

Schuyler Community Development  
1119 B Street  
Schuyler, Nebraska 68661-1919  
(402) 326-8456  
Schuyler.nedevelopment@gmail.com



1. Applicant Identification

Schuyler Community Development  
1119 B Street  
Schuyler, NE 68661-1919

R07-24-A-005

2. Funding Requested

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

3. Location

- a) City of Schuyler
- b) Colfax County
- c) Nebraska

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

- Target Area: Schuyler, Nebraska: Downtown Historic District
  - Census Tract 31037964800
- Priority Sites:
  - Former Top Notch Hotel, 302 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Schuyler, NE 68661
  - Former Municipal Power Plant, 1300 B St., Schuyler, NE 68661
  - Abandoned Grain Elevator, Lots 13–24, Block 42, Schuyler, NE 68661

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Carol Ringenberg, Community Development Director  
402-326-8456  
Schuyler.nedevelopment@gmail.com  
1119 B Street, Schuyler, NE 68661-1919

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Lonnie Kitt, Schuyler Community Development Board Chairman  
402-615-0294

[REDACTED]  
1119 B Street, Schuyler, NE 68661-1919

6. Population

City of Schuyler, Nebraska: 6,526  
(US Census 2017–2021 American Community Survey)

7. Other Factors

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
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).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% or more 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.	8, 9
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.	NA

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority  
See attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications  
Not Applicable.



OCT 13 2023

Environmental Protection Agency Region 7  
Attn: Ms. Susan Klein  
11201 Renner Blvd  
Lenexa, KS 75270-2162

**RE: Letter of Support – EPA FY24 104(k) Community Wide Assessment Grant Application**

Dear Ms. Klein:

On behalf of the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE), I am pleased to submit this letter in support of Schuyler Community Development (SCD)'s application for the EPA FY24 104(k) Brownfields Community Wide Assessment Grant. NDEE and SCD already enjoy a working collaborative relationship. Ms. Carol Ringenberg, SCD's Director of Development, converses often with NDEE to discuss SCD's priority projects and plans for growing the City of Schuyler. Her passion and vision make Ms. Ringenberg the community champion Schuyler needs to jumpstart the successful redevelopment of the numerous brownfield properties dotted throughout the community. According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, Schuyler is in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for low-income households and the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for linguistic isolation. The funding provided by this grant will greatly benefit the City of Schuyler by catalyzing the redevelopment and productive reuse of the many vacant and blighted facilities occupying valuable space in Schuyler's downtown, which in turn will help spur economic growth and job creation for a community in need.

The NDEE Brownfields Program plans to support SCD's revitalization efforts by using Section 128(a) funding to complete a Brownfields Inventory of Schuyler's business district and adjacent areas; complete additional site assessments when needed; assist with asbestos abatement at SCD's priority sites; and translate outreach materials to Spanish for SCD to use at future outreach events to ensure meaningful involvement of Schuyler's large Spanish speaking population.

NDEE is excited about SCD's planned use of this grant and looks forward to supporting SCD's efforts through the Section 128(a) Brownfields and Voluntary Cleanup Program. If you require additional information, or if NDEE can be of further assistance, please contact Taryn Horn at (402) 471-6411 or by e-mail at [taryn.horn@nebraska.gov](mailto:taryn.horn@nebraska.gov).

Sincerely,



Jim Macy  
Director

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

### **a. Target Area and Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of**

**Target Area:** The City of Schuyler, Nebraska (City), population 6,526, is the county seat of Colfax County in eastern Nebraska. Situated two miles north of the Platte River, much of Schuyler is **within a FEMA-designated floodplain**. Incorporated in 1870, and homesteaded by families of Czech and German descent, the history of Schuyler was shaped largely by the Platte River, which the Mormon Trail and Military Road followed, as well as the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) that fueled much of Schuyler's early growth. In 1969, the Spencer Foods Company built a beef packing plant west of Schuyler, which was later acquired by Cargill and is now the largest employer in Colfax County with over 2,000 employees.

The **geographic boundary** for this grant application is the **city limits of Schuyler**, covering 2.8 square miles and a population that is 82% people of color (**72% Hispanic**).<sup>1</sup> Schuyler is wholly encompassed by a **Justice40 disadvantaged Census Tract (31037964800)**, an **Opportunity Zone** and a **USDA designated food desert**. The **target area is the Downtown Historic District (DHD)**, bounded by 14<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, 10<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, Colfax Street (Highway N-15) on the west and D Street on the east. The UPRR double track main line runs east-west through the target area with one at-grade crossing. The target area was part of the "Core Area Blight Study", which concluded that significant conditions exist within the study area, including deteriorated structures and infrastructure, inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout, and unsanitary conditions, to support a blight designation and enabling tax increment financing (TIF) for redevelopment projects.

Schuyler Community Development (SCD), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is leading this grant with a vision and charge to revitalize the DHD with its myriad of challenges that include budget constraints, outdated infrastructure, aged buildings, floodplain limitations and brownfields that are hampering investment. There is much to build on within the DHD, including a culturally diverse business community, a historic district designation, and Schuyler's civic offices. Revitalization and redevelopment of the DHD and the broader community through a strategic Brownfield Program will bring investment, jobs, beautification, and most importantly, a greater opportunity for Schuyler's disadvantaged residents. Securing a Brownfields Assessment Grant will help the community coalesce around a downtown vision with appropriate resources to assess areas of contamination and formalize redevelopment plans.

ii. **Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s):** A survey of known and potential brownfield sites within the DHD and the broader Schuyler community, based on review of the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) spills database and interviews with city and state officials, revealed over 60 documented spill sites, including gas stations, auto repair shops, a former power plant, abandoned grain elevators, a former dry-cleaning facility, a former burn site, and two former dump sites that contribute to blight, hamper investment, and present health and safety risks to area residents. There are over a dozen sites within the target area alone, but the following three are priority sites: (1) Historic Top Notch Hotel, (2) Former Municipal Power Plant, and (3) Abandoned Grain Elevator.

**The historic Top Notch Hotel** (*located in a FEMA designated flood plain*) was built in 1880 with subsequent additions, has had numerous owners, and survived several fires. Its most recent use had a restaurant on the first floor and upstairs living quarters. Damaged by fire in 2010, the prior owners abandoned the property, and the City obtained ownership by tax foreclosure in 2012. Vacant since the 2010 fire, the two-story, 7,700 sq. ft. structure contains **suspect asbestos-**

---

<sup>1</sup> US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

**containing material (ACM) and lead-based paint (LBP)**, has hazards such as unstable stairways and open pits on the ground floor, and was recently written up for a long list of deficiencies by the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's office. Due to its prominent corner location and historic designation, the site is an attractive redevelopment opportunity but remains an eyesore and a physical and health hazard to the community. The City has allowed access to this site for assessment.

**The Former Municipal Power Plant (FMPP)** is on the target area's north end adjacent to the UPRR main line. It lies on an approximately two-acre parcel surrounded by residential neighborhoods to the north and east, an abandoned grain facility to the west, and the UPRR main line to the south. A preschool is less than 200 yards to the northwest. Constructed in 1892 as a coal-burning facility, the plant was converted to fuel oil in the 1920s, later adding natural gas until shuttered in 1994, leaving boilers, generator systems, electrical gear, and related equipment intact. **Contaminants associated with the plant operation include heavy metals (primarily arsenic, lead, and mercury) and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) from coal and coal-combustion byproducts, PAH and petroleum constituents from fuel oil storage and combustion, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from electrical equipment and building components, and a significant amount of documented ACM, including "bales" of asbestos product held in storage.** The plant has been secured but is not fenced off and remains an eyesore. Left unoccupied, with no clear future use, it will continue to degrade in the elements and be subject to vandalism and exposure risks to area residents. The City has allowed access to this site for assessment.

The **Abandoned Grain Elevator (AGE) site**, located adjacent west of the FMPP, looms large over the northwestern skyline of the DHD. Constructed in 1948 and long since abandoned due to multiple ownerships, bankruptcies, and tax foreclosures, the approximately 0.85-acre site has been acquired by Colfax County, who has allowed access for site assessment. Grain elevators are well known for **using fumigants including carbon tetrachloride, often associated with soil and groundwater contamination at grain storage sites.** The site is unsecured with numerous physical hazards and unknown levels of contamination.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites: Beyond the initial priority sites, SCD will first prioritize additional sites within the DHD target area. Since the entire geographic boundary of Schuyler is within a CEJST Justice40 Disadvantaged Community, there are numerous opportunities to support assessment, revitalization and redevelopment initiatives that will benefit the City's underserved populations. The site evaluation ranking methodology (created in Budget Task 2) will incorporate priority consideration for sites and projects affecting disadvantaged communities. These priorities will be based on actual or perceived risk associated with the sites, US Census and CEJST data, and redevelopment and revitalization potential, and will be vetted by our community partners in consultation with area residents and the Brownfields Advisory Team.

**b. Revitalization of the Target Area** i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The 2017 Schuyler Downtown Vision Implementation Strategy (DVIS) laid out eight priorities for the DHD: infrastructure improvements, promoting economic development, façade and building improvement, preservation of historic structures, adding residential housing, supporting recurring special events, mitigating flood risks, and improving communication/engagement with minority-owned businesses. SCD's work with developers, entrepreneurs, and businesses within the DHD fully align with DVIS priorities and have led to formulation of a multicultural food hub concept for the DHD that seeks to address most of the DVIS priorities to varying degrees and, in addition, tackles food desert challenges. Foundational elements of the food hub concept include a social

hall, brew pub, open market space, and culturally appropriate grocery stores to serve the diverse culinary needs of the community. Open space in and around the DHD, including portions of the FMPP and AGE (priority sites 2 and 3), are targeted for food production, whether in ground (after assessment and cleanup is performed) or in greenhouses or “hoop houses” enabling extended growing seasons to enjoy fresh produce in Schuyler. Additional green space enhancement fits well into the food hub concept including enhancement of the Jim Kluck Memorial Railside Green on the perimeter of the DHD, a part of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) that currently lacks attention. NSA staff will be preparing a green space enhancement plan for the site and surrounding area that will be integrated into the food hub plan. Also, soon to break ground thanks to a \$409,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will be a public amphitheater one block north of the Top Notch site, intended to host the city’s annual Cinco de Mayo celebration and other recurring events—another critical node of the food hub.

Through this Brownfield grant, SCD will hold visioning sessions to gather input from disadvantaged target-area residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to finalize conceptual plans for the food hub, including community/market gardens and green space improvements. Visioning sessions will also take into consideration opportunities for residential housing within the DHD, where appropriate. EPA Approved Planning Activities such as site reuse assessments (including market analyses) will be completed for the three priority sites to determine suitability and optimization of available space for various elements of the food hub conceptual plan. An infrastructure analysis of subgrade utilities within the DHD will be performed prior to any cleanup and redevelopment work to better plan for modifications or upgrades to be encountered during redevelopment (another stated concern and priority of the DVIS).

ii. **Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy:** Assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of the Top Notch priority site will be the cornerstone of Schuyler’s food hub, facilitating growth and reinvestment within the core of the DHD. Repurposing of the FMPP and AGE sites will provide accessory space for healthy and culturally appropriate food production (such as Central American chayote squash and African teff cabbage) and potentially other conforming uses dependent on structural conditions that will be determined during environmental and reuse assessments of the parcels. The food hub concept and corollary development will spur a wide variety of economic and noneconomic benefits, including increased tax base and revenue, jobs, DHD housing options, entrepreneurship fostered within Schuyler’s disadvantaged communities, **green space** enhancement, and improved localization of food supply (addressing resilience and food desert considerations).

Improving climate resilience is a central tenant to each of the priority site projects. Incorporating renewable energy (including adding to the City’s current 1900 KW built solar capacity), energy efficiency, and conformance to floodplain restrictions are fundamental considerations for the priority sites and others to be assessed throughout the community. This is a critical given the **CEJST ranks Schuyler in the 92<sup>nd</sup>, 96<sup>th</sup>, and 97<sup>th</sup> percentiles for expected building loss rate, expected population loss rate, and projected flood risk, respectively.**

c. **Strategy for Leveraging Resources** i. **Resources Needed for Site Reuse:** The following table lists the funding sources currently available and other sources that can potentially be pursued dependent upon progression and outcomes of the SCD’s Brownfield program:

	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Funding Purpose</b>
Federal	EPA Cleanup and RLF Grants	Environmental Cleanup, competitive grant application process
State	NDEE Section 128(a) Brownfields funding	Limited funding available for area inventories, Phase I/II ESA’s and minor ACM abatement projects

Federal/State	USDA/NRCS	Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Grants – funding support for urban farming and soil health initiatives including “high tunnels”
Local	SCD Rural Workforce Revolving Loan Fund	No- to low-interest RLF for <b>workforce development housing</b> (approx. \$2M balance)
State	Nebraska Statewide Arboretum	Variety of grants available for <b>community forestry and green space enhancement</b>
Federal/State	History Nebraska	Federal and state tax credits and state valuation incentive program for historic preservation projects
Local	City of Schuyler Tax Increment Financing	Supports <b>infrastructure and related costs for development projects</b> within the Core Area blight designation (including the DHD and surrounds)
Local	Schuyler Chamber of Commerce	Ensures the <b>Opportunity Zone</b> tax incentives are marketed to developers and investors to further site reuse.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: SCD’s primary focus within the DHD will allow for the use/upgrade of existing infrastructure dependent on the scope of the development project and condition of existing infrastructure. Little is known about the integrity of all below-grade infrastructure within the DHD due in part to the historic designation restrictions of the Lincoln Highway through the DHD restricting brick paver maintenance. As a part of this grant, SCD will conduct a non-destructive utilities analysis of key segments of the DHD, including records review and geophysical imaging. If redevelopment activities associated with the priority sites require extensive investment, SCD will seek other state or federal funding sources (including TIF and historic tax credits) to supplement current budget allocations.

**2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

a. **Community Need** i. The Community’s Need for Funding: Schuyler is a rural community, a **Justice40 Disadvantaged Community, Qualified Opportunity Zone, and a USDA Food Desert** (identified due to low income and limited access to fresh healthy food). **Schuyler’s per capita and median income are \$23,451 and \$70,423, respectively**, compared to the US per capita of \$37,638 and median of \$85,028.<sup>2</sup> Socioeconomic factors identified through CEJST include **low-income prevalence (85<sup>th</sup> percentile), 82% people of color, 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for linguistic isolation, and 46% of residents without a high school education**. These statistics do not fully represent the broader need. Schuyler Public Schools data indicates **92% of enrollment as Hispanic students, 68% of preschoolers enter as non-English speaking, and 30% of non-English speaking students do not meet proficiency to meet graduation requirements**. There are also **multiple Hispanic and African dialects** spoken, adding to the communication challenges in Schuyler Public Schools and the broader community. While this data points to the phenomenal cultural qualities of the community, it also describes the challenge in ensuring adequate public resources are available to serve students and the public. Given the City’s limited resources to serve the basic needs of the community, embarking on a bold vision for rehabilitating the DHD and target area presents a **significant challenge without federal and state assistance**. Securing a Brownfields Assessment Grant would give a huge boost to SCD to better engage with multicultural and disadvantaged residents and businesses concerning community betterment, environmental mitigation, and education. It would also increase the tax base through redevelopment, better supporting school funding.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Within Schuyler and the targeted area, sensitive populations include young, Hispanic, linguistically isolated, and low-income residents with elevated risks associated with a wide variety of

<sup>2</sup> US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

environmental factors. Schuyler is 82% people of color [72% Hispanic or Latino (US 18%)] and 35% of residents are below the age of 18 (US 22%).<sup>2</sup> Linguistic isolation (98<sup>th</sup> percentile) and 46% of residents with less than a high school education also characterizes the at-risk residents of Schuyler. The Environmental Justice (EJ) Screen Report places Schuyler in the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile for ozone exposure in the state, 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for toxic air releases, 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for proximity to Risk Management Plan (RMP) facilities, and 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for wastewater discharges (including impaired waters designation), highlighting the substantial exposure risk these groups face. Conditions leading to the blight designation discussed above covered approximately ¼ of the City's geographic boundary where some of the highest concentrations of disadvantaged residents are housed. The target area also has minimal access to open spaces, with inadequate green space available (CEJST ranks Schuyler in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile for lack of green space). Most park and recreational open spaces are on the south end of town, well away from the disadvantaged community. In addition, the target area is in a USDA food desert, making the need for community gardens and access to fresh food and groceries as at the planned redevelopment of all three priority sites all the more crucial. Securing a Brownfields Assessment Grant for the community will offer opportunities for generations to come.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Due in large part to a significant portion of Schuyler's disadvantaged community not participating in surveys, community health screenings, etc., there is concern over underreporting of health and other demographic data for Schuyler. A 2022 Community Health Assessment (CHA) provided additional insights into the health needs and vulnerabilities of Schuyler's residents: **the uninsured population rate of 17.8% more than doubles the national rate of 8.3%; teen birth rates of 25 per 1,000 (for females aged 15–19) eclipse the US figure of 16.7; and infant mortality rates of 8.9 deaths per 1,000 births exceed the US figure of 5.9.**<sup>3</sup> All of these rates demonstrate the vulnerability of young women of child-bearing years in Schuyler potentially being exposed to contaminants in the target area and beyond. The CHA also reported **cancer as the leading cause of death** in Schuyler in contrast to heart disease being the leading cause of death in the US. **Asthma occurrence in Schuyler is 5% higher** than Nebraska as a whole (78<sup>th</sup> percentile), a state where asthma is known to cause 32% more deaths per capita than in the US,<sup>4</sup> a symptom of high exposure risks and/or lack of appropriate medical care for asthma sufferers in Nebraska. **The CHA report routinely pressed for broader health screening in Schuyler's disadvantaged communities, particularly regarding known or suspected contaminants associated with the priority sites including asbestos, PCBs, PAHs, lead, arsenic, mercury, petroleum products, and carbon tetrachloride and their cumulative capacity for contributing to several forms of cancer, respiratory ailments, and other health problems.** Securing a Brownfields Assessment Grant will provide more awareness of health risks associated with priority sites within the target area and will initiate steps to mitigate pathways for exposure.

(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: The target area is within a Justice40 Disadvantaged Census Tract characterized as a low income, racially segregated, and linguistically isolated segment of the Schuyler community also exhibiting low high school education percentages. The CEJST reports Schuyler as a disadvantaged community, exhibiting low income *and* exceeding the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for environmental/climate exposure risks including expected building loss, population loss, projected flood risk, and proximity to RMP facilities and wastewater discharges—all risks landing squarely on the most disadvantaged segment of

<sup>3</sup> 2022 Community Health Assessment: <https://www.chihealth.com/content/dam/chi-health/website/documents/community-health-needs-assessment/Schuyler-CHNA-2022%20.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Asthma in Nebraska: <https://nebraskaasthmacoalition.org/about-asthma/asthma-in-nebraska.html>.



Schuyler’s residents. Another risk factor not reflected in the EJ Screen Tool or CEJST data is the presence of the UPRR double track main line that bifurcates the city and target area. Rail traffic is a significant source of emissions including diesel exhaust and coal dust that aggravate respiratory and related health risks. Also, with multiple at-grade crossings and only one viaduct, emergency response service times to disadvantaged communities due to train blockages are a common occurrence. Other factors reflecting EJ challenges in Schuyler as stated in the CHA include the anomalously high uninsured rates (**17.8% vs. 8.3% nationally**), **teen birth rates (for females aged 15 – 19, 25 per 1,000 vs. 16.7 nationally)**, and **infant mortality rates of 8.9 deaths per 1,000 births vs. 5.9 nationally**).

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: Left unresolved, the blight and associated negative consequences will proliferate throughout the underserved community. Assessing targeted properties and engaging affected residents in cleanup and redevelopment planning can offer hope and opportunity to the community. A good portion of community engagement throughout this grant will also focus on the need for broader health screening of disadvantaged residents and determining how to mitigate health and safety risks associated with rail traffic within the affected community. Eliminating blight and bringing new and engaging business opportunities to the DHD through the food hub will make inroads for better trust and validation among the underserved populations of Schuyler. Displacement of residents or businesses will not occur through this grant. It is SCD’s desire, in fact, to bring more residents and businesses *into* the DHD for all to enjoy and prosper within. Securing a Brownfields Assessment Grant will provide the funding, structure, and renewed enthusiasm to engage disadvantaged residents in building Schuyler’s future.

**b. Community Engagement** i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles: The following have been identified by SCD as project partners who will assist in site selection and prioritization, cleanup, and future redevelopment of brownfields sites for this assessment project.

<b>Name of Org.</b>	<b>Point of Contact</b>	<b>Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided</b>
Schuyler Chamber of Commerce	Audra Jedlicka, <a href="mailto:schuylerchamber@gmail.com">schuylerchamber@gmail.com</a> 402-352-5472	<b>This nonprofit will secure business involvement</b> and support for redevelopment initiatives, <b>fund raising, outreach</b> , and seeking out supplemental grant funding.
Center for Rural Affairs	Nina Lanuza, ninal@cfra.org, 402-380-0785	This organization will assist in <b>prioritizing sites for assessment, public visioning</b> for reuse and outreach/engagement with the Hispanic community in Schuyler, connecting with local food advocates and growers.
African Store Proprietor	Said Muhammad, [REDACTED], 402-494-7065	Business owner in the DHD and representative of Schuyler’s African community. Mr. Muhammad will assist with <b>visioning</b> of the food hub buildout incorporating <b>African cuisine</b> .
CHI Health	Claudia Lanuza, <a href="mailto:Claudia.lanuza@alegent.org">Claudia.lanuza@alegent.org</a> 402-276-9644	This medical provider will assist in <b>identification of health risks</b> associated with brownfields sites in the community and support directing residents to <b>health screening services</b> , where appropriate.
Schuyler Inn	Javier Arizmendi, <a href="mailto:manager@schuylerinn.com">manager@schuylerinn.com</a> , 402-615-3327	This business owner and SCD Board member will provide outreach and support to Hispanic business owners and investors as well as serve as spokesperson and <b>advocate for DHD improvements in the Hispanic community</b> .

iii. Incorporating Community Input: SCD understands the need for community engagement with disadvantaged residents, project partners, community organizations, and public sector leaders to achieve successful outcomes with their redevelopment and revitalization efforts. SCD presented its intent to apply for a Brownfields Assessment Grant to the Schuyler City Council on September 5, 2023, gaining support and approval to proceed with the application. In October 2023, SCD

hosted a meeting of downtown businesses and community representatives to walk the target area and gather input on priorities for the Brownfields Assessment Grant. Comments and feedback from the group included advice/suggestions on covering environmental issues, community perceptions to outsiders, opportunities for “what could be,” how to approach the project, and critiques regarding past unsuccessful redevelopment and visioning efforts in the community. SCD will work with project partners (including engaging and activating future generational leaders) to develop a community engagement plan (CEP). The CEP will detail project background and objectives, targeted groups, and planned community engagement activities. Priority will be given to reaching disadvantaged residents in the vicinity of the Downtown Historic District and the broader Schuyler area to ensure all voices are heard. SCD will communicate project progress with citizens via their website, social media, and other digital coalition building releases coordinated with the city or by other means. All official communications will be provided in English and Spanish to ensure broadest communication and consideration is given to underserved sectors of the community. The frequency of communications will generally coincide with public meetings and/or quarterly project team meetings. During in-person meetings, comment forms (in English and Spanish) will be provided to collect citizen input for meeting topics (or other areas of concern). For those unable to attend in person, meeting summaries will be posted on the project website, with fillable forms (in English and Spanish) available to residents to provide additional comments. Public service announcements will periodically be provided through local media outlets, directing residents to the project website and to provide notice of upcoming meetings. A log of comments received and SCD responses will be maintained and shared on a quarterly basis through the project website. Alternatives to in-person meetings (virtual options) will be considered and established based on insights provided by project partners’ community input.

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

#### **Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:**

<b>Task 1: Outreach</b>	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> SCD’s Brownfield (BF) Project Director will develop a Community Engagement Plan (CEP), outreach materials, BF Project website, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). SCD staff will lead the community meetings to keep the public informed on project plans and updates. Supplies are budgeted for the printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts), office supplies, meeting props (easels, posterboard, etc.).
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CEP 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter. Community Meetings held 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> quarters. Website and outreach materials created in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and posted as needed throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> SCD: Carol Ringenberg, Director of Development, BF Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> CEP, Brownfield Website, 7 Community Meetings, Brochures/Handouts, Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA-required Quarterly Reports.
<b>Task 2: Site Inventory</b>	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> SCD’s BF Project Director will work with the target-area residents and other stakeholders during community meetings to create a thorough site inventory for assessment. Abandoned and underused properties identified by the residents will be researched further by SCD staff using the Colfax County Assessor’s GIS-linked website and other relevant resources. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with staff to create an evaluation ranking methodology with the help of residents to prioritize site work.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> The community meeting held in 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process that began with this application. Evaluation ranking process will take place in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continue throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> SCD: Carol Ringenberg, Director of Development, BF Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Methodology, Site Inventory List
<b>Task 3: Assessment</b>	

i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at sites selected and ranked through the Site Inventory Task, starting first with the three priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase I's; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs which will include the SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determination approvals will be obtained.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessment activities begin in 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the SCD: Carol Ringenberg, Director of Development, BF Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 18 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 8 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements and Property Eligibility Determinations.
<b>Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning</b>	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation/reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the SCD in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions to be held for key properties. A planner will prepare Site Reuse Assessments and a BF Revitalization Plan. Site reuse plans to include infrastructure analysis support from the EC engineering team.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Charrettes begin in 6 <sup>th</sup> quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the SCD: Carol Ringenberg, Director of Development, BF Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 3 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 3 Site Reuse Assessments and 1 BF Revitalization Plan.
<b>Task 5: Programmatic Support</b>	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The SCD will procure an EC to assist with the BF Grant Project. The SCD's BF Project Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The EC will assist the SCD in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the four-year term of the grant. The SCD staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend three national/regional/grantee brownfield training conferences/workshops.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> ACRES Reporting begins in the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter, and Quarterly Reporting begins in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting and Forms created in 5 <sup>th</sup> quarter, 9 <sup>th</sup> quarter, 13 <sup>th</sup> quarter, and during final closeout (after 16 <sup>th</sup> quarter).
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> SCD: Carol Ringenberg, Director of Development, BF Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 MBE/WBE Annual Report Forms, Programmatic Support for four-year grant period. Two staff to three conferences.

**b. Cost Estimates:** Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project *based on past brownfield projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.* The budget for this project includes SCD personnel administrative, travel, and supplies and contractual costs. **Fifty-four (54%) percent of the budget will be spent on site-specific work, and 31% of the budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities for priority sites in the target area.**

**Task 1 Outreach:** Personnel: SCD staff support of outreach activities \$610 (16 hr. x \$30/hr. plus 0.27 fringe). Contractual: Community Engagement Plan \$4,500 (36 hrs. x \$125); Brownfield Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Content/Posts \$4,000 (32 hrs. x \$125); 7 Community Engagement Meetings \$14,000 (112 hrs. x \$125; \$2,000/meeting). Supplies: Outreach Supplies \$1,389 (\$639 printing service, \$500 poster board, \$250 easels purchase). **Task 2 Site Inventory:** Contractual: Brownfield Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool Creation \$10,000 (80 hrs. x \$125/hr.). **Task 3 Assessment:** Personnel: SCD staff support of assessment activities \$1,676 (44 hr. x \$30/hr. plus 0.27 fringe). Contractual: 18 Phase I ESAs \$3,500 each for a total of \$63,000, 1 Generic QAPP \$5,500 (44 hrs. x \$125), 8 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP

at \$25,000 each for a total of \$200,000. **Task 4 Remediation/Reuse Planning:** Personnel: SCD staff support of planning activities \$610 (16 hr. x \$30/hr. plus 0.27 fringe). Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$5,500 (44 hrs. x \$125) each for a total of \$22,000; 3 Visioning Sessions/Charrettes \$6,000 (48 hrs. x \$125/hr.; \$2,000/session); 3 Site Reuse Assessments \$75,000 (480 hrs. x \$125/hr. + \$5,000 each engineering/geophysical services, or \$25,000 each); BF Revitalization Plan \$50,000 (400 hrs. x \$125/hr.). **Task 5 Programmatic Support:** Personnel: SCD staff support of grant activities \$5,715 (150 hr. x \$30/hr. plus 0.27 fringe). Contractual: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$24,000 (192 hrs. x \$125). Travel: Two SCD staff to attend three conferences \$12,000 (flights at \$800, 3 nights in hotel at \$300 each, incidentals and per diem at \$75/day for 4 days x 2 attendees x 3 events).

Category	Tasks					Totals
	<i>Outreach</i>	<i>Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Remediation/Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	
Personnel	\$480	\$0	\$1,320	\$480	\$4,500	\$6,780
Fringe Benefits	\$130	\$0	\$356	\$130	\$1,215	\$1,831
Travel					\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$1,389					\$1,389
Contractual	\$22,500	\$10,000	\$268,500	\$153,000	\$24,000	\$478,000
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$24,499</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$270,176</b>	<b>\$153,610</b>	<b>\$41,715</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results:** To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule, the SCD Brownfields Team, which will include the EC, will meet quarterly to track all **outputs identified in 3.a.** using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the project schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site-specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. The outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not being completed in an efficient manner, the SCD has countermeasures in place to address this problem. The SCD Project Director will make monthly calls to their EPA Project Officer and if needed will create a Corrective Action Plan to help the project to get back on schedule.

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

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

Description of Key Staff: Established in 2012 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, Schuyler Community Development has focused on facilitating business expansion, redevelopment, housing, recruiting and workforce development, downtown revitalization, and taking on the role of Brownfield Program development. Carol Ringenberg, the SCD Director of Development since 2022, will serve as the **Brownfields Project Director** for this grant, ensuring timely and successful execution of all tasks. Ms. Ringenberg has a BS in consumer affairs and education and a MA in education from the University of Nebraska and has held numerous positions spanning higher education administration, community engagement consulting in EPA Superfund communities, and as State Director of Health Sciences Curriculum. Her 30 years of experience in education, business consulting, and training, and her deep connections in state government and rural Nebraska

communities will position SCD for success with this grant. Brian Bywater, Community Housing Specialist with SCD, will serve as the **Financial Director** for this grant, ensuring timely ASAP drawdowns and managing all financial requirements of the grant. Mr. Bywater has a BS in economics and history from Nebraska Wesleyan University and an MBA from Bellevue University. He worked in banking for 20 years before joining SCD in 2014 to lead the housing program and Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) administration. Jose Rocha will serve as Project Manager/Community Engagement Specialist responsible for coordinating all aspects of the Community Engagement Plan including outreach to Schuyler's Hispanic community. Having been with SCD since March of 2023, Mr. Rocha is a Schuyler High School graduate; second generation bilingual (Spanish/English) speaker, writer, and translator; local entrepreneur with expertise in web design, market research, and business development, and is a respected member of the Schuyler Latino community. An environmental contractor will assist with the technical aspects of the project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: SCD will procure a qualified environmental contractor 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. SCD will promote strong practices, local hiring, and will link members of the community to potential employment opportunities for all brownfield-related redevelopment via community outreach practices and project updates to project partners.

b. **Past Performance and Accomplishments** ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements: (1) Purposes and Accomplishments: SCD was awarded \$750,000 from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) in 2018 to support SCD's Rural Workforce Housing (RWFH) RLF. With this award, SCD secured 1:1 match funding from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA), Cargill, Pinnacle Bank, Homestead Bank, and the City of Schuyler to make \$1.5M available for workforce housing loans in Schuyler. Loan disbursements were made resulting in completion of one (1) 24-unit apartment complex (with a percentage allocated to affordable housing units) and four (4) townhouse units. SCD worked with developers, builders and clients to site and construct units, and to house workforce applicants in 2019. Due to excellent performance on the 2018 allocation, SCD was awarded supplemental RWFH funding from NDED in 2020 in the amount of \$750,000 (supported by local match for a total of \$1.5M) and is currently financing the construction of two (2) multifamily housing units and one (1) single family unit under the SCD's RWHF RLF. To date, \$500,000 of the funding has been dispersed, with the final \$1M loan approved but not yet dispersed. In 2020 and 2021, SCD also administered two COVID-19 relief allocations on behalf of the City of Schuyler totaling \$1M. Funding was provided to the Schuyler Food Bank for equipment and support of one full-time-equivalent employee and funding of facility improvements and equipment for the Schuyler Senior Center. All RWFH and COVID-19 grant allocations have been fully coordinated with and supported by SCD's Board of Directors, the Schuyler City Council, and the City's residents through a transparent public engagement process. (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The SCD has a history of compliance with grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions and has an excellent history of timely reporting with all awards. All RWFH funds were dispersed, with annual reporting and audits completed with no compliance issues. All disbursement of COVID-19 relief funds and project work was completed in 2023 with no compliance issues. The Brownfield Project Team is skilled in project management and will monitor all grant activities to ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements.



**Schuyler Community Development  
Schuyler, Nebraska  
FY24 Brownfields Assessment Grant  
Threshold Criteria**

**Threshold Criteria****1. Applicant Eligibility**

- a. Schuyler Community Development, Inc. (SCD) was incorporated in 2012 as a Nebraska nonprofit corporation in accordance with the Nebraska Nonprofit Corporation Act (Nebraska Revised Statute 21-1901) and Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The purpose of SCD is primarily to provide positive leadership in facilitation of community betterment, development, and sustained economic growth of Schuyler, Nebraska. **Please see attached articles of incorporation.**
- b. The SCD is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**2. Community Involvement**

SCD understands the need for community engagement with disadvantaged residents, project partners, community organizations, and public sector leaders to achieve successful outcomes with their redevelopment and revitalization efforts. SCD presented its intent to apply for a Brownfields Assessment Grant to the Schuyler City Council on September 5, 2023, gaining support and approval to proceed with the application. In October 2023, SCD hosted a meeting of downtown businesses and community representatives to walk the target area and gather input on priorities for the Brownfields Assessment Grant. Comments and feedback from the group included advice/suggestions on covering environmental issues, community perceptions to outsiders, opportunities for “what could be,” how to approach the project, and critiques regarding past unsuccessful redevelopment and visioning efforts in the community. SCD will work with project partners (including engaging and activating future generational leaders) to develop a community engagement plan (CEP). The CEP will detail project background and objectives, targeted groups, and planned community engagement activities. Priority will be given to reaching disadvantaged residents in the vicinity of the Downtown Historic District and the broader Schuyler area to ensure all voices are heard. SCD will communicate project progress with citizens via their website, social media, and other digital coalition building releases coordinated with the city or by other means. All official communications will be provided in English and Spanish to ensure broadest communication and consideration is given to underserved sectors of the community. The frequency of communications will generally coincide with public meetings and/or quarterly project team meetings. During in-person meetings, comment forms (in English and Spanish) will be provided to collect citizen input for meeting topics (or other areas of concern). For those unable to attend in person, meeting summaries will be posted on the project website, with fillable forms (in English and Spanish) available to residents to provide additional comments. Public service announcements will periodically be provided through local media outlets, directing residents to the project website and to provide notice of upcoming meetings. A log of comments received and SCD responses will be maintained and shared on a quarterly basis through the project website. Alternatives to in-person meetings (virtual options) will be considered and established based on insights provided by project partners’ community input.

**3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

SCD affirms that it does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. **Contractors and Named Subrecipients**

Not Applicable.