

EPA FY26 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant
Blackline Foundation
Narrative Information Sheet

1. Applicant Identification:
Blackline Foundation
1250 Wordens Pond Rd
Charlestown, RI 02813
401-477-3309
2. Website URL:
<https://www.blacklinefoundation.com>
3. Funding Requested:
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
 - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
4. Location:
 - a. City/Town: South Kingstown; North Kingstown; Westerly; Narragansett; Charlestown; Richmond; Hopkinton; Exeter
 - b. County: Washington County
 - c. State: Rhode Island
5. Target Area and Priority Site Information:

Target Areas: Washington County, Rhode Island, including coastal, river-adjacent, and inland communities with historic industrial, maritime, defense-related, and commercial activity.

Priority Site(s): Priority brownfield sites include former light industrial, marine-support, manufacturing, warehouse, and underutilized commercial properties located within town centers, waterfront corridors, and historic industrial districts. Specific site addresses will be finalized through inventory refinement, municipal coordination, and execution of site access agreements during the grant period.
6. Contacts:
 - a. Project Director:
Marisa Desautel
Director Blackline Foundation
96 Glen Farm Rd
Portsmouth, RI 02871
401-477-3309
marisa@blacklinefoundation.com

b. Chief Executive / Highest-Ranking Official:
 Kerin Browning
 Director Blackline Foundation
 1250 Wordens Pond Rd
 Charlestown, RI 02813
 401-529-9723
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7. Population Washington County, Rhode Island is approximately 130,000 residents (U.S. Census Bureau).

8. Other Factors:

Other Factor	Narrative Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less	N/A
Applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or U.S. Territory	N/A
Priority site(s) impacted by mine-scarred land	N/A
Priority site(s) adjacent to a body of water	Page 1
Priority site(s) located in a federally designated floodplain	N/A
Reuse of priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy (wind, solar, geothermal)	N/A
Reuse of priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures	N/A
Proposed project will improve local resilience to extreme weather events and natural disasters	Page 1
At least 30% of overall project budget spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities	Page 7-8
Target area impacted by a coal-fired power plant that closed in 2015 or later	N/A

9. Letter from State Environmental Authority:
 See attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications:

This application does not include confidential business information (CBI). The applicant understands that copies of this application may be made publicly available by EPA.



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
235 Promenade Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

January 28, 2026

Re: EPA FY26 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application – Blackline Foundation, Inc.

This letter acknowledges that Blackline Foundation has notified the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) of its intent to apply for an EPA FY26 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. If awarded, the applicant proposes to conduct eligible brownfields assessment activities within Washington County, Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Susan Forcier
Deputy Director for Environmental Protection
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

PROJECT NARRATIVE (EPA FY26 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant)

This Narrative responds to all criteria in Section 4.C of the FY26 EPA Brownfields Notice of Funding Opportunity and is intended to form the basis of the EPA cooperative agreement workplan if selected for funding. The proposed project addresses long-standing data gaps, environmental uncertainty, and redevelopment barriers affecting brownfield sites across Washington County, Rhode Island.

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

1.a Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area. The geographic boundary for this proposed project is Washington County, Rhode Island. Washington County encompasses a diverse set of coastal, riverine, and inland communities that have experienced decades of industrial, maritime, defense-related, manufacturing, agricultural-support, and commercial activity. Much of this development occurred prior to the adoption of modern environmental regulations, resulting in properties with real or perceived contamination that now inhibit reinvestment.

The County's brownfield challenges are compounded by its environmental sensitivity. Many potential redevelopment sites are located adjacent to coastal waters, tidal rivers, wetlands, and aquifers that serve as drinking water supplies. Sea level rise, coastal flooding, and extreme weather events further complicate redevelopment by increasing regulatory complexity and financial risk. As a result, environmental uncertainty often stalls transactions, deters lenders, and leaves strategically located properties underutilized for extended periods.

Within this geographic boundary, Blackline Foundation will focus assessment activities in defined target areas that include town centers, waterfront and river-adjacent corridors, historic industrial districts, and underutilized commercial zones. These areas were selected because they contain concentrations of brownfield sites, are served by existing infrastructure, and align with municipal goals for economic development, adaptive reuse, and climate resilience.

EPA funding will allow the Foundation to modernize and expand existing brownfields inventories, close information gaps through systematic environmental assessments, and provide municipalities, property owners, and developers with reliable data necessary to move sites toward cleanup and reuse.

A significant barrier to brownfield redevelopment within Washington County is the condition of existing site information. Available brownfields inventories and public records are frequently outdated, fragmented across agencies, or limited to static datasets that do not reflect current ownership, site status, redevelopment interest, or evolving environmental concerns. In many cases, listed information predates significant changes in land use, regulatory standards, or climate-related risks, limiting its usefulness for decision-making.

As a result, municipalities, property owners, lenders, and prospective developers often operate with incomplete or inconsistent information. This information asymmetry increases perceived risk, discourages investment, and contributes to prolonged site inactivity. Even where redevelopment interest exists, the lack of current, credible environmental data frequently prevents parties from engaging in meaningful negotiations or advancing transactions.

The proposed project addresses these challenges by modernizing brownfields inventories and generating current, site-specific assessment data that can be shared among stakeholders. In addition to producing technical reports, the project will serve as a conduit for coordination by aligning municipalities, property owners, consultants, and potential redevelopment partners around a common factual baseline. This approach is intended to move sites from a state of uncertainty toward actionable redevelopment pathways.

By creating a transparent and up-to-date inventory and assessment framework, the project will reduce transaction friction and help stakeholders identify mutually viable redevelopment opportunities. This coordinated approach transforms assessment activities from isolated technical exercises into tools that support consensus-building, site control, and reinvestment decisions.

1.b Description of Priority Brownfield Site(s). Priority brownfield sites within Washington County typically range from approximately one to five acres and include former manufacturing facilities, marine-support properties, warehouses, former light industrial operations, auto-oriented commercial sites, and obsolete commercial buildings. Many sites contain existing structures that may be suitable for rehabilitation or adaptive reuse, which is a priority for communities seeking to limit sprawl and preserve open space.

Common known or suspected environmental concerns at priority sites include petroleum hydrocarbons from storage tanks and fueling operations; volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds associated with manufacturing and solvent use; heavy metals from historic industrial activities; and potential vapor intrusion risks. Several sites are located within flood-prone areas or adjacent to surface waters, increasing the importance of understanding contaminant migration pathways and long-term exposure risks.

Priority sites will be selected based on redevelopment potential, municipal interest, proximity to infrastructure, potential community benefit, and the likelihood that EPA-funded assessment activities will lead directly to cleanup planning and reuse.

1.c Identifying Additional Sites. If grant funds remain after addressing initial priority sites, Blackline Foundation will identify additional eligible sites within the geographic boundary through an iterative process. This process will include continued inventory refinement, review of municipal land use and tax records, consultation with local officials and planning staff, and evaluation of sites identified by property owners or community stakeholders.

Additional site selection will be guided by criteria including evidence of real or perceived contamination, readiness for assessment activities, redevelopment feasibility, consistency with local land use plans, and potential economic and community benefits.

1.d Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans. Projected reuse strategies for assessed sites include light industrial and trades facilities, marine-support uses, mixed-use commercial redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of existing industrial and commercial structures. These uses are consistent with zoning and comprehensive plans across Washington County and support regional priorities related to workforce development, small business growth, and revitalization of historic employment centers.

Municipal planning documents throughout the County emphasize reinvestment in existing developed areas, reuse of underutilized properties, protection of coastal and natural resources, and increased resilience to climate impacts. The proposed assessment activities directly advance these objectives by reducing environmental uncertainty and enabling informed reuse decisions.

In addition to outdated environmental information, redevelopment in Washington County is frequently constrained by misalignment between existing zoning frameworks, municipal planning objectives, and market-feasible reuse scenarios. Many brownfield sites are located in zoning districts that no longer reflect current economic conditions, infrastructure capacity, or community priorities, or are subject to layered regulatory constraints that are not well documented or coordinated across agencies.

As a result, prospective developers often encounter uncertainty not only regarding environmental conditions, but also regarding the feasibility of proposed reuse under existing zoning and land use regulations. This uncertainty further increases transaction risk and discourages investment, even where sites are well located and infrastructure is available.

The proposed project will support more effective redevelopment by pairing updated environmental assessment data with an understanding of local zoning and planning contexts. Assessment activities will be coordinated with municipal planning staff to identify realistic reuse pathways that are consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and economic development goals. This coordination is intended to ensure that assessment outcomes inform reuse concepts that are both community-supported and attractive to private-sector developers.

By aligning environmental information with zoning and land use considerations, the project will help municipalities and property owners present sites to the market in a manner that reflects regulatory realities and redevelopment opportunities, increasing the likelihood that assessment activities lead to viable transactions and implementation.

1.e Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy. The proposed project will generate measurable environmental, economic, and community benefits. Environmental assessments will identify and characterize contamination, inform cleanup strategies, and reduce risks to human health and the environment. Economic benefits include facilitating private investment, supporting job creation, and strengthening municipal tax bases through productive reuse of currently underutilized land.

The project will also support climate resilience by encouraging adaptive reuse of existing structures, reducing development pressure on greenfields, and enabling redevelopment designs that incorporate flood mitigation, energy efficiency, and resilient infrastructure.

In addition to environmental and economic benefits, the proposed project will produce concrete redevelopment-enabling outcomes by transforming brownfield sites from speculative or stalled properties into sites capable of supporting transactions, financing, and redevelopment planning. Completion of EPA-funded assessments will provide the level of environmental certainty necessary for municipalities, lenders, and developers to engage in negotiations, establish site control, and advance redevelopment concepts.

The anticipated reuse of assessed sites will support local employment opportunities, particularly in trades, light industrial, marine-support, and small business sectors that align with Washington County's existing workforce and economic base. By prioritizing adaptive reuse of existing structures, the project will help preserve community character while expanding opportunities for job creation and business growth.

The project will also generate important long-term environmental and public health benefits by identifying contamination that may pose risks to nearby residents, sensitive populations, and environmental resources. Assessment activities will support proactive management of contamination in flood-prone and coastal areas, reducing the potential for contaminant migration during extreme weather events and improving the resilience of redevelopment efforts.

Collectively, these outcomes will advance sustainable land reuse, reduce environmental uncertainty, and support equitable economic revitalization within Washington County.

1.f Resources Needed for Site Reuse. EPA assessment funding is a critical enabling resource for advancing brownfield sites in Washington County from stagnation to redevelopment readiness. Many properties within the target areas are privately owned, encumbered by uncertain environmental conditions, and not currently eligible for traditional financing or private investment due to unresolved contamination questions. Without credible environmental data generated through Phase I and Phase II assessments, municipalities, property owners, and prospective developers are unable to secure funding, negotiate transactions, or advance redevelopment concepts.

The requested EPA funding will provide the foundational environmental information necessary to reduce risk, clarify regulatory pathways, and support informed decision-making. Assessment results will be used to support cleanup planning, identify applicable remedial approaches, and

establish cost ranges that can be incorporated into redevelopment pro formas. This information is essential for leveraging subsequent resources, including private lending, municipal investment, state brownfields and economic development programs, and other federal funding sources.

Blackline Foundation will actively use assessment outputs to position sites for follow-on investment by preparing documentation suitable for lenders, developers, and public-sector partners. Assessment data will be shared with municipalities to support redevelopment planning, zoning alignment, and infrastructure coordination. Where appropriate, assessment results will also support applications for cleanup funding, tax incentives, or public-private partnerships.

Importantly, EPA funding will allow sites that are currently viewed as too risky or uncertain to become viable candidates for reinvestment. By reducing environmental uncertainty and clarifying regulatory requirements early in the redevelopment process, the project will stimulate the availability of additional funds necessary to complete cleanup and implement the projected reuse strategies described in this Narrative.

1.g Use of Existing Infrastructure. Many priority sites are located within developed areas served by existing utilities, transportation networks, and buildings. Assessment activities will evaluate the condition and capacity of this infrastructure and identify constraints or upgrade needs relevant to reuse planning. Reuse of existing infrastructure will reduce costs and environmental impacts associated with redevelopment.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a The Community's Need for Funding. Communities within Washington County vary in size and resources, but many lack the financial capacity to independently fund environmental assessments for properties with uncertain contamination histories. Smaller municipalities and nonprofit organizations often face barriers to accessing capital for assessment activities, particularly where redevelopment outcomes are uncertain. EPA funding is therefore critical to addressing environmental conditions that impede reinvestment.

2.b Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations. Sensitive populations within the target areas include low-income households, older adults, individuals with pre-existing health conditions, and residents living near former industrial or commercial sites. Potential exposure to contaminants through soil, groundwater, or indoor air presents health and welfare concerns that must be understood before redevelopment can proceed. Assessment activities will help identify exposure pathways and inform future mitigation measures.

2.c Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions. Historic industrial and commercial land uses in certain areas of Washington County are associated with elevated risks of respiratory and other chronic health conditions. While this project will not include health monitoring, the assessment data generated will support future evaluation of environmental contributors to health risks and inform protective actions.

2.d Economically Impoverished and Disproportionately Impacted Populations. Some communities within the target area have experienced disproportionate environmental and economic impacts due to legacy industrial activity. By advancing assessment and reuse of contaminated properties, this project will help reduce environmental burdens, improve economic opportunities, and promote more equitable redevelopment outcomes.

2.e Project Involvement. The project will involve municipal officials, planning and economic development staff, regional organizations, property owners, and community stakeholders. Blackline Foundation will serve as the coordinating entity, ensuring transparent decision-making and meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the project.

2.f Project Roles. Municipal partners will assist with site identification, prioritization, and outreach. Qualified environmental professionals will conduct technical assessments. Blackline Foundation will manage the cooperative agreement, oversee procurement, ensure regulatory compliance, and coordinate reporting.

Blackline Foundation has conducted preliminary inventory review activities to better understand existing brownfields data for Washington County. Available state and federal inventories largely reflect conditions from prior decades and do not account for redevelopment activity, ownership changes, or newly identified sites.

The Foundation anticipates continuing this work, including site status, known or suspected environmental conditions, redevelopment constraints, and potential reuse categories. This preliminary work was conducted without reimbursement and was undertaken as a result of reviewing current inventories and recognizing a large data gap. This project role demonstrates the Foundation's readiness and capacity to immediately implement EPA-funded assessment activities.

2.g Incorporating Community Input Community. engagement will include meetings with municipal officials, outreach to local organizations, and public communication as appropriate. Feedback from residents and stakeholders will be solicited during site selection and reuse planning and incorporated into project decisions.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Task 1: Program Management and Reporting. Blackline Foundation will manage the cooperative agreement, coordinate with EPA, oversee procurement, and prepare required performance and financial reports. Outputs include quarterly reports and documentation of expenditures and progress.

Task 2: Brownfields Inventory Update and Site Prioritization. Activities include updating and expanding existing brownfields inventories, GIS mapping, data validation, and site prioritization. Outputs include a documented inventory and prioritization framework.

Task 3: Phase I Environmental Site Assessments. Qualified environmental professionals will conduct Phase I ESAs in accordance with ASTM standards. Outputs include completed Phase I ESA reports for selected sites.

Task 4: Phase II Environmental Site Assessments. Where appropriate, limited Phase II investigations will be conducted to further evaluate contamination. Outputs include Phase II ESA reports and data summaries.

Task 5: Cleanup and Reuse Planning. Activities include preparation of cleanup planning information and reuse concepts to support redevelopment decisions. Outputs include planning memoranda and summaries.

Cost estimates are based on prevailing market rates for environmental consulting, project management, and data management services. Administrative costs will not exceed five percent of total EPA-requested funds. Progress will be measured through defined outputs, schedules, and reporting systems.

TABLE 1: Task Description & Timeline

Task	Description	Timeframe	Lead	Key Outputs
Task 1: Program Management	Grant administration, EPA coordination, procurement, reporting	Months 1–48	Blackline Foundation	Quarterly reports, procurement records
Task 2: Inventory Update & Site Prioritization	Update brownfields inventory; GIS mapping; zoning context review	Months 1–18	Blackline Foundation	Updated inventory; prioritization framework
Task 3: Phase I ESAs	Conduct Phase I ESAs per ASTM	Months 6–36	Contractor	Phase I ESA reports
Task 4: Phase II ESAs	Limited subsurface investigations	Months 12–42	Contractor	Phase II reports
Task 5: Cleanup & Reuse Planning	ABCA-level planning; reuse coordination	Months 24–48	Blackline Foundation	Planning memoranda, stakeholder meetings

TABLE 2: Cost Allocation by Task

Task	Personnel	Contractual	Other	Total
Task 1	\$20,000	—	—	\$20,000

Task	Personnel	Contractual	Other	Total
Task 2	\$40,000	\$60,000	—	\$100,000
Task 3	—	\$180,000	—	\$180,000
Task 4	—	\$150,000	—	\$150,000
Task 5	\$50,000	—	—	\$50,000
TOTAL				\$500,000

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a Organizational Capacity. Blackline Foundation has the organizational capacity to manage the programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements of an EPA cooperative agreement. The Foundation maintains governance structures, internal controls, and reporting systems to ensure compliance.

4.b Organizational Structure. The Foundation’s structure ensures clear separation of governance, management, and technical services. Contractors will be selected through competitive procurement consistent with federal requirements.

4.c Description of Key Staff. Key staff and leadership possess extensive experience in environmental law, regulatory compliance, land use, and redevelopment. Leadership affiliated with Desautel Browning Law brings significant experience in permitting, enforcement, and complex redevelopment projects that will directly inform project implementation.

4.d Acquiring Additional Resources. Additional technical expertise and services will be obtained through competitively procured contracts with qualified environmental professionals and consultants.

4.e Past Performance. Blackline Foundation has not previously received an EPA Brownfields grant. Organizational leadership, however, has successfully managed complex environmental and redevelopment initiatives requiring coordination among regulators, municipalities, consultants, and private stakeholders, positioning the Foundation to successfully implement the proposed project.

THRESHOLD CRITERIA RESPONSES

1. Blackline Foundation Eligibility Statement

Blackline Foundation is a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Rhode Island. The Foundation has applied for recognition as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is operating in furtherance of charitable and educational purposes related to environmental assessment, land revitalization, and community redevelopment.

Blackline Foundation is an eligible entity to receive EPA Brownfields grant funding pursuant to CERCLA §104(k)(1) and §104(k)(6), as a nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3), or as an organization that has applied for such status and is operating consistently with those purposes.

The Foundation will be the recipient and administrator of the EPA cooperative agreement and will ensure compliance with all federal, state, and EPA program requirements

2. Documentation of Applicant Eligibility

- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws

3. Lobbying Disclosure Statement

Blackline Foundation is not a 501(c)(4) organization. The Foundation does not engage in lobbying activities as defined under applicable federal law. No EPA grant funds will be used for lobbying activities.

4. Community Involvement Description

Blackline Foundation's approach to community involvement in Washington County is grounded in early engagement, transparency, and practical coordination with municipal officials, property owners, and regional stakeholders.

Prior to this application, Foundation leadership has conducted preliminary brownfields inventory research, reviewed public records, evaluated redevelopment barriers, and performed initial site reconnaissance within Washington County. This work was undertaken to better understand the scope, status, and limitations of existing brownfields data and to identify gaps preventing redevelopment.

During the grant period, the Foundation will engage municipalities, planning departments, and community stakeholders in site prioritization, assessment planning, and reuse discussions. Community input will be solicited through meetings, coordination with municipal staff, and public-facing communication as appropriate. Community feedback will inform site selection, sequencing of assessments, and reuse considerations.

5. Statement Regarding Open EPA Grants

Blackline Foundation does not currently have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

6. Contractor and Subrecipient Disclosure

At the time of application submission, Blackline Foundation has not procured contractors and has not named any subrecipients for the proposed project. All environmental consulting, assessment, and related services will be procured following award through competitive processes in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and EPA procurement requirements.