



COUNTY OF VANCE, NORTH CAROLINA

122 YOUNG STREET, SUITE B
HENDERSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27536

R04-24-A-030

C. RENEE PERRY
COUNTY MANAGER
(252) 738-2002

KELLY H. GRISSOM
CLERK TO BOARD
(252) 738-2003

**PROPOSAL FOR USEPA'S COMMUNITY-WIDE BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANT
RFP NO. EPA-OLEM-OBLR-23-12/ CFDA NO. 66.818
Section IV.D. – Narrative Information Sheet
November 13, 2023**

1. Applicant Identification

Vance County
122 Young Street STE E
Henderson, NC 27536-4268

2. Funding Requested

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

3. Location:

Vance County, North Carolina

4. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information:

• Target Area and Census Tract/Town/City of Target Area

<u>Target Area</u>	<u>Census Tract / Location</u>
Vance County/Henderson US-1Bus/I-85 Corridor	Vance County/Henderson Census Tracts: 37181960300, 37181960700 37181960100, 37181960600 37181960800, 37181960500 37181960400
Vance County/Henderson US-1/Hwy 39 Corridor	Vance County/Henderson Census Tracts: 37181961000, 37181960903 37181960901

- Addresses of Priority Site(s)

1. 200 Parham Road, Henderson, NC 27536 (Census Tract 9606)
2. 5434 and 5390 NC 39, Henderson, NC 27536(Census Tract 9603)
3. 341 North Chestnut Street, Henderson, NC 27536 (Census Tract 9605)

5. Contacts

a. Project Director / AOR

McKinley Perkinson, Director, Vance County Economic Development
Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission
326 South Garnett Street
Henderson, North Carolina 27536
Phone: 252-492-2094
E-mail: mperkinson@vancecounty.org

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Leo Kelly, Jr., Chairman, Board of Commissioners
Vance County, North Carolina
1214 Alpha Road
Henderson, NC 27536
Phone: 252-767-7957
Email: lkellyjr@nc.rr.com

6. Population

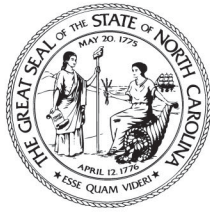
US Census Bureau, 2020:
Vance County: 42,578
City of Henderson: 15,060

7. Other Factors Checklist:

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	N/A
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).	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	N/A
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	(3) 1.b.ii
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in <u>Section I.B.</u> , for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	(8) 3.b
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 Environmental Authority: Attached

9. Releasing Copies of Applications: N/A



NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

November 7, 2023

ROY COOPER

Governor

ELIZABETH S. BISER

Secretary

MICHAEL SCOTT

Director

McKinley Perkinson
Director of Economic Development
Vance County
326 South Garnett St.
Henderson, NC 27536
mperkinson@vancecounty.org

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant – Vance County

Dear Ms. Perkinson

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS) acknowledges and supports Vance County's application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We understand that your grant will primarily focus on the Henderson commercial corridor and the US-1 and Hwy 39 Corridors within the County. Initial priority sites will include former gas stations at the NC-39 gateway, the former Henderson Laundry dry cleaners, and the former Best Value Inn in Henderson. The purpose of the grant will be to bring revitalization to these properties, which would be a significant achievement for the County.

The BRS offers technical project guidance to help ensure assessments conducted utilizing grant funds are in accordance with our program requirements throughout the life of your project. Coordination with the BRS is critical to ensuring that the assessments make efficient use of the federal funds awarded. The BRS can also assist with evaluating the benefits of entering specific properties into our State Brownfields Program through a brownfields agreement. A brownfields agreement outlines the controls needed to make the site safe for the intended reuse and is often a marketing tool for developers and instrumental in securing redevelopment financing. Additional tax incentives are also available upon completion of Brownfields redevelopment if completed in the State's Program.

We hope that the County is successfully awarded this grant, but we will continue to support you in your Brownfields redevelopment efforts whether a grant is awarded or not. We truly believe successful Brownfields projects can rejuvenate a community.

Sincerely,

Jordan Thompson
Brownfields Project Manager

cc: NCDEQ Brownfields Public Outreach Team



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Waste Management
217 West Jones Street | 1646 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1646
919.707.8200

VANCE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
Proposal of USEPA's Community Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant
EPA-OLEM-OBLR-23-12/ CDFA No. 66.818
Section IV.E – Narrative Proposal / Ranking Criteria – November 13, 2023

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Unless noted, references are latest publicly available and reflect the most current information.

1.a Target Area and Brownfields

1.a.i Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: The proposed Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Program will be led and managed by **Vance County, North Carolina (Vance or County)** with partner **City of Henderson (Henderson or City)**. Located in the northern Piedmont along the NC/VA border, Vance lies about 20 miles NE of Raleigh, NC and contains the southernmost reaches of the John H. Kerr Reservoir, the largest man-made lake east of the Mississippi River. **Henderson** is the County's largest City by far, accounting for 34% of Vance's total population and the majority of current and shuttered commercial and industrial businesses. Vance, formed in 1881, is mostly rural and small in population but rich in history with a strong sense of community.

From the 1880s through the 1990s, Vance County and Henderson grew and thrived as a center for the tobacco and textile industries. This area had not only tobacco growers, but also tobacco resellers, processors and manufacturing operations. However, in the past 20 to 30 years, the County's manufacturing, textile, warehousing, and tobacco industries have been hit hard by globalization, the tobacco "buy-out", and the outsourcing of jobs, leaving a large number of vacant and underutilized facilities. During this timeframe, Vance went from one of the most affluent areas of the State to one of the poorest, with the **fifth highest county unemployment rate in the State**¹. Since 2001, the North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDC) reported **117 business closings in Vance, resulting in 4,238 jobs lost**². In 2021, Henderson teamed with the UNC School of Government to perform a tax parcel assessment of the City's Elmwood District, which includes most of downtown and areas west of Chestnut Street. **Of the 481 parcels in the district, 86% were reported to show signs of mild to severe blight.**

This grant will focus on two Target Area Corridors, specifically in the **US-1 Business and I-85 Corridor** within which Henderson lies, and the **US-1 and HWY 39 Gateway Entrance Corridors to Vance County**. I-85 runs east to west, cutting the county in half, while US-1 and Hwy 39 provide access to the County from the north and south. Both are commercial corridors littered with brownfields, and the assessment, revitalization, and correcting of environmental justice issues is key to the community's revitalization. **Henderson lies at the intersection of these corridors in the heart of Vance**. This grant award will support Vance's vision and commitment to revitalize the area's economy and quality of life of its residents through reduction of health hazards, job creation, and increased commerce in the County's business districts.

1.a.ii. Description of Priority Brownfield Site(s):

In alignment with regional strategy and based on community need, Vance County has identified multiple brownfield sites in the target area corridors with the potential to become transformative revitalization assets. Priority sites discussed below are located in each Target Area Corridor.

Priority Site 1: 200 Parham Road, Henderson, North Carolina (Census Tract 9606). Located adjacent to I-85, this approximately 9-acre, pad-ready, priority site formerly contained a discount hotel and service station. Both former businesses have been razed with just asphalt and concrete paving remaining. The unrestricted site is bordered by low-income housing to the east, allowing disadvantaged residents free access to potential contaminants of concern (COCs) including petroleum, PCBs, metals, and volatile and semi-volatile organics (VOCs/SVOCs). Vance plans to promote this site for a new hotel to support a future Civic/Convention Center on adjacent property (see Section 1.b.i).

Priority Site 2: County Site, 5434 and 5390 NC 39, Henderson, North Carolina (Census Tract 9603). Located on the Hwy 39 Gateway Entrance Corridor in Vance County at a highly trafficked intersection, this unsecured priority site includes blighted properties that contain current and former gas stations and dilapidated storage units surrounded by

¹ <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/supplemental-release-december-2022-county-and-area-employment-numbers/open>

² <https://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx>

residential properties. Grant funds are needed to clarify site conditions that may hamper future redevelopment and/or pose a community health threat. Likely COCs include petroleum compounds, ACM, LBP, and metals. The site was selected as a priority site due to active redevelopment interest by the County to direct more planning efforts towards recreational use along this Kerr Lake gateway and cross-promoting Henderson to Kerr Lake tourism (see Section 1.b.i).

Priority Site 3: Former Henderson Laundry, 341 North Chestnut Street, Henderson, NC (Census Tract 9605). A former drycleaner site is projected for demolition and conversion to a parking lot for the City's planned open-air amphitheater next door. The site is located at a busy intersection adjacent to low-income housing with unrestricted access. A 2017 limited Phase II ESA commissioned by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's Dry-cleaning Solvent Cleanup Act (DSCA) program identified COCs in the soil and groundwater. Demolition of the dry-cleaner structure will require ACM and LBP assessment and management planning. This project will also require conceptual planning efforts to incorporate this site into the amphitheater project footprint and remediation planning to meet potential state cleanup goals. Because of the economic and community benefits and attractiveness of the planned amphitheater project, Vance anticipates the project will spur more commercial businesses to the area while also removing an environmental liability from the neighboring disadvantaged community.

1.a.iii. Identifying Additional Sites:

Vance County will use the following criteria to identify additional brownfield sites within the Target Corridors: first, through community engagement activities and outreach of the **VANCE BRAG** (See Section 2.b.), identify what the community sees as assets and needs within the identified underserved and disadvantaged areas using collected pertinent demographic (census tract) and environmental (EJScreen, etc.) data, as well as preferred development types; second, identify underutilized properties with revitalization potential where clean up and redevelopment can act as a catalyst to spur additional economic growth within the County; and third, identify potential reuses of the brownfield sites that match the community needs. Site attributes such as current use (vacant, abandoned, underutilized), parcel size, location, existing infrastructure, zoning, etc. will also be used in selection of additional sites.

1.b. Revitalization of the Target Area

1.b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans:

In 2023, **Vance County** leaders created their **Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP)** to guide collective actions to promote a more prosperous, successful, and vibrant community. Overarching EDSP goals include advocating for investments in tourism destinations and amenities that will attract tourists. This involves redeveloping blighted areas within Henderson, seeking a new upscale hotel and or Civic/Conference Center at/near Kerr Lake, and linking Kerr Lake and Henderson to boost retail, dining, and entertainment opportunities. The plan also identified County weaknesses, including dilapidated properties, the County's Tier 1 poverty status, and unmotivated property owners willing to invest, renovate, or redevelop. **Priority Sites 1, 2 and 3 align strategically with the EDSP by addressing sites directly associated with these stated goals.** The County currently owns approximately 20 acres along I-85 adjacent to Priority Site 1 for which they have planned a new Civic/Conference Center. Priority Site 1 was previously a discount motel site, and, at approximately 9 acres in size, the property has plenty of room for a new hotel to support the future Civic/Conference Center. Priority Site 2 is positioned along the Hwy-39 gateway entrance corridor to Henderson, linking Kerr Lake tourists to Henderson. The County would like to promote redevelopment of Priority Site 2 from abandoned, blighted properties to an outdoor recreation business that would tap into the natural resource of Kerr Lake and be an inviting draw for tourists to Henderson. Priority Site 3 will become part of the new amphitheater development plan, providing entertainment opportunities. Finally, this grant will provide the necessary funding to assist property owners in poverty who do not have the capital to pay for assessments, thus holding back reuse plans.

All priority sites are within **Vance County and the City's** key focus revitalization areas, strongly align with community redevelopment priorities, and benefit the underserved communities. Revitalization of the core downtown areas and County gateway corridors can reinvigorate the region and bring about the quality-of-life improvements needed to spur other revitalization goals.

1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy:

All priority project outcomes align with **Vance County's** reuse strategies, address environmental justice issues, and have the potential to strongly spur economic growth in the Target Area, as all are catalyst sites. Positive outcomes allow the Vance-Henderson partnership to continue to focus on enhancing economic potential within the Target Areas. By revitalizing the priority sites, multiple outcomes will be achieved, including the following: 1) removal of legacy pollutants, improving health outcomes for sensitive populations 2) reuse of historical structures 3) increased opportunity for community gathering and wellbeing 4) business growth and additional redevelopment within the Target Areas 5) increased property values 6) local job creation and 7) building upgrades. The benefits of these outcomes will have a major impact on Target Area residents and the surrounding communities, including the following: 1) increased mental and physical health, especially to disadvantaged communities 2) stronger community ties 3) updated buildings through use of energy efficient windows, appliances, lighting, and water fixtures and reduced stress on electrical grids and treatment facilities 4) improvement of past environmental injustices towards disadvantaged communities, and 5) decreased poverty levels due to increased economic opportunities. Additional specific economic and non-economic outcomes and benefits are detailed below.

Redevelopment of the Priority Sites benefits the adjoining disadvantaged communities by clarifying current site conditions and addressing needed cleanup. This will help diminish fear and anxiety of residents living next to a contaminated property with environmental justice concerns lingering from a business that closed over a decade ago. Cleanup eliminates environmental exposure risk to residents and future generations and builds trust between **Vance County** and its citizens. Site cleanup also attracts tenants to the region, creates local jobs, and increases local tax base, all of which increase the welfare and economic standing of the community. Planning efforts funded under this grant provide an opportunity for Vance to focus on climate resiliency by incorporating climate friendly best management practices (BMPs) into brownfield site reuse concepts. This includes methods to reduce total energy use and increase the percentage of energy from renewable resources; reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions; reduce water use and preserve water quality; conserve material resources and reduce waste; and protect land and ecosystems such as Kerr Lake. By prioritizing BMPs, Low Impact Development, and Green Infrastructure into site reuse plans, Vance will build and strengthen community resiliency to the effects of climate change and provide equitable development to its disadvantaged communities.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse:

Vance will work with community partners, organizations, and state and federal regulators to identify funding for future efforts related to their brownfields program initiative. **Vance** and the **City** have successfully utilized their own funds and leveraged multiple federal, regional, and state resources toward brownfield reuse. However, funding gaps remain, and Vance County will continue to strongly leverage additional capital for assessment, remediation, and reuse of priority and other Target Area sites. For example, the City funds an average of \$30,000 to \$50,000 annually to demolish blighted, abandoned structures present in the Target Area. The County and/or City have recently received and expended a \$2,000,000 Hope VI Community Revitalization grant for 22 second floor apartments bordering the Henderson railroad tracks, a \$2,000,000 Neighborhood Stabilization grant to demolish, rebuild, and refurbish dilapidated dwellings, several building reuse grants for the Harriet and Henderson South Plant, and multiple building reuse grants for economic development. Additionally, the County is well versed with state commerce grants and Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants having recently received and expended \$2.45 million at the industrial park and receiving an additional \$900,000 in EDA funds for economic development. Additional funds that will be pursued include Brownfields Cleanup Grants and grants through the Department of Commerce, CBDG grants for street repaving and water/sewer upgrades, the Golden Leaf Foundation, and the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund. Vance County also intends to leverage (and encourage current and potential property owners to leverage) other funding sources. These include the N.C. Dry Cleaning Solvent Fund, the N.C. Leaking UST Trust Fund, and tax credits (state historic mill, federal historic, new market, etc.). **Vance County** can also tap into non-grant assistance sources such as EPA's Smart Growth Program as well as non-profit Groundworks USA and the Brownfields Technical Assistance

Programs. The County will utilize the proposed EPA grant funds as a leveraging tool for additional funds (ex. local match requirements) where applicable.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The Priority Sites will use existing utility connections (water, sewer, gas, electricity, and telecommunications) and are located on primary roadways. Utility infrastructure and connections are in place with sufficient capacity for the redevelopment projects envisioned for Vance County’s Target Corridors, although some improvements may be necessary depending on specific reuse plans. Vance County will work collaboratively to address potential infrastructure deficiencies in other target areas through joint pursuit of available resources.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a. Community Need

2.a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding: The 2021 5-Year ACS Census Estimates are presented in the table below which illustrate that the County, particularly **Target Area Corridor census tracts**, lag well behind state levels in every economic and demographic metric presented. The income disparities reported correlate to lower property values demonstrated by County median housing value (MHV) being estimated at only 57% of the state MHV, which leads to decreased tax revenue to fund environmental assessments and planning.

Demographic	North Carolina	Vance County	City of Henderson	Census Tracts (CT) within Target Area Corridors
Population	10,367,022	42,650	15,084	N/A
Minority	33.8%	58.9%	73.6%	(CT9607) 90.3%
Over 65	16.3%	18.4%	16.9%	(CT9601) 32.2%
Median Household Income (MHI)	\$60,516	\$45,243	\$36,147	(CT9607) \$24,526
% of State MHI	N/A	75%	60%	41%
Unemployment	5.3%	6.5%	7.2%	(CT9606) 15.6%
Poverty Rate	14.0%	20.0%	29.3%	(CT9608) 41%
Under 5yrs old in Poverty	21.3%	30.4%	39.4%	(CT9601) 73.8%
% Utilizing Food Stamps	12.1%	23.2%	31.8%	(CT9608) 41.9%

All of Vance County, including Henderson, is designated as a Justice40 initiative and EPA IRA disadvantaged community³. The US Economic Development Administration identifies Vance County as a Persistent Poverty County⁴. These factors clearly demonstrate that Vance lacks critical financial resources to facilitate assessment, remediation, and redevelopment planning without outside funding such as this EPA grant.

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations:

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The table above demonstrates that **the Target Area contains a large minority population (>58%) and maintains poverty and unemployment rates up to two times higher than the State, thus contributing to the County’s Justice40 Initiative and EPA IRA disadvantaged status**. Henderson residents require food assistance at a rate nearly **triple** the remainder of North Carolina. These sensitive populations have the fewest resources to respond to or improve their welfare or environmental situations and are at risk of exposure to environmental contaminants such as ACM, LBP, petroleum, and volatile organics left behind by the industry closures noted in Section 1.a.ii. **These factors contribute to Henderson’s ranking in the 98th percentile for Low Life Expectancy⁶. Henderson also ranks in the 97th percentile for children under the age of 5.** Assessment, remedial planning, and site reuse will help alleviate impacts to children, minorities, and those in poverty by (1) creating new jobs that can improve economic conditions and thus alleviating poverty (2) attracting new business such as grocery stores

³ <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>

⁴ https://www.eda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/EDA_FY23_PPCs.xlsx

and medical facilities that can increase access to better nutrition and healthcare improving health outcomes, and (3) creating new housing, particularly affordable housing, or renovated housing, thus improving living conditions and reducing contaminant exposure risk. Facilitating site cleanup with this grant will eliminate exposure risk to vulnerable populations living near brownfield sites particularly at the unsecured Priority Sites identified in Section 1.a.ii.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: When compared to NC counties of similar population (+/- 1,500 - Pasquotank, Jackson), Vance’s incidents of **birth defects are seven times higher** than Pasquotank, and Vance residents experience **four times higher rates of Asthma** per 100,000 than Jackson. EPA EJScreen⁵ mapping for 2023 identifies the Target Area Corridors within the **92nd percentile for toxic releases to air, 86th percentile for presence of lead-based paint and 99th percentile for low life expectancy**. Environmental asthma triggers are known to include air pollution and industrial dust and fumes from brownfield sites. A 2019 study by the UNC School of Medicine identified Vance County within a localized hotspot for colorectal cancer⁷. UNC’s analysis of area-level data found a link between higher colorectal cancer deaths and high levels of socioeconomic deprivation. Assessment and remediation of brownfield sites located near sensitive populations (i.e. within high poverty areas and with large youth populations) that have the potential for releasing pollutants and carcinogens into the environment may reduce risks of asthma, cancer, and other above-normal adverse conditions. Reduced work travel outside the County from local job creation would help reduce cancer-causing and asthma-triggering air pollution.

The Priority Sites and other brownfields in the area can be contributing to above-normal incidence including cancer and asthma due to their former use (e.g., gas stations, dry cleaners, industries, legacy businesses which operated prior to regulatory oversight) and site COCs (e.g. petroleum, solvents, and other known carcinogens). Poor housing conditions are presumed to contain numerous asthma allergen triggers (ex. mold from leaking roofs) that can pose unfortunate exposure opportunities for someone with allergic asthma. Priority Site reuse plans (Section 1.b.i.) resolve health issues in two ways. First, through this grant, assessments will facilitate identification of environmental concerns and health risks to the community at priority sites. Additionally, assessments will inform site redevelopment, which will mitigate identified contaminants and therefore reduce threats of adverse health conditions to the surrounding communities. Second, new industries and services will improve quality of life by providing stable jobs, stable neighborhoods (i.e. control real estate price decline), and additional support services (e.g. grocery stores and health service providers), all of which improve overall health. Cleanup, particularly at the former Henderson drycleaner facility, eliminates lingering environmental justice concerns for yet another generation.

(3) Environmental Justice:

3.a Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: **All of Vance County (including Henderson) is classified as a Justice40 initiative and EPA IRA disadvantaged community.** According to the census data tabulated above in Section 2.a.i, the Target Area Corridors contain high minority populations, estimated at **74%** for Henderson and as high as **90%** in certain Target Area Corridor census tracts. EJScreen data for 2023 ranks **Henderson** residents within the **99th** percentile Demographic Index, **99th** percentile for People of Color, and **99th** percentile for Low Income Population. Additional socioeconomic variables are presented in the following table for **Henderson Target Area Corridor Census Tract 9607**. This grant will promote environmental justice in communities that strongly and disproportionately share negative consequences from Vance County’s industrial legacy.

SELECTED VARIABLES	VALUE	STATE AVERAGE	PERCENTILE IN STATE	USA AVERAGE	PERCENTILE IN USA
SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS					
Demographic Index	81%	36%	97	35%	96
Supplemental Demographic Index	27%	15%	93	14%	91
People of Color	96%	37%	97	39%	92
Low Income	67%	34%	92	31%	92
Unemployment Rate	14%	6%	90	6%	89
Low Life Expectancy	30%	21%	99	20%	99
Less Than High School Education	24%	12%	87	12%	86

⁵ <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/index.html?>

⁷ <https://unclineberger.org/news/researchers-identify-cluster-of-higher-colorectal-cancer-death-in-northeastern-n-c-counties/>

3.b Advancing Environmental Justice: This grant will assist in evaluating priority and other brownfield sites within the Target Areas and determine current site conditions, contaminants of concern and associated exposure risk which can then be mitigated during the redevelopment process. These efforts will not only address the disproportionate share of environmental consequences impacting the nearby disadvantaged population, but also improve the communities through increased local jobs, services, and property values. These actions will help rectify historical and ongoing environmental injustices in **Vance County**. Cleanup at a legacy industrial site (ETC), whose property boundary abuts low-income communities, is within reach and will help resolve environmental injustice experienced by these communities for decades. The Priority Site parcels are vacant and/or underutilized. The anticipated site reuses envisioned for the Priority Sites will provide services lacking in the Target Areas and will not compete with existing County businesses or cause the displacement of residents.

2.b. Community Engagement:

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

Vance will convene a citizen board known as the **Vance County Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Group (VANCE BRAG) to be led by County Staff** and informed by members from the City and Vance’s selected Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) team. The BRAG will advance a sustainable brownfields redevelopment program and serve as ambassadors, advisors, and a steering committee throughout the project, bringing their community vision and expertise as sites are prioritized to identify their reuse potential. The County will make final decisions on site redevelopment. To date, the following **Project Partners** (among others) have committed to participation in the program:

Partner Name	Point of Contact / Email / Phone	Specific Role in Project
Sandra Wilkerson- Chamber of Commerce Director	sandra@hendersonvance.org (252) 438-8414	BRAG Member. Space and staff support for public meetings. Educate and communicate program benefits through broad communication network.
Ruxton Bobbitt- Coldwell Baker Broker/Realtor	rbobbitt.cbadvantage.com (252) 431-6250	BRAG Member. Assist in site inventory and site prioritization, community engagement, and future redevelopment input. Educate and communicate program benefits through broad communication network and all other tasks as needed.
Michael Kelly- Kerr-Tar Council Of Governments Planning Director	mkelly@kerrtar.org (252) 436-2040	BRAG Member. Assist in site inventory and site prioritization, community engagement, and future redevelopment input. Space and staff support for public meetings. Educate and communicate program benefits through broad communication network and all other tasks as needed.
Dr. Jerry Edmonds- Vance Granville Community College	edmondsj@vgcc.edu (252) 738-3243	BRAG Member. Assist in site inventory and site prioritization, community engagement, and future redevelopment input. Space and staff support for public meetings. Educate and communicate program benefits through broad communication network and all other tasks as needed.
Dr. Abidan Shah- Clearview Church Pastor	Ashah22@nc.rr.com (252) 438-8433	BRAG Member. Community liaison to disadvantaged community. Space and staff support for public meetings. Educate and communicate program benefits through broad communication network.

2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input: In 2022, Henderson created the West End (in which Priority Site 3 lies) Urban Redevelopment Plan (URA). To advertise the undertaking, approximately 450 postcards were mailed to residents and property owners within the URA boundary. In addition, flyers advertising the listening session were delivered to all five churches within the URA boundary, Perry Memorial Library, and City Hall. A member of the Redevelopment Commission with personal ties to the neighborhood was also provided with flyers to distribute. Finally, the local radio station, WIZS, and local newspaper, the Henderson Dispatch, both ran stories prior to the listening session that provided

context regarding the URA process and informed the public about the event. The Vance BRAG will build upon these efforts to guide broader community outreach and support engaging stakeholders to better understand their needs, concerns, and interests related to brownfields. Vance will continue to pursue mechanisms that will provide a voice for the broader community and a forum for those who may not be directly represented by the BRAG to participate in site selection, cleanup, and reuse of other priority sites. The BRAG will establish a schedule for regular community updates through press releases, website content, and social media outlets. The BRAG may also include open house meetings and planning charrettes to occur throughout the 4-year project period. With focus on stakeholders most affected in the target area, these meetings will include updates by BRAG members, staff and consultants to provide an open forum for engagement and education. By nature, Project Partners such as Clearview Church have the ability to represent disadvantaged communities by communicating their needs and disseminating information, benefitting Target Area residents with limited internet and/or phone access.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES AND MEASURING PROGRESS

3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs (Sections 3.a.i.-v. outlined under each task)

Task 1 – Program Administration / Community Engagement	
i.	Project Implementation: Cooperative Agreement Oversight includes program and financial management to ensure compliance with grant requirements; oversee data input to EPA’s ACRES database; attend brownfield-related training and conferences; and submit quarterly, annual, and final performance reports. If specific, eligible, and appropriate activities occur beyond the priority sites are needed, the same process described herein will be followed as needed. Community Engagement includes coordinating and conducting meetings and developing materials. Grant-funded direct costs: Travel expenses (registration, airfare, lodging, and meals), supplies, and contractual costs for assistance with reporting and maintaining interactions with stakeholders. Non-EPA funded activities: In-kind County Staff/Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) oversight for administration, monitoring, reporting, and community engagement activities and attending training conferences.
ii.	Anticipated Project Schedule: Procure Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) (4.a.iii): Q1; ACRES and quarterly reports: Quarterly and as needed; Annual and closeout reports: Q4, Q8, Q12, Q16; BTF meeting: Q2 and quarterly thereafter; Other activities: Ongoing and as needed.
iii.	Task / Activity Lead: County Staff led by AOR (See Section 4.a) with input/assistance from QEP and BTF.
iv.	Outputs: RFP/QEP Contract (1); Quarterly Reports (16 Total - 4/Year); Annual Reports (3); Closeout Report (1); Property Profile Forms/ACRES Site Entries (18); BTF Meetings (16); Community Meetings (8); Conferences (3); Brochures (3); Media Releases (6); Web Page Content (3); Advertisement, printing, and supplies (5 events).
Task 2 – Site Inventory and Prioritization	
i.	Project Implementation: The County will prepare a GIS brownfields site inventory and database for Priority and Target Area sites described in Section 1.a.ii and include sites in underserved communities within the geographic area. These properties will be compiled, mapped, characterized, and prioritized by the BTF and County based on community vision, redevelopment potential, and community needs. A pool of sites will be selected for assessment from the target areas. If grant funds remain after addressing the priority sites, the most current EJ Screening Tool will be used to identify additional sites in underserved communities within the geographic area. When sites have been identified, they will be selected using the same criteria. No assessments will be conducted prior to confirming eligibility with EPA and DEQ, if applicable, for petroleum sites using Property Approval Questionnaires (PAQs). Grant-funded activities: Contractual costs to update, maintain inventory/database and prepare PAQs. Non-EPA funded activities: In-kind County Staff/AOR oversight, site prioritization, and property owner access coordination.
ii.	Anticipated Project Schedule: Site inventory and database, prioritization, selection: Q2 – Q3, update monthly; Other activities: Ongoing and as needed.
iii.	Task / Activity Lead: QEP will prepare/maintain inventory and PAQs with County staff/AOR oversight assistance with access coordination and work product review/approval. BTF will provide site selection and prioritization input.
iv.	Outputs: Inventory/Database (1); Prioritization Matrix (1); New and/or updated PAQs (18)

Task 3 – Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)	
i.	Project Implementation: Upon receiving eligibility approval and access from property owners, approximately 12 Phase I ESAs will be conducted beginning with Priority Sites. Phase I ESA time and costs are contingent upon property size, existing improvements, past uses, and extent of known or suspected Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs). Based on Phase I ESA results, approximately 4 sites will be addressed through Phase II ESAs, which include (a) project work plans, i.e. (generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)), site specific Health and Safety Plans (HASPs), and Field Sampling Plans (FSPs); (b) soil, groundwater and/or air sampling; (c) lab analyses and data validation; and (d) summary reports with recommendations for further action, if warranted. Grant-funded activities: Contractual costs for assessments, work plans, and reports. Non-EPA funded activities: In-kind County Staff/AOR oversight, coordination with property owners, and review of work products prior to EPA submittal.
ii.	Anticipated Project Schedule: Phase I ESAs: Q3 – Q15 (after creating inventory database and priority list); Phase II ESAs: Q3 – Q15 (following Phase I review and priority list)
iii.	Task / Activity Lead: QEP with County Staff/AOR oversight, assistance with property owner coordination and community input, and work product review/approval.
iv.	Outputs: Phase I ESA Reports (12); Phase II ESA Reports (4); Phase II ESA Planning Documents (9 Total): Generic QAPP (1), HASPs (4) and FSPs (4)
Task 4 – Preliminary Planning for Remediation and/or Redevelopment	
i.	Project Implementation: For some sites addressed through Phase II ESAs, preliminary remediation plans (Analyses of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives or ABCAs) and associated cost estimates will be prepared to review alternatives for further environmental investigation and/or remediation, if warranted. County staff and QEP will also work with stakeholders to conduct preliminary redevelopment planning for selected target areas and/or sites to explore best reuse and economic potential. This may include reuse plans, marketing/feasibility studies, master plans, infrastructure evaluations, and conceptual development plans. Grant-funded activities: QEP costs for remediation and redevelopment plans. Non-EPA funded activities: In-kind County Staff/AOR oversight, coordination with property owners and community partners to prepare plans and review/approve work products.
ii.	Anticipated Schedule: Q3 – Q15
iii.	Task / Activity Lead: QEP with County Staff/AOR oversight, assistance with property owner coordination and community input, and work product review/approval.
iv.	Outputs: Site-Specific ABCAs (2); Site-Specific Redevelopment Plans / Studies for priority sites (4); Area-Wide Revitalization Plans / Studies for target areas (2)

3.b. Cost Estimates: The **Project Budget Table** below provides direct costs to the defined tasks and cost types.

Budget Categories		Task 1 Grant Admin / Grant Reporting/ Com. Engagement	Task 2 Site Inventory / Prioritization	Task 3 Environmental Site Assessments	Task 4 Remediation / Redevelopment Planning	Total
Direct Costs	Travel	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
	Supplies	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,000
	Contractual	\$39,200	\$35,000	\$262,800	\$150,000	\$487,000
TOTAL BUDGET		\$52,200	\$35,000	\$262,800	\$150,000	\$500,000

3.b.i / 3.b.ii. Development and Application of Cost Estimates: The **Project Budget Table** below provides direct costs to the defined tasks and cost types including cost estimates for each task, the cost development based on reasonable and realistic unit costs, and cost application to task activities. Cost estimates include an allocation of **53%** of funds

towards site-specific assessments and 30% of funds towards reuse/area-wide planning activities. Remaining funds will be used towards grant administration, community engagement, and site inventory and prioritization. **The County will not charge indirect costs.**

Task 1 – Grant Reporting / Community Engagement – \$52,200 Total – Direct & Contractual	
(a)	Travel – \$10,000 Total (Direct Expense) – Attendance of 2 national conferences for 1 person and 3 state conferences for 2 people assuming the following unit costs (national/state): Conference registration: \$255/\$190; Transportation: \$1000/\$205; Hotel: \$200 per night for 3 nights/\$175 per night for 2 nights; Meals: \$70 per day for 4 days/\$70 per day for 3 days
(b)	Supplies – \$3,000 Total (Direct Expense) – Advertisement, printing, supplies, and promotional materials for 6 community-wide and/or site-specific events estimated @ \$500 per event.
(c)	Contractual – \$39,200 Total – QEP assistance for reporting / grant reporting: \$1,200/quarter (\$4,800/year, \$19,200 Total); and QEP assistance for community engagement activities/BTF meetings, including development of communication materials: \$1,250/quarter (\$5,000/year, \$20,000 Total)
Task 2 – Site Inventory and Prioritization – \$35,000 Contractual	
(a)	Develop and maintain a GIS brownfields site inventory mapping/database and site prioritization matrix estimated: \$15,000 Total
(b)	Site access coord., assistance, preparation, and submittal of PAQs: \$1,250/quarter (\$5,000/year, \$20,000 Total)
Task 3 – Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)* – \$262,800 Total – Contractual	
(a)	Phase I ESAs – Twelve (12) @ \$5,250 average – \$63,000 Total
(b)	Phase II ESAs – Four (4) @ \$42,250 average – \$169,000 Total
(c)	Project Work Plans – Nine (9) plans – \$30,800 Total, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan – 1 @ \$ 6,000 Total • Site-Specific Health & Safety Plans (HASPs)** – 4 @ \$1,200 average – \$4,800 Total • Site-Specific Sampling & Analysis Plans (SAPs)** – 4 @ \$5,000 average – \$20,000 Total
Task 4 – Remediation / Redevelopment Plans – \$150,000 Total – Contractual	
Based on site conditions following assessment, Vance anticipates completing approximately nine (9) planning documents estimated as follows:	
(a)	Preliminary Site Remediation Plans (ABCAs) – 2 @ \$15,000 average – \$30,000 Total
(b)	Site-Specific Redevelopment/Reuse Plans/Studies – 4 @ \$15,000 average – \$60,000 Total
(c)	Area-Wide Redevelopment Plans/Studies – 3 @ \$ 20,000 average – \$60,000 Total

* Unit costs for ESAs are estimates and may change depending on site-specific conditions.

** HASPs and SAPs will be combined into single report submittal.

3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To maintain steady progress throughout the grant, the QEP will prepare **monthly reports to Vance and BRAG** in compliance with the approved **EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan**, which will summarize activities (e.g. milestones achieved, issues encountered, and budget and schedule updates). Progress will be measured by the outputs defined in Section 3.a.iv. and evaluated against the schedule in Section 3.a.ii. and costs defined in Section 3.b. Significant deviations will be discussed with the EPA Project Officer to develop corrective actions. Updates will be reported upon implementation and completion of each site-related task in **EPA’s ACRES database**, and **Vance** will provide ongoing (quarterly, at a minimum) and post-grant information describing outcomes and benefits of the funding, including additional funds leveraged, jobs created, acres made ready for redevelopment, and private investment and tax revenue generated by the program.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a. Programmatic Capability

4.a.i. / 4.a.ii. / 4.a.iii. Organizational Capacity, Organizational Structure, and Description of Key Staff:

The table below describes the future Brownfields program’s organizational structure as well as key staff experience and qualifications, including education, professional experience, and current position with the County. Key staff fulfill roles that provide the technical, administrative, and financial capacity to provide grant oversight, management, and administration. If additional staff or resources are required, the County will seek in-house talent.

AOR/Project Manager: McKinley Perkinson, Director, Vance County Economic Development

McKinley Perkinson, Director, Vance County Economic Development, will act as the Authorized Organizational Representative, providing direction and oversight of the anticipated EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. McKinley holds a bachelor's degree in communication and public Relations and a Master's degree in Management and Leadership. She has 14+ years' experience with business attraction, business marketing, existing business support, strategic planning, event planning, and financial management.

FINANCE: Katherine Bigelow, Vance County Finance Director

Katherine Bigelow has been the Finance Director for Vance County since 2019. She started her government career in 2013. She is a graduate of UNC Wilmington with B.S. degrees in Finance and Accounting and a graduate from NC State University with a M.S. in Accountancy. She also holds the designations of CPA and CFA. Additionally, Katherine has been the State Treasurer for Virginia Ducks Unlimited since 2014 and is an active member of her local chapter. Katherine will handle ASAP drawdowns and accounting of the EPA Grant.

TECHNICAL: Jerry "Franki" Nobles, Vance County Special Projects Coordinator

Jerry "Frankie" Nobles has been employed with Vance County for 14 years and currently holds the position of Special Projects Coordinator. In this role, he oversees policy review, community relations, and project coordination. He also assists county departments with locating and applying for grants for continued community improvements and currently serves as the interim director of the planning department for Vance County.

4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The County will rely on a **Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)** with appropriate expertise and resources to carry out the technical aspects of its Brownfields Program. The County follows competitive negotiation procedures required for all public bodies in the state to obtain professional services at a reasonable cost. All procurement procedures will be conducted in compliance with 40 CFR 31.36 and the NC public procurement procedures for Qualifications Based Selection (QBS). Beginning with advertisement of a request for qualifications and proposals for professional services, followed by interviews with top candidates if needed, staff will score applicants and select and negotiate a contract with a qualified candidate. Applicable EPA solicitation clauses will be incorporated into the County's solicitation and final contract executed with the selected QEP.

4.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

4.b.i / 4.b.ii Vance County has not previously received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has received other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements:

(1) Purpose and Accomplishments: Vance County has an excellent track record in grant management and performing all phases of work within a multitude of funding program awards to the County. Recent awards include: \$12.1 million loan/grant combination from the USDA-RD to construct a county-wide water system which assisted in providing safe drinking water to residents; multiple building reuse grants from the North Carolina Department of Commerce leading to the creation of jobs and redeveloped buildings within Vance County (\$500,000); \$8,650,402 in American Rescue Plan Act funding; \$761,040 grant from US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) coupled with \$190,260 in NC Commerce funds to promote job creation through roadway and sewer upgrades for Phase 3 of the Henderson-Vance Industrial Park. The succession of multiple grant funds further demonstrates Vance County's ability to successfully complete grant projects. These awards clearly indicate Vance County's success in leveraging multiple resources and managing funds for projects and align with Vance's plans for redevelopment of brownfields sites.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: As noted above, the County has managed both federally and non-federally funded projects and is fully capable of successfully completing all phases of work under this cooperative agreement. The County and City were both recipients of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) federal funds and are well versed in compliance and reporting requirements. The County is familiar with and understands the necessity of developing work plans, creating and maintaining schedules, and assuring adherence to project terms and conditions. For all projects identified above, all applicable site information, required administrative reports, design documentation and final inspections were submitted in a timely manner and approved by funding and regulatory agencies with purview. Final project closeout was accomplished for these projects in compliance with program requirements and schedules.

VANCE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
PROPOSAL FOR USEPA’S COMMUNITY-WIDE BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANT
RFP NO. EPA-OLEM-OBLR-23-12/ CFDA NO. 66.818
Section III.B. – Threshold Criteria
November 13, 2023

1. Applicant Eligibility

Vance County, North Carolina, formed in 1881, is a small rural area rich in history with a strong sense of community. As a chartered political subdivision of the State of North Carolina, Vance County is considered a **General Purpose Unit of Local Government** and an eligible applicant for funding under EPA guidelines having rights to conduct associated activities within the County’s incorporated limits under the EPA Cooperative Agreement.

2. Community Involvement

Vance County will convene a citizen board known as the **Vance County Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Group (VANCE BRAG)** to be led and informed by County Staff. The BRAG will advance a sustainable brownfields redevelopment program and will serve as ambassadors, advisors and a steering committee throughout the project, bringing their community vision and expertise as sites are prioritized to identify their reuse potential. The community involvement and communications component of the proposed brownfields assessment program, which is described in greater detail in the County’s narrative proposal **Section 2.b –Community Engagement**, includes (1) regular team meetings, (2) project updates at advertised public meetings, particularly at meetings and work sessions of the VANCE BRAG, (3) maintaining a brownfields project information section on the County’s website, (4) preparing printed materials, e.g., program brochures, and media releases to disseminate project updates and program success stories. Vance County will also extend its outreach efforts to include opportunities for citizens to review project deliverables, especially remediation and redevelopment plans, through presentations to local business and civic organizations and through small group and neighborhood meetings, open house events and planning charrettes, facilitated by the BRAG, staff, and consultants, to allow a broad range of community perspectives.

3. Expenditure of Assessment Grant Funds

Not Applicable: The applicant affirms it does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not applicable – the applicant has not identified a procurement contractor nor subrecipient to conduct work proposed in this application.