

EPA Programs Supporting Vibrant and Sustainable Rural Communities



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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Sustainable Communities

ARDI Grant Writing and Technical Assistance Workshop

October 27, 2011



Farm in Washington State



Port Washington, Wisconsin



Edwards, Colorado

EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities: Working in Rural America



- **EPA's mission: Protect human health and the environment**
- Where and how we build our communities impacts those things
- Provide technical assistance to communities and states
- Rural guidebooks
 - *Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities*
 - *Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Development and Zoning Codes* (upcoming)
- Smart Growth Achievement Awards
- Work with NGOs (NADO, NACo, etc.) and other rural stakeholders
- Partnering with HUD, DOT, USDA, ARC



Partnership for Sustainable Communities

- Began in June 2009: EPA, HUD, DOT
- Also partnering with USDA to think through how the **Partnership's activities can best** serve rural America
- Upcoming report includes:
 - How the Livability Principles Support Rural Communities
 - HUD, DOT, EPA, and USDA Programs At Work in Rural Communities
 - Case Studies of Federal Support for Sustainable Rural Communities
 - Rural Performance Measures
 - Next Steps for the Partnership



Challenges Facing Rural Communities



- Changing economies
 - Decline of traditional economic base, questions about what's next
- Fewer farms and farmers
 - Although there is a growing interest in farming
- Loss of forest and other natural and working land
- Some communities are growing, some are shrinking
 - Rapid growth at metro edges
 - Shrinking population in some communities
- Limited access to jobs, services, and transportation
- Limited planning capacity



Smart Growth: A Response to Rural Challenges



Skaneateles, New York



Waitsfield, Vermont

- Development that provides:
 - Choices for where to live and how to get around
 - A stronger, more resilient economy
 - A safer, healthier place to live
 - Opportunities to protect the things that you love about the place you live (farmland and open space, natural beauty, sense of community, etc.)

So what does smart growth mean for a rural community?



When you've seen one rural community...
you've seen one rural community.

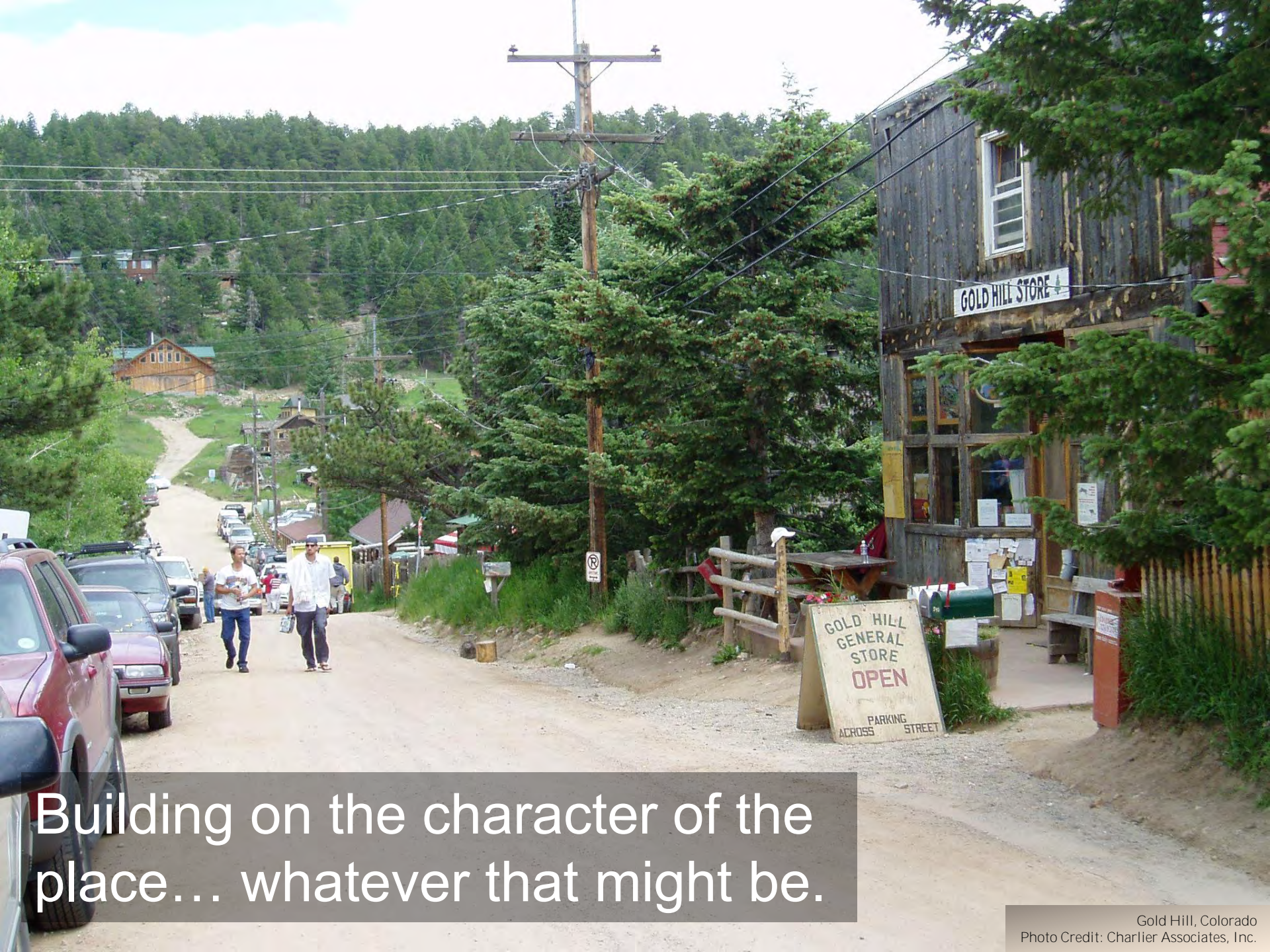




Smart growth means choices for where to live...



...and how to get around.



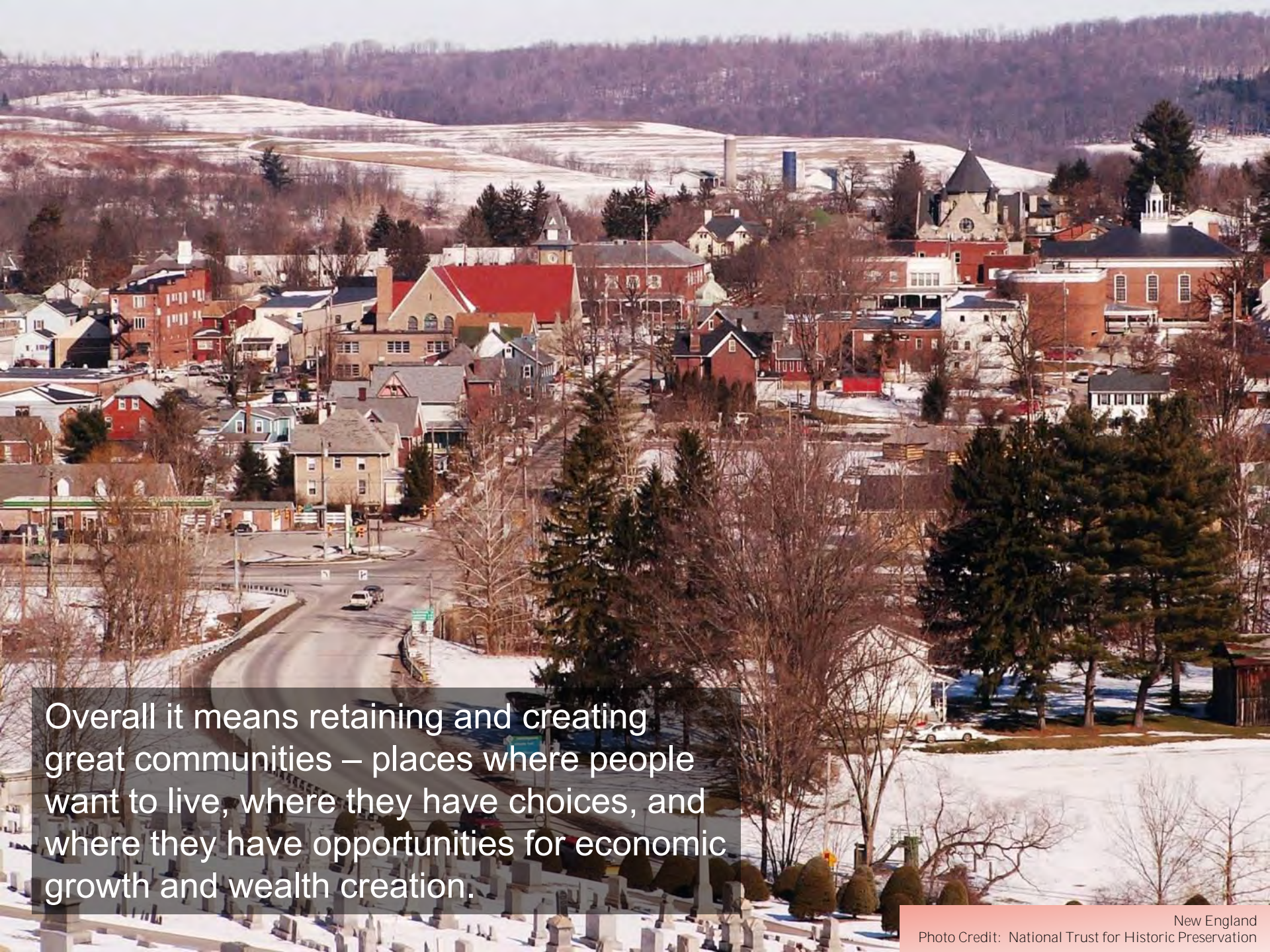
Building on the character of the place... whatever that might be.



And preserving what's
great about the community.



Smart growth also means developing a strong economy through economic development strategies that take advantage of a community's best assets.

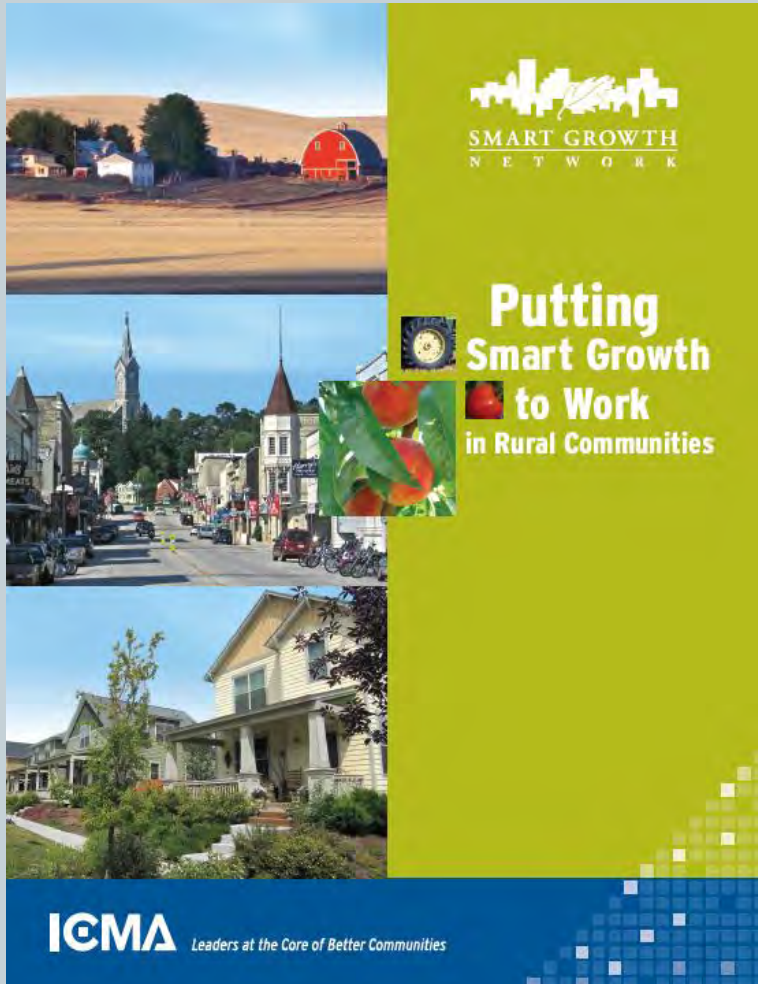


Overall it means retaining and creating great communities – places where people want to live, where they have choices, and where they have opportunities for economic growth and wealth creation.



Smart growth looks different depending on where you are, but in every case it means building on a community's strengths.

Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities



- Partnership between the U.S. EPA and ICMA – a Smart Growth Network publication
- Lays out a framework for rural communities and small towns seeking to implement smart growth
- Set of tools, case studies, and resources

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities



- Quick, targeted smart growth assistance to communities (1-day workshops) using a variety of tools that have demonstrated results and widespread application
- Provides access to technical experts who can assist with public engagement, direct consultation with decision makers, and a memo outlining next steps
- Example: Spencer, North Carolina

More Building Blocks...



- Some of the technical assistance is being provided through grants with the following organizations:

- Cascade Land Conservancy
- Global Green USA
- Project for Public Spaces
- Smart Growth America



- These organizations will offer direct technical assistance to 40-70 communities per year – apply directly to the organization
- For more information:
 - Contact Kevin Nelson: nelson.kevin@epa.gov, 202-566-2835
 - Building Blocks Website:
<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/buildingblocks.htm>



Smart Growth America

Making Neighborhoods Great Together

ISSUES | POLICY WORK
FOR DEVELOPERS |
COALITION MEMBERS |

Free technical assistance from Smart Growth America

Through a grant from the U.S. EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities' Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, Smart Growth America is pleased to offer free technical assistance to help communities implement smart growth strategies to build stronger economies while protecting human health and the environment. Any unit or subdivision of local, tribal or regional government is eligible to apply.

The deadline for Smart Growth America Technical Assistance applications is **October 26, 2011 at 5:00 PM EDT**.

Communities interested in applying for this assistance may choose from twelve tools outlined below. If selected, communities will receive a one- or two-day workshops on the tool of their choice. The twelve technical assistance tools are (click on the tool for a more detailed description):

- [Implementing smart growth 101](#)
- [Planning for economic and fiscal health](#)
- [Regional planning for small communities](#)
- [Sustainable land use code audit](#)
- [Smart growth zoning codes for small cities](#)
- [Complete streets](#)
- [Walkability workshop/audit](#)
- [Transportation performance measurement](#)
- [Parking audit](#)
- [Implementing transit-oriented development 101](#)
- [Cool planning: local strategies to slow climate change](#)
- [Using LEED-ND to accelerate the development of sustainable communities](#)

Smart Growth America is holding a webinar to discuss the technical assistance program and the application on October 12, 2011 at 2:00 PM EDT. Interested parties can [click here](#) to register.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



This technical assistance program is funded under a grant from U.S. EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities' Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program.

HOW TO APPLY

[Click here to learn about the selection criteria and application process.](#)

Other EPA Grants: Brownfields Program

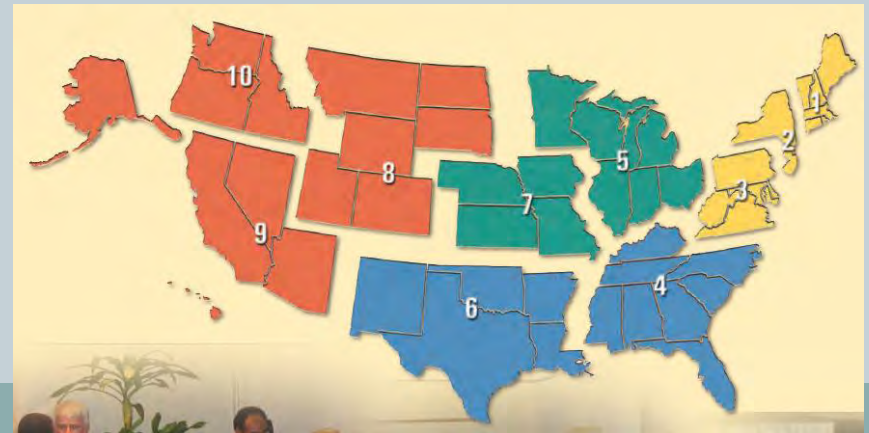


- Brownfields are properties whose expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.
 - Includes mine-scarred land
- **EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization** has many programs to help prevent, inventory, assess, clean up, and reuse brownfields properties.

Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities



- Third-party providers offer free technical assistance to communities with grant applications and brownfields issues
- Provide assistance with:
 - Preparing grant applications
 - Reviewing and explaining brownfields-related technical reports
 - Providing information about basic science, environmental policy, and other technical matters related to brownfields
 - Facilitating brownfields redevelopment efforts by supporting stakeholder involvement activities
- Find your technical assistance provider on the brownfields website



Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup Grants



- Application period is open now, closes Nov 28
- Assessment grants provide funding for brownfields inventories, planning, environmental assessments, and community outreach
 - Eligible applicants include state, local, and tribal governments and regional councils
 - Community-wide or site-specific
 - No required cost share
- Revolving Loan Fund grants provide funding for a grant recipient to capitalize a revolving loan fund from which they can provide subgrants and loans to carry out assessment and/or cleanup activities at brownfield sites
 - Eligible applicants include state, local, and tribal governments and regional councils
 - Require 20% cost share in the form of money, labor, material, or services

Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup Grants...continued



- Cleanup grants provide direct funding for cleanup activities at specific sites owned by the applicant
 - Eligible applicants include state, local, and tribal governments, regional councils, and nonprofit organizations
 - Require 20% cost share in the form of money, labor, material, or services
- Proposal guidelines:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/applicat.htm>

More Brownfields Programs...



- Multipurpose Grants (opens Oct/Nov 2011)
 - Funding to conduct assessment and cleanup activities at a specific site
- Environmental Workforce Job Training Grants (opens Nov/Dec 2011)
 - Grants to nonprofit organizations to recruit, train, and employ unemployed and under-employed residents from solid and hazardous waste-impacted communities (opens Nov/Dec 2011)
- Area-Wide Planning Grants (opens Feb 2012)
 - Planning assistance to communities, many in underserved and economically disadvantaged areas, to develop area-wide plans for the reuse of brownfields properties

For more information on brownfields



- EPA Office of Brownfields Website:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>
- EPA R3 Brownfields Website:
<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/bf-1r/index.htm>
- National Headquarters Brownfields Contact:
Stacy Swartwood, swartwood.stacy@epa.gov,
202 566-1391

Considerations for Applications



- Can you demonstrate a commitment to implementing sustainable communities approaches to development in your region/community?
- Can you demonstrate policymaker and public support for the project?
- Can you illustrate how this work will be applicable to other rural communities/small towns?
- Several programs have specific rural/small town categories – make use of these!

For More Information

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth
www.sustainablecommunities.gov
mcconville.megan@epa.gov