



BERKELEY
COUNTY SC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

R04-25-A-042

 **BerkeleyMeansBusiness.com**
 1003 Highway 52
P.O. Box 6122
Moncks Corner, SC 29461
 (843) 719-4416 direct
(843) 719-4381 fax

1. Applicant Identification
Berkeley County, South Carolina
Economic Development Department
1003 US Highway 52, P.O. Box 6122
Moncks Corner, SC 29461
2. Website URL: <https://berkeleymeansbusiness.com/brownfield>
3. Funding Requested
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
 - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
4. Location
a) City of St. Stephen, b) Berkeley County, c) South Carolina
5. Target Area and Priority Site Information
Target area: Census tract 45015020201
***Justice40 disadvantaged community according to CEJST**

Priority Sites:

Site 1: Former Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill

1026 Georgia Pacific Drive
St. Stephen, SC 29479

Site 2: Former Envirogreen Holdings Group, Inc.

315 Ravenell Drive
St. Stephen, SC 29479

6. Contacts
 - a. Project Director
Corey McClary, Workforce Development Manager
(843) 719-4096
Corey.mcclary@berkeleycountysc.gov
1003 US Highway 52, Moncks Corner, SC 29461
 - b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official
Johnny Cribb, County Supervisor and County Council Chairman
(843) 719-4094
Johnny.cribb@berkeleycountysc.gov
1003 US Highway 52, Moncks Corner, SC 29461

RICH HISTORY.
BRIGHT FUTURE.

One Berkeley



7. Population

St. Stephen, SC – 1,386
(US Census: 2018–2022 American Community Survey)

8. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	2
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.	3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	9
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2014 or later) or is closing	N/A

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.



SC DEPARTMENT of
**ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

Julie E. Blalock, Chief
Bureau of Land and Waste Management
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

November 1, 2024

Sara S. Janovitz, Manager
Brownfields and Land Revitalization
United States Environmental Protection Agency
61 Forsyth Street S.W. 10th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960

RE: EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant
Berkeley County, South Carolina

Dear Ms. Janovitz:

The South Carolina Department of Environmental Services, the State's environmental authority, acknowledges and fully supports Berkeley County's application for a Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant. The grant will focus on Census Tract 202.01.

The Department appreciates your consideration of the application and hopes for a favorable outcome. Your positive response will assist the County in its efforts to revitalize properties in the community. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Robert Hodges, member of my staff at (803) 898-0919 or Robert.Hodges@des.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie E. Blalock".

Julie E. Blalock, Chief
Bureau of Land and Waste Management

cc: Elizabeth Basil, BEHS
Robert Hodges, Manager, Brownfields Program



**BERKELEY
COUNTY SC**

**Berkeley County
South Carolina**

**FY25 Brownfield Assessment 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: Berkeley County (County) is the eighth most populated county in South Carolina (pop. 215,044).¹ The County covers 1,099 square miles and contains the approximate 94-square-mile Lake Moultrie, most commonly known as Santee Cooper.² The area was at the center of the original colony's Indigenous trade and grew to be one of the largest agricultural centers of antebellum America. Early French immigrants developed a thriving rice and indigo culture, and in the late 1700s, cultivated cotton.³ Much of the commerce at the time relied on slave labor, and the County had a ratio of 103,000 slaves to 30,000 white people in 1790.³ Following the Civil War, reconstruction greatly disrupted the economy, and the Black majority enjoyed a short victory, holding state General Assembly and US House of Representative offices until the 1880s, when a largely white majority regained governmental power. The new majority used gerrymandering to confine 25% of the state's Black population to a single district that included Berkeley County. The County's shift to sharecropping quickly established the primacy of the timber and farming industry. Later, the 1939 Santee Cooper federal hydroelectric construction project initiated a significant economic recovery for the region at the cost of many farms, former plantations, and small communities. Following World War II, much of the population growth in the County transitioned to areas on the southeast boundaries, where new governmental and manufacturing jobs flourished within the larger Charleston, South Carolina, economy.

The **geographic boundary** of this project is the **County lines**, with a **target-area** focus of census tract (CT) 45015020201, which is a **Climate Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) Justice40 disadvantaged community** centered on the Town of St. Stephen. The target area has a low median household income (\$25,674, US \$75,149), a much higher population at or below the poverty line (40%, US 9%), and a significantly higher reliance on government subsidized food programs (29%, US 12%).¹ The target area had some success with attracting lumber mills and light manufacturing employers following the construction of the hydroelectric lakes, but this area lost its appeal as it competed with the more accessible interstate corridor along the southeast County border. Vacant manufacturing sites have created **blight and brownfield challenges**. The remaining major employers for the region include a paper/pulp materials manufacturer, a precision machining factory located within St. Stephen and the **coal-fired Cross Generating Station power plant**, which operates upwind of the target area, adjoining Lake Moultrie. The County will continue their EPA Brownfield Program with this additional Assessment Grant funding to assess vacant manufacturing sites and bring new job opportunities for the target area's sensitive populations, directly aligning with the County's 10-Year Comprehensive Plan update.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Diminished employment opportunities, reduced development, and a decreasing population have resulted in underused brownfield properties within the target area. The County was awarded an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant in 2022 and identified **40 brownfield properties** in the target area as part of the grant-funded site inventory, which included a plywood mill, a veneer factory, and a tire recycler as well as filling stations and petroleum and bulk oil storage properties. Of these identified properties, half likely contain environmental issues based on their known histories while the other half may have environmental issues based on the age of each property.⁴ The County assessed multiple brownfields properties in the target area for the previous assessment grant, including a former high school, lumber mill, and

¹ US Census: American Community Survey 2018–2022.

² <https://www.sciway.net/tourism/lakes.html>.

³ Walter B. Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

⁴ South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, GIS Permitting Metadata.

rail station. The primary focus and priority sites of this Community-wide Assessment Grant include two large former industrial properties along with all remaining identified sites within the target area. These two priority sites were selected due to interest in their redevelopment and the impact that reinvestment in this area could have on this disadvantaged community.

The first priority site is the former **Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill**. This 409-acre site is located adjacent to Lake Moultrie and the Lake Moultrie Rediversion Canal. There is a current end-use with plans for redevelopment for 247 acres of the site. The remaining 162 acres are available for future development. The unsecured site partially acted as a storage yard, but once held a chemical production facility, lumber mill, and furniture facility and was agricultural land. The lumber mill plywood plant operated on the site from 1969 to 2002. Since then, the site has sat vacant with remnants of the original mill foundation, roadways, water treatment structures, and rail lines. There is suspected wide-range soil and groundwater contamination based on former uses. The site has a Class Two Landfill present, multiple ponds, material stockpiles, large concrete covered areas, and a former electrical substation building. Contaminants of concern for this property include **asbestos-containing materials (ACM), petroleum products, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), metals, pesticides, and per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) compounds**. The past and current hazards of this site make this an ideal priority site. The site has a church immediately to the east, with residences, a post office, and additional churches to the south, and another church and school further northeast of the site. The County has site access for assessment from the owner.

The second priority site is the **Envirogreen Holdings Group, Inc.**, site. This 12-acre property has been targeted for industrial redevelopment multiple times but has failed to be redeveloped. The site operated as an electric telephone materials manufacturer from the 1980s until the mid-2000s. It sat vacant from the mid-2000s to 2018, when a tire processing and recycling company purchased it with plans for operations. However, the approximately 163,000 square-foot dilapidated industrial building, built in 1964, has sat vacant since 2020 and is overgrown with vegetation surrounded by cracked concrete and overgrown fences. **Petroleum products, LBP, ACM, heavy metals, VOCs, and hazardous materials** are suspected to be present at the site. Therefore, the site is considered a priority based on size, location, and need for reuse. The redevelopment of this site would bring back much-needed jobs to the community. The County hopes to attract an advanced manufacturing employer to increase local employment options.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites: A site inventory completed during the FY22 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant for the target area identified **40 sites**. The citizen-led Berkeley County Environmental Authority (BCEA) helped determine where funding was spent, using a formulated ranking system to prioritize the sites to be assessed. For this Assessment Grant, the brownfield inventory will be updated, with priority given to sites that most benefit the **underserved (CEJST Justice40), sensitive populations** in the target area. If the target area is fully assessed, the BCEA and County will apply the formulated ranking system and **US Census, CEJST and the EPA EJ Screen Tool** data to prioritize sites throughout the County's geographical boundary.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The County's Economic Development team recognizes the importance of redevelopment in northern Berkeley County's underserved areas and wishes to lead this effort by revitalizing existing brownfields. The County initiated its **10-year Comprehensive Plan Update** process in Fall 2020, which began with public meetings to obtain public input regarding the current state of the County. This planning focused on infrastructure needs, economic implications, and community impacts in rural areas, as demonstrated by the County's Guiding **Principle 1** in their current

Comprehensive Plan, which concludes, “Berkeley County will protect and promote the existence of distinctive and diverse, sustainable communities within its boundaries.” The County’s development objective for village centers such as St. Stephen also includes this statement: “The County will support establishment of larger employment uses around the periphery of a Village Center provided they can be served by adequate facilities.” By focusing on redevelopment in the target area’s underserved community, the County ensures existing communities are maintained with sustainable employers and climate-resilient redevelopment.

The County’s redevelopment goal for the **priority sites** includes the **development of industrial manufacturing facilities**. Guiding Principal 1 of the Comprehensive Plan states, “The County will cultivate residential and employment growth areas that align with the community objectives in the adopted plan.” The associated recommended strategy B.2 states, “Partner with the Economic Development Department to launch a community development program targeting appropriately scaled and compatible business growth and reinvestment within and proximate to incorporated towns and identified rural hamlet nodes.”⁵ Proposed reuse of the selected sites is consistent with the County’s objectives to protect communities, spur business growth, and encourage sustainable employment.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The priority sites within the target area will provide both economic and noneconomic **benefits to the disadvantaged community**. Both properties’ redevelopment strategies focus on maintaining sustainable communities within the County. The target-area demographics show the target area has a lower-income population experiencing persistent poverty and larger-than-average minority populations. The target area is part of a larger labor study reviewed by the County and has both a high underemployment rate and a high unemployment rate, comparatively.⁶ The former **Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill priority site** is targeted for a large industry redevelopment, and the **Envirogreen Holdings Group, Inc., priority site** is targeted as a medium industry redevelopment. The current lack of reinvestment at the priority sites can be attributed to perceived contamination. In 2016, Viva Holdings Group, Inc., planned to invest \$28 million in the current Envirogreen Holdings Group, Inc., facility to refurbish it into a rubber and plastics recycling manufacturing plant.⁷ This plan was intended to produce 384 long-term jobs and a sustainability-focused industry.⁸ But due to the perceived contamination, the site sits abandoned and remains available for redevelopment. **Economic benefits** of reinvestment in these sites include **new local entry-level employment, increased property values, and an increased tax base**. The **noneconomic benefits** include the **removal of blight** on unused properties and using the land to generate a stronger community.

In line with Berkeley County’s conservation goals, the encouragement of renewable energy usage at the sites will be of the utmost importance when the sites begin attracting industries. The County will work with developers to ensure all redevelopment within the target area considers energy-efficient designs and incorporates renewable energy options when possible. The County will work with developers to consider local climate adaptation/mitigation strategies in their designs to ensure future developments are resilient, long-term investments in the community. As a part of this grant project, the County is requesting funds to create a **Brownfield Climate Smart Plan** to guide further climate mitigation strategies throughout all redevelopments.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The County as a government entity is eligible to apply for county, state, and federal grant funding. The Brownfields

⁵ Berkeley County Comprehensive Plan, September 25, 2023.

⁶ SC Power Team, Qualified Industrial Labor Summary, 10-mile radius of St. Stephen, SC.

⁷ Charleston Regional Development Alliance News & Blog, “Viva Holdings Group, Inc. Launching Operations in Berkeley County” (rd.org).

⁸ “New plant to ‘revive’ St. Stephen with hundreds of jobs” (live5news.com).

Assessment Grant will allow the County to focus their community sustainability plans on the redevelopment of brownfield properties, which in turn allows them to use other funding sources for implementation. The County has a demonstrated ability to secure additional funding to further their brownfield redevelopment goals and will use the following funding opportunities to redevelop the target area:

Agency	Funding Purpose
US HUD Community Development Block Grant (up to \$100,000 for blighted property activities)	Demolition of blighted properties and infrastructure redevelopment planning for the target areas; Conversion of dilapidated properties to more desirable business opportunities
US EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant (up to \$4,000,000)	Remediation of sites
Catawba Council of Governments – South Carolina’s Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)	Provision of low-interest loans for the remediation of brownfield sites and their redevelopment
Santee Cooper Site Readiness Grant Program	Production of market-ready development sites that increase Berkeley County’s ability to recruit and retain industry
SCDES Brownfield Voluntary Cleanup Program	Provision of income tax credits up to 50% of cleanup costs each year, \$50,000/year max income credit and \$100,000 total over five years, for Non-Responsible Party developers using the state brownfield cleanup program

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The existing infrastructure (streets, roads, utilities, water, sewer) throughout the target area and at the priority sites is sufficient for redevelopment. As additional infrastructure needs are identified, the County will acquire additional funding through state and federal grant programs.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. **Community Need** i. The Community’s Need for Funding: Economic and community investment is desperately needed within the target area. The target area has a **total population of 3,551**, and of those people, 1,386 live in St. Stephen.⁹ The **per capita income of \$17,036, median household income of \$25,674, and median family income of \$31,076** are well below the national averages (\$41,261/\$75,149/\$92,646).⁹ St. Stephen, which is central to CT 202.01, has a significantly higher percentage of people living at or **below the poverty level (39%) and households receiving food stamp assistance (26%) compared to the national averages (13%/12%)**.⁹ CEJST shows the target area in the **90th percentile for poverty** where income is at or below 100% of the federal poverty level.

The County is unable to fund focused brownfield-remediation efforts due to the resources required to manage the rapid development and economic growth along the southern and eastern County limits. Rural, northern Berkeley County economics revolve around small businesses, the timber industry, outdoor recreation, and the Cross Generating Station power plant. With the closure of the target area’s largest employer, Georgia-Pacific; the 2008 recession; and the 2020 pandemic, many jobs and tax revenue have been lost. **Unemployment in both the target area and the Town of St. Stephen currently stands at 8%, which is well above the national average (5%)**.⁹ The County’s vision of new industrial manufacturing jobs can be realized only with remediation assistance from the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. With the current state of unemployment, poverty levels, and low income, it is impossible for the County to raise taxes to fund this project on their own.

⁹ US Census: American Community Survey 2018–2022.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations: (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: **Sensitive target-area populations include minorities, the youth and elderly, females, and those living in poverty.** The target area has a significantly high **Black population of 34%, nearly three times the national average (13%).**¹⁰ In addition, the target area has a high population of youth and elderly combined (58%, US 42%) as well as impoverished residents, with **40% of all families being below the poverty level** (US 9%) and 68% of those families being female head of household with children under the age of 18 (US 33%).¹⁰

According to the EJ Screening Tool, the target area is in the **78th percentile for less than a high school education**, which can lead to higher crime rates and higher poverty. Crime statistics associated with St. Stephen are higher than most communities of the same size within the US. One's chance of becoming a victim of either violent or property crime here is one in 18.¹¹ Within South Carolina, more than 90% of the communities have a lower crime rate than St. Stephen.¹¹ Crime in rural and underserved areas is often a result of generational socioeconomics, limited community support services, and diminished job availability. Investment in the target area will allow the development of new manufacturing jobs for all levels of education, reduce the potential for the target area's youth to be involved in criminal activities, and help residents counteract entrenched socioeconomic factors that prevent a community from overcoming historical bias. EPA Brownfield funding will make the **transition of the priority sites into industrial employers possible and will reduce these threats** by increasing opportunity and services to the minority and underprivileged populations in the target area.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: The potential contaminants at the **former Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill** are hazardous materials and petroleum products. Historic operations at the former Lumber Mill require further investigation. Potential contaminants include creosote railroad ties, underground storage tanks, and PAHs from the combustion of boiler fuel and wood debris. Potential environmental impacts to the **Envirogreen Holdings Group, Inc., site** may be detrimental to the underlying groundwater and contribute to health issues among inhabitants of neighboring residences that adjoin the property.

Target area and County model-based data were obtained from the Center for Disease Control. The target area has an estimated 62% higher rate of coronary heart disease when compared to the County as a whole (10% vs. 6%), an estimated 72% higher rate of diabetes (21% vs. 12%), an estimated 74% higher rate of COPD (12% vs. 7%), and a 93% higher rate of stroke (6% vs. 3%) for all adults.¹² The EPA EJ Screen Report shows the target area is in the **89th percentile for low life expectancy, 92nd percentile for asthma, and 61st percentile for cancer.** Lead and asbestos are common contaminants in commercial structures constructed prior to 1980. Adults and children exposed to lead or asbestos when trespassing on the sites could develop neurological effects that include behavior issues and intelligence limitation for children and blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, and reduced fertility in adults.¹² Asbestos exposure can also cause several types of incapacitating diseases including asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma.¹² Berkeley County ranked as the 14th highest county for **lung/bronchus cancer mortality** based on five years of recent data.¹³ The Brownfields Assessment Grant funding will facilitate the identification and reduction of threats to sensitive populations in the target area.

(3) Environmental Justice: (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: The target area's disadvantaged populations have been subject to historical, regional, and global factors that have

¹⁰ US Census 2018–2022 American Community Survey.

¹¹ <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/sc/st-stephen/crime>.

¹² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website – Health Problems Caused by Lead, Asbestos – September 2020.

¹³ SCDPH, Berkeley County, South Carolina Cancer Profile 2014–2018 SC Central Cancer Registry.

diminished the area’s ability to prosper. Historical slave-based economies, eminent domain acquisition of personal property for a federal electric project, and the closure of large timber-based employers due to market fluctuation are all **social and environmental justice issues** affecting the target area. The EJ Screening Tool indicates the target area experiences a higher value for wastewater discharge indicators. **The wastewater toxicity weighted concentration value is in the 96th percentile in the state and 94th percentile in the US.** Likely contributors to higher-than-average wastewater discharges include the upstream discharges of industrial and municipal wastewater into target areas adjoining the Lake Moultrie waterbody located west and north of the target area. The coal-fired Cross Generating Station power plant is located on the windward side of the lake and includes coal ash disposal areas and coal piles, and it uses Lake Moultrie and Marion for cooling water. When considering these environmental hazards, it is no surprise that **heart disease, diabetes, and asthma values for the target area are all above the 90th percentile in the US.** These higher-than-average concentrations can be associated with poor air toxicity and wastewater toxicity.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: Redevelopment in this community will correct the long-term environmental justice issues impacting the target area. The development of new manufacturer/industrial jobs will aid the minority and impoverished populations of the target areas by creating new job opportunities and will spur economic growth. **Both priority sites are currently vacant; therefore, no residents or businesses will be displaced with this redevelopment.** If there is the potential for future displacement due to redevelopment, the County will collaborate with developers to focus on infill redevelopment and encourage reuse of abandoned and vacant structures. Historical environmental justice issues are difficult to counteract, but with funding assistance from an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant, Berkeley County can provide community members with the opportunity to overcome the historic encumbrances of race-based economics in the region through new employers.

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

Name of Organization & Mission	Point of Contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Berkeley County Environmental Authority: Represent the community during environmental grants in the target area	Gerald Addison gwaddison@tds.net	Provide input on the site selection and coordination from local citizens and business owners in the target area
Charleston Regional Development Alliance: A consortium of government and private partners committed to strengthening employment and industries in the area	David T. Ginn dginn@crda.org	Provide guidance on site prioritization and exposure to potential employers
Small Town Restoration Inc.: (Local nonprofit organization) Beautify, restore, and revitalize St. Stephen.	Gerald Addison, gwaddison@tds.net	Provide assistance on future site reuse plans.
Berkeley Seniors, Inc.: Provide services to the senior citizens of the County	Mayor John Rivers, admin@berkeley-seniors.org	Provide assistance with site identification and prioritization
Berkeley County School District: Provide education and opportunities to the youth of the County	Dr. Anthony Dixon, Superintendent@-bcstdschools.net	Provide assistance with outreach and education to the youth

<p>Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments: Provide local governments with planning and technical support to improve regional quality of life</p>	<p>Kathryn S. Basha AICP, kathrynb@bcdkog.com</p>	<p>Provide cleanup/future reuse planning and leveraging assistance for program success</p>
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iii. Incorporating Community Input: The County Council approved the application of the Brownfields Assessment Grant at their meeting held on October 29, 2024. The County formed the citizen-led **Berkeley County Environmental Authority (BCEA)** to aid in brownfield community outreach and ensure that community involvement carries forward in future County planning, including brownfield redevelopment. The County has assigned a brownfield planning role to the BCEA, which consists of community residents and St. Stephen Town Council members. These BCEA members consist of citizen leaders interested in elevating underserved community needs and economic revitalizing of the target area. The BCEA will organize three community meetings per year that will include target-area residents and local organizations throughout the duration of the grant project. These meetings will take place within the target area at St. Stephen’s public library, Timberland High School, and community churches. Based on community interest from the FY22 Assessment Grant, additional meetings are needed; therefore, the County has budgeted for 12 meetings for this project. Virtual meeting options include web-based video conference meetings published via the County’s economic development website, berkeleymeansbusiness.com, and the St. Stephen’s Facebook page. Meeting and information opportunities will educate target-area residents, project partners, and stakeholders on the brownfield issues throughout the target area.

The County will update the FY22 grant Community Involvement Plan (CIP), which describes the planned community engagement activities, schedule, and Brownfield Grant awareness activities; compiles project background information; and identifies key stakeholders for the brownfield assessment process. For those individuals who do not have access to the internet, the BCEA will post flyers on bulletin boards at churches, community centers, parks, grocery stores, libraries, youth centers, and afterschool program locations within the target area. Berkeley County is committed to obtaining community involvement and feedback to ensure the assessment process serves the target-area’s underserved, sensitive populations. Input from target-area residents will be recorded in meeting minutes and evaluated during County and project partner meetings for prioritizing the assessments in conjunction with the community redevelopment plans. The information will be promptly posted to the County’s brownfield website for further public review. The BCEA and Brownfields Project Director will use the public input to guide the Brownfields Grant assessment efforts and ensure the program funds are allocated to best serve the target area and the underserved population. The BCEA will respond to those citizens who provide input within two weeks of receipt. Key meeting inputs and resulting planning approaches will be available via the County’s brownfield website and public handouts at the meetings.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Community Engagement	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The County’s Brownfield (BF) Project Director will update the existing Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, updated brownfield project webpage, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). County staff will lead the community meetings to keep the public informed on project plans and updates. Supplies: printing of outreach materials (brochures), office supplies. Light refreshments for meetings are budgeted as “Other.”
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meetings held three of four quarters during Y1–Y4, CIP, website and outreach materials updated in Q1 and posted quarterly throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Berkeley County: Corey McClary, BF Project Director

iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Updated CIP and BF webpage, 12 community/educational meetings, brochures/handouts, social media posts, summary of community meeting minutes in EPA-required quarterly reports
Task 2: Inventory & Assessment	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> Berkeley County’s BF Project Director will work with target-area residents during outreach events to update the site inventory. Identified abandoned and underused properties will be researched further by the County staff using the Berkeley County GIS website. EC will work with County’s staff to update the evaluation ranking tool to determine the order the sites will be addressed. EC conducts Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), starting first with the two priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs will include the SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation will be addressed when applicable.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> First community meeting held will continue the inventory process. Evaluation ranking process and assessments begin Q2 and continue throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from Berkeley County: Corey McClary, BF Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation ranking tool, site inventory list, 14 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 6 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, site access agreements, property eligibility determinations, Section 106 determinations (if applicable)
Task 3: Remediation Planning	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> Projects identified for cleanup; EC will prepare the Analysis for BF Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning includes evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs and determining site-appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions. A planner will create EPA-approved plans: BF Revitalization Plan, Site Reuse Assessment, Climate Smart Plan, and Market Study.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & charrettes begin Q6 and will continue throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from Berkeley County: Corey McClary, BF Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 2 vision sessions/charrettes, BF Revitalization Plan, Site Reuse Assessment, Smart Climate Plan, and Market Study
Task 4: Program Management	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The County will procure an EC to help with the grant project. The County’s BF Finance 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 County 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 County staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend two brownfield training conferences/workshops.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Procure EC, ACRES & quarterly reporting begins Q1 and continues during grant project. Yearly reporting and forms created in Q5, 9, 13, and final closeout.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Berkeley County: Lechele Brown, BF Finance Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES database reporting, 4 annual financial reports, 16 quarterly reports, 4 MBE/WBE forms, programmatic support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend two 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 travel, supplies, other, and contractual costs only.
- Light refreshment costs for community meetings is included in the “Other” category per EPA Terms and Conditions.
- No administrative costs are included in the budget.

- **Fifty-two percent (52%) of the budget will be spent on the site-specific work and thirty-three (33%) for area-wide planning activities.**

Task 1 Community Engagement: Contractual: Updated CIP \$1,600 (10 hrs x \$160); BF website, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$3,200 (20hrs x \$160); 12 Community/Edu. meetings \$24,960 (156hrs x \$160; \$2,080 /meeting). Supplies: Outreach supplies \$1,190 (printed brochures \$800[800 x \$1.00], printed display boards \$300 [3 x \$100], notebooks, paper, pens, other miscellaneous office supplies \$90). Other: (community meeting light refreshments) \$5,000.

Task 2 Inventory & Assessment: Contractual: Update Brownfield site inventory and evaluation ranking tool \$6,000 (40hrs x \$150); 14 Phase I ESAs \$5,000 each for a total of \$70,000; 1 Generic QAPP \$6,000; 6 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP at \$31,000 each for a total of \$186,000. **Task**

3 Remediation Planning: Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$6,000 for a total of \$24,000; 2 vision sessions/charrettes \$4,000 (\$2,000/meeting); 1 Site Reuse Assessment \$32,000 (Planner: 65hrs x \$200; Market Analysts: 74hrs x \$125, Environmental Professional: 75hrs x \$130); 1 Market Study \$12,200 (Planner: 22hrs x \$200; Market Analysts: 52hrs x \$125, Environmental Professional: 10hrs x \$130); Climate Smart Plan \$16,350 (Planner: 24hrs x \$200; Market Analysts: 30hrs x \$125, Environmental Professional: 60hrs x \$130); Brownfield Revitalization Plan \$75,000 (Planner: 20 hrs x \$200; Market Analysts: 150hrs x \$125, Environmental Professional: 125hrs x \$130). **Task 4 Program Management:** Contractual: ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, MBE/WBE forms \$24,000 (150hrs x \$160). Travel: 2 staff to attend 2 conferences \$8,500 (flights at \$700, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/night, incidentals and per diem at \$75 x 3 days, plus conference registration \$300/event x 2 attendees x 2 events).

Category	Tasks				Totals
	<i>Community Engagement</i>	<i>Inventory & Assessment</i>	<i>Remediation Planning</i>	<i>Program Mngt</i>	
Travel				\$8,500	\$8,500
Supplies	\$1,190				\$1,190
Contractual	\$29,760	\$268,000	\$163,550	\$24,000	\$485,310
Other	\$5,000				\$5,000
Total	\$35,950	\$268,000	\$163,550	\$32,500	\$500,000

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule the County’s BF Team, which includes the environmental contractor and BCEA, 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. Outputs tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs and cleanup redevelopment plans. Outcomes 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 County has countermeasures in place to address this problem. The County will make monthly calls to their EPA Project Officer and, if needed, generate a Corrective Action Plan to help the project get back on schedule.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii. Description of Key Staff: The County has obtained support through the local community leaders

in St. Stephen up through the County Council members and the Economic Development team. The County's Brownfield Project Team is made up of staff from the Economic Development Department and Grants Administration Department with a combined total of 19 seasoned staff committed to community residents and County prosperity. The Economic Development Workforce Development Manager, **Corey McClary**, will be responsible for the day-to-day activities, timely and successful expenditure of funds, and completion of the project's administrative and financial requirements as the **Brownfield Project Director**. He has served as the Brownfield Project Director for the County's existing Brownfield Grant for the past three years. Corey has served as the Workforce Development Manager for the past four years. Mr. McClary will be assisted by **Ms. Lechele Brown**, the County's Grants Administrator, as the **Brownfield Finance Director**. She is responsible for managing the finances for the existing EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant project and will continue to handle grant funding draw downs through the ASAP system. She has over 10 years of experience managing grant finances and programmatic reporting and has functioned as the County's Grants Administrator for a year. In her current role, she is responsible for federal funding draw downs, record keeping, and contractor invoice management. A qualified environmental contractor will assist with the technical portions of the project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The County will procure a qualified environmental contractor and subcontractors to assist with technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Cleanup project. Procurement procedures will comply with both the local contracting and procurement process and with EPA requirements for "Professional Service." The County will promote strong labor practices, local hiring and procurement, 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 i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant: (1) Accomplishments: The County was awarded an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant in FY22 in the amount of \$500,000. To date, three Phase I and two Phase II ESA have been completed on priority sites. After assessment, the community support led to the refocusing of funds to fully address the St. Stephen High School structure. Asbestos, mercury, and structural assessments have been performed to support future redevelopment. Five community meetings have been held from April of 2023 to November of 2024. The first community meeting was the largest public meeting ever attended in the Southeast for the Brownfield Program, with about 130 people, over three times larger than expected. Along with the community meetings, five Steering Committee meetings have been held from June 2023 to November 2024. When selecting the Steering Committee, there were over 70 interested individuals wanting to serve. Extensive communications and media posts have been shared to effectively communicate the details of the grant, including representation at the local Catfish Festival. Multiple internal planning meetings are held monthly to prepare for community and committee meetings. All information has been reported in ACRES. (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The County has been in full compliance with their open FY22 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. ACRES has been updated with all relevant grant information and outputs. All reporting has been turned into the EPA Project Officer in a timely manner, and the County has had a monthly call with their EPA Project Officer since the beginning of the grant project to discuss progress. The FY22 grant opened on 10/01/2022 and is expected to close with all funds expended by March 2025 (official close out date is 09/30/2026). As of October 1, 2024, 73% of the grant has been spent. The remaining \$132,918 will be spent on community meetings and visioning sessions, Phase II ESAs, Phase I ESAs, structural assessment, asbestos inspections, wetlands delineation, and a reuse plan report.



**BERKELEY
COUNTY SC**

**Berkeley County
South Carolina**

**FY25 Brownfield Assessment Grant
Threshold Criteria**

Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. Berkeley County, South Carolina, is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant as a general-purpose unit of local government as defined under 2 CFR §200.64.
- b. The County is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement

The County formed the citizen-led Berkeley County Environmental Authority (BCEA) on August 17, 2021, to aid in brownfield community outreach and ensure that community involvement carries forward in future County planning, including brownfield redevelopment. The County has assigned a brownfield planning role to the BCEA, which consists of community residents and St. Stephen Town Council members. These BCEA members consist of citizen leaders interested in elevating underserved community needs and economic revitalizing in the target area. The BCEA will organize community meetings that will include target-area residents and local organizations throughout the duration of the grant project. These meetings will take place within the target area at St. Stephen's public library, Timberland High School, and community churches. Virtual meeting options include registered, web-based video conference meetings published via the County's economic development website, berkeleymeansbusiness.com, and the St. Stephen's Facebook page. These information opportunities will educate target-area residents, project partners, and stakeholders on the brownfield issues throughout the target area.

Input from target-area residents will be recorded in meeting minutes and evaluated during County and project partner meetings for prioritizing the assessments in conjunction with the community redevelopment plans. The BCEA and Brownfields Project Director will use the public input to guide the Brownfields Grant assessment efforts and ensure the program funds are allocated to best serve the target area. The BCEA will respond to those citizens who provide input within two weeks of receipt. Key meeting inputs and resulting planning approaches will be available via the County website and public handouts at the meetings.

The County will update the existing Community Involvement Plan (CIP) from their FY22 grant project, which describes the planned community engagement activities, schedule, and Brownfield-Grant awareness activities; compiles project background information; and identifies key stakeholders for the brownfield assessment process. For those individuals who do not have access to the internet, the BCEA will post flyers on bulletin boards at churches, community centers, parks, grocery stores, libraries, youth centers, and afterschool program locations within the target area. Berkeley County is committed to obtaining community involvement and feedback to ensure the assessment process serves the target area's underserved populations.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

Berkeley County, South Carolina, affirms that the County has an open EPA Assessment Grant. As of October 1, 2024, 73.4% has been drawn down through the ASAP.gov system. Please see attached account statement.

The County affirms that it does not have an open/active EPA Multipurpose Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not applicable.