mechanic Street	1 parcel (4.6 acres)	Landfill, scrapyard and spot for illegal dumping. Not fenced. Adjacent to low income housing.	Petroleum, PAHs, Metals	Phase I/II ESAs, RP, ABCA
5th Avenue Block 654, 657, 661, 664, 665, 667, 668 & 671 Oliver St	8 parcels (0.7 acres)	Block of vacant and underutilized commercial and residential buildings including ones destroyed by fire. Various commercial uses, dry cleaners.	Petroleum, Metals, ACM, LBP	Phase I/II ESAs, RBM Surveys, ABCA, RP

Definitions: SVOCs = Semi-volatile organic compounds; PAHs = Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon; ACM = Asbestos-Containing Materials; LBP = Lead-Based Paint; PCBs = Polychlorinated Biphenyl

1.a.iv. Identifying Additional Sites - As part of previous brownfield assessment efforts, NCDED developed a site assessment prioritization worksheet. The interactive Microsoft Excel worksheet takes into consideration factors such as environmental justice (EJ), community priority, location/size of site, redevelopment potential, impact on surrounding area, access to infrastructure, EJ issues, and health impacts of the site. Sites with a potential purchaser or developer with redevelopment plans that align with community goals will be prioritized for funding. The Coalition will also accept site nominations from property owners and prospective purchasers. NCDED chose the members of this coalition specifically due to their involvement in the various target communities. The Coalition CBOs hold regular meetings with impacted community members and this project will become part of the meeting agendas. The primary language in the TAs is English but translation will be provided as needed.

1.b. Revitalization of the Target Areas -

1.b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans - Selection of the TAs and priority sites is based on funding projects where extensive planning has been completed to identify priority redevelopment sites. This includes three revitalization plans funded by the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program for the **Highland Area TA** (Highland BOA), **Industrial Core TA** (Downtown Lockport BOA), and **Oliver Street TA** (City of North Tonawanda BOA). The BOA plans include an inventory of brownfield sites; economic and market trends analyses; analyses of redevelopment feasibility for priority sites; and an implementation strategy. Three of the TAs are included in a NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) (NYS economic development program) including **Mid-City TA** (Niagara Falls Bridge District DRI), **Industrial Core** (Lockport DRI) and **Oliver Street TA** (DRI for Tonawanda). The DRI emphasizes the “Four E’s” of Smart Growth: Economy, Equity, Environment and Energy to provide a holistic area wide revitalization strategy. A Niagara Falls Neighborhood Evaluation Committee comprehensive plan is being developed to evaluate housing market conditions in the **Mid-City TA**. The Oliver Street Community Needs Assessment focuses on the **Oliver Street TA**. A goal of Lockport’s 2023 Comprehensive Plan is to “advance the revitalization, reuse, and improvement of vacant, deteriorating, and underutilized properties” such as those in the **Industrial Core TA**. The collective goals of these plans include providing quality, mixed-income multifamily housing, generating business opportunities that stabilize the area (by providing new jobs and bringing access to goods and services in underserved areas), reducing blight, and prioritizing infill development, and preparing for climate change. Reuse plans and strategies for the priority sites include:

Site	Reuse Plans/Strategy	Alignment with Revitalization/Land Use Plans
Highland Area (NCDED Target Area)		
Lower Highland Cluster	New mixed-income residential infill development with 2-3 SFH and a 12-unit apartment building.	Bordered by residential/commercial properties, the site is along a main transit corridor. <i>Highland BOA states</i> , “parcels for new small scale residential infill development that will help strengthen the existing residential neighborhood.”
Center Court	Community garden and affordable housing with 13 duplexes, 2 apt. buildings (40 units).	Identified in the <i>Highland BOA</i> to be a community garden with the remaining acreage to be an expansion of the adjacent affordable housing development that includes apartments, duplexes, and SFHs.
Mid-City (University Target Area)		
Amtrak Station	Tourism/park complimenting train station and Underground Railroad Heritage Center.	Per the <i>Niagara Falls Bridge District DRI</i> , there is a need “to expand tourism options in the area” and “increase accessible park space to create a pedestrian friendly environment for residents and visitors.”
Main Street	Potential for retail, commercial, residential, and support services for adjacent new \$8.9M University Academic Innovation Hub.	Strategies in the <i>Niagara Falls Bridge District DRI</i> , include “encourage the adaptive reuse of and restorations of buildings with a mix of uses that services residents and visitors and encourage the renovation of upper stories for residential use.” “There is an unmet demand for retail and housing investments”
Downtown Lockport (Main St Target Area)		
West & Park Avenues	Mixed use development with restaurant, brewery, and residential apartments.	Per the <i>Lockport 2023 Comprehensive Plan</i> , this area is envisioned to support “creative redevelopment efforts that cultivate mixed use activity centers with increased housing, retail, and service operations.”
South Niagara Quarry	Manufacturing to support adjacent GM’s new investment in electric vehicles	Per the <i>Lockport 2023 Comprehensive Plan</i> , “the City should ensure future development is compatible with the industrial character of the area and ensure they do not detract from nearby residential quality of life”
Oliver Street (Oliver Target Area)		
22 Mechanic Street	Potential reuse that is complimentary to adjacent low income apartment building	In accordance with the <i>DRI for the City of North Tonawanda</i> , “Brownfield sites are incredible opportunities to transform a drain on the community into something that catalyzes revitalization.”
5th Avenue Block	Potential for mixed income, upper floor residential with first floor retail and commercial.	As stated in the <i>Oliver Street Needs Assessment</i> , “the most feasible and beneficial approach to improve residential properties within the Oliver Street study area is to focus on the rehabilitation of existing residential and mixed-use properties”.

1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy - The Coalition’s revitalization plans are focused on vacant or abandoned sites that will not cause the displacement of residents or businesses and are anticipated to provide the following benefits:

- **Provide Affordable, Quality Housing:** The Coalition will prioritize development of low-/mixed-income

housing in all the TAs to help address existing shortages, reduce housing cost burdens, and reduce exposure to lead based paint. Over 200 new units of low-to-moderate-income housing will be created in the Lower Highland Cluster and Center Court. Mixed-use residential/commercial projects proposed at Main Street, West and Park Avenues, and the 5th Avenue Block support the County’s goals to combine housing development with activities that create meaningful employment opportunities.

- **Create Jobs & Reduce Poverty:** Commercial and industrial operations provide a critical employment base in the TAs but unknown environmental conditions are impeding redevelopment, deterring investors and contributing to high vacancy rates. Returning urban brownfields (such as those identified) to productive use aligns with local goals to prioritize employment opportunities in areas with high unemployment. Resultant projects could create 150 new jobs. Through workforce development training, residents can improve their skillset to fill newly created jobs. This will create a positive feedback loop that reduces poverty, housing cost burdens, and dependence on government programs by providing quality, living-wage jobs.
- **Stimulate Private Investment:** Quantifying environmental liabilities will allow the Coalition to market vacant and abandoned tax-delinquent and municipally owned properties for private investment. It is estimated that over \$50 million in private investment will be generated.
- **Parks and Greenspace:** Parcels in the Lower Highland Cluster will be redeveloped for a community garden to provide healthy food in a defined food desert, and a public gathering space at the Amtrak site. Improve climate adaptation and mitigation: T TAs are located in cities and downtowns that are inherently climate friendly. Their compact, mixed use, and pedestrian/bike/transit friendly design reduces car use and dependence, thus reducing automobile greenhouse gas emissions. Proposed adaptive reuse projects will highlight infill development and sustainable building design, such as new high-efficiency heating systems, replacement of single pane windows and electrical upgrades. Lockport is a Clean Energy Community and has prioritized energy efficiency and renewable energy as a strategy for smart growth and economic development. In the Main St TA, a community solar project on the County’s closed landfill is in development with potential for additional similar landfill solar projects as well as GM's investment in electric vehicle production at its facility to help the region continue to lead the way with the next generation of electric vehicles and support NY's transition to a green economy.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse - Niagara County is eligible for funding from local, state, and federal resources and Coalition members are eligible for funds from private foundations. As seen in the table below, significant funding is secured for community revitalization, but the missing piece is brownfields specific planning and assessments. This EPA grant will stimulate the availability of leveraged funds for planning, assessment, remediation, reuse, infrastructure upgrades, and climate resiliency at priority sites and TAs.

Source	Purpose/Role	Amount	Status
NYS DRI NF	Main St (Mid-City TA) sidewalks, street trees, & LED street lights	\$3.72M	Secured. Complete 2024
NC Brownfields RLF	Subgrants & low interest cleanup loans from EPA Program	\$2.5M	Secured. Avail. until 2027
NYS DOS	Oliver St TA sidewalks, greenspace, and LED street lights	\$1.5M	Secured. Complete 2024
NYS HCR	Property acquisition, stabilization, and demolition	\$1.4M	Secured. Complete 2024
NYS HCR	Grants for revitalizing commercial properties in NT DRI	\$620K	Secured. Avail. until 2026
NYS HCR	Grants for revitalizing commercial properties in NF DRI	\$630K	Secured. Avail. until 2026
NYS DRI NF	Mixed-use development at 2025 Main St (Mid-City TA)	\$500K	Secured. Avail. until 2026
John R. Oishei Found.	Research and community engagement in NF (Mid-City TA)	\$455K	Secured. Complete 2024
HUD CBDG	Stabilization of 3 houses on Niagara Ave (Mid-City TA)	\$434K	Secured. Avail. until 2025
NYS DRI	Renovate 2021 Main St (Mid-City TA) into retail and offices	\$400K	Secured. Avail. until 2026
NYS DRI NF	Public plaza on Main St and Cleveland Ave (Mid-City TA)	\$295K	Secured. Complete 2024
NF Bridge Comm.	Grant for economic development activities in Niagara County	\$233K	Secured. No end date
University	Assessment of housing condition & affordability in Mid-City TA	\$150K	Secured. Complete 2024
CCP	Study of vacant and underutilized land in Industrial Core TA	\$25K	Secured. Complete 2024

Definitions - HCR = Homes & Community Renewal; DOS = Department of State; CCP = Center for Community Progress

Potential future funding sources to help advance reuse of sites in the TAs include EPA Technical Assistance to Brownfields for assessment activities; US DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for building energy efficiency financing and tax credits; Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Green and Resilient Retrofit program for energy efficiency and climate resilience in affordable housing; HUD Community Development Block grants; and Department of Transportation Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

State funding sources include Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) tax credits for up to 50% of clean costs and

up to 24% of redevelopment costs on privately funded cleanups. NYS Main Street Program with matching grants for economic development and housing opportunities in downtown, mixed-use commercial districts. NYS Environmental Protection Fund grants for creation of parks in high poverty areas. NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Energy Efficiency and Carbon Neutral Economic Development Programs funds for carbon reduction opportunities and net zero energy performance in new construction and adaptive reuses. The NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation Green Innovation Grant Program helps pay for projects that improve water quality and mitigate the effects of climate change. National Grid, a local utility company, offers grants for brownfield cleanup and energy efficiency upgrades.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure - Sites in the TAs are in an urban area with existing infrastructure including water, sewer, electric, gas, broadband, roads, highways, rail, and public transit that can support redevelopment activities. Existing infrastructure will be reused or retrofitted during remediation and rehabilitation. Dilapidated street infrastructure and lack of ADA-accessible connections exist in some of the TAs. As noted in *Section 1.c.i.*, recent investments in streetscape infrastructure is helping create safe, accessible and connected neighborhoods. Specifically, \$3.72M is being used for sidewalk improvements, replacing street trees, and converting street lighting to LED in the Mid-City TA. In the Oliver St TA, sidewalk enhancements, bike lanes, greenspace, and LED street lighting is underway at a cost of \$1.5M. Roadway improvements planned as part of the Oliver Street projects will implement green infrastructure techniques to prevent and filter runoff and flooding. The City of Lockport 2023 comprehensive plan encourages creative stormwater management and green infrastructure practices with new development; replacing fixtures with LED lighting; and using permeable pavement for parking areas, sidewalks, and hardscapes. The plan further recommends conducting a climate vulnerability assessment to identify local impacts of climate change and necessary infrastructure mitigation and adaptation measures. The NT DRI requires projects include green infrastructure components, achieve a higher level of energy efficiency and renewable energy use. NT is planning the installation of EV chargers in public parking lots.

2.COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a. Community Need

2.a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding - The Love Canal disaster resulted in the County experiencing accelerated economic and political difficulties. This coupled with the steadily declining population and expensive manufacturing costs led to the closure of the majority of factories and businesses, particularly in Niagara Falls. The City has struggled through decades of population loss, rising crime and repeated attempts to reinvent itself from a manufacturing town with some tourism to a major tourist destination. According to a 2021 NYS Comptroller report (the latest report to include NF), Niagara Falls received the highest designation of “significant stress” for both 2019 and 2020. Niagara Falls has nearly exhausted its resources to avoid a fiscal crisis.

From 1970 to 2021, total employment in the region’s manufacturing sector fell from 170,000 to 8,382, a decline of 95%. Most of the manufacturing facilities were concentrated in the cities and TAs. The manufacturing sector continues to decline according to the latest US Census County Business Patterns as seen in the table.

Niagara County’s Manufacturing Sector 2000-2021				
	2000	2021	Number Changes	Percent Change
All Employment Sectors Jobs	65,153	56,640	-8,513	-13.1%
Manufacturing Sector Jobs	17,133	8,382	-8,751	-51.1%
Number of Manufacturing Firms	305	257	-48	-15.7%

With the loss of employment opportunities, skilled workers left the County. The lost manufacturing jobs have been replaced with lower paying jobs in the retail and service sectors, resulting in a median income in Niagara Falls 43% less than NYS’ median income. The County has been deeply impacted by cuts in state and federal aid. According to the Niagara County Budget Office, the 2023 cost for Medicaid and state mandates was 84% of the County's tax levy, a cost that will increase as NYS withholds federal Medicaid funds from localities.

With a shrinking population, lower-income workers, and loss of industrial taxpayers, existing tax dollars are stretched to provide basic community services such as fire and police protection. The County, Cities, and Coalition partners do not have the financial resources to fund brownfields assessment and reuse planning. The County is acting on behalf of Coalition partners to effectively manage a brownfields program consistent with EPA goals and objectives.

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations -

2.a.ii. (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations - A majority of brownfield sites in Niagara County are concentrated in a few CTs in the 3 cities. As shown in the table below, all of the TAs are disadvantaged communities that are home to a disproportion number of sensitive populations including minorities, low income, people with less than a high school education, and disabled. These areas are burdened with the greatest social,

economic, and environmental challenges in the County. According to CEJST and EJ Screen, the CTs of the TAs have numbers often in the 90th percentile or above (bolded) across the board for Climate, Energy, Health, Housing, Toxicity and Workforce Development. CT 202 is identified as having historical underinvestment and is the most blighted area of the County with a population that is 82% minority, high poverty (98th), low income (98th); unemployment (95th), housing cost (95th) disabled (92nd), under 5 (91st), and 17% having less than a high school diploma. Critical service gaps exist for housing burdens (CTs 202, 204, 205, & 206), transportation access (CTs 202, 236, 237, 231, & 232), and food deserts (CTs 202 & 236). The lack of indoor plumbing for CT 230.01 and CT 231 is at the 97th and 98th percentiles respectively. Historically these underserved populations have been disparately impacted by industry, emissions, pollution, blight, and community disinvestment. The impacts of climate change are expected to exacerbate these conditions and further negatively impact sensitive populations.

	CTs Niagara Falls				CTs Lockport		CTs North Tonawanda		
CEJST:	202	204	205	206	236	237	230.01	231	232
Minority	82%	54%	46%	66%	16%	34%	12%	8%	13%
Low Income	98th	90th	94th	99th	74 th	95th	71 st	78 th	79 th
Energy Cost	98th	77 th	90th	94th	78 th	92nd	70 th	78 th	54 th
Asthma	99th	97th	98th	99th	95th	97th	88 th	91st	86 th
Diabetes	98th	87 th	95th	93rd	48 th	79 th	37 th	35 th	43 rd
Heart Disease	97th	81 st	98th	88 th	60 th	85 th	59 th	55 th	64 th
Lead Paint	65 th	99th	89 th	99th	94th	93rd	98th	99th	92nd
Proximity to Risk Mngt Plan facilities	99th	95th	94th	95th	95th	90th	92nd	91st	92nd
Proximity to Superfund sites	90th	95th	92nd	94th	96th	96th	62 nd	60 th	59 th
Poverty	98th	88 th	95th	97th	77 th	88 th	57 th	60 th	61 st
Unemployment	95th	64 th	89 th	78 th	67 th	52 nd	76 th	93rd	76 th
Less than High School	17%	15%	20%	15%	22%	17%	6%	17%	9%
EJ Screen:									
Disabilities	92nd	79 th	99th	91st	38 th	96th	85 th	84 th	83 rd
Toxic Releases to Air	92nd	96th	97th	97th	76 th	80 th	44 th	44 th	45 th
Low Life Expectancy	81 st	99th	99th	99th	96th	98th	88 th	95th	98th
Housing Burden	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Transportation Access	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

This EPA grant will quantify environmental conditions in the TAs by prioritizing assessment and cleanup of sites that will help reduce exposure to contaminants. The challenges faced by the sensitive populations will start to be addressed by returning brownfields back to productive uses that create jobs (improving poverty, increasing income, and reducing unemployment); develop higher quality affordable housing, and improve access to basic goods and services.

2.a.ii.(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions - As an old industrial area, the majority of housing in the TAs was built before the 1950s which puts residents at a much higher risk of exposure to hazardous airborne particulates from LBP and ACM. Per the table above, LBP is at the 99th percentile for 3 of the CTs and close to/ above the 90th percentile for all the other CTs. The 1 exception is CT 202 where in the last 12 years, 301 new affordable housing units were constructed to replace dilapidated public housing developments. High levels of lead exposure can damage the brain and kidneys and in pregnant women may cause a miscarriage. According to NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), kids are more sensitive to the health effects of lead than adults, and a blood lead level of 10 mcg/dL in kids is a concern. In 2021, 2.65% of children under the age of 18 in Niagara County tested as having a blood lead level over 10 mcg/dL; the rate in NYS was 1.33%. Some homes likely have soil vapor intrusion issues that are compromising the quality of indoor air. When petroleum hydrocarbons enter a building, inhalation exposure can result in chronic health effects like COPD and asthma. According to the NYSDOH, the adult rate for asthma in Niagara County in 2021 was 12.5% compared to 9.5% in NYS and 8% nationally (Center for Disease Control - CDC). Deteriorating conditions at buildings in the TAs puts sensitive populations at increased risk for health impacts. The new residential projects proposed in all of the TAs will help address lead poisoning and indoor air quality by creating new affordable housing options.

The close proximity to Risk Management Plan facilities (above 90th percentile for all CTs) and proximity to Superfund sites can be contributing to the higher incidence of disease as a result of regular exposure to contaminants. Benzene and butadiene, petroleum by-products, are common contaminants found at sites in the County. Studies have shown these contaminants can cause or aggravate a wide range of serious health problems

including cancer, birth defects and asthma.

According to NYSDOH, Niagara County has the second highest incidence of the Number of All Invasive Malignant Tumors per 100,000 persons in NYS and is above the state average in several types of cancer. Exposure to environmental carcinogens through direct contact, inhalation and indoor vapor intrusion of site contaminants may be contributing to the higher incidence of cancer in the County. The assessment and remediation of brownfield sites in the TAs will help decrease exposure to harmful contaminants and improve health of community members.

Incidence of Cancer (per 100,000) - (CDC) 2016-2020			
Type of cancer	Niagara County	NYS	National
Overall Occurrence	553	474.4	403.3
Bladder	33.2	21.4	17.0
Lung and Bronchus	72.8	55.4	47.1
Oral Cavity and Pharynx	13.5	11.3	11.3

2.a.ii.(3)(a).- Identification of Environmental Justice Issues - As discussed in *Section 1.a.ii.*, the CTs in all 4 TAs have been identified as disadvantaged communities and environmental justice areas. Due to lack of environmental regulations during the County's early heavy industrial history, most manufacturers disposed of hazardous wastes on-site in landfills or into local waterways. Liquid and sludge-like chemical wastes were dumped in open pits and residential neighborhoods were built over and around these pits, the most infamous neighborhood being Love Canal. As explained in *Section, 2.a.ii.*, the CTs of the TAs have numbers often in the 90th percentile or above across the board for Climate, Energy, Health, Housing, Toxicity and Workforce Development. Several criterion rank at the 98th and 99th percentiles which indicates the severity of the environmental justice facing the communities. Sensitive populations such as low-income residents, minorities, disabled, and those with less than a high school education are disproportionately impacted and find themselves in close proximity to brownfield sites but lack the financial means to find safe housing and better working conditions. According to Envirofacts, Niagara County has 4,099 EPA-regulated facilities, including 3 active *National Priority List (NPL)* sites, 29 active non-NPL sites, and 4 delisted NPL sites. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation lists 144 State Superfund sites and 61 voluntary cleanup sites in the County.

2.a.ii.(3)(b).- Advancing Environmental Justice - As previously described, extensive planning was done in the TAs with heavy community involvement conducted for the BOA and DRI plans which focused on the economic empowerment of low-income communities that have been negatively impacted for decades by brownfields. The downward spiral of poverty stops when investment is made to clean up and rehabilitate both vacant structures and land. For most of the sites, site characterization and RBM surveys have not been completed. This grant will fill the data gap by conducting environmental assessments and developing cleanup and reuse plans so sites can be redeveloped in accordance with the community's established vision, reversing the environmental justice and health issues impacting the TAs. Many residents in the TAs live in substandard housing exposing them to LBP and ACM. As evidenced in the tables above, the TAs are mostly above the 90th percentile for exposure to LBP compared to other communities in NYS. Grant funding will be used to conduct RBM surveys to help with rehabilitating older structures, eliminating exposure pathways. Many residents live in close proximity to industrial facilities, gas stations/auto repair facilities, and environmental hazards. As shown in the table above, all the TAs are in the 90th to 99th percentile for Proximity to Risk Management Plan Facilities and the TAs in Lockport and Niagara Falls are in the 90th to 96th percentile for Proximity to Superfund sites compared to other communities in NYS. Grant funding will be used to assess contamination and evaluate remediation options. By cleaning up and redeveloping brownfield sites, we can begin to rectify EJ issues for sensitive populations, improve public health, reduce blight, increase employment opportunities, and increase local tax revenue.

2.b. Community Engagement

2.b.i Project Involvement/2.b.ii. Project Roles – In addition to the Coalition members, NCDED identified the project partners below to ensure a holistic approach is taken to grant implementation impacting residents.

Organization	Contact Name & Info	Organization Purpose & Project Role
Niagara County Dept. of Economic Dev. (NCDED)	Amy Schifferli, Brownfields Program Mgr, 716-278-8754, amy.schifferli@niagaracounty.com	Purpose: Countywide experience in brownfields work Role: Grant lead for all phases of the project including compliance and reporting
Niagara University (NU)	Karen Kwandrans, Associate Vice President, 716-286-8559, kwandrans@niagara.edu	Purpose: Community engagement and revitalization of Niagara Falls Role: Coalition Member (Inform all phases of project)

Lockport Main Street (LMS)	Grace Platt, Program Manager, 716-434-0212, grace@lockportmainstreet.com	Purpose: Community engagement and revitalization of Lockport Role: Coalition Member (Inform all phases of project)
Oliver Street Merchants Assoc. (OSMA)	Lauren Schulte, President, 716-316-0157, oliverstreetpresident@gmail.com	Purpose: Connecting businesses and residents to revitalize Oliver Street in N. Tonawanda Role: Coalition Member (Inform all phases of project)
Niagara Falls Housing Authority	Angela Smith, Deputy Director, 716-285-6961, alslih@nfha.org	Purpose: Provide safe affordable housing for residents in Niagara Falls Role: Identify housing sites; address EJ issues
Niagara County Industrial Dev. Agency	Susan Langdon, Executive Director, 716-278-8764, susan.langdon@niagaracounty.com	Purpose: Enhance economic development opportunities in the County Role: Advise on industrial reuse; financial incentives for reuse
Greater Lockport Development Corporation	Heather Peck, President, 716-439-6688, hpeck@lockportdevelopment.org	Purpose: Local economic development organization Role: Assist with reuse planning for Lockport sites; market sites for cleanup and redevelopment.
Lumber City Development Corporation	Laura Wilson, Executive Director, 716-695-8580, lwilson@lumbercitydc.com	Purpose: Local economic development organization Role: Assist with reuse planning for North Tonawanda sites; market sites for cleanup and redevelopment
Niagara County Health Department (NCHD)	Daniel Stapleton, Director, 716-439-7435, dan.stapleton@niagaracounty.com	Purpose: Protect human health and the environment Role: Advise on health issues
Niagara County Employment & Training (NCET)	Donald Jablonski, Director, 716-278-8148, donald.jablonski@niagaracounty.com	Purpose: Workforce development Role: Train and connect residents with employment opportunities related to site reuse
Niagara Orleans Regional Land Imprv. Corp	Andrea Klyczek, President, 716-278-8761, andrea.klyczek@niagaracounty.com	Purpose: Address blighted residential, commercial, and industrial properties Role: Inform all phases of the project
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper	Jill Spisiak Jedlicka, Executive Director, 716-852-7483, jedlicka@bnwaterkeeper.org	Purpose: Protect and restore water quality Role: Advise on building resiliency into all projects to prepare for the impacts of climate change
The Clean Air Coalition of W.N.Y.	Chris Murawski, Executive Director, 716-852-3813, chris@cacwny.org	Purpose: Grassroots organization promoting incorporation of EJ into decision making Role: Advise on EJ and air quality issues
NF Underground Railroad Heritage Area Commission	Sara Capen, Executive Director, 716-778-4607, sara@discoverniagara.org	Purpose: Underground Railroad interpretation and actions toward an equitable society. Role: Assist with EJ issues and reuse for Amtrak Station TA

2.b.iii Incorporating Community Input – NCDED and Coalition members have a strong community engagement foundation which will be utilized for this grant. By building on current outreach efforts we can ensure those directly impacted by projects have an opportunity for meaningful input. Since each TA is in an underserved community, meeting the community “where they are” is essential for inclusion of sensitive populations who are traditionally left out of the decision-making process. Main St organizes community events and runs a farmers’ market where low income individuals and seniors receive vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables. Table space will be provided to NCDED at the farmers market and other community events to continually solicit input from residents during the grant period. University employs a robust community engagement strategy to actively identify and involve community members in activities to gather information and to hear the voices of residents in Niagara Falls. Niagara University recently opened an Academic Innovation Hub in CT205 as a center for community outreach that helps the poorest residents in the County with early childhood development, economic development, community collaborations, and health and wellness issues. Meetings will held at the center throughout the grant project to involve residents in the site selection and reuse alternatives decisions. OSM holds monthly community events that involve residents and local businesses where grant activities will be discussed. To promote the work proposed by the grant, NCDED will use a variety of electronic, hybrid and in-person, and print forms of communication. Coalition members and project partners will assist with distributing project-related information and surveys on their websites, social media pages, and newsletters. In-person meetings will be held in the neighborhoods where projects are proposed at ADA-compliant facilities. English is the primary language for the targeted areas but translation services will be provide if necessary. Additional community engagement strategies proven successful on past projects will also be used, including walking tours of each TA and design

charrettes for reuse planning. Niagara County hosts a monthly local cable access television show. Early in the grant process, a show will be produced on brownfields explaining how the public can be involved with grant activities. The show will air multiple times over a 30-day period. Additional brownfield tv shows will be produced during the grant period. Our community engagement process seeks to empower local leaders and youth to become champions for their communities for positive changes that go beyond the grant project period.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1 – Project Management and Cooperative Agreement (CA) Oversight
i. Project Implementation: NCDED will coordinate all aspects of the grant in accordance with the terms and conditions established in the CA with EPA. NCDED will complete all compliance reporting (quarterly and final reports, ACRES updates, annual MBE/WBE Utilization form, and financial reports). NCDED will procure and manage qualified environmental professionals (QEPs) per CFR. We anticipate 1 NCDED staff and 3 Coalition members will attend 2 regional/state and 2 national brownfields conferences. <i>Non-EPA resources: NCDED will give in-kind services of staff time for CA implementation activities above the personnel time charged to the grant.</i>
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities will be ongoing throughout the 4-year project period
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): NCDED with support from Coalition members
iv. Outputs: 16 Quarterly Reports; 1 Closeout Report; 4 MBE/WBE Reports; 4 Federal Financial Reports; ACRES updates; EPA Site Approval Forms; 4 brownfield conferences attended by 4 Coalition members; and monthly Coalition meetings.
Task 2 – Community Engagement
i. Project Implementation: As discussed in Section 2.b.iii, NCDED and Coalition members have a robust community engagement program to engage the communities in the TAs with a focus on input into the site selection and cleanup/reuse planning of Priority Sites. Outreach materials and surveys will be prepared for posting on NCDED and Coalition member websites and social media platforms. Updates will be made to NCDED’s website to include assessment program information. NCDED will create promotional materials to publicize meetings and events and ensure the TA residents, underserved communities as well as the broader community & stakeholders are fully engaged. <i>Non-EPA resources: NCDED and Coalition members will provide in-kind services of staff time for this task.</i>
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Updated website and fact sheets during 1st quarter (Q1). The Coalition will have monthly check-in meetings. Meetings with project partners will occur quarterly with the first meeting during Q2. Brownfields tv show will occur annually. Meetings and events with the public will take place throughout the 4-year project period. Site walks will be held in Q2.
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): NCDED will update the website and create project fact sheets. NCDED and Coalition members will facilitate stakeholder, project partner, and public meetings with assistance from a competitively procured consultant.
iv. Outputs: Updated website and fact sheets; monthly meetings among Coalition members; 12 project partner meetings; and ~12 public meetings, several events, and 4 site walks. List of all sites nominated/approved for funding and outcomes associated with grant-funded activities.
Task 3 – Phase I/II ESAs & RBM Surveys
i. Project Implementation: NCDED estimates that 30 sites will be assessed. The Coalition will use the established site prioritization worksheet discussed in <i>Section 1.a.iv.</i> to determine which sites are selected for assessment. NCDED will prepare the EPA Brownfields Site Approval Form for sites prioritized by the Coalition. A competitively procured QEP will conduct Phase I ESAs for ~30 sites in accordance with the AAI Final Rule, ASTM E1527-21, and the EPA Climate Smart Manual (CSM). Weather, climate related impacts, vulnerabilities, and infrastructure will be considered during the PI ESAs. Site-specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) will be prepared and approved by EPA prior to Phase II activities. The QEP will complete Phase II ESAs for ~18 sites and strategies for climate mitigation will be implemented including maximizing reuse of existing wells, using field test kits, using local laboratories, and incorporating remote sensing capabilities. RBM Surveys will be done for ~12 sites. Since many of the priority sites identified for this project are contiguous parcels, our plan is to include multiple properties in each Phase II ESA field event to reduce mobilization costs, maximize assessment activities, and reduce our carbon footprint.
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Year 1 - 10 Phase I ESAs, 6 Phase II ESAs, 6 RBM Surveys; Year 2 - 10 Phase I ESAs, 4 Phase II ESAs, 4 RBM Surveys; Year 3 - 10 Phase I ESAs, 6 Phase II ESAs, 2 RBM Surveys; Year 4 - 2 Phase II ESA
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): QEP will conduct Phase I/II ESAs and QAPPs. EPA will review all draft reports. Site access will be secured by NCDED.
iv. Outputs: 30 Phase I ESAs; 18 QAPPs and Phase II ESAs; 12 RBM Surveys
Task 4 – Cleanup & Reuse Planning
i. Project Implementation: Phase II ESA data will be used by a QEP to develop 8 ABCAs and 8 Reuse Plans. Cleanup/reuse planning will be conducted in accordance with the EPA Climate Smart Manual and will include a discussion on observed and forecasted climate change conditions and associated risks. The ABCA will consider ways to make the cleanup greener by incorporating best management practices and the 5 core elements of a greener cleanup (materials & waste, energy, air &

atmosphere, water, land & ecosystems) from the ASTM Standard Guide for Greener Cleanups. Proposed alternatives will be evaluated based on cost, feasibility, effectiveness in protecting human health and the environment, and climate resiliency. Site-specific reuse plans will be developed to provide a roadmap to returning priority sites back to productive reuse. Design charrettes will be used to help the community provide valuable feedback for reuse plans.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Year 1 - 1 ABCA, 1 Reuse Plan; Year 2 - 3 ABCAs, 2 Reuse Plans; Year 3 - 3 ABCAs, 3 Reuse Plans; Year 4 - 1 ABCA, 2 Reuse Plans

iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): QEP to conduct ABCAs and Reuse Plans. NCDED oversees QEP and reviews plans. Coalition members and public feedback on plans. EPA reviews and approves plans.

iv. Outputs: 8 ABCAs and 8 Reuse Plans.

3.b Cost Estimates – The table below provides a breakdown of estimated costs by task and are based on past experience with similar services. As demonstrated under Tasks 3 and 4, 96% of grant funds (\$1,442,305) are allocated for Phase I/II ESAs, RBM Surveys, and Cleanup & Reuse Planning.

Task 1 – Project Management and Cooperative Agreement (CA) Oversight = \$31,260
Personnel Costs - \$8,800 – NCDED Project Manager (PM) at \$55/hr for 160 hrs for quarterly reporting & grant management
Fringe Costs - \$2,640 (FICA, retirement, workers comp) calculated at 30% of personnel rate
Travel - \$19,820 – NCDED PM and 3 Coalition members with travel, lodging and per diem for:
• 2025 National Brownfield Conference (Location TBD):\$7,600 (\$1,900 pp for x 4)
• 2027 National Brownfield Conference (Location TBD):\$7,600 (\$1,900 pp x 4)
• 2 Regional/State Brownfield Conferences (Locations TBD): \$4,620 (\$1,155 pp x 4)
Task 2 – Community Engagement \$26,435
Personnel Costs - \$4,950 – PM at \$55/hr for 90 hrs. Estimate for meetings and outreach
Fringe Costs - \$1,485 (FICA, retirement, workers comp) calculated at 30% of personnel rate
Contractual Costs \$20,000 for QEP to assist with community engagement activities
Task 3 – Phase I/II ESAs & RBM Surveys - \$987,870
Personnel Costs: \$9,900 - PM at \$55/hr for 180 hrs for completion of EPA Site Eligibility Forms and Oversight of QEPs
Fringe Costs: \$2,970 (FICA, retirement, workers comp) calculated at 30% of personnel rate
Contractual: \$975,000 Phase I ESAs - \$135,000 (\$4,500/site x 30 sites); Phase II ESAs -\$720,000 (\$40,000/site x 18 sites); RBM Surveys - \$120,000 (\$10,000/site x 12 sites)
Task 4 – Cleanup & Reuse Planning - \$454,435
Personnel Costs: \$4,950 - PM at \$55/hr for 90 hrs for report review and oversight of QEPs
Fringe Costs: \$1,485 (FICA, retirement, workers comp) calculated at 30% of personnel rate
Contractual: \$448,000 ABCAs \$104,000 (8 sites x \$13,000/site); Reuse Plans \$344,000 (\$43,000/site x 8 sites)

Budget Categories	Project Tasks (\$)				Total
	Task 1 - PM and CA Oversight	Task 2 - Community Engagement	Task 3 – PI/II ESAs & RBM Surveys	Task 4 – Cleanup & Reuse Planning	
Personnel	\$8,800	\$4,950	\$9,900	\$4,950	\$28,600
Fringe Benefits	\$2,640	\$1,485	\$2,970	\$1,485	\$8,580
Travel	\$19,820	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$19,820
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$0	\$20,000.00	\$ 975,000.00	\$448,000.00	\$1,443,000
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs	\$31,260	\$26,435	\$ 987,870	\$454,435	\$ 1,500,000
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Budget	\$31,260	\$26,435	\$ 987,870	\$454,435	\$ 1,500,000

3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results -

NCDED will track, measure, and report on the success of the project by utilizing ACRES for the following *outputs*: number of Phase I/II ESAs, RBM surveys, ABCAs, and reuse plans completed. The actual outputs will be compared to the proposed outputs identify in *Section 3.a*. NCDED will track and report on the following *outcomes* in ACRES: acres assessed; acres used for greenspace; acres remediated and redeveloped; number of

jobs retained/created; redevelopment funding; tax revenue generated; and leveraged funding. NCDED will report in ACRES the climate adaption and mitigation strategies employed. As an experienced grantee, NCDED knows the importance of ACRES data so updates to ACRES property profiles will occur beyond the life of this grant to capture long term outcomes. Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and Microsoft Project are also used daily to create schedules and track project tasks and milestones. The use of these software programs allows for interim deadlines and easy identification of progress issues. NCDED followed this approach with previous EPA assessment grants to confirm that the project was progressing as planned and key milestones were met. NCDED, with assistance from Coalition members, will also evaluate the extent to which assessment, cleanup and redevelopment are improving public health and the environment. Quarterly status calls are held with EPA and if goals aren't being met or the project is off-schedule, corrective actions will be discussed with Coalition members/EPA and the project approach and schedule will be adjusted.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a. Programmatic Capability

4.a.i. Organizational Capacity/ii. Organizational Structure/iii. Description of Key Staff - Niagara County has been an EPA brownfield grant recipient since 1998 and has received several brownfield assessment and BCRLF grants, which are administered by the NCDED. Niagara County has successfully met the administrative, technical, and financial requirements of every EPA grant and will utilize the same group of professionals to implement this assessment project. As the Coalition led, NCDED will be responsible for overseeing consultants and QEPs, stakeholder engagement, coordination with Coalition members, coordinating site prioritization, preparing EPA site approval forms, and arranging site access.

Upon notice of grant award, the Niagara County Attorney's Office (NC Attorney) will draft a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Coalition. The MOA will include a description and role of each coalition member and stipulate that grant funds will be used for assessment at a minimum of two priority sites within the TA of each Coalition member. Monthly meetings among the Coalition members will ensure that everyone is meaningfully involved in all aspects of the project and that goals and objectives of the grant are being met in a timely manner.

The Project Manager, Amy Fisk Schifferli, Brownfield Program Manager with NCDED, is a Certified Planner with a Master's Degree in Urban Planning and Bachelor's Degree in Geology. Ms. Schifferli has managed the County's brownfield program for over 20 years. She also serves as the President of the Niagara County Brownfield Development Corporation. Mrs. Schifferli will track all projects and coordinate all grant tasks. Michael Casale, NCDED Commissioner, has 30 years experience in economic development and provides oversight of the brownfields program. NCDED also has an administrative assistant, account clerk, planner/GIS specialist, and a marketing specialist that can be utilized for grant tasks. The Niagara County Treasurer's Office and Audit Department provide financial tracking of grant funds. The NC Attorney provides legal oversight of the grant. NCDED consults with the NCHD on health impacts. As a County Department, NCDED has the ability to draw on a wide range of expertise from other County personnel. Coalition members will assist NCDED in implementing grant tasks. Grace Platt is a Program Manager with LMS and has experience with community engagement. Karen Kwandrans is Associate Vice President at NU and oversees community engagement, student involvement and planning and economic development for the college. Lauren Schultz is President of OSMA and has experience organizing residents and business owners.

4.a.iii. Acquiring Additional Resources - All grant administrative and programmatic terms and conditions will be satisfied by NCDED staff. Niagara County uses a competitive bidding process consistent with EPA procurement to hire QEP contractors for environmental site assessments, RBM surveys, ABCAs, reuse plans, and community engagement tasks. QEPs are selected based on qualifications, scope of work and project cost. The NC Attorney provides legal assistance for obtaining site access agreements and contracting with QEPs.

Niagara County's local labor policy requires developers to use employees permanently residing within the local labor area in order to qualify for financial incentives. NCET oversees the local Workforce Development Board and has 15 training providers on staff to help meet the educational and skill needs of the local workforce and the employment needs of local businesses. Staff actively participates in work groups and social justice committees to improve the economic opportunities for local residents, particularly low income, minority populations, and less educated individuals. Specialized training is provided for individuals with disabilities, which is one of the sensitive populations this grant is targeting.

4.b.Past Performance and Accomplishments

4.b.i. Currently Has an EPA Brownfields Grant

4.b.i.(1) Accomplishments - NCDED has received several EPA assessment and BCRLF grants since 1998. The three most recent and open grants are in the table below.

Grant Type	Time Frame	Funding	Spent	Obligated/Pending	Uncommitted
FY22 BCRLF #4B96270623	10/1/22-9/30/27	\$3.9M	\$798,223	\$3.1M	\$0.00
FY21 Assessment BF96246900	10/1/21-9/30/24	\$300K	\$213,848	\$86,152	\$0.00
FY16 BCRLF #BF-96270616	10/1/16-9/30/24	\$2.325 M	\$2,073,692	\$251,308	\$0.00

A summary of project accomplishments is included below and all outputs and outcomes are accurate in ACRES. For FY22 BCRLF, cleanup is ongoing at 2 sites, with planned reuse as a waterfront park and a housing development. Cleanup loan applications totaling over \$8 million are pending at sites proposed for reuse as apartments; international truck stop; and commercial greenhouses with investments planned of over \$100 million. For the FY21 assessment grant, 19 PI ESAs and 12 PII ESAs have been conducted, an updated brownfields inventory in GIS was created, drone footage and site videos were captured for 22 brownfields, and marketing sheets were developed for 6 sites. A majority of the sites in Niagara Falls need further assessment but proposed reuse includes affordable housing and a community garden. Two sites (8 tax parcels) in North Tonawanda were sold and are being developed for commercial uses. For the FY16 BCRLF grant, five sites have been remediated with \$29 million leveraged for redevelopment. Site reuses include a green, net zero professional office building; 110 waterfront housing units; 2 mixed use buildings - an event space and apartments, and a brewery and apartments; and a public park. Cleanup is ongoing at 1 site that will be reused by a non-profit for workforce development training.

Past EPA grants have resulted in significant investment in Niagara County, including 43 sites ready for reuse representing 695 acres and leveraging \$4.7 million in cleanup funding, 42 cleanup jobs, \$56.9 million in redevelopment funding and the creation of 42 permanent jobs. One specific example is an EPA-funded Phase I ESA in North Tonawanda that resulted in a \$30 million private investment for remediation and rehabilitation of a vacant manufacturing facility into a mixed-use development. All these outputs and outcomes have been reported in ACRES.

4.b.i.(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements – As an EPA grant recipient for 25 years, NCDED is familiar with EPA rules and procedures and has an established history of EPA grant implementation. NCDED has experience managing coalitions from serving as the lead agency for the EPA-designated Niagara Region Brownfields Showcase Community. This project will utilize the existing grant infrastructure that conforms to EPA policies.

As shown in the table in *Section 4.b.i.(1)*, FY21 assessment and FY16 BCRLF money has been committed to existing assessment/cleanup projects and work will be completed prior to the grant expiration dates. Current loan requests (EPA eligibility approved) from the FY22 BCRLF total \$8.5M which exceeds available funding. NCDED is currently evaluating the applications to determine which projects will have the biggest environmental, economic, and environmental justice impact on Niagara County.

As evidenced by the successful implementation of existing brownfields grants, Niagara County has the capacity to ensure timely and successful completion of this grant. The County is in compliance with all grant requirements, including submission of quarterly reports, financial status reports, and ongoing updates in ACRES. Niagara County continues to meet established grant milestones and is on track to achieve the expected results for the above grants within the identified grant timeframes. In the unlikely event that expected results are not being achieved, NCDED will work with EPA to identify corrective measures that can be taken to correct the situation.

FY2023 Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants Niagara County - Department of Economic Development

1. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

(a) Applicant Type: Local Government

(b) Eligibility: The Niagara County Department of Economic Development (doing business as **Niagara County [NCDED]**) is a County governmental agency established by the authority of New York State (NYS).

(c) Eligibility documentation for the NCDED is provided in Attachment B

2. NUMBER OF NON-LEAD COALITION MEMBERS AND TARGET AREAS:

The Niagara County Department of Economic Development (NCDED) formed a Coalition with three (3) community-based non-profit organizations (CBOs) that represent the three municipalities in Niagara County. Niagara University (NU - University), Lockport Main Street Inc. (LMS – Main St), and Oliver Street Merchants Association Inc. (OSMA - Oliver), located in Niagara Falls (NF), Lockport (Lkpt) and North Tonawanda (NT), respectively. They were identified as key partners for the EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant because of ongoing partnerships with the NCDED and the collective goal of improving the quality of life in the most underserved communities in Niagara County

Each Coalition member represents a different municipality in Niagara County where brownfield revitalization efforts will be focused. The target areas are described below:

NCDED TA – Highland Area (CT 202) (pop. 2,608): Located in the northwest portion of the Falls, the area is a mix of residential, heavy industrial, and vacant land. More than half the acreage is brownfields and the census tract suffers from historic underinvestment per CEJST.

University TA – Mid-Town (CTs 204, 205 & 206) (pop 5,116): Located in the Falls, the area has a compact framework of dense residential neighborhoods alongside former industrial and commercial uses putting residents in close proximity to brownfield sites. There is a high number of vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and substandard housing.

Main St TA – Industrial Core (CT 236 & 237) (pop 5,922): The business and industrial center of Lockport, this area has a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial properties in various states of disrepair.

Oliver TA – Oliver Street Corridor (CT 230.1, 231, & 232) (pop 7,501): Over the past 4 decades, Oliver Street in North Tonawanda has declined from a thriving business and economic hub into an underutilized and blighted 2 mile corridor with a mix of vacant commercial, residential, and industrial properties.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF NON-LEAD COALITION MEMBERS:

Niagara University, Lockport Main Street Inc. and Oliver Street Merchants Association are non-profit, community-based organizations with tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Documentation of their 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is provided as Attachment C.

4. EXISTING BROWNFIELDS GRANTS TO NON-LEAD MEMBERS:

Neither Niagara University, Lockport Main Street Inc. nor Oliver Street Merchants Association have ever been awarded an EPA Brownfield Grant. Therefore, none of these organizations is a recipient of an open Cooperative Agreement (CA) for Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, or Cleanup (MARC) Grant funding, nor a recipient of a MARC Grant that closed in 2015 or later.

5. COALITION AGREEMENT:

Letters of commitment confirming the membership of Niagara University, Lockport Main Street Inc. nor Oliver Street Merchants Association are provided as Attachment D. Following grant award, the NCDED will create a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the FY24 Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant project in accordance with the terms and conditions issued by EPA for this Grant.

6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: – NCDED and the Coalition members have a strong community engagement foundation that will be utilized for this grant. By building on current outreach efforts of the coalition members (each of whom has a community engagement focus) and project partners it will ensure that those directly impacted by projects have an opportunity for meaningful input. Since each TA is in an underserved community, meeting the community “where they are” is essential for inclusion of sensitive populations who are traditionally left out of the decision-making process. LMS organizes community events and runs a farmers’ market where low income individuals and seniors receive vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables. Table space will be provided to NCDED at the farmers market and other community events to continually solicit input from residents during the grant period. NU employs a robust community engagement strategy to actively identify and involve community members in activities to gather information and to hear the voices of residents in Niagara Falls. NU recently opened an Academic Innovation Hub in CT205 as a center for community outreach that helps the poorest residents in the County with early childhood development, economic development, community collaborations, and health and wellness issues. Meetings will held at the center throughout the grant project to involve residents. OSM holds monthly community events that involve residents and local businesses where grant activities will be discussed. To promote the work proposed by the grant, NCDED will use a variety of electronic, hybrid and in-person, and print forms of communication. Coalition members and project partners will assist with distributing project-related information and surveys on their websites, social media pages, and newsletters. In-person meetings will be held in the neighborhoods where projects are proposed at ADA-compliant facilities. English is the primary language for the targeted areas but translation services will be provide if necessary. Additional community engagement strategies proven successful on past projects will also be used, including walking tours of each TA and design charrettes for reuse planning. Niagara County hosts a monthly local cable access television show. Early in the grant process, a show will be produced on brownfields explaining how the public can be involved with grant activities. The show will air multiple times over a 30-day period. Additional brownfield tv shows will be produced during the grant period. Our community engagement process seeks to empower local leaders and youth to become champions for their communities for positive changes that go beyond the grant project period.

7. EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS:

See Attachment E, an ASAP report for Niagara County showing a drawdown of more than 70 % of the existing assessment grant.

8. CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS:

Contractors are not procured at this time. After a grant award we will competitively secure a Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEP) according to Niagara County Procurement Policy. All RFP’s are publicly advertised and M/WBE firms are encouraged to apply.