

EPA Brownfields Redevelopment Marketing Your Revolving Loan Fund Grant (RLF) USEPA Region 1 (Connecticut)

Overview:

NJIT TAB coordinated and conducted a workshop in Derby, Connecticut for interested communities and non-profit organizations that were experiencing difficulties in marketing their EPA Revolving Loan Fund Grants. The workshop consisted of a presentation which included topics such as: how to identify your audience; how to get the word out to potential borrowers; developing a good sales pitch; making the RLF more appealing to borrowers; meeting grant requirements; and how to measure success. A copy of this presentation can be found at <http://www.njit.edu/tab/downloads/index.php>. Discussions and information exchanges between participants occurred throughout the presentation. Some transferrable recommendations and insights offered during the workshop include:

- Banks should be seen as partners in the RLF process as they can perform underwriting services and they can also promote RLF loans to borrowers as part of their services portfolio.
- Sites that will ultimately be reused for community spaces (parks, river-walks, etc...) are not good choices for using RLF Grant funding unless part of a larger redevelopment project. These funds are best applied to sites that will ultimately have resale value (in terms of repaying the loan).
- In order to make RLF Grant loans work it is important to have loan terms that account for the typical complexities and difficulties encountered during brownfield redevelopment, e.g., payment schedules that do not begin until revenue from the site is generated and conversion of a shortfall in anticipated land sale price to a subgrant. EPA stressed that RLF loans can be very flexible in terms, such as repayment time frames, interest rates and when the repayment process begins.
- One option for use of the RLF Grant loan is to provide gap financing as part of a larger package of loans for a project. Particularly, the RLF loan could pay for remediation costs in situations where a normal lender will not fund project until the environmental remediation is complete and this risk is removed.
- It is easier to market RLF Grant loans to a community that has a redevelopment plan and a vision for itself which justifies some of the difficulties associated with brownfields redevelopment.
- Brownfields redevelopment inherently has unforeseen obstacles and costs. Communities have to have realistic expectations of the process and understand that in some cases it takes time to get a site through the entire redevelopment process.
- RLF funding can be used by the grantee to develop generic programmatic documents that then can be slightly modified by the borrower for specific projects. Programmatic documents that can be prepared generically are Quality Assurance

Project Plan (QAPP), Health and Safety Plan (HASP), Community Outreach Plan and Analysis of Brownfield Clean up Alternative (ABCA). In many cases standard remedial action documents, such as the Remedial Action Workplan (RAW) can substitute for the programmatic documents.