



# Lackawanna County

## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commissioners  
Jerry Notarianni  
Debi Domenick, Esq.  
Chris Chermak

### FY 2024 UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANT APPLICATION

#### Narrative Information Sheet

November 10, 2023

1. Applicant Identification: Lackawanna County  
123 Wyoming Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Scranton, PA 18503
2. Funding Requested
  - a. Assessment Grant Type – Community-Wide
  - b. Federal Funds Requested - \$500,000
3. Location a) Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania
4. Target Area and Priority Site Information:
  - Target Area: Scranton, Carbondale, and Dickson City
  - Census tracts: 42069100600, 42069110700, 42069110800 and 42069111600
  - Priority Sites: Klots Throwing Company, Enterprise Drive, Carbondale, PA 18407  
Torch Lumber Mills, 45 Clark Avenue, Carbondale, PA 18407  
Quaker Maid, 40 Poplar Street, Scranton, PA 18509
5. Contacts
  - a. Project Director: Brenda Sacco, Director,  
Department of Planning & Economic Development  
Lackawanna County  
123 Wyoming Avenue; 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Scranton, PA 18503  
570-963-6830; [saccob@lackawannacounty.org](mailto:saccob@lackawannacounty.org)
  - b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:  
  
Jerry Notarianni, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners  
123 Wyoming Avenue; 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Scranton, PA 18503  
570-963-6812; [notariannij@lackawannacounty.org](mailto:notariannij@lackawannacounty.org)
6. Population
  - a. Lackawanna County, 215,615

7. Other Factors

| Factor  | Page #    |
|---|-----------|
| Community population is 10,000 or less  | NA        |
| The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.   | NA        |
| The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.  | #1, 2 & 3 |
| The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water.  | NA        |
| The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.  | #1, 2, 6  |
| The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, of geothermal energy.  | #2        |
| The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.  | NA        |
| The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.                                       | NA        |
| 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. | #2 & 6    |
| The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant had recently closed (2013 or later ) or is closing.  | NA        |

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

a. Attached

9. Releasing Copies of Applications – Not Applicable

Lackawanna County



Brenda Sacco, Director  
Department of Planning & Economic Development



October 11, 2023

Ms. Brenda Sacco, Director  
Lackawanna County Department of Planning and Economic Development  
Lackawanna County Government Center  
123 Wyoming Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Scranton, PA 18503

RE: U.S. EPA Brownfields Grant Proposal | State Letter of Acknowledgement  
Lackawanna County Department of Planning and Economic Development  
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

Dear Ms. Sacco:

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is pleased to support your efforts to redevelop brownfield properties in your regional area. Returning environmentally challenged and underutilized land and buildings to productive use improves our environment, safeguards our residents, and helps boost Pennsylvania's economy.

The DEP supports the Lackawanna County's application for a US EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000 to create brownfields site inventories, conduct environmental assessments, and develop remediation plans for locations within the county that are the most viable options to drive successful redevelopment projects.

The County's efforts to examine the redevelopment potential of aggregated, underutilized sites to create renewed neighborhoods and business districts in Pennsylvania is a worthwhile endeavor.

Both Central Office and Regional Office Staff in the Land Recycling Program look forward to supporting Lackawanna County and U.S. EPA Region 3 on this project.

If you have any questions, please contact John Gross by email at [johngross@pa.gov](mailto:johngross@pa.gov) or by telephone at 717-783-7502.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Maddigan".

Michael Maddigan  
Land Recycling Program Manager  
Bureau Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields

1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Lackawanna County (the County) is located in the primarily rural northeastern part of Pennsylvania. The County and the surrounding area have a long and proud tradition of coal mining. High-value anthracite coal was discovered in the region in the early 1800s and signaled the beginning of an economic boom for the County. Rapid mining expansion and demands for coal from New York and New Jersey necessitated the need to develop an extensive rail and canal infrastructure throughout the County. By the mid-1800s, iron deposits were also discovered and provided an additional resource to mine in the county. Lackawanna County enjoyed nearly a century of growth and prosperity as a result of the coal, steel, rail and associated fuel intensive industries such as lumber mills and silk mills. In the 1880's, the first electric street car system in the United States was built in Scranton, thus earning it the nickname "The Electric City". Coal-mining infrastructure dominated the skyline of every community in the County and modern day America was being built off the resources of Lackawanna County. However, by the early 1900s, the boom had ended and the mining industry as well as the associated industries which relied on coal, in the County began a slow process of decline and abandonment. By the 1950s, the mining industries were all but gone leaving a network of buildings, factories and mines to decay. Since then, the County has struggled to overcome the mining legacy and re-establish itself as an economic center.

The deleterious effects of a century of neglect and intensive land use related to mining have created hundreds of brownfields sites of all sizes with environmental and physical hazards across the entire county. Coal ash piles, mine fill sites, numerous industrial sites and the associated deteriorating infrastructure are ubiquitous in the County. These sites have negatively impacted the overall economic, social, health and environmental conditions of the County and its largest urban center and county seat, Scranton. In many areas, brownfields are located near sensitive populations living in disadvantaged communities. The targeted areas for this community wide assessment grant span the county and include disadvantaged census tracts within the City of Scranton (Census Tract 42069100600), Dickson City (42069111600), and Carbondale (Census Tracts 42069110700 and 42069110800). These communities, with the exception of Scranton, are largely small, rural, and lack the resources to confront the complex challenges of redeveloping brownfields. Lackawanna County has recognized this and with the support of this U.S. EPA Brownfields grant, will assist with assessment activities that will quantify environmental liabilities and spur cleanup, equitable redevelopment of planned projects, and ultimately new jobs and clean open spaces and renewable energy project (Brightfields). The assessment and redevelopment of brownfield sites has been identified as a goal of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan which includes focused redevelopment on infill sites with existing infrastructure.

- i. Description of the Priority Brownfields Sites: The legacy of mining and natural resource extraction and the ancillary industries they supplied including steel production and manufacturing are proving to be a difficult challenge to overcome as the County attempts to adapt to a changing economy. The table below provides a description of the initial list of the highest priority brownfield sites that will be targeted for assessment because of developer interest, size, potential for contamination to impact sensitive populations, and the historic use of these sites.

| <b>Site</b>            | <b>Location</b> | <b>Disadvantaged Census Tract</b> | <b>Potential Contamination</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Klots Throwing Company | Carbondale      | Yes                               | VOCs, SVOCs, Metals            |
| Torch Lumber Mills     | Carbondale      | Yes                               | VOCs, SVOCs, Metals            |
| Quakermaid Cabinets    | Scranton        | Yes                               | VOCs, SVOCs, Metals            |
| Mine Scarred Land      | Dickson City    | Adjacent                          | Metals, SVOCs                  |
| Mine Scarred Land      | County Wide     | Varies                            | SVOCs, Metals                  |

The former Klots Throwing Company is currently vacant and distressed and located within a primarily residential area of Carbondale. This site is located in a federally designated flood plain. The site operated as a silk mill from the late 1800's through early 1900's. This site is located within a Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) "disadvantaged community" census tract and consists of a multi-story story building on approximately 2-acres and is adjacent to a rail line. The site was identified as part of Lackawanna County's previous US EPA grant and also identified as being located in a Primary Growth Area. This site has been identified as a priority due to potential legacy contamination often associated with silk mills and to the revitalization of the community due to potential proximity to residential areas, commercial corridors and major transportation routes, and existing infrastructure. Planned reuse includes commercial mixed-use.

The former Torch Lumber Company is currently vacant and severely distressed and located within a primarily residential area of Carbondale. The site operated as a lumber mill from the early to late 1900's and has sat vacant

since that time. This site is located within a Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) “disadvantaged community” census tract and consists of a multiple dilapidated buildings on approximately 1-acre and is adjacent to a rail line. The site was identified as part of Lackawanna County’s previous US EPA grant and also identified as being located in a Primary Growth Area. This site has been identified as critically important to the revitalization of the community due to the potential of legacy pollution, proximity to residential areas, commercial corridors and major transportation routes, and existing infrastructure. Planned reuse includes open recreational space and potential solar farm.

The former Quaker Maid Cabinet Site is currently vacant and severely distressed and located within a primarily industrial area of Scranton. This site is located within a federally designated flood plain and a Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) “disadvantaged community” census tract and consists of a multiple dilapidated buildings on approximately 1-acre and is adjacent to a rail line. This site consists of a multi-story building on approximately 2-acres and is adjacent to a rail line. The site was identified as part of Lackawanna County’s previous US EPA grant and also identified as being located in a Primary Growth Area. This site has been identified as critically important to the revitalization of the community due to proximity to residential areas, commercial corridors and major transportation routes, a major public transportation hub, and existing infrastructure. Planned reuse includes commercial mixed-use with affordable housing and re-housing programs.

Another brownfield challenge with in the County are the myriad coal mine scarred lands that are ubiquitous across the landscape and often adjacent to industrial parks and residential area. These sites provide the opportunity for re-use as solar farms or “Brightfields.” Additionally, the potential migration of contaminants and acid mine drainage from these sites to the Lackawanna River is particularly problematic. The Lackawanna River bisects the county and discharges into the Susquehanna River. However, pollution, in part, from brownfields sites such as abandoned mines and former industrial sites located near the river have been impacting water quality for decades. Both rivers lie within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, thus pollution originating from brownfields sites across the county have the potential to migrate into these waterways and impact the Chesapeake Bay. Mitigating the contributions of pollution to the Lackawanna River from brownfields is necessary and represents an opportunity for the County to promote healthy waterways on local, state and regional levels.

**iii. Identifying Additional Sites:** Lackawanna County has developed tools and strategies to identify brownfields sites specifically in alignment with Justice40 and Environmental Justice initiatives. Lackawanna understands many brownfields are disproportionately located in and impacting disenfranchised and disadvantaged communities. Utilizing the Justice40 model, Lackawanna has demonstrated a track record of utilizing over 40% of their previous EPA Brownfields Assessment grants in disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. Lackawanna utilizes the EPA Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to factor into a weighted scoring system for identifying brownfields sites for assessment. CEJST identified “Disadvantaged Communities” are targeted first for assessment activities. Additionally, the census tracts identified by the CEJST will be targeted for community outreach to gain input from local expertise for insight from the impacted community. This insight will not only be for site identification but also for the redevelopment planning process. The identification of sites via this approach will be paired with public community meetings targeting the identified disadvantaged communities to solicit an open dialogue to gather community input for redevelopment needs.

**1.b.i Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** Lackawanna County intends to follow the objectives of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Counties Joint Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan, 2021): 1.) Infill development in cities, borough and surrounding lands; 2.) More affordable housing opportunities are needed; and 3.) Renewable energy development. The assessments of brownfield sites throughout the County would be consistent with the goals of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. The areas targeted for assessment activities would facilitate future growth and development to support multimodal linkages to nearby existing commercial and residential areas, including bicycle and pedestrian access. Additionally, assessments of properties located within county “Urban Centers”, which include commercial and residential districts, will support the Comprehensive Plan’s goal of preservation of public open space and new construction. These goals are consistent with the Sustainability and Livability Principles<sup>1</sup> to promote smart growth in communities across the country. However, properties targeted by the various county plans, partnerships and initiatives need to be assessed for potential

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<sup>1</sup> Livability Principles defined by the Partnership for Sustainable Communities between the US EPA, US Department of Transportation and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to help communities improve access to affordable housing and transportation while protecting the environment.

environmental concerns associated with historic uses. The sites listed above have been identified based on these criteria.

**1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Redevelopment Strategy:** Lackawanna County will use a systematic approach to brownfields redevelopment by identifying and assessing those brownfields which are consistent with the principles and goals of the various revitalization and land use plans across the County and preferentially benefit disadvantaged communities in both economic and non-economic ways. By revitalizing blighted, abandoned, and potentially contaminated brownfields sites throughout the County, the County's revitalization approach promotes economic stability and equitable growth while strengthening the social fabric of the County. This approach will facilitate the development of much needed affordable housing and also mitigate existing hazardous conditions, create jobs and opportunities for the disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities throughout the County. Accordingly, the priority sites within and adjacent to CEJST "disadvantaged community" areas, a potential source of contamination, the vacant buildings are a public hazard and a known location for arson, illegal dumping and substance abuse. These sites were identified as a high-priority sites with their previous US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant and redeveloping these site will replace a public health hazard with a source of jobs, open space and community pride, consistent with the County Land Use Plan goal to prioritize the preservation of existing neighborhoods.

By identifying, assessing, and prioritizing development of existing brownfields sites, Lackawanna County's redevelopment strategy will support the 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals to promote the revitalization of existing urban places to "create good jobs" for the community while preserving open space as well as facilitating local partner non-profits in developing affordable housing. Addressing these brownfields sites will enable redevelopment with modern stormwater management systems to reduce localized flooding events and reduce overland flow from reaching mine-scarred land and exacerbating acid mine drainage. Supporting the County Land Use Plan, the County is also engaging more rural communities, such as Carbondale and Dickson City where individual brownfield sites have a disproportionately larger impact on these comparatively low-population towns. Additionally, the numerous mine scarred lands makes the County an attractive location for renewable energy projects such as wind and solar on former mine lands which promotes 2040 Collective Vision (2021) goal to support development of locally generated renewable energy in addition to mitigating the input of pollution to Lackawanna River and improving watershed quality and conditions.

**1.c.i Resources Needed for Site Reuse:** Assessment grants are a critical mechanism to catalyze Brownfields redevelopment projects by providing a source of funding to facilitate environmental site assessments, address liability concerns and, project design and remediation planning. Additional sources of financial support will likely be needed to ensure a successful brownfields redevelopment program throughout the County. However, sources for the initial assessment activities are limited, thus the EPA funding is crucial to the redevelopment plan and goals. The County has a strong history of leveraging funding for community revitalization projects and initiatives. If the assessments determine that additional funding is required, the county will leverage its network of redevelopment and financial partners to provide this support. The following is a list of redevelopment leveraging that the Lackawanna County has successfully leveraged for previous projects and will continue engage to move brownfields redevelopment forward.

- **Community Development Block Grant Program:** Lackawanna County administers this U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program which provides support to benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevent or elimination of slums or blight, or address community development needs which pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of the community. (Value: determined by HUD formula)
- **Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority** – This PA Department of Community and Economic Development program provides low-interest loan financing through Industrial Development Corporations for land and building acquisition, construction and renovation, resulting in the creation or retention of jobs (Value: up to \$2 million)
- **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**–provides grants financing through Industrial Site Reuse Program for environmental assessment and remediation activities. The County utilized an award of a \$500,000 grant for the remediation of a site that was previously assessed with EPA brownfields grant funds. (Value: up to \$1 million)
- **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources** – provides grants financing for community parks, open space and trails, the County facilitated \$450,000 for the redevelopment of a brownfield site which was assessed under the previous grant which is being developed into an urban pocket park.

Additionally, Lackawanna County has established funding to promote environmentally beneficial reuse and sustainability projects. County municipalities, municipal authorities and non-profit organizations, are eligible to take advantage of the Lackawanna County Community Re-Invest program which provides funding to develop affordable housing, preserve open spaces, acquire and construct greenways, acquire outdoor recreational facilities and improve infrastructure.

**1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure:** The County is committed to beneficial infrastructure and sustainable reuse throughout the County by using smart growth concepts to guide planning and policies. One primary goal of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan is to integrate the planning and design of transportation systems in a manner that fosters development of sustainable communities. Priority brownfields sites are located in areas served by existing infrastructure; thus, the reuse of these sites represents sustainable redevelopment. By utilizing existing infrastructure, these sites reduce the need for additional external capital investment, preserve existing natural areas and minimize greenhouse gas contributions from redevelopment. Owing to the largely rural nature of the County, access to existing infrastructure and public utilities is paramount to equitable development and is consistent with US EPA Smart Growth approaches to reuse already-developed land. Accordingly, the County's site-ranking criteria will help identify sites for assessment that utilize existing infrastructure and will consider future reuse which utilizes existing infrastructure. Additional infrastructure improvements are not anticipated at this time as all targeted sites are located within the existing transportation and utility systems.

**2.a.i. The Community's Need for Funding:** Outside of Scranton, Lackawanna County is primarily a collection of rural communities with limited prospects for employment and economic growth because opportunities associated with the mining and ancillary manufacturing industries have not been replaced with jobs in more contemporary economic sectors and the economy of the County has suffered as a result. Various measures of economic health in the Lackawanna County indicate that the conditions here are worse than in surrounding counties and the state as a whole. US Census Data shows the County has suffered a 1% drop in population from 2010 through 2022. According to data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS 2021), the unemployment rate in Lackawanna County (4.58%) was higher than in surrounding counties, adjacent Susquehanna at 4.06% and higher than the United States (3.73%).

Comparative measures of income and wages indicate greater inequality and disproportionately higher impacts to disadvantaged communities in Lackawanna County which limit their capacity to acquire the resources needed to remove community blight and mitigate environmental hazards to improve public health conditions. Moreover, US Census Bureau data (July 2022 in 2021 dollars) indicated median household income in Lackawanna County (\$58,366) was 14% less than Pennsylvania (\$67,587) and 16% less than national (\$69,201) averages. These income disparities are contributing to disproportionately elevated rates of poverty in Lackawanna County. According to the 2021 US Census, Lackawanna County has a higher percentage of people living below the poverty level at (13.7%) than the adjacent Susquehanna County (12.0%), state (11.8%) or national averages (11.5%). Overall, the reduction in population, high levels of poverty, low income and unemployment have reduced the County's tax revenue, thus reducing funding sources for brownfields redevelopment. Additionally, the economic dislocations experienced across the County are limiting the ability of small, rural, and disadvantaged communities of Lackawanna County to respond to the environmental and public health issues represented by brownfields. Funding made available through this grant will help to provide a much-needed resource to assess and ultimately revitalize these sites.

### **2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations**

**(1) Welfare of Sensitive Populations:** Mitigating the persistent environmental conditions related to brownfields sites along with improving the welfare of sensitive populations across Lackawanna County by removing blight and community burdens are central to the County's brownfields approach. The CEJST indicated 23 census tracts in Lackawanna County are identified as "disadvantaged and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (PADEP) Office of Environmental Justice (EJ) has identified over 34 Pennsylvania census tracts throughout Lackawanna County where 50% or more individuals live at or below the federal poverty line, and/or 21% or more of the population identifies as a non-white minority: indicating the County is rife with sensitive populations in disadvantaged communities. These disproportionate welfare factors ultimately lead to older housing stocks which residents cannot afford to upkeep, which in turn could be a factor in the CEJST identification of potential for Lead Paint for the census tract in which the priority site Torch Lumber Mill at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile.



Results from the EPA EJSCREEN Tool rank the census tracts in which the Klots Throwing Company and Torch Lumber Mills priority sites are located compared to the rest of the US as “Disadvantaged” including; Persons with Disabilities in the 94<sup>th</sup> percentile, Low-Income 78<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup>; Poverty 80<sup>th</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> percentiles. Further, childhood (under age 18) poverty rates in Lackawanna County (21.2%) are higher than that of Pennsylvania (17.5%), indicating the issues of food and housing insecurity are endemic in the most vulnerable populations of Lackawanna County (data provided by the US Census 2021). Also, higher rates of reliance on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have been reported in Lackawanna County. When compared to state (12.5%) and national rates (14.3%), children in Lackawanna County (18.2%) were more reliant on the SNAP for accessing food than the state or across the country (2022 Community Health Profile). The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Environment Facility Application Compliance Tracking System (eFACTS) database of regulated environmental sites lists over 4,000 regulated or potentially impacted sites throughout Lackawanna. Accordingly, this Environmental Justice index suggests sites, brownfields, are having a disproportionate and negative impact on the welfare and human and environmental health in disadvantaged communities. Overall, mitigating the human health and environmental conditions at brownfield sites in disadvantaged communities will support direct investment, revitalization, social equity, and help to improve the welfare of sensitive populations across Lackawanna County.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: The environmental conditions associated with brownfields sites in Lackawanna County represent persistent sources of contamination that are adversely impacting the health of county residents. As reported in the most recent Childhood Lead Surveillance Report, Pennsylvania Department of health (2019), elevated lead levels in children (0-71 months) in Scranton (1.91%) were higher than the Pennsylvania average (0.69%), the same report stated across Lackawanna County as a whole elevated lead levels in children (0-71 months) (.34%) were higher than the Pennsylvania average (0.22%). According to the National Institute of Health “...Lead exposure may be increasing asthma risk and contributing to racial disparities<sup>2</sup>.” Given that sensitive populations often reside in disadvantaged communities which are disproportionately impacted by brownfields, public-health data suggest hazards at these sites are having measurable and negative impacts on the health of those communities. Accordingly, the CEJST has identified the following health related disparities in the priority sites’ census tracts; Klots Throwing Company – Asthma 79<sup>th</sup> percentile, Lead Paint – 73<sup>rd</sup> percentile, Diabetes – 79<sup>th</sup> percentile, Heart Disease – 96<sup>th</sup> percentile and Low Life Expectancy – 93<sup>rd</sup> percentile; and Torch Lumber Mill – Asthma – 79<sup>th</sup> percentile, Lead Paint – 97<sup>th</sup> percentile, and Quaker Maid – Asthma 83<sup>rd</sup> percentile, Heart Disease 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, Diabetes 80<sup>th</sup> percentile, and Lead Paint 95<sup>th</sup> percentile. The table below summarizes additional public-health measures for those conditions prevalent in disadvantaged communities and those associated with pollutants commonly related to brownfields.

|                   | Death Rate per 100,000 <sup>1,2</sup> | Cancer Incidence <sup>1,2</sup> | Cancer Deaths <sup>1,2</sup> | Incidences of Colon & Rectum <sup>1,2</sup> | Death by Heart Disease <sup>1,2</sup> | Chronic Lower Respiratory <sup>1,3</sup> |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Lackawanna County | 876.7                                 | 263.4                           | 166.5                        | 17.1  | 220                                   | 40.2                                     |
| Pennsylvania      | 762.3                                 | 243.8                           | 154.9                        | 12.5  | 176.6                                 | 34.3                                     |

<sup>1</sup>Pennsylvania Department of Health, available: <https://www.phaim1.health.pa.gov/EDD/>  
<sup>2</sup>age-adjusted per 100,000 individuals for 2018-2020 <sup>3</sup>age-adjusted per 100,000 individuals for 2018-2020

(1) Environmental Justice

(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: Lackawanna recognizes the legacy of racism and environmental discrimination have caused a disproportionate number of low income residential areas in close proximity to industrial and often contaminated sites. The County has actively identified environmental justice sites to target re-investment in such communities. Utilizing tools such as the EPA EJScreen, PADEP EJ Screen and EPA CEJST, the County has selected their three highest priority sites, Klots Throwing Company, Torch Lumber Mills, and Quaker Maid for assessment which are located in CEJST identified disadvantaged census tracts to help correct this historic injustice. Based on data collected from the CEJST, Klots Throwing Company

<sup>2</sup> Environ Health Perspective, “Blood Lead Level and Risk of Asthma”, published 2005 March 3 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1257653/>)



(Census Tract 42069110700), Torch Lumber Mills (Census Tract 42069110800) and Quaker Maid (census Tract 42069100600) the disproportionate negative and discriminatory impacts are startling and obvious. All data below comes from CEJST and is in relation to the United States as a whole when referring to percentile ranking and displays a clear picture of environmental injustice. This site is also located in a federally designated Flood Plain.

Klots Throwing Company – CEJST Disadvantaged Census Tract, Population 2,610, Low Income 78<sup>th</sup> percentile, Poverty 80<sup>th</sup> percentile, Expected Building Loss Rate – 91<sup>st</sup>, Projected Flood Risk 91<sup>st</sup>, Unemployment 47<sup>th</sup> percentile, and Lead Paint 73<sup>rd</sup> percentile. This site is also located in a federally designated Flood Plain.

Torch Lumber Mills – CEJST Disadvantaged Census Tract, Population 2,860, Low Income 79<sup>th</sup> percentile, Poverty 73<sup>rd</sup> percentile, Unemployment 42<sup>nd</sup> percentile, and Lead Paint – 97<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Quakermaid – CEJST Disadvantaged Census Tract, Population 4,191, People of Color 44%, Low Income 86<sup>th</sup> percentile, Poverty 81<sup>st</sup> percentile, Lead Paint 97<sup>th</sup>, and Lack of Green Space 85<sup>th</sup>.

**(3)(b) Advancing Environmental Justice:** Lackawanna is committed to supporting EJ initiatives like Justice40 to remove the blight, environmental hazards, and human impacts in the disadvantaged communities of the County. Accordingly, Lackawanna has set a goal to allocate a minimum of 40% of the grant budget to direct assessment tasks and activities to sites within disadvantaged communities. To further incorporate EJ principles into their brownfields program, Lackawanna’s site-ranking criteria will be weighted to prioritize those sites within CEJST identified “disadvantaged” communities.

The goal for the ultimate redevelopment of the three highest priority sites, Klots Throwing Company, Torch Lumber Mills and Quaker Maid, include recreational open space, affordable housing, mixed-use commercial and office space. The redevelopment of these sites will advance EJ issues by: cleaning up contaminated sites, create good paying jobs, and create new green open space and parks. Based on the CEJST rating for these sites, the census tracts data, above, shows higher rates of unemployment, poverty, and lack of green space. The cleanup and redevelopment of these sites will address each of these issues as well increase investment in these communities. Lackawanna is preparing to combat potential displacement of existing community members from the potential for property increases due to the planned redevelopment of the high priority sites via ongoing community engagement. The County is also working with the Zoning and Planning Department for modifications to ensure the inclusion of low-income housing in the communities targeted for assessment and redevelopment. Without this Assessment Grant, Lackawanna will not be able to continue to support the assessment of the priority brownfields sites and other environmental challenges throughout the County.

**2.b.i. and ii. Project Involvement and Project Roles:** The community partners will be involved in public outreach and the site-selection process, but the final determination of sites where assessments will be conducted will be made by the County. As sites are selected for assessment, the County will present the reasoning for the selection at the quarterly meetings and solicit feedback from the public. Lackawanna County will use community comments, evaluate the overall viability of the project and ensure compatibility with the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, as metrics to determine if the proposed site will be assessed using grant funds. County representatives will also attend community organization meetings across the County to discuss the project and/or specific site assessments, where applicable. The following is a list of local project partners.

| Partner Name   | Point of Contact   | Specific Role   |
|--|--|---|
| Lackawanna River Corridor Association                    | Bernie McGurl, <a href="mailto:director@lrca.org">director@lrca.org</a> , 570-347-6311                                       | Community outreach, public engagement, and site identification                              |
| Lackawanna County Brownfields Steering Committee         | Sandra Opshinsky, <a href="mailto:opshinskys@lackawannacounty.org">opshinskys@lackawannacounty.org</a> , 570-963-6830 x 1375 | Public meeting coordination, stakeholder engagement, and site owner outreach                |
| Agency for Community Empowerment North East Pennsylvania | Jim Wansacz <a href="mailto:jwansacz@acenepea.org">jwansacz@acenepea.org</a> 570-963-6836                                    | Identify sites for assessment for ultimate purchase for redevelopment of affordable housing |

**2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input:** Soliciting, incorporating, and responding to community input is necessary to ensure program success, transparency, and progress toward achieving equitable economic, social,

and EJ outcomes. Lackawanna County developed a community engagement approach under their previous US EPA Brownfields Assessment grant to facilitate reciprocal, collaborative, and constructive dialogue with the community using targeted multimodal outreach followed by review and response feedback. To kick off the program, the County will announce the award to the community through a press release to the local newspapers (*Times Tribune*), local trade and commerce publications (e.g., Lackawanna Regional Chambers, Manufacturer & Business Associations), local TV stations (e.g., WNEP), and the Lackawanna County’s social media pages (Twitter and LinkedIn). Additionally, the County will post announcements on their website ([www.lackawannacounty.org](http://www.lackawannacounty.org)) and social media platforms. The County also livestreams public meetings via social media platforms and communicate through electronic media, as alternative methods to in-person community engagement.

**3.a.i.i.-iv Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Task 1: Programmatic</b>  |
| i. <u>Project Implementation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall programmatic and administrative oversight along with cooperative agreement (CA) compliance</li> <li>▪ Solicitation, selection, and contracting an experienced, qualified environmental professional (QEP)</li> <li>▪ Prepare and submit Quality Management Plan (QMP)</li> <li>▪ Annual and quarterly progress reporting (US ACRES), ASAP accounting updates, and grant closeout</li> <li>▪ Travel for applicant attendance at conferences to present program success stories</li> </ul>  |
| ii. <u>Identifying Additional Sites:</u> Potential sites will be evaluated using the U.S. EPA Community Reuse Property Prioritization Tool to include: distance to population centers, existing infrastructure, site access, developer/community interest and site access.   |
| iii. <u>Anticipated Project Schedule:</u> The solicitation and selection of the QEP will be completed within 3 months following execution of the CA. All other administrative tasks will be completed, as required in the CA, over the grant-performance period. Conference attendance, annual, as available.  |
| iv. <u>Task/Activity Lead:</u> Lackawanna County (Applicant)   |
| v. <u>Outputs:</u> CA execution, QEP solicitation and contracting, QMP, 16 quarterly progress reports (US ACRES), monthly ASAP accounting updates, annual FFR and MBE/WBE reporting, 1 kickoff meeting with US EPA, travel for staff for to up to 3 conferences, and requisite grant closeout reporting.   |
| <b>Task 2: Community Outreach</b>  |
| i. <u>Project Implementation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public announcements of grant progress, updates, and meetings via print, electronic, social and TV media</li> <li>▪ Solicitation of community input through County social media accounts and email newsletters</li> <li>▪ Secondary information distribution via Lackawanna County community engagement partners</li> <li>▪ Host a kick-off meeting (and livestream) to inform the community and solicit input</li> <li>▪ Outreach to community engagement partners, local governments, and private/non-profit stakeholders</li> </ul>                                    |
| ii. <u>Identifying Additional Sites:</u> The public will be encouraged to submit potential sites during public outreach meetings as well as via online submissions on the Lackawanna County website.   |
| iii. <u>Anticipated Project Schedule:</u> Initial public meeting will be scheduled during the first quarter following grant award. Program updates, announcements, and solicitations for input will be posted regularly via Lackawanna County social media accounts, websites. Additionally, public update meetings will be held annually, or as needed, based on community input, site selection, and program progress.   |
| iv. <u>Task/Activity Lead:</u> Norristown (Applicant)  |
| v. <u>Outputs:</u> Host up to 3 public meetings, regular social media and website updates, creation of marketing materials, press releases/conferences, and regular outreach to community partners.  |
| <b>Task 3: Site Inventory and Selection</b>  |
| i. <u>Project Implementation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain, update, rank, and prioritize brownfields inventory sites</li> <li>▪ Coordinate with community engagement partners and coordinate with the selected QEP to expand the list of brownfields sites and revise ranking criteria to incorporate EJ criteria</li> <li>▪ Site owner outreach, site access coordination, and completion of site access agreements</li> <li>▪ Preparation of Property Approval Questionnaires (PAQs) and coordination of requisite eligibility determination for petroleum sites with the Pa Dept. of Environmental Protection</li> </ul> |
| ii. <u>Identifying Additional Sites:</u> QEP canvassing of Lackawanna County via vehicular reconnaissance, priority will be given to sites located in disadvantaged census tracts.   |

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| iii. <u>Anticipated Project Schedule</u> : The existing site inventory will be actively expanded during the first 6-9 months following grant award and updated for the duration of the performance period. Site selection will be completed and access agreements, PAQs, and petroleum eligibility determination coordination, as necessary, will be completed continuously during the 4-year grant-performance period.   |
| iv. <u>Task/Activity Lead</u> : Lackawanna County (Applicant)   |
| vi. <u>Outputs</u> : Update and expand site inventory list, rank and identify priority sites, complete up to 20 PAQs and 20 site access agreements, including eligibility determination coordination for petroleum products sites, and complete up to 5 site inventory evaluation visits.   |
| <b>Task 4: Site Assessments</b>   |
| i. <u>Project Implementation</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare and submit a Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPrP) to be used for the duration of the performance period for all sites</li> <li>▪ Coordinate site access at eligible sites to complete Phase I/II activities</li> <li>▪ Complete up to 20 Phase I ESAs (and accompanying US EPA All Appropriate Inquiry Checklists) in accordance with ASTM E1527-21 and All Appropriate Inquiry requirements</li> <li>▪ Complete up to 9 Phase II ESAs, which include the completion of site-specific health and safety plans (HASPs) and requisite submission of Field Sampling Plans (FSPs) to evaluate environmental conditions at selected sites, consistent with PA Land Recycling Program requirements</li> </ul> |
| ii. <u>Identifying Additional Sites</u> : During site assessment activities QEP will evaluate the area surrounding the area of the assessment site for additional potential sites.  |
| iii. <u>Anticipated Project Schedule</u> : Phase I ESAs will be initiated within 6 months of the start of the program and will be ongoing throughout the duration of the performance period. A FSP, HASP, and a Phase II ESA report will be completed for each site, as appropriate, based on the findings of the Phase I ESA on a rolling basis. The QAPrP will be completed and submitted to the US EPA within the first 6 months of the program and prior to initiation of any Phase II ESA activities.  |
| iv. <u>Task/Activity Lead</u> : The selected Qualified Environmental Professional, at the direction of Lackawanna County (Applicant),   |
| v. <u>Outputs</u> : Up to 20 Phase I ESA reports, 1 QAPrP, 9 FSPs, 9 HASPs, 9 Phase II ESA reports, and US ACRES updates.   |
| vii. <b>Task 5: Remedial Planning and Design</b>  |
| i. <u>Project Implementation</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete up to a total of 4 Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) based on the results of the Phase I and Phase II ESAs and reuse needs/requirements</li> <li>▪ The RAPs will outline the remediation plans and will be used to leverage additional assessment and cleanup funds and satisfy PADEP Land Recycling Program requirements.</li> </ul>   |
| ii. <u>Identifying Additional Sites</u> : Sites slated for redevelopment will be revisited for potential additional sites in the area to build on the success.  |
| iii. <u>Anticipated Project Schedule</u> : RAPs will be developed and submitted to the US EPA within 3 months following the completion of Phase II ESA activities for a given site, as appropriate.   |
| iv. <u>Task/Activity Lead</u> : The selected Qualified Environmental Professional, at the direction of the Lackawanna County (Applicant)  |
| v. <u>Outputs</u> : Complete up to 4 RAPs, identify secondary funding programs to leverage with the completed RAPs.   |

**3.b. Cost Estimates:** table below provides the funding allocation for each proposed task.

|                     |                 | Project Tasks (\$)      |                               |   |                             |   | Total    |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|----------|
|                     |                 | Task 1:<br>Programmatic | Task 2:<br>Community Outreach | Task 3:<br>Site Inventory and Selection | Task 4:<br>Site Assessments | Task 5:<br>Remedial Planning and Design |          |
| <b>Direct Costs</b> | Personnel       | \$11,000                | \$2,750                       | \$4,125                                 | \$4,400                     | \$1,925                                 | \$24,200 |
|                     | Fringe Benefits | \$0                     | \$0                           | \$0                                     | \$0                         | \$0                                     | \$0      |
|                     | Travel          | \$2,400                 | \$0                           | \$2,200                                 | \$0                         | \$0                                     | \$4,600  |

|                           |          |         |          |           |          |           |
|---------------------------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Equipment                 | \$0      | \$0     | \$0      | \$0       | \$0      | \$0       |
| Supplies                  | \$1,200  | \$1,000 | \$0      | \$0       | \$0      | \$2,200   |
| Contractual               | \$4,800  | \$6,000 | \$31,200 | \$395,000 | \$32,000 | \$469,000 |
| Other                     | \$0      | \$0     | \$0      | \$0       | \$0      | \$0       |
| <b>Total Direct Costs</b> | \$19,400 | \$9,750 | \$37,525 | \$399,400 | \$33,925 | \$500,000 |
| <b>Indirect Costs</b>     | \$0      | \$0     | \$0      | \$0       | \$0      | \$0       |
| <b>Total Budget</b>       | \$19,400 | \$9,750 | \$37,525 | \$399,400 | \$33,925 | \$500,000 |

**Cost Estimate Development – based on previous U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant implementation.**

**Task 1 Programmatic:** *Personnel* – 200 over four years hours at an average rate of \$55/hour = \$11,000; *Travel* - \$800 for County staff attendance at three conferences (travel, conference fee, hotel & food) = \$2,400; *Supplies* - \$1,200 for printing and distribution of program information materials, website maintenance and remote-hosting service (e.g., Zoom) fees. *Contractual* – QEP to complete QMP and assist in Quarterly Reports and Project Closeout - \$4,800.

**Task 2 Community Outreach:** *Personnel* – 50 hours (ten hours per five public meetings) at an average rate of \$55/hour = \$2,750; *Supplies* – \$1,000 for newspaper fees, website/social media fees, printing information materials; *Contractual* – 5 days for the QEP to attend and support outreach meetings at an average rate of \$1,200/day = \$6,000.

**Task 3 Site Inventory and Selection:** *Personnel* – 75 hours at an average rate of \$55/hour = \$4,125, coordination with land owners and potential developers; *Travel* – 40 hours at an average rate of \$55/hour = \$2,200 for County staff to visit potential sites; *Contractual* – 26 days for the QEP to assist in contacting site owners, completing Property Approval Questionnaires, canvassing, inventory database updates, and maintenance at an average rate of \$1,200/day = \$31,200.

**Task 4 Site Assessments:** *Personnel* – 80 hours at an average rate of \$55/hour = \$4,400, coordination with land owners, EPA and QEP; *Contractual* – The QEP will complete up to 20 Phase I ESAs at an average cost of \$6,000 each = \$120,000, a QAPrP at a cost of \$5,000, and up to 9 Phase II ESAs (including Site Access Agreements, FSP, HASP, and Phase II ESA report) at an average cost of \$30,000 each = \$270,000 (Total: \$399,400).

**Task 5 Remedial Planning and Design:** *Personnel* – 35 hours at an average rate of \$55/hour = \$1,925, coordination with developers, PADEP, and QEP; *Contractual* – The QEP will complete up to 4 RAPs at an average cost of \$8,000 each = \$32,000.

**3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results:** Paramount to sustaining progress toward brownfields assessment project goals is continuous and regular communication between the County, the QEP, and the US EPA Project Officer. Lackawanna will maintain open lines of communication throughout the performance period and schedule monthly update calls with the QEP and the US EPA Project Officer, as necessary. Consistent with the summary of tasks and activities above, Lackawanna intends to assess up to 5-8 sites per year (Phase I ESAs) and will evaluate overall progress toward that goal by performing an annual review of the requisite quarterly progress reports. Additionally, the solicitation for the QEP will require the submission of a project timeline based on the expected outputs identified in Section 3.b to ensure the program schedule is being met and deliverables are being completed in a timely and efficient manner. Lackawanna will also submit quarterly progress reports, annual MBE/WBE and FFR documentation, and update ACRES as deliverables are completed and progress is made on programmatic goals. Lackawanna will update ACRES when additional resources beyond the Assessment Grant are leveraged at a priority site, consistent with the approach of their previous assessment grant.

The table presented below lists some of the expected outputs and outcomes from the assessment program.

| Outputs   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community-involvement meetings</li> <li>• Number of assessment sites identified</li> <li>• Number of Phase I ESAs completed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Phase II ESAs completed</li> <li>• Number of remediation plan's</li> <li>• Quarterly reports</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of sites assessed</li> <li>• Acres of greenspace preserved/created</li> <li>• Tax-base increase</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of sites redeveloped</li> <li>• Jobs created/retained</li> <li>• Redevelopment value added</li> <li>• Number of affordable housing units developed</li> </ul> |

**4.a.i.-iii. Organizational Capacity, Structure & Description of Key Staff:** The Lackawanna County project team is ready to initiate the assessment work and will be responsible for managing the Assessment Grant and ensuring the successful outcomes. Ms. Brenda Sacco is the Director of the Lackawanna County Department of Economic Development (LCDED) and will be responsible for overall Assessment Grant management, communication and community outreach. Ms. Opshinsky, Lackawanna County Grants manager will oversee the day-to-day grant management operations and selected QEP. Ms. Sacco will also be responsible for the coordination of the site-selection process and project coordination. Ms. Sacco has over 20 years' experience in administration, project management, and budgeting, and is responsible for direct oversight of the daily operations of the County's Department of Planning and Economic Development. Ms. Opshinsky also has over 20-years' experience in grant writing, administration, project management, and budgeting and Act 137 Affordable Housing programs. Ms. Sacco and Ms. Opshinsky were instrumental in initiation the Lackawanna County Brownfields program and securing and managing the County's previous EPA Brownfields grant. Lackawanna County accounting representatives will manage and track all project financial transactions and generate required financial reports.

**4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources**

Lackawanna County has a demonstrated record of acquiring the additional resources necessary to lead a successful brownfields assessment program. Together, Ms. Sacco and Ms. Opshinsky were responsible for soliciting and retaining a QEP with significant experience in US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants to complete technical environmental tasks and reporting required by the grant program that are unable to be completed in house. The County has internal processes for the hiring of qualified contractors which adhere to the EPA's Solicitation Clauses. The County will retain a qualified environmental consultant to assist in the site inventory, site ranking and conduct the environmental assessments. The environmental consultant will be retained using a qualification-based selection process in accordance with Pennsylvania law and that complies with applicable federal funding procurement regulations (40 CFR §31.36). The County does not anticipate any subrecipients as part of this grant program. Additionally, Lackawanna has worked directly with their affiliate economic and industrial development organizations in the County and led the team which leveraged federal and state assistance to effectuate job creation, develop affordable housing and remove environmental hazards similar in scope and purpose to the proposed county-wide brownfields assessment grant program.

**4.b.i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant:** The County received a US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant in 2019 for hazardous substances (BF# 96369501). The County has completely drawn down and closed out this previous grant in 2023. While significant progress has been made, more work needs to be completed for the County to meet its redevelopment goals.

**(1) Accomplishments:** The County has conducted outreach meetings, developed an inventory of 134-sites and have completed 10 Phase I ESAs and four Phase II ESA's. The following is a brief description of the outputs and outcomes of the previous grant activities which have been updated in US ACRES; Capouse Avenue Site – Phase I and II completed, site is being sold for redevelopment to affordable housing; Storrs Colliery – Phase I and II completed, remediation plan completed, the site is being redevelopment into a recreational and open space park for public use; Noble BioMaterials – Phase I and II completed and remediation plan developed. Private funding of approximately \$150,000 leveraged for the completion of the remediation plan and the site was closed under the PADEP Voluntary Cleanup Program. The site is now being developed to expand the manufacturing business operations and will provide over 100- new full-time jobs. 601 Prospect – Phase I was completed facilitate the sale of the site to community non-profit partner Agency for Community Empowerment of Northeast Pennsylvania for redevelopment into affordable housing units.

**(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements:** The County has complied with all requirements of their previous US EPA Brownfields Community Wide Assessment Grant on time. The County has submitted Property Profile Forms, Quality Assurance Project Plan, Field Sampling Plans, Quarterly Reporting, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise reporting, Financial Reporting, as well as updating US ACRES. The previous funding has been successfully drawn down and has made positive contributions to the health and welfare of the County and is making steady and positive progress toward their brownfields redevelopment goals.