



EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessments—The Basics

What is EPA's Brownfields Program?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. EPA provides technical and financial assistance for brownfields activities through an approach based on four main goals: protecting human health and the environment, sustaining reuse, promoting partnerships, and strengthening the marketplace. Brownfields grants serve as the foundation of the Brownfields Program and support revitalization efforts by funding environmental assessment, cleanup, and job training activities. Thousands of properties have been assessed and cleaned up through the Brownfields Program, clearing the way for their reuse.

What is a Targeted Brownfields Assessment?

EPA's Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) program is designed to help minimize the uncertainties of contamination often associated with brownfields – especially for those entities without EPA Brownfields Assessment grants. The TBA program is not a grant program, but a service provided through an EPA contract in which EPA directs a contractor to conduct environmental assessment activities to address the requestor's needs. Unlike grants, EPA does not provide funding directly to the entity requesting the services.

Under the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act, EPA's TBA assistance is available through two sources: directly from EPA through EPA Regional Brownfields offices, and from state or tribal voluntary response programs using funds provided by EPA (Section 128(a) funding). A TBA may encompass one or more of the following activities:

- An "all appropriate inquiry" assessment (Phase I), including a historical investigation and a preliminary site inspection;
- A more in-depth environmental site assessment (Phase II), including sampling activities to identify the types and concentrations of contaminants and the areas to be cleaned; and
- Evaluation of cleanup options and/or cost estimates based on future uses and redevelopment plans.

A BROWNFIELD is defined as: real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The 2002 Brownfields Law further defines the term to include a site that is: "contaminated by a controlled substance; contaminated by petroleum or a petroleum product excluded from the definition of 'hazardous substance'; or mine-scarred land."

Who is Eligible to Apply for a Targeted Brownfields Assessment?

Eligible entities include: state, local, and tribal governments; general purpose units of local government, land clearance authorities, or other quasi-governmental entities; regional council or redevelopment agencies; states or legislatures; or nonprofit organizations.

TBA funding may only be used at properties eligible for EPA Brownfields funding. EPA generally will not fund TBAs at properties where the owner is responsible for the contamination unless there is a clear means of recouping EPA expenditures. Further, the TBA program does not provide resources to conduct cleanup or building demolition activities. Cleanup assistance is available under EPA's Cleanup or Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grants. **Information on EPA's Brownfields Cleanup and RLF grants can be found on the EPA Brownfields Web site at: www.epa.gov/brownfields/**



The Georgia Sea Turtle Center - Jekyll Island, GA

What Properties are Typically Targeted for TBA Funding?

The TBA selection process varies with each EPA Region and by each state and tribal voluntary response program. When administered directly by EPA Regional offices, the Regions have discretion in selecting areas to target for environmental site assessment assistance and typically prefer to target properties that are abandoned or publicly owned; have low to moderate contamination; include environmental justice issues; suffer from the stigma of liability; or have a prospective purchaser willing to buy and pay for the cleanup of the property, if needed. The selection process is guided by Regional criteria. See the sidebar for examples of Regional TBA criteria.

Examples of EPA Regional TBA Criteria:

- Property control and ownership transfer is not an impediment—preference will be given to sites which are publicly owned, either directly by a municipality or through a quasi-public entity such as a community development corporation. If a property is privately owned, there generally must be a clear means of recouping EPA expenditures, if the party is responsible for the contamination.
- There is a strong municipal commitment—financially or through other resources—and clear municipal vision and support.
- There is a clear public benefit and need for property revitalization.
- There are adequate leveraged funds available for cleanup and redevelopment, and/or the property has strong development potential (perhaps demonstrated by past or present developer interest).
- EPA assessment assistance is crucial to the property's redevelopment; lack of an assessment has proven to be an obstacle.
- Existing information supports redevelopment—the property will likely have low to moderate contamination levels, and redevelopment will provide tangible benefits for the community.
- The project area has a clear need for revitalization evidenced by significant deterioration and/or significant environmental justice issues.
- A direct health/environmental threat will be mitigated or property revitalization will serve to spur further beneficial activity in the surrounding area.

** Although these examples embody many common elements, each Region has refined its own set of criteria which may differ slightly than those illustrated in the sidebar.*

When administered by state and tribal voluntary response programs the selection criteria and amount of assistance available for TBA properties varies with each state and tribe.

Examples of TBA Successes

Sacramento, CA - EPA provided \$24,000 in contractor-led TBA assistance to the Capitol Area Development Authority (CADA) to assess a former residential property that for over 30 years served as a central gathering point for local residents as a community garden. The assessment revealed the soil was contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), lead, and pesticides. By August 2006, CADA removed and disposed of 1,700 cubic yards of contaminated soil and replaced it with clean soil suitable for gardening using EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant funding and approximately \$423,000 in leveraged cleanup and redevelopment funding. A grand opening celebration for the Fremont Community Garden was held in June 2007. The garden includes 50 garden plots (including four Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible plots), compost bins, two orchards, public art, and bocce ball courts.



Jekyll Island, GA - Using \$80,000 in contractor-led TBA funding along with \$200,000 in Section 128(a) funding to address lead and asbestos impacts, the historic power plant located on Jekyll Island, Georgia has been renovated to house the Georgia Sea Turtle Center. EPA selected the project for site-specific funding because it presented a combination of goals (historic preservation, environmental education, and assistance to endangered species). The Sea Turtle Center opened on World Turtle Day, June 16, 2007, with a renovated building and structures to house educational exhibits and state-of-the-art surgical, rehabilitation, and research areas.

How Can I Apply for TBA Assistance?

If you are interested in receiving TBA assistance, please contact the EPA Brownfields staff in your Region. You can find current contact information on the EPA's Brownfields Web site at: www.epa.gov/brownfields.