



RO6-24-A-002

### **1. Applicant Identification**

Americans for Action (A4A)  
PO Box 1087  
Marianna, AR 72360

### **2. Funding Requested**

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

### **3. Location**

- a) City of Marianna b) Lee County c) Arkansas

### **4. Target Area and Priority Site Information**

Target Area Information: City of Marianna (Census Tract 4703)

Priority Site Information

- Abandoned Coca-Cola Plant, 612-676 Poplar St. Marianna, Lee County AR 72360
- Old Train Depot, 103 W Mississippi St. Marianna, Lee County AR 72360

### **5. Contacts**

#### **a. Project Director**

Malik Barnes, A4A Executive Director  
870-260-7595

[mbarnes@americans4action.org](mailto:mbarnes@americans4action.org)

PO Box 1087

Marianna, AR 72360

#### **b. Chief Executive/ Highest Ranking Official**

Dr. Mildred Griggs JD, Chair of The A4A Board  
870-509-2003

[mbgriggs@illinois.edu](mailto:mbgriggs@illinois.edu)

PO Box 1087

Marianna, AR 72360

**6. Population**

City of Marianna, Arkansas: 3674 (US 2020 Census)

**7. Other Factors**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1
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.	2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The reuse strategy or project reuse of the priority site(s) considers climate adaptation and/or mitigation measures	3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area.	N/A
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2012 or later) or is closing.	N/A

**8. Letter from State of Tribal Environmental Authority**

See Attached.

**9. Releasing Copies of Applications**

Not Applicable.



**DIVISION OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
GOVERNOR

Shane E. Khoury  
SECRETARY

November 6, 2023

Electronic Mail Only

Malik Barnes, Executive Director  
Americans for Action  
P.O. Box 1087  
Marianna, Arkansas 72360

**RE: Letter of Support for Americans for Action's FY24 EPA Community-wide Assessment Grant Application**

Dear Mr. Barnes:

The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is pleased to provide this letter in support of Americans for Action's (A4A's) application for an EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant in Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24).

If awarded, the Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant will facilitate redevelopment activities in St. Francis, Lee, Phillips, and Monroe Counties, all located in Arkansas's Delta region. A4A has worked with community leaders in these counties to develop a comprehensive needs assessment for the region, and will use grant funds to compile local brownfield site inventories, to conduct assessments, and to develop cleanup and reuse plans.

DEQ strongly supports local efforts to address brownfields. As the state response program, DEQ's Arkansas Brownfield Program will continue to offer Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBAs) for eligible properties in these communities, funding for direct cleanups as available, and technical assistance.

Please feel free to contact me at 501-682-0616 or by email at [Addie.Smith@Arkansas.gov](mailto:Addie.Smith@Arkansas.gov) if further assistance is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'ASmith'.

Addie Smith, Arkansas Brownfield Program Coordinator  
Division of Environmental Quality



**FY 24 EPA BROWNFIELDS COMMUNITY WIDE ASSESMENT  
GRANT NARRATIVE**

**1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

a. Target Area and Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Americans for Action’s (A4A) **geographic boundary** consist of four counties (St. Francis, Lee, Phillips, and Monroe) spanning 2,611 square miles. This region contains some of the states most economically distressed and rural communities. All four of the counties have experienced significant economic and population decline since 2010. These counties were hit especially hard by the closure of many of the remaining commercial and industrial businesses during the outbreak of COVID-19. Because of their size, these communities often lack access to matching funds, grants, and other services readily available to urban areas. The lack of these services has disproportionately affected sensitive populations that make up most residents in these communities. Today, many of its neighborhoods, downtown commercial districts, and industrial sites now sit dilapidated, leaving behind blighted and unsafe conditions throughout the region. A4A has chosen the City of Marianna as the **target area (Census Tract [CT] 4703)** due to the Justice40 Initiative social and environmental justice issues that need to be addressed. Marianna (population 3,674) located in the Arkansas Delta, has a long history of serving as an agricultural and industrial hub until the late 1900’s. Several of the downtown buildings including former movie theaters, restaurants, and stores have been vacant for the last two decades. The City of Marianna has historically served as a point of socio-economic advancement for African Americans which still make the majority of its population today (75%)<sup>1</sup>. City leaders have spent the last few years planning the meaningful reuse of several dilapidated buildings but has lacked the funding and the capacity to pursue funding to address the environmental concerns at these properties. The vacant properties have sat idle, with ceilings caved in and walls collapsed, some serving as unsafe refuge for the homeless. In addition, these properties serve as an environmental threat to the sensitive populations that make up the community and a strong deterrent for the redevelopment of the target area. This Brownfield Assessment Grant will be a pivotal step in providing severely needed funding to identify, characterize, and plan for revitalization of the area.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): While Marianna has dozens of dilapidated: commercial properties, single and multi-family residences, former gas stations, and a former train depot. A4A, along with City leaders and the target area residents will work tirelessly to identify and prioritize brownfield sites through a grant-funded site inventory. The City of Marianna hosts two priority sites, the **abandoned Coca-Cola Plant**, and the **Old Train Depot**, which have strong redevelopment potential since the city owns both real properties and has created plans for the meaningful revitalization of these sites but lack the funding to address the environmental concerns of these sites. The first priority site is the **abandoned Coca-Cola Plant** (approximately 1.8 acres), located in the city’s industrial district. The entire property is currently owned by the City **allowing for immediate site access for assessment upon award of funding**. The single-story brick and steel warehouse facility reportedly opened in the early 1900’s and served as one of the few major employers for African Americans at the time until its closure in the early 1970’s. The facility has vacant for over 30 years, and despite significant resources from the City to protect the property from vandalism, the City’s resources are not sufficient to keep people from breaking into the building. The building has been stripped of copper piping and wiring and left with crumbling interior finishes, collapsed walls and ceilings, and broken and dismantled fixtures. In addition, illegally dumped trash and peeling paint can be seen throughout the inside and outside of the building. Environmental

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. “Income and Poverty in the United States: 2021.”

concerns on the site from historical operations include potential for underground storage tanks (USTs), chemicals with volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and semi volatile organic compounds (SVOCs). Based on the age of these buildings, a high likelihood that asbestos containing material (ACMs) and lead-based paint (LBP) were used in construction exists. The long history of vacancy and lack of routine maintenance has allowed building materials to decay, creating a significant potential for mold growth. The second priority site is the former **Old Train Depot (0.85 acres)**. This property was developed as a train depot in 1915 by the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company. This single story, 15,340 square foot facility was owned and operated by the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company as a passenger and freight stop until the late 1980's when the city acquired the building. Since then, it has been listed on the US National Register of Historic Places and has functioned as a job training center, and later a food pantry in the early 2000's. The building presently sits in a severely dilapidated condition, due to the age, the chipping and peeling paint are likely lead based (LBP) and the crumbling plaster/drywall likely asbestos containing material (ACM). The city invests a significant number of resources to protect the building and protect the public from being harmed from its dilapidated condition. However, their resources prove to be insufficient as the building is routinely vandalized and periodically inhabited by homeless sensitive populations thus creating elevated potential for exposure. The site is located along the old railroad service line and is also adjacent to a historical auto service station (potential contamination from petroleum products, solvents, and degreasers such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, lead, naphthalene, and methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE). **As the City owns this site, site access and assessment can happen immediately upon award of funding.**

**b. Revitalization of the Target Area** i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The city of Marianna, grappling with the challenges of dilapidated and abandoned buildings, faces issues of illegal dumping, vandalism, and squatter activities. These problems are starkly depicted in the 2023 YouTube video "Arkansas: The Bleakest Towns I've Ever Visited – The Dying, Forgotten Delta," showcasing the urgent need for revitalization. In response, Americans for Action (A4A) conducted a Comprehensive Community Distress Assessment (CCDA) in collaboration with community leaders, public officials, and residents. The CCDA pinpointed key priorities for economic and community development, focusing on reducing community blight, creating better opportunities for residents, and enhancing access to fresh produce. A4A, in partnership with the City of Marianna, has developed a strategic reuse plan for the priority brownfield sites. The **Old Train Depot**, owned by the city, is envisioned to be transformed into a vibrant community center. This center will not only provide workspace for local nonprofit groups but also feature a public green space, a small gym, and pathways to higher-wage jobs and educational programs in the region. This initiative is aimed at fostering community engagement and improving the quality of life for residents. Furthermore, the **abandoned Coca-Cola plant** is set to be repurposed into a **community-owned and operated vertical aeroponics facility**. This innovative project aims to supply fresh, locally grown produce to the community, schools, and restaurants. It represents a significant step towards addressing food insecurity and promoting sustainable urban agriculture in Marianna. These revitalization plans are aligned with the broader goals of **stimulating economic growth, enhancing community well-being, and creating a sustainable future for Marianna**. The transformation of these brownfield sites into community assets is a testament to A4A's commitment to driving positive change in the Arkansas Delta region.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The transformation of **abandoned Coca-Cola Plant** and the **Old Train Depot** in Marianna into a community-owned/operated vertical aeroponics facility and a

multifunctional community center, respectively, will yield significant benefits. The aeroponics facility will address food insecurity and promote sustainable urban agriculture, offering a non-economic benefit by enhancing community health and well-being. The community center, providing space for local nonprofits, a gym, and educational pathways, will foster community engagement and inclusivity, another key non-economic benefit. Economically, these projects are expected to create new job opportunities and stimulate local economic growth. The aeroponics facility will introduce innovative agricultural practices to the region, potentially creating new markets and job opportunities. The community center will not only serve as a hub for local activities but also potentially attract new businesses and services to the area, contributing to the economic revitalization of Marianna.

**c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources:** i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: Americans for Action (A4A) is poised to leverage a variety of funding sources to support the redevelopment of the brownfield sites. This includes pursuing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, which is instrumental in addressing community blight and supporting redevelopment efforts. Additionally, A4A will explore Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants, aligning the redevelopment projects with their eligibility criteria. As the projects progress, A4A will assist the City of Marianna in applying for EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant funding for the remediation of assessed sites. The organization's expertise in grant applications and project management will be pivotal in securing these resources.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The redevelopment plans in Marianna will utilize and enhance the existing infrastructure. The strategic location of the brownfield sites within the city means that essential infrastructure – including transportation, water, sewer, and power – is already in place. As the projects develop, A4A will work closely with the city to assess and address any additional infrastructure needs, ensuring that the redevelopment not only leverages but also strengthens the existing urban framework.

## **2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**a. Community Need** i. The Community's Need for Funding: The A4A target area, (CT 4703), has been grappling with persistent economic distress for over three decades. The median household income in CT 4703 stands at a mere \$17,932, starkly contrasting with the Arkansas state average of \$55,432 and the US average of \$74,850<sup>2</sup>. This area continues to face significant economic decline, necessitating a blend of public and private investment to foster long-term positive change for its residents. The poverty rate in CT 4703 is alarmingly high at 39%, far exceeding the state rate of 16.8% and the national rate of 11.5%. The unemployment rate in CT 4703 is 4.7%, higher than the state's 2.9% and the national average of 3.9%. These figures underscore the acute need for funding and support in this area. A4A does not have discretionary funding to pursue assessment activities on its own. To date A4A has been working closely with The City to increase their capacity to apply for federal and state funding for projects to supplement existing City programs. The city already invests a significant amount of its limited resources in the surveillance of the two priority sites unfortunately, the City's resources are not sufficient to keep people from breaking into the building. Currently, the City's budget funding is committed to basic services, and it does not have additional funds dedicated to assessment activities. Thus, residents continue to endure blight and potential ongoing negative health effects from underused properties in the target area. This EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant funding will serve as a critical initial step in identifying environmental risks, spur revitalization, break the cycle of poverty and crime, and establish a stronger community.

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<sup>2</sup> Census.gov

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The sensitive populations in CT 4703, predominantly in Marianna, face significant challenges. The sensitive populations in this area are minorities: 75% African American residents compared to 13% in the US, a substantial elderly population, and a notable proportion of female householders with no spouse present (61%, more than double the US average of 25%). Additionally, a considerable segment of the population lives in poverty (39%, compared to 13% nationally)<sup>3</sup>. CT 4703's residents are heavily reliant on government food assistance, with more than 23% of the population dependent on such aid, which is more than double the national average of 11%. The unemployment rate in this area is alarmingly high at 9%, nearly double the US average of 5%<sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>. These economic hardships are compounded by the fact that 14% of households in the area lack access to a vehicle, making it challenging to access healthy food options. This is particularly concerning as the US Department of Agriculture identifies the area as a Food Desert, indicating both low income and limited access to healthy food options. Health outcomes in CT 4703 are troubling, with the area ranking in the lowest percentile for both Health Outcomes and Health Factors. Specific health issues include high rates of adult obesity and physical inactivity<sup>6</sup>. The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool further highlights the area's health challenges, with Marianna ranking in the 94th percentile for asthma, 97th for diabetes, 96th for heart disease, and 96th for low life expectancy. These statistics underscore the urgent need for interventions to improve the health and welfare of the area's residents.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: The sensitive populations in CT 4703 are at a heightened risk of diseases and adverse health conditions due to environmental factors. The area's deteriorating buildings, including the abandoned Coca-Cola plant and Old Train Depot, pose ongoing air quality threats due to lead-based paint (LBP) and asbestos-containing materials (ACM). These buildings, along with other sites such as former filling stations and suspected laundry/dry-cleaning facilities, are potential sources of hazardous substances and petroleum products, posing risks for vapor intrusion and exposure to carcinogenic compounds. The Arkansas Cancer Facts & Figures report places Lee County, encompassing CT 4703, at the 5th position out of 75 counties for age-adjusted incident rates of cancer.<sup>7</sup> The EPA Environmental Justice Screening Report further emphasizes the area's vulnerability, with high percentile rankings for air toxics cancer risk, respiratory hazards, risk from LBP, and underground storage tank count. These environmental concerns, coupled with the high incidence of asthma in the area, highlight the critical need for environmental assessments and remediation.

(3) Promoting Environmental Justice: CT 4703, including Marianna, is plagued by numerous vacant or abandoned properties, contributing to environmental degradation, blight, and opportunities for illegal activities. These conditions disproportionately affect the area's low-income residents, high poverty residents, and those with limited educational attainment. The Biden Administration's Justice40 Initiatives emphasize the importance of addressing these environmental justice (EJ) issues in communities like CT 4703. The area's demographics, with a high percentage of low-income residents (95th percentile), high poverty rates (92nd percentile), and a significant portion of the population with less than a high school

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<sup>3</sup> Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool

<sup>4</sup> Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics

<sup>6</sup> CDC: Assessment of Factors Contributing to Health Outcomes in the Eight States of the Mississippi Delta Region. Preventing chronic disease

<sup>7</sup> Healthy Arkansas.gov



education (24%), underscore the urgency of these challenges<sup>8</sup>. The lack of maintenance and the presence of numerous abandoned properties in CT 4703 have led to ongoing exposure to environmental contaminants, exacerbating poverty and contributing to high crime rates. The area's high unemployment rate (98th percentile) and low median income (97th percentile) further highlight the economic struggles faced by the community. Additionally, the low educational attainment, with only 9% holding a bachelor's degree and 6% an associate's degree, limits opportunities for upward mobility. Securing the Brownfield Assessment Grant is a crucial step towards mitigating these EJ issues. This funding will aid in the identification and assessment of environmental hazards in the area, paving the way for remediation and redevelopment. The removal of hazardous materials from key sites like the Old Coca-Cola plant, and the Old Train Depot, will not only reduce health risks but also stimulate economic growth by creating job opportunities. The transformation of these brownfield sites will extend benefits far beyond mere environmental cleanup. The Old Train Depot, set to be repurposed into a vibrant community center, will not only offer workspace for local nonprofits but also feature a public green space and a small gym, fostering community engagement and enhancing the quality of life. Additionally, the conversion of the abandoned Coca-Cola plant into a community-operated vertical aeroponics facility marks a significant step towards combating food insecurity and promoting sustainable urban agriculture in Marianna. This innovative project will supply fresh, locally grown produce to the community, schools, and restaurants, thereby nurturing both the local economy and the health of its residents. This Brownfield Assessment Grant will play a pivotal role in addressing the environmental, health, and economic challenges faced by the sensitive populations in CT 4703. By focusing on environmental cleanup, community revitalization, and economic development, this initiative aligns with the goals of the Justice40 Initiatives, aiming to deliver 40% of the overall benefits of federal investments to disadvantaged communities. This approach not only addresses immediate environmental justice concerns but also lays the foundation for long-term sustainable development in CT 4703.

**b. Community Engagement** i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles

Name of group	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement in the project of assistance provided
Marianna City Council	Millie Hill, Council Member Phone: 870-295-3813	The City Council performs legislative services for the city. The city will provide in-kind services, including planning and development support, Public works support, and assist with site inventory and future reuse planning.
Arkansas Economic Development Commission	Amy Williams, Northeast Regional Manager Amy.williams@arkansasedc.com	AEDC works on creating economic opportunities for the area. AEDC will act as a downtown business liaison and will coordinate with local industry to assist with site inventory, prioritization, and community outreach via its small business connections.
Lee County Men of Action	Reverend Ocie Thomas Phone: 870-270-7010	The Lee County Men of Action is one of the few actively engaged community nonprofits.

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<sup>8</sup> EPA EJ Screening tool

		They will assist with site inventory, prioritization, and community outreach via its deep roots in Marianna
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iii. Incorporating Community Input: A4A is committed to engaging deeply with the Marianna community to ensure that the redevelopment of brownfield sites aligns with local needs and aspirations. To achieve this, A4A will establish a robust Community Involvement Plan (CIP) immediately after receiving the grant. This plan will outline a comprehensive strategy for community engagement, including a schedule of events, project background, and information about key stakeholders. The CIP will be accessible for public review both at A4A's office and on its website.

Given the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19, A4A is prepared to adapt its community engagement strategies as needed. This may include implementing social distancing protocols for in-person meetings or shifting to virtual platforms to ensure continuous and safe community involvement.

A4A will actively solicit input from local residents and community organizations to identify and prioritize brownfield sites for redevelopment. These groups possess invaluable knowledge about the community and can pinpoint areas where intervention is most needed. Regular community outreach will be conducted through local channels, including neighborhood meetings and forums, to gather suggestions and feedback on potential brownfield sites.

To facilitate transparent and ongoing communication, A4A will utilize various media channels. Regular updates about the Brownfield Project will be posted on A4A's social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, and on a dedicated section of A4A's website. Additionally, A4A will collaborate with the City of Marianna to use their communication channels, such as local newspapers, press releases, and brochures, to disseminate information about the project.

Community meetings, and visioning sessions will be organized to engage community members in meaningful discussions about the project. The contact information of the Brownfield Program Team members will be made publicly available, enabling residents to directly reach out with questions, concerns, or suggestions. This approach ensures that the redevelopment process is not only informed by community needs but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride among the residents of Marianna.

**3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs: A4A is requesting \$500,000 in funding to implement the Brownfield Project, focusing on the target-area brownfield sites (discussed in 1.a.ii.) and additional sites expected to be identified during the site inventory process.

<b>Task/Activity 1: Community Engagement</b>
<b>Project Implementation:</b> The Brownfield Project Director and team will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, a Brownfield Project website page, and social media content. A4A staff and volunteers will lead community meetings to update the public on project progress. The environmental consultant will review outreach materials and provide meeting support. A budget is allocated for printing outreach materials and office supplies.

<p><b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> CIP to be created in the 1st quarter. Community Meetings scheduled for quarters 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, and 12. Website and Outreach Materials to be developed in the 1st quarter with updates posted quarterly.</p>
<p><b>Task/Activity Lead:</b> A4A: Malik Barnes, Brownfield Project Director.</p>
<p><b>Outputs:</b> CIP, Brownfield Website, 6 Community Meetings, 16 Brochures/Handouts/Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA required Quarterly Reports</p>

<p><b>Task/Activity 2: Site Inventory</b></p>
<p><b>Project Implementation:</b> A4A will collaborate with Marianna’s residents during community meetings to compile a comprehensive site inventory for assessment. Following this, the consultant will work with A4A staff to develop an evaluation ranking tool to prioritize sites based on criteria set by City staff, project partners, and the local community.</p>
<p><b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Community meetings in the 1st quarter will initiate the inventory process, with the evaluation ranking process scheduled for the 3rd quarter and ongoing until the grant’s conclusion.</p>
<p><b>Task/Activity Lead:</b> A4A: Malik Barnes, Brownfield Project Director.</p>
<p><b>Outputs:</b> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List.</p>

<p><b>Task/Activity 3: Assessment</b></p>
<p><b>Project Implementation:</b> The consultant will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at selected and ranked sites, beginning with the two priority sites. This includes ASTM E1527-compliant Phase I ESAs, Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), and Phase II ESAs with Single Site-QAPP. Site access agreements and property eligibility approvals will be obtained prior to assessment.</p>
<p><b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Assessment activities to start in the 2nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.</p>
<p><b>Task/Activity Lead:</b> Consultant, overseen by A4A: Malik Barnes, Brownfield Project Director.</p>
<p><b>Outputs:</b> 19 Phase I ESAs; 1 Generic QAPP, 10 Phase II ESAs, SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements, and Property Eligibility Determinations.</p>

<p><b>Task/Activity 4: Cleanup &amp; Reuse Planning</b></p>
<p><b>Project Implementation:</b> For sites identified for cleanup, the consultant will prepare the Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and Cleanup Plans. This includes evaluating cleanup alternatives, estimating cleanup costs, and determining appropriate remediation and reuse plans to mitigate health/environmental risks. The consultant will also assist A4A in hosting visioning sessions</p>

for key properties. A planning consultant will assist in the preparation of the Brownfields Revitalization Plan and Site Reuse Assessments.
<b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Planning and Visioning Sessions to start in the 6th quarter, with Site Reuse Assessments and Brownfields Revitalization Plan beginning in the 3rd quarter.
<b>Task/Activity Lead:</b> Consultant, overseen by A4A: Malik Barnes, Brownfield Project Director.
<b>Outputs:</b> 5 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 Brownfields Redevelopment Plan.

<b>Task/Activity 5: Programmatic Support</b>
<b>Project Implementation:</b> A4A's Brownfield Project Director, Malik Barnes, along with the team, will engage an environmental consultant to assist with the Brownfield Grant Project. Malik Barnes will oversee grant implementation and ensure adherence to EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms. A4A will complete ACRES Database Reporting, Annual Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and provide Programmatic Support throughout the four-year term of the grant. The budget includes travel for two staff members to attend three brownfield training conferences/workshops.
<b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> ACRES & Quarterly Reporting will commence in the 1st quarter and continue throughout the grant period. Annual Reporting/Forms will be prepared in the 5th, 9th, and 13th quarters, with final closeout.
<b>Task/Activity Lead:</b> A4A: Malik Barnes, Brownfield Project Director.
<b>Outputs:</b> ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period, and conference attendance.

**b. Cost Estimates:** Below are the anticipated cost estimates for A4A's Brownfield Project, based on past Brownfield Projects and local market standards as discussed with local environmental consultants. The contractual hourly rates are determined by the skills needed for specific tasks. The budget for this project includes only personnel, fringe, travel, supplies, and contractual costs. Personnel pay rates average \$36 per hour, with a fringe rate of \$0.25. **Nearly sixty percent (60%) of the budget will be allocated to site-specific activities through the Assessment Task.**

**Task 1 Community Engagement:** Personnel: Community Involvement Plan \$1,400 (40hrs), A4A Website & Social Media upkeep for the four-year grant period \$2,160 (60hrs), 7 Community Educational Meetings \$5,040 (\$720 per meeting/20hrs per meeting to include preparation and execution). Contractual: Community Meeting Assistance \$5,000 (\$110 x 45hrs), Review and assistance with CIP \$2,000 (\$100 x 20hrs). Supplies: \$1,830 Color Prints Handouts/Brochures (\$1 each), Paper (\$15/pack), Ink (\$30/cartridge), Post-it Notes (\$5/pack), totaling \$1,830. **Task 2 Site Inventory:** Personnel: \$2,880 (80hrs). Contractual: Site Inventory & Evaluation Ranking Tool \$7,000 (\$125 x 56hrs). **Task 3 Assessment:** Personnel: Report Review \$1,080 (1hr per report). Contractual: 19 Phase I ESAs \$3,000 each for a total of

**Americans For Action, AR  
FY2024 US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant**

\$57,700; 1 Generic QAPP at \$5,500; 10 Phase II ESAs at \$23,500 each for a total of \$235,000. **Task 4 Cleanup & Reuse Planning:** Personnel: 2 Vision Sessions \$2,000 (\$1,000 per session/28hrs per event prep and delivery), ABCA and Planning Doc Reviews \$576 (2hr per report). Contractual: 5 ABCAs at \$6,500 for a total of \$32,500; 2 Vision Sessions \$7,500 (\$3,750/meeting); 1 Brownfields Revitalization Plan at \$50,000 (Planner: 150hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 100hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 120hrs x \$125); 2 Site Reuse Plans \$40,000 (Planner: 267hrs x \$150; \$20,000/plan). **Task 5 Programmatic Support:** Personnel: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly & Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms \$12,600 (350hrs). Contractual: Quarterly Reporting assistance \$10,000 (\$100 x 100hrs); Travel: \$12,000 (flights at \$800, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/night, incidentals and per diem at \$75 per day [4 days] x 2 attendees x 3 events).

Category	Tasks					Totals
	Community Engagement	Site Inventory	Assessment	Cleanup & Reuse Planning	Programmatic Support	
Personnel	\$8,600	\$2,880	\$1,080	\$2,576	\$12,600	\$27,736
Fringe Benefit	\$2,150	\$720	\$270	\$644	\$3,150	\$6,934
Travel					\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$1,830					\$1,830
Contractual	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$297,500	\$130,000	\$10,000	\$451,500
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$19,580</b>	<b>\$10,600</b>	<b>\$298,850</b>	<b>\$133,220</b>	<b>\$37,750</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**c. Measuring Environmental Results:** To ensure the EPA Brownfield Project progresses as planned, A4A's internal Brownfield Team, including the environmental and planning consultant, will conduct quarterly meetings. These meetings will focus on tracking all outputs identified in section 3.a., utilizing an Excel spreadsheet for comprehensive monitoring. Progress in achieving the scope of work, goals, and objectives will be reported to the EPA through quarterly reports. Additionally, to guarantee the project's alignment with the scheduled timeline, a comparison of project expenditures and activities against the planned schedule will be regularly conducted, ensuring completion within the four-year grant period. Site-specific information will be meticulously entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The key outputs for tracking include the number of meetings with residents/property owners, public meetings, engagements with community groups and partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. Furthermore, the outcomes to be monitored encompass community participation, the number of acres assessed, acres prepared for reuse, the amount of redevelopment dollars leveraged, and the jobs generated through this initiative. In the unlikely event the project does not progress efficiently, A4A has established countermeasures to address these challenges. This includes conducting monthly calls with the EPA Project Officer to provide updates and discuss any necessary adjustments. If required, A4A is prepared to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan to realign the project with its intended goals and timelines. This proactive approach ensures that A4A remains committed to the successful and timely completion of the Brownfield Project, with a strong focus on environmental and community benefits.

#### 4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

**a. Programmatic Capability** i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii.

Description of Key Staff: Americans for Action was established for the purpose of enhancing socio-economic well-being and ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans. Beginning in one of the most distressed regions of the nation the Arkansas Delta, A4A is tailoring proven solutions into innovative approaches. While the organization may be nascent the team is far from, very familiar with successfully managing federal and state funded grant projects for the region. The team described below, and their supporting staff, provide a more than adequate and capable staff to successfully manage this Brownfield Assessment Grant. **Dr. Mildred Griggs JD**, A4A's Chair of the Board will serve as the **highest ranking official on this project**. Dr. Griggs, Emeritus Dean of Education at the University of Illinois Champaign Urbana has an extensive history supervising all grants management activities including successful expenditure of funds and completion of administrative and financial requirements of the project. Dr Griggs has been with A4A for almost a year, where she has been instrumental in the development of the Comprehensive Community Distress Assessment (CCDA) and will serve as the payee for the project. **Mr. Malik Barnes**, the organizations Executive Director will serve as the **Brownfields Project Director**. He is well positioned to serve in this capacity as demonstrated by his extensive history of community engagement, applied economic development, and organizational advancement. Formerly serving as the Chairman of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Wabash College, he's versed with direct skills and experience to ensure the successful execution of eligible grant activities. His former role as Senior Fellow for the Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse initiative demonstrates his excellence in designing effective community engagements reaching the communities most sensitive and underserved populations. He is a native of the Arkansas Delta, advantageously positioning him and thus the organization to successfully carry out eligible grant activities in a timely manner. **Mrs. Jillian Longbattle**, who has over 20 years of experience in internal auditing and accounting will oversee all **Brownfield Finances**. Mrs. Longbattle coordinates budgeting, financial statements and analysis, reporting, and related accounting activities for A4A and will be responsible for closely supervising the finances of this EPA Grant. An environmental consultant will handle the technical and reporting portions of this project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: A4A will procure a qualified environmental consultant and subconsultants to assist with technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Community- wide Assessment. Procurement procedures will comply with both the local contracting and procurement process and with EPA requirements for "Professional Service," including 2 CFR §§ 200 and 1500.

**b. Past Performance and Accomplishments** iii. Never Received Any Type of Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements: The Applicant hereby affirms that Americans for Action does not have a history of performing assistance agreements opting for the neutral score in this category. While the organization is approaching its first year, its leadership team is far from with a history of successfully administrating a combined thirty-four million dollars in Federal assistance agreements.



**FY 24 EPA BROWNFIELDS COMMUNITY WIDE  
ASSESSMENT THRESHHOLD CRITERIA & ATTACHMENTS**



## **Threshold Criteria**

### **1. Applicant Eligibility**

Arkansas for Action (A4A) is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on community development. Housed in Marianna Arkansas, A4A operates serves the Arkansas Delta and collaborates with various local and regional partners. See the attached nonprofit eligibility documentation.

### **2. Community Engagement**

A4A places a high priority on community involvement for the success of its Brownfield Program. The organization will engage with Marianna residents and local groups to gather insights and identify potential brownfield sites, leveraging the community's deep understanding of local needs and priorities. Upon grant award, A4A will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP). This plan will outline the strategy for community engagement, including event schedules, project details, and key stakeholders. The CIP will be accessible at A4A's office and on its website.

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence, A4A will adapt by implementing social distancing measures and conducting virtual meetings to keep the community informed and involved. Community outreach will be conducted to gather suggestions for brownfield sites, with information collected during quarterly meetings. This input will be carefully reviewed and evaluated by A4A, and meeting minutes will document all community feedback. A site inventory will be maintained and updated regularly, with a focus on prioritizing sites that offer the greatest benefit to sensitive populations in the target area. A4A will utilize various media channels for CIP updates, including social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, as well as the A4A Brownfields Project website page. Information about the Brownfield Program will also be shared through local media outlets, press releases, and brochures. Community education meetings and visioning sessions will further facilitate engagement and contact information for Brownfield Program Team members will be readily available for direct community interaction.

### **3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

A4A confirms that it does not have any active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants or Multipurpose Grants currently in use.

### **4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients**

Not Applicable.