



Kennebec Valley Council of Governments - Narrative Information Sheet

1. Applicant Identification: Kennebec Valley Council of Governments,
17 Main Street Fairfield, Maine 04937, Somerset County

2. Funding Requested:
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
 - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000

3. Location: Kennebec Valley Council of Governments’ service area spans Somerset County, Kennebec County, and western Waldo County in the state of Maine. The area consists of 62 municipalities, several unorganized territories, 5,251 square miles, and approximately 181,000 people.

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information:
 - Target Area #1: Downtown Skowhegan, Maine (Census Tract 23025966601)
 - Priority Site #1 – The Water Street Commercial District and “J. Pamer Merrill Block” Upper Levels, 43 Water Street, Skowhegan, Maine 04976
 - Target Area #2: Downtown Bingham, Maine (Census Tract 23025966200)
 - Priority Site #2: Maine Plywood, 17 Lander Avenue, Bingham, Maine 04920
 - Target Area #3: Head of Falls Village/Riverfront, Waterville Maine (Census Tract 23011024102)
 - Priority Site #3: Front and Temple Street Block End, Waterville, Maine 04901

5. Contacts
 - a. Project Director: Jessie Cyr, Community and Economic Development Specialist
 - jcyr@kvcog.org
 - (207) 453-4258 ext. 220
 - 17 Main Street, Fairfield, Maine 04937
 - b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official: Matthew Underwood, Executive Director
 - munderwood@kvcog.org
 - (207) 453-4258 ext. 213
 - 17 Main Street, Fairfield, Maine 04937

6. Population: KVCOG’s region includes approximately 181,000 people, over 62 municipalities.
 - a. Skowhegan, Maine: Population 8,661
 - b. Bingham, Maine: Population 866
 - c. Waterville, Maine: Population 15,828

7. Other Factors:

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1, 4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	N/A

The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	1, 2, 3
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1
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.	3
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/areawide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	N/A
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	N/A

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: Attached.
9. Releasing Copies of Applications: Not applicable – this application does not contain confidential, privileged, or sensitive information.



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



MELANIE LOYZIM
COMMISSIONER

November 3, 2023

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments
Attn: Jessie Cyr
17 Main Street
Fairfield, ME 04927

Dear Jessie Cyr:

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Department) acknowledges that the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments plans to conduct assessments of brownfields sites and is applying for an FY24 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grant.

Jessie Cyr of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments has developed an application requesting federal Brownfields Site Assessment Grant funding to assess brownfields sites in their service area.

If the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments receives funding, the Department will assign project management staff to conduct eligibility determinations and provide review and comment on all assessments, workplans, quality assurance plans, and health and safety plans. For sites where cleanup is pursued, the Department’s Voluntary Response Action Program (VRAP) staff will provide review and comment on investigation reports and remedial workplans, and will provide oversight, as necessary, of their contractor’s work at the properties. Upon successful completion of remedial activities at a property, the VRAP will provide protections from Department enforcement actions by issuing a Commissioner’s Certificate of Completion.

Please feel free to call me directly at (207) 215-8597 should you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Christopher Redmond
Department Brownfields Coordinator
Voluntary Response Action Program Manager
Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management, Division of Remediation
Maine Department of Environmental Protection

cc: Katy Deng, EPA Brownfields Region 1

AUGUSTA
17 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0017
(207) 287-7688 FAX: (207) 287-7826

BANGOR
106 HOGAN ROAD, SUITE 6
BANGOR, MAINE 04401
(207) 941-4570 FAX: (207) 941-4584

PORTLAND
312 CANCO ROAD
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103
(207) 822-6300 FAX: (207) 822-6303

PRESQUE ISLE
1235 CENTRAL DRIVE, SKYWAY PARK
PRESQUE ISLE, MAINE 04769
(207) 764-0477 FAX: (207) 760-3143

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1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

1.a.i. Overview of Brownfields Challenges and Description of Target Area: The *Kennebec Valley Council of Government's (KVCOG's)* geographic region includes the entirety of Kennebec County, Somerset County, and western Waldo County, Maine, which includes 62 municipalities. Historically, the abundant natural resources, including dense timber forests and the Kennebec and Sebasticook Rivers, formed the basis of the region's past industrial economy. Inexpensive hydro-electric dams and large industrial mill complexes were built along the banks of these rivers, which led to the surrounding Towns and Cities becoming the local commercial manufacturing centers in the early 1900s. However, these mills were often the only significant employer in those communities. Over the past 30+ years, multiple mills in KVCOG's region have shuttered and surrounding economies have suffered. Small municipalities, many of which are isolated from larger population centers, are blighted with vacant industrial buildings and saddled with unstable tax bases and environmental concerns - not only within the abandoned mill sites, but on farm and residential lands upon which PFAS-laden mill (and other) waste sludges have been historically spread.

In Somerset County, poverty has increased over the past twenty years and is now at 14.8%. Meanwhile, other Maine counties leveraged their diversified economies to set a new economic direction. *KVCOG will focus a significant portion of our economic development and Brownfields assessment efforts within the downtowns areas of two rural municipalities, Bingham and Skowhegan, which are our first two Target Areas.*

In the City of Waterville (Kennebec County), 23.1% of the population is below the federal poverty level compared to the County level of 11.3%, available housing is scarce, and unemployment is at 4.8%. The Head of Falls Village and riverfront area is undergoing a redevelopment surge as the City received their first Brownfields Assessment Grant. KVCOG intends to supplement their efforts revitalizing their downtown, riverfront, and historic mill areas along the Kennebec River. *Our third Target Area is the Head of Falls Village/Riverfront area of Waterville.*

Use of new Brownfields Assessment Grant funding to assess the priority sites in each area will attract investors as the real and perceived environmental stigma associated with those sites are defined or eliminated, pave the way for cleanup and redevelopment for new businesses bringing increased employment opportunity, and housing options for new workers and the existing disadvantaged community members.

1.a.ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): For each of the Target Areas, KVCOG has identified several current and potential brownfield sites (e.g., *in Downtown Skowhegan*, the Water Street Commercial District (a portion of which is within a flood plain), the former Somerset Report building, the former Spinning Mill property, and the former Kennebec Inn property; *in Downtown Bingham*, the former Quimby Mill/Maine Plywood facility; *in Waterville, the Head of Falls area* includes the Lockwood Mill, the Front and Temple Street properties, the Edith and Eaton Block buildings, the vacant railroad building at the corner of Pleasant and Main Street, and a plethora of abandoned buildings (former commercial, auto service, gas stations, small engine repair, etc.). These sites are each burdened with known or implied environmental concerns, including subsurface contamination, hazardous building materials (HBMs; i.e., asbestos, lead, and polychlorinated biphenyl laden materials), hazardous waste, petroleum impacts, etc. Assessment of these properties can remove the environmental stigmas, provide known conditions and/or abatement cost estimates to help support developers, and prepare the sites for cleanup and redevelopment to address the poverty and housing impacts of our Target Areas. These sites present clear redevelopment potential despite the environmental concerns, and our three Priority Sites each have appeal which have already attracted investors pending assessment and abatement:

- **Priority Site #1 – The Water Street Commercial District and “J. Pamer Merrill Block” Upper Levels, 43 Water Street (part of Target Area 1: Downtown Skowhegan, Somerset County):** This 1908 colonial revival brick building within the Skowhegan Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, is home to many key businesses in the heart of Downtown. Assessment is needed here prior to potential investor who want to develop housing and given the age of the structure, there are concerns for asbestos and lead paint.
- **Priority Site #2 – Maine Plywood, 17 Lander Avenue, Bingham (part of Target Area 2: Downtown Bingham, Somerset County):** This 123,000 sq. ft. former wood product manufacturing and veneer mill facility is known to have used and (improperly) stored harmful chemicals at the facility. HBMs, including three steam boilers assumed to contain asbestos from the early 20th century, are known to be an issue throughout the structures.

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Several structures are in serious disrepair, with walls or roofing caved in. Ash from former wood burning was piled and buried on-site. KVCOG assisted with Phase I ESAs prior to new investors purchasing the property, who intend to start a plywood manufacturing business that will bring over 100 reliable jobs to an area where little year-round work exists.

- **Priority Site #3 – Front and Temple Street block end (part of Target Area 3: Head of Falls Village/Riverfront Waterville, Kennebec County)**: Developers are currently invested in this site, who plan to build create 61 units of housing with more possible on a site that’s just over 1.5 acres. The new housing would be built on land that currently houses Universal Bread, Damon’s Beverage & Redemption, the former Bob-In tavern, Creative Sounds, and a former office building known as the Heath House at 60 Front Street that abuts Appleton Street to the north. Previous assessment in the area showed that there is significant ground contamination from former fueling stations and associated storage tanks, and HBMs have been identified. More testing and assessment in this area is needed for cleanup planning purposes prior to redevelopment.

1.a.iii. Identifying Additional Site: KVCOG has prior experience and methods for identifying and selecting additional sites. Community outreach activities under section 2.b. below (e.g., website and newspaper advertisements, participation in member community events, and regular meetings with our member partners/communities and municipal leadership) will spur connections with landowners and developers, inform others of our program, and allow us to identify and inventory new sites. Along with our Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), we will also conduct drive-by surveys and online database research for new potential sites, with follow-up calls and outreach to landowners. Prioritization of additional sites will consist of several factors, including: 1) Is the site in an Environmental Justice (EJ)/EJScreen-identified disadvantaged census tract, or a Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) identified underserved community? 2) Does the site have an interested commercial developer or a real opportunity for future redevelopment and job creation? 3) Does the site fit a community need for open greenspace, park, outdoor recreation, and/or community center? 4) What is the proximity of the site to sensitive locations, populations, or natural resources?

1.b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: Potential reuses of the Target Areas and/or Priority Sites are listed below:

- ***Target Area 1 (Downtown Skowhegan)/ Priority Site 1 (43 Water Street)*** – Residential (affordable, low-income, and/or market-rate housing for families and workers) following assessment and abatement of HBMs. Commercial businesses are also coming in for redevelopment in the lower levels of this block.
- ***Target Area 2 (Downtown Bingham)/Priority Site 2 (Maine Plywood)*** – A new plywood manufacturing facility at the former mill, as well as abatement and demolition of some of the remaining structures from the former facility to put in parking, warehousing, and potential sale to the Town for additional housing and/or new park/greenspace.
- ***Target Area 3 (Head of Falls Village/Riverfront, Waterville)/Priority Site 3 (Front/Temple Street block end)*** – Housing and surrounding greenspace, with potential for additional commercial spaces on the ground level along Front Street.

In Skowhegan, their 2010 Comprehensive Plan and reuse strategies align with KVCOG’s focus of craft food/beverage, housing creation, job creation, and tourism in conjunction with the outdoor recreational opportunities related to the whitewater park planned for the Kennebec River. Additionally, the Skowhegan Economic Development Corp. has clear mission/vision statements geared toward the redevelopment of the downtown spaces, as well as business parks, etc. In Bingham, the reuse strategies and priorities of the communities align with its Comprehensive Plan (which KVCOG is helping to update currently) to attract jobs to a site that once employed 750 people, and to re-employ the residents. In Waterville, the City’s Comprehensive Plan (updated 2014) identifies goals associated with population, housing, and income, which are spurred by Brownfields redevelopment. The City also encouraged development of vacant structures and existing Brownfields industrial/commercial sites by recent creation of a tax increment financing (TIF) district in their downtown, as well as TIF-Credit Enhancement Agreements for Brownfield Sites. In 2022 the City of Waterville completed a \$7.4M downtown transportation redevelopment project, greatly improving the infrastructure for Priority Site 3). A Downtown Waterville Vision Plan was created in 2023 that included the redevelopment of the Head of Falls area.

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1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The redevelopment of each priority site will stimulate economic development in those areas through revitalization, which supports even more creation and expansion of local businesses. In Skowhegan, the redevelopment of these Nationally Registered Historic buildings will create jobs, provide housing for a growing workforce, and activate downtown waterfront properties. In Bingham, starting up Maine Plywood will create jobs that were lost to the mill closures and create economic benefits to the existing local businesses by the increase in worker traffic. The modernization of these existing buildings will support efficient, renewable energy sources, including solar panels and power sourced from a hydroelectric plant in Skowhegan. In Waterville, Brownfields redevelopment will revitalize the downtown, where there are currently several blighted and eyesore properties, making the area more attractive to new developers and residents. Cleanup planning may include creation of greenspaces or parks over areas that are not otherwise developed by structures. Developers will be encouraged to reuse the existing infrastructure, take advantage of tax incentives, use renewable energy and/or energy-efficient approaches in their redevelopment plans (new energy efficient appliances/windows, upgraded lighting/HVAC, etc.), and consider actions to improve local climate adaptation, mitigation capacity, and climate resiliency (e.g., climate change vulnerability assessments, assessing the site's adaptive capacity, utilizing climate exposure scenario visual tools, and engaging the current local community for desired actions) which will protect residents and community investments.

1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: KVCOG administers the region's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), a significant source of funding for cleanup and reuse of Brownfield sites. KVCOG has \$275,000 remaining in our 2011 RLF and also received \$1 million in supplemental RLF funding in 2022. Much of these funds are expected to be used for cleanup loans in 2024 (potentially at Maine Plywood and/or Front/Temple Street, Waterville). Initial/early assessment of the Front and Temple Street properties in Waterville, for example, were funded by the depletion of our prior assessment grant; supplemental assessment there was later funded by MEDEP. Additional assessment and cleanup planning are still needed for these properties. We anticipate that our RLF funds will be the primary funding source for cleanup and redevelopment at our Priority Sites. If additional funds are needed, KVCOG will leverage funds from the MEDEP, the City of Waterville, Maine DECD, and other State/Federal/local sources (HUD, EDA, Brownfields Tax Incentive, State programs, TIFs, private investors, etc.). We will also work with our partners (see Section 2.b.i) to facilitate outside supplemental funding sources, if/when necessary. KVCOG has great experience and has recently been successful in leveraging supplementary funding for other (non-Brownfields) projects (e.g., Northern Border Regional Commission Grants, a Go-PIF Grant, an ARPA Grant for Kennebec County, an EDA Planning Grant for a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, a USDA Solid Waste Grant, and a Maine DECD Recovery Grant). Examples of uses for outside funding may include façade grants, removal of underground storage tanks, and loan/subgrant funding for cleanup actions. The community outreach for this assessment grant will be critical to identifying the need and obtaining these potential other funding sources.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: In Bingham, assessment activities will identify and facilitate cleanup of that Priority Sites' existing infrastructure and sustain future reuse of the old mill site to put it back into an active state. Redevelopment at this site would upgrade the electric, water/sewer connections, and other utilities for the site and surrounding neighborhood. Downtown Skowhegan is primed for redevelopment as utilities (water, sewer, gas, etc.) already exist. However, upgrades to the buildings themselves, as well as highspeed internet options to service the future residences will be needed. Plans for these upgrades are included in the Town's economic development plans and Comprehensive Plan. In Waterville, we would engage with the City of Waterville's Brownfields program for their opinions on sites which have existing infrastructure that could/should be prioritized to support their assessment and redevelopment strategies.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a.i. The Community's Need for Funding: The residents of our Target Areas are strapped for resources and opportunities. As demonstrated in the Table below, the Somerset County Target Areas (1 and 2) and associated communities are similar in their small size (<10,000 people) and have high poverty rates. Skowhegan has endured significant tax increases while its total municipal valuation decreased. Our Priority Sites in Skowhegan and

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Bingham (in our Target Areas 1 and 2, both within Somerset County) do not have the financial assets to invest in assessment, remediation, or reuse of Brownfields sites. Populations are generally too small and impoverished to sustain a redevelopment investment. Brownfields funding provided by this grant is needed to mitigate the risk of investing in redevelopment and improve the return on investment for private investors. Waterville has a higher population, but still has increased poverty and low median income compared to state and national averages. U.S. Census quick fact statistics are provided below:

Sensitive Population Data Priority Sites	Target Area #1 (P.S. #1) – Skowhegan	Target Area #2 (P.S. #2) – Bingham	Somerset County	Target Area #3 (P.S. #3) – Waterville (Head of Falls/Riverfront)	Kennebec County	Maine	National
Population ¹	8,661	<1,000	51,098	15,828	125,540	1,385,340	333,287,557
Unemployment ²	6.5%	5.7%	4.6%	4.8%	4.6%	4.0%	4.6%
People in Poverty ¹	15.8%	22.9%	14.8%	23.1%	11.3%	10.8%	11.5%
Median Income ¹	\$48,737	\$34,180	\$47,488	\$41,245	\$58,097	\$63,182	\$69,021
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher ¹	24.0%	Info. Unavail	19.9%	29.9%	29.7%	33.6%	33.7%
Pop. < 5 yrs ¹	5.3%	9.0%	4.5%	4.2%	4.6%	4.5%	5.6%
Pop. > 65 yrs ¹	25.5%	23.0%	23.0%	17.2%	21.5%	22.5%	17.3%
Disability < 65 yrs ¹	19.5%	Info. Unavail	16.4%	14.9%	13.1%	11.6%	8.7%

Sources: ¹ US Census Quick Facts, 2022; ² Reno Gazette Journal: At-a-glance, July 2021

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations: (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Utilizing the EJScreen Tool and CEJST, in tandem with our own awareness of the communities and the US Census data, we’ve identified that our Target Areas and Priority Sites have threats to sensitive populations (low income households and persons with disabilities are the primary sensitive populations, throughout). This is clear in the U.S. Census data listed above and is also clear in the EJScreen Tool data for each Target Area. Target Area #1 (Downtown Skowhegan) has a low income value of 38% (in comparison to the state average of 28% and national average of 31%), and persons with disabilities value of 27.7% (in comparison to the state average of 16.3% and national average of 13.4%). Target Area #2 (Downtown Bingham) has a low income value of 41% and persons with disabilities value of 19.3%. Target Area #3 (Head of Falls Village/Riverfront, Waterville) has a low income value of 69% and persons with disabilities are at 28%.

Census Tract data clearly show these neighborhoods have greater poverty rates than the rest of the county, state, and country (more than double, in some cases), a lower education rate, and a slightly elevated unemployment rate. The redevelopment and reuse of our Priority Sites (amongst others) facilitated by this grant will allow for more businesses which will bring jobs, better housing options, and improved infrastructure to the low-income populations which are in need of financial stability and reduced health and socioeconomic stresses and will minimize displacement of residents as the new commercial and residential developments spurred by this grant would advance the aforementioned economic justice initiatives for these populations.

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations: (2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Maine’s Central Public Health District (CPHD), which serves Somerset and Kennebec Counties, has recorded significantly disproportionate rates of asthma and certain birth defects and cancers in relation to both Maine and national averages. Somerset County has higher incidence and mortality rates of all cancers and cancers of the lungs & bronchus than both Maine (and other Maine counties) and the U.S.; in fact, Somerset has the state’s highest female mortality rate for all cancers. Additionally, Waterville has a higher incidence of respiratory disease and cancer.

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- **Cancer:** Waterville is at the 78th national percentile in terms of cancer prevalence, Skowhegan at the 89th and Bingham at the 81st percentile.
- **Asthma:** Skowhegan is at the 91st national percentile in terms of asthma prevalence, Bingham at the 85th and Waterville at the 88th percentile.

By identifying and facilitating the removal of contamination (through assessment), which is linked to adverse health conditions, this assessment grant will reduce the environmental risk factors associated with blighted industrial buildings in Somerset County and in Waterville (where our assessments will start, before spreading to the rest of KVCOG's region). These sites are not isolated; the wind and rain that blow through abandoned mills and schools carry asbestos and hazardous waste into surrounding neighborhoods and downtown districts.

2.a.ii. (3) Environmental Justice: (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: The sensitive populations in our Target Areas (low income and persons with disabilities), as well as the rest of the population of those areas are affected by several EJ issues. As presented in Community Report data exports from the EJScreen Tool, our Priority Sites have EJ-identified pollution impacts (higher/worse, in comparison to state and national levels) related to the Air Toxics Cancer Risk, Air Toxics Respiratory HI, Traffic Proximity, Lead Paint, Hazardous Waste Proximity, Underground Storage Tanks, and/or Wastewater Discharge indices. Additional details of the EJScreen analysis, as well as CEJST data are provided below:

- **EJScreen Analysis:** Target Area #1 (Downtown Skowhegan) has the following population indices listed in the EJScreen tool over the 75th percentile: lead paint indicator and population over age 64. Additionally, EJScreen lists persons with disabilities at 27.7%, in comparison to the state average of 16.3%. Target Area #2 (Downtown Bingham) is over 75% for: low income population, population under 5, and lead paint, and persons with disabilities are at 19.3%. Target Area #3 (Head of Falls Village/Riverfront, Waterville) is over the 75th percentile for: lead paint indicator, hazardous waste proximity, low income population, traffic proximity, lead paint, underground storage tanks, and wastewater discharge, and persons with disabilities are at 28%. Several other indices are in the 50-75th percentile range for each Target Area, as well.
- **CEJST Disadvantaged Communities:** Target Area #1 (Downtown Skowhegan; tract 23025966600) is considered a CEJST disadvantaged community as it is above the 90th percentile for expected agriculture loss rate, energy cost, asthma, heart disease, and lack of indoor plumbing, along with being in the 69th percentile for low income. Target Area #2 (Downtown Bingham; tract 23025966200) is above the 90th percentile for expected agriculture loss rate, projected flood risk, and energy cost, along with being in the 81st percentile for low income. Target Area #3 (Head of Falls Village/Riverfront, Waterville; tract 23011024102) is above the 90th percentile for energy cost and lead paint and is in the 80th percentile for low income.

2.a.ii. (3) Environmental Justice: (b) Advancing Environmental Justice: As previously mentioned, redevelopment and reuse of our Priority Sites (amongst others) will allow for more businesses which will bring jobs, better housing options, and improved infrastructure to the low-income populations which are in need of financial stability and reduced health and socioeconomic stresses and will minimize displacement of residents as the new commercial and residential developments spurred by this grant would advance the aforementioned economic justice initiatives for these populations. KVCOG will encourage our member communities to meet with and encourage local entrepreneurs to help stimulate business. We will also help them to make sure that the communities are informed of redevelopment opportunities and occurrences, to help tie them to potential job opportunities. Building associated affordable housing will prevent the displacement of low income populations.

2.b.i. and 2.b.ii Project Involvement and Project Roles:

Name of Organization/ Entity/Group and Point of Contact (name & email)	Specific Involvement in the Project, or Assistance Provided
<p>Main Street Skowhegan (linked to P.S. #1) Kristina Cannon kristina@mainstreetskowhegan.org</p>	<p>A 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on the ongoing revitalization of Skowhegan, Maine. A citizen group, they would assist in communicating with property owners and identifying and selecting key development sites for assessment, cleanup, and provide guidance on potential future reuse(s).</p>

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<p>Town of Skowhegan (linked to P.S. #1) Jeff Hewett, Director of Economic & Community Development jhewett@skowhegan.org</p>	<p>Assist in communicating with property owners and identifying and selecting key development sites for assessment, cleanup, and provide guidance on potential future reuse(s).</p>
<p>Town of Bingham (linked to P.S. #2) Steve Steward, Selectman binghamselectmen@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Assist in communicating with property owners and identifying and selecting key development sites for assessment, cleanup, and provide guidance on potential future reuse(s).</p>
<p>City of Waterville (linked to P.S. #3) All requests relating to economic and community development are forwarded to Central Maine Growth Council.</p>	<p>Pairing with the City of Waterville and Central Maine Growth Council to identify sites, collaborate on sites in the City’s Brownfields program, and potentially assist via the RLF.</p>
<p>Central Maine Growth Council (CMGC) (linked to P.S. #3) Garvan Donegan, Director of Planning, Innovation, & Economic Development gdonegan@centralmaine.org</p>	<p>This agency serves as the “clearing house” for major economic development opportunities in Waterville and central Maine. Garvan will serve on Waterville’s Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) and will be a prime contact for KVCOG in Brownfields collaborations with the City.</p>
<p>Somerset Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) Christian Savage, Executive Director csavage@somersetcounty-me.org</p>	<p>Assist in communicating with property owners and identifying and selecting key development sites for assessment, cleanup, and provide guidance on potential future reuse(s).</p>
<p>Town of Fairfield Michelle Flewelling, Town Manager mflewelling@fairfieldme.com</p>	<p>Assist in communicating with property owners and identifying and selecting key development sites for assessment, cleanup, and provide guidance on potential future reuse(s).</p>

2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input: KVCOG’s robust community engagement strategy for Brownfields assessment activities spans several communication channels, both digital and in-person, region-wide and community-specific. Information on project progress is shared regularly through KVCOG and municipal social media accounts, and printed notices at community gathering locations (e.g., libraries, grocery stores, etc.). Quarterly meetings, presentations, and events are publicized through print and social media, and are broadcast on local cable television. Additional public meetings will be held on a periodic basis (at least 1 per year). Meetings are open to the public and are advertised so that residents, local developers, etc. can attend and share their vision and concerns. The community may also participate in events remotely using virtual meeting tools including Zoom and Microsoft Teams, or may provide feedback virtually through the use of online surveys distributed through KVCOG e-newsletters. Translation services are made available, and special attention is paid to servicing those with hearing impairments. Newspaper or print advertising in local periodicals will also occur to make sure that underserved communities are reached, particularly those directly affected by project work.

Supervising community engagement efforts is KVCOG Brownfields Advisory Committee, which partners with municipal governments and community organizations to ensure that information is disseminated to, and feedback is solicited from, the community in a comprehensive, effective manner. In addition, KVCOG’s Project Director has developed relationships with municipal councils, regional economic development organizations, and downtown associations to identify potential sites and liaise with property owners. Two-way email communication with our network contacts and partners (such as SEDC and CMGC) will occur regularly. There will be direct phone calls with prospective partners and community members. KVCOG and/or our QEP will also survey and neighboring residents for awareness and informational purposes, as practicable, and seek direct feedback from our sensitive populations during meetings and through the KVCOG website. Responses to this feedback would occur through the website, applicable social media, written notices, and through subsequent quarterly meetings, as applicable.

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3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

3.a.i. - iv. Project Implementation, Schedule, Leads, & Outputs

Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight
i. Project Implementation - <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>EPA-funded tasks/activities:</i> KVCOG will conduct programmatic oversight; redefine a Brownfields advisory group that will include KVCOG staff, the QEP, and project officers from MEDEP and EPA; prepare a Request for Qualifications and hold competitive interviews to select a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), coordinate public meetings/marketing, attend Brownfields conferences and training sessions, and track program progress through performance and financial reports, ACRES, and quarterly reports. Participant/partner/liaison support costs are not expected or included.• <i>Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable:</i> None. <p>KVCOG’s previous Assessment Grants provided the foundation for further developing our Brownfields program. KVCOG will plan to attend 2-3 national and/or regional Brownfields conferences and State or EPA trainings, as needed. Successful tracking of progress to be completed via ACRES and quarterly reporting. AAI checklists for Phase I ESAs will be submitted to EPA.</p>
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: In Quarter 1, KVCOG will prepare a Request for Proposals (RFQ) to engage a QEP Firm through a competitive bidding process after the Cooperative Agreement is in place to conduct assessment activities. KVCOG staff will review and rank the RFPs. QEP selection is expected to occur in Quarter 2. The QEP will assist with eligibility determinations to start the assessment process for the Priority Sites immediately upon being contracted. Other related activities will be conducted throughout the grant period. Quarterly reports will be completed each quarter of the grant period of performance. Grant closeout reporting will occur during the last quarter of the grant and through the end of that calendar year.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: Project Director and KVCOG staff to lead, with QEP assistance.
iv. Outputs: KVCOG will prepare sixteen (16) quarterly reports and concurrent ACRES updates. KVCOG will hold regular/periodic meetings with QEP and partner organizations on program oversight. AAI checklists will be submitted for each Phase I ESA. Site eligibility checklists will be provided for approval prior to assessing sites.
Task 2: Community Outreach and Engagement
i. Project Implementation - <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>EPA-funded tasks/activities:</i> Outreach to community leaders, updating outreach materials, soliciting owners and developers, and KVCOG staff time to conduct outreach and develop/maintain a website.• <i>Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable:</i> None. <p>While beginning by focusing on our Priority Sites, community outreach activities will occur throughout the life of the grant as long as funding is available, with the goal of identifying additional sites and drumming up support from the community. KVCOG will hold public meetings, partner meetings (e.g., Bingham, Skowhegan, SEDC, CMGC, etc.), and our annual meeting to identify and advertise our Brownfields initiatives. Initial meetings will be related to our Priority Sites to get feedback and momentum. The BAC and QEP will help steer our community relations and outreach. KVCOG and QEP will update our marketing materials used to notify community partners, landowners, developers, and residents when public information and/or site assessment activities will occur. Outputs will include up to four community meetings and/or virtual public meetings, which may be televised, and updated Brownfields marketing, brochures, flyers, and/or newsletters. Participant/partner/liaison support costs are not expected or included.</p>
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Outreach materials will be updated by Quarter 4. Outreach activities will be conducted throughout the duration of the 4-year grant period of performance.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: KVCOG staff and the selected QEP.
iv. Outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to four KVCOG and community/partner meetings and/or virtual public meetings; annual KVCOG meetings.• Updated KVCOG outreach materials (brochures, flyers, newsletters).• KVCOG website updates and web postings regarding Brownfields program sites/potential sites.

NARRATIVE/RANKING CRITERIA

Task 3: Site Selection and Phase I and II Site Assessment Activities
<p>i. Project Implementation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EPA-funded tasks/activities:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Inventory, prioritization, and selection of sites within the EJScreen-identified disadvantaged communities and from other areas within our region and target areas (sites within disadvantaged communities and target areas will be prioritized over others in the region).○ Preparation of site eligibility forms and access agreements for privately owned properties.○ Completion of Phase I ESAs and Phase II ESAs (and associated QAPPs).• Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable: None. <p>Leveraging our frequent outreach to municipalities, site owners, developers, and prospective purchasers, KVCOG will continue updating its existing list of potential Brownfields sites, focusing on EJScreen- and CEJST-identified disadvantaged communities and other target areas. The identified Priority Sites will be assessed ASAP once the grant is active and will spearhead our assessment program that will continue with our other identified potential sites. KVCOG and QEP will prepare EPA Brownfields Eligibility forms for approval. KVCOG will obtain site access agreements for The QEP will complete an ASTM Phase I ESA for each site, followed by Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and an ASTM Phase II ESA for sites that will be assessed further. Reports will be submitted for MEDEP and EPA review. Participant/partner/liason support costs are not expected or included.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Following approval of eligibility, sites will be assessed. Phase I ESAs are anticipated to take about 1 month, followed by 30 days for review by EPA/MEDEP. For Phase II ESAs, the QAPP will take 2-4 weeks to develop, followed by 30 days for regulatory review. Phase II ESA activities and reporting will take 2 months, followed by 30 days for regulatory review. ACRES will be updated promptly at key points for the site assessments.</p>
<p>iii. Task/Activity Lead: QEP, with KVCOG oversight.</p>
<p>iv. Outputs: KVCOG will prepare site inventory and site eligibility forms and access agreements. We anticipate up to approximately 8 Phase I ESAs and 8 Phase II ESAs (and associated site-specific QAPPs and HASPs). We will hold meetings with the Brownfields team for each Phase II ESA site.</p>
Task 4: Cleanup and Site Reuse/Redevelopment Planning Activities
<p>i. Project Implementation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EPA-funded tasks/activities: Evaluation of cleanup alternatives and reuse options for the assessed sites. Completion of ABCAs/reuse plans.• Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable: None. <p>Phase II ESA site reports will include QEP recommendations for next steps. We expect that our three Priority Sites will go through the full assessment and cleanup planning process and will be able to leverage cleanup funding from our RLF, or from other sources for remedial work. Additional sites for cleanup planning will be selected based upon findings and recommendations from Phase II ESAs, as well as other assessment sources, as practicable. Where additional remediation or reuse is appropriate, KVCOG and the QEP will develop an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Remedial Action Plan (RAP). These plans will evaluate cost, effectiveness, and reuse scenarios for these sites. We will recommend and assist site applications to the MEDEP VRAP program. Outputs will include up to nine ABCAs/RAPs, as well as public meetings, as applicable. In the event that a new owner/developer is on board for a particular site, an application to the Maine Voluntary Response Action Program (VRAP) will be prepared. Participant/partner/liason support costs are not expected or included.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities will be conducted throughout the 4-year grant period. ABCAs/RAPs would be staggered after completion of the corresponding Phase II ESAs. We anticipate 1-3 ABCAs/RAPs per year during the grant period of performance.</p>
<p>iii. Task/Activity Lead: QEP, with KVCOG oversight.</p>
<p>iv. Outputs: Up to 6 (4-6) Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives reports and/or Remedial Action Plan reports. Feasible sites will be followed up with remediation plans and VRAP applications.</p>

NARRATIVE/RANKING CRITERIA

3.b.i - iii Cost Estimates: A cost breakdown for the above tasks is based on past experience is below:

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)				Total
		Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight	Task 2: Community Outreach	Task 3: Phase I & Phase II ESAs	Task 4: Cleanup & Site Reuse Planning	
Direct Costs	Personnel	\$9,000	--	\$6,000	\$13,500	\$28,500
	Fringe Benefits	--	--	--	--	\$0
	Travel	\$3,925	--	--	--	\$3,925
	Equipment	--	--	--	--	\$0
	Supplies	\$1,000	\$2,500	--	\$1,500	\$5,000
	Contractual	\$11,000	\$12,275	\$364,000	\$75,300	\$462,575
	Construction	--	--	--	--	\$0
	Other	--	--	--	--	\$0
Total Direct Costs		\$24,925	\$14,775	\$370,000	\$90,300	\$500,000
Indirect Costs		--	--	--	--	\$0
Total Budget		\$24,925	\$14,775	\$370,000	\$90,300	\$500,000

- **Task 1: CA Oversight:** \$9,000 for Town personnel to oversee the program and identify sites (180 hours @ \$50/hour); \$3,925 travel total (\$1,600 airfare + \$1,200 hotel + \$625 food for 1 KVCOG staff to attend 2-3 EPA National Brownfields conferences and 1 EPA/MEDEP-training seminar, plus \$500 local travel to meetings); \$1,000 for supplies (copies, phone calls, contract documents); and \$11,000 contractual for QEP and/or an attorney to assist with cooperative agreement oversight or access agreements, respectively. Total Task 1 = \$24,925.
- **Task 2: Community Outreach:** KVCOG will provide public outreach and educational support to the Brownfields Program at no cost to the grant. \$2,500 for supplies (copies, brochures, outreach, mailings); and \$12,275 contractual for QEP to assist KVCOG on public outreach and educational efforts. Total Task 2 = \$14,775.
- **Task 3: Phase I & Phase II ESAs:** \$6,000 for KVCOG personnel for site selection, interfacing with site owners, and overseeing ESAs (120 hours @ \$50/hour); and \$364,000 contractual for QEP services (8 Phase I ESAs @ \$5,000 = \$40,000; 8 SSQAPPs @ \$5,500 = \$44,000; 8 Phase II ESAs (several of which would include hazardous building materials surveys or inventories) averaging @ \$35,000 = \$280,000). Total Task 3 = \$370,000.
- **Task 4: Cleanup & Site Reuse Planning:** \$13,500 for KVCOG personnel to assist with reuse/redevelopment planning, coordinating with site owners and potential site redevelopers, and review of ABCA/RAPs (270 hours @ \$50/hour); \$1,500 in supplies (letters/correspondence with site owners, meeting materials for redevelopment charettes, brochures, and marketing materials) and \$75,300 contractual for QEP & subcontracted planning firm(s) to conduct 6 ABCA/RAPs @ \$9,750/each = \$58,500; 6 VRAP applications and submittals @ \$2,800/each = \$16,800. Total Task 4 = \$90,300.

3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: KVCOG will track progress through the grant budget through detailed bookkeeping and quarterly reporting in ACRES. Periodic and regular check-ins with our QEP and EPA project officer will also be completed to track compliance tasks, project schedules, deliverables, and budgets. Meeting Phase I ESA, Phase II ESA, and ABCA/RAP quotas set forth in our grant plan will be the primary method KVCOG measures our environmental results. Tracking leveraging of other critical funding (if applicable), as well as successes in accomplishing site or community redevelopment plans will also be completed.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a.i. - 4.a.iii. Organizational Capacity, Structure and Key Staff: KVCOG staff have extensive and varied experience managing grants. KVCOG has managed several previous Brownfields Assessment grants and an RLF, as well as several other grants, as discussed in Section 1.c.i. No adverse audit findings were found or reported. Final close out documentation for all grants have been in compliance with all applicable regulations. For this grant, KVCOG will coordinate the projects with the membership partners (e.g., SEDC, CMGC, etc.), QEP, property owners, and abutting property owners.

- **Matthew Underwood, KVCOG Executive Director** – Matt oversees all aspects of KVCOG operations and programs, including long range planning, policy and procedures, market strategies, knowledge of federal and state legislation, annual budget development, and personnel management. He has a master's in educational administration and experience with environmental issues, regional planning, and operational planning.
- **Jessie Cyr, Project Director/Economic and Community Development Specialist** – Jessie has provided technical assistance to municipalities for grant writing, implementation, budgeting, and administration for over 15 years. Her experience with CDBG, Brownfields, USDA, and EDA grant writing and has led to many successful applications with all funds expended and closed out with no issue. She works with local officials, residents, contractors, and property owners to see her grant projects through fruition with positive outcomes. She will be the liaison with EPA and MEDEP throughout this grant period of performance.

The above will work together with and be supported by the services of the **Planning Director (Joel Greenwood)** and the **Financial Manager (Lorra-Lee Snyder)**. For over 17 years, Joel has led planning activities at KVCOG and has extensive expertise in regional planning, land use issues, comprehensive planning, ordinance writing, bicycle, and pedestrian planning, and maintaining and utilizing the GIS system. Lorra-Lee's experience in financial management and administration ensures the wise allocation of funding, timely reporting, drawdowns, and project closeouts with all funding expended. She will manage the grant financials and drawdowns.

4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: KVCOG has a strong history of accountability and proper expenditure of federal funds, and has significant experience implementing competitive procurement principles, cost and price analyses, and non-awarding of sole source contracts. KVCOG will use RFQs or RFPs to procure any other expertise and resources needed to successfully complete the project (such as the QEP). The requests will be widely publicized and evaluated by the Project Director, who will share results with the Brownfields Advisory Committee. Together, they will make a recommendation to KVCOG's Executive Director. If necessary, interviews will be conducted to clarify proposals or make decisions between respondents with similar qualifications or proposals. Where practicable, KVCOG will strive to include local hiring or procurement services and include member communities in potential employment/contractor opportunities on the Brownfields projects, with the assistance of our QEP.

4.b.i. – Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant: KVCOG has previously received four Assessment Grants in 2005, 2008, 2011, and 2018, and RLF grants in 2011 (with supplemental funding in 2017) and 2022.

4.b.i.(1) and (2) – Accomplishments and Compliance with Grant Requirements: KVCOG's prior Assessment Grants were successfully closed within the approved periods of performance with no funds remaining. RLF grants are currently active. Each have been accurately reported in ACRES in a timely manner. Prior Assessment Grants combined to total \$800,000 in funding, each of which were completely expended and accurately reflected in ACRES. Phase I ESAs, at times combined with limited Phase II ESAs, were conducted at over twenty sites. During the most recent (2018) grant, 12 assessments were completed for 9 different sites. Outcomes included: a pocket park; new fire station; community market; senior housing; new office/commercial spaces; and attraction of developers. In 2011, KVCOG received \$1 million for its Brownfields RLF; over \$500,000 has been sub-granted for cleanup activities in 4 projects (creation of a food hub, creation of a manufacturing makerspace, medical support functions, and residential blight remediation) and \$290,000 has been loaned for cleanup activities in one housing project. Additional loan activities are forthcoming and RLF activities are ongoing, expecting to wrap up in 2024. KVCOG was awarded \$1,000,000 in new/supplemental RLF monies in FY22.

Narrative Information Sheet Attachment:

Letter from State or Tribal Environmental Authority

(Maine Department of Environmental Protection)

ATTACHMENT A

Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG), Maine

EPA FY2024 Brownfields Assessment Grant Application

Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants

1. Applicant Eligibility

The Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) is a Regional Council or group of General Purpose Units of Local Government and is eligible to apply for Brownfields Assessment funding from the EPA Brownfields Grant Program. KVCOG's authority as a Regional Council is established in Maine law (30-A M.R.S.A §2311, et. Seq.). A copy of KVCOG's eligibility documentation is included as *Attachment B*.

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) is a private, non-profit organization established in 1967. KVCOG is a membership organization and is owned and operated for the benefit of its members. The Council of Governments is enabled by state statute. The office is located in Fairfield, Maine and serves Kennebec, Somerset and western Waldo Counties. The Kennebec Valley region is connected by the Kennebec River. It covers 62 municipalities, several unorganized territories, and 5,251 square miles with a population of approximately 182,000. It includes the state capital of Augusta as well as other cities including Waterville, Gardiner, and Hallowell and many rural towns. We currently have 53 member communities in which we assist with developing and administering an economic development program.

2. Community Involvement

KVCOG's robust community engagement strategy for Brownfields Assessment activities spans several communication channels, both digital and in-person, region-wide and community-specific. Information on Project progress is shared regularly through KVCOG and municipal social media accounts, quarterly newsletters, communicated with partners (e.g., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Central Maine Growth Council, etc.) and printed notices at community gathering locations (e.g., libraries, grocery stores, etc.). Project meetings, presentations, and events are publicized through print and social media, and are broadcast on local cable television – the Town of Fairfield, a Somerset County town that borders Kennebec County, hosts the region's public access channel, Crossroads-TV. The community may also participate in events remotely through the use of virtual meeting tools including Zoom and Microsoft Teams, which most municipalities have adopted for their remote town government meetings or may provide feedback virtually through the use of online surveys distributed through KVCOG e-newsletters. Translation services are made available, and special attention is paid to servicing those with hearing impairments.

Supervising community engagement efforts is the KVCOG Brownfields Advisory Committee, which partners with municipal governments and community organizations to ensure that information is disseminated to, and feedback is solicited from, the community in a comprehensive, effective manner. In addition, KVCOG's staff have developed deep relationships with municipal councils, regional economic development organizations, and downtown associations to identify potential sites and liaise with property owners.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

KVCOG affirms that it does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant.

We are currently managing a Revolving Loan Fund Grant (RLF; BF 96154101) and which we intend to expend and close out by September 2024. We are also the recipient of an FY22 Supplemental RLF award of \$1,000,000 (BF 00A00911).

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not applicable. KVCOG chooses not to name procurement contractors, consultants, or subrecipients as part of this application. KVCOG will select contractors in compliance with the fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, and the EPA's Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements. We do not anticipate subrecipients as part of this grant.