



APPLICATION INFORMATION SHEET

R05-26-A-025

- (1) **Applicant Identification** Community Foundation for Muskegon County
425 W. Western Avenue, Suite 200
Muskegon, Michigan 49440
- (2) **Website URL** <https://muskegonfoundation.org/>
- (3) **Funding Requested**
a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
- (4) **Location** Muskegon County, Michigan
- (5) **Target Area and Priority Site Information**
Target Area: City of Muskegon Shoreline-Downtown region
- Priority Site 1: Former Sappi Pulp Paper Mill, 2400 Lakeshore Drive, Muskegon, MI
 - Priority Site 2: Former Amoco Bulk Oil Terminal, 1490 Lakeshore Drive, Muskegon, MI
- Target Area:** City of Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor
- Priority Site 3: Former Lift-Tech International Site, 414 W. Broadway Avenue, Muskegon Heights, MI
 - Priority Site 4: Former Laboratory Furniture Manufacturing, 150 W. Broadway Avenue, Muskegon Heights, MI
 - Priority Site 5: Former Bennett Pump Site, 2740 Wood Street, Muskegon Heights, MI

Refer to the attached map, which illustrates the identified target areas and priority sites.

- (6) **Contacts**
- a. Project Director: Cathy Brubaker-Clarke
Grants and Program Manager of Greater Muskegon Economic Development
231.728.7251
cbrubakerclarke@developmuskegon.org
380 W. Western Ave., Suite 202
Muskegon, MI 49440
- b. Chief Executive/Highest-Ranking Elected Official: Todd M. Jacobs
President/CEO
231.332.4123
todd@muskegonfoundation.org
425 W. Western Avenue, Suite 200
Muskegon, MI 49440



(7) Population

City of Muskegon (37,203)
City of Muskegon Heights (9,902)

(8) Other Factors

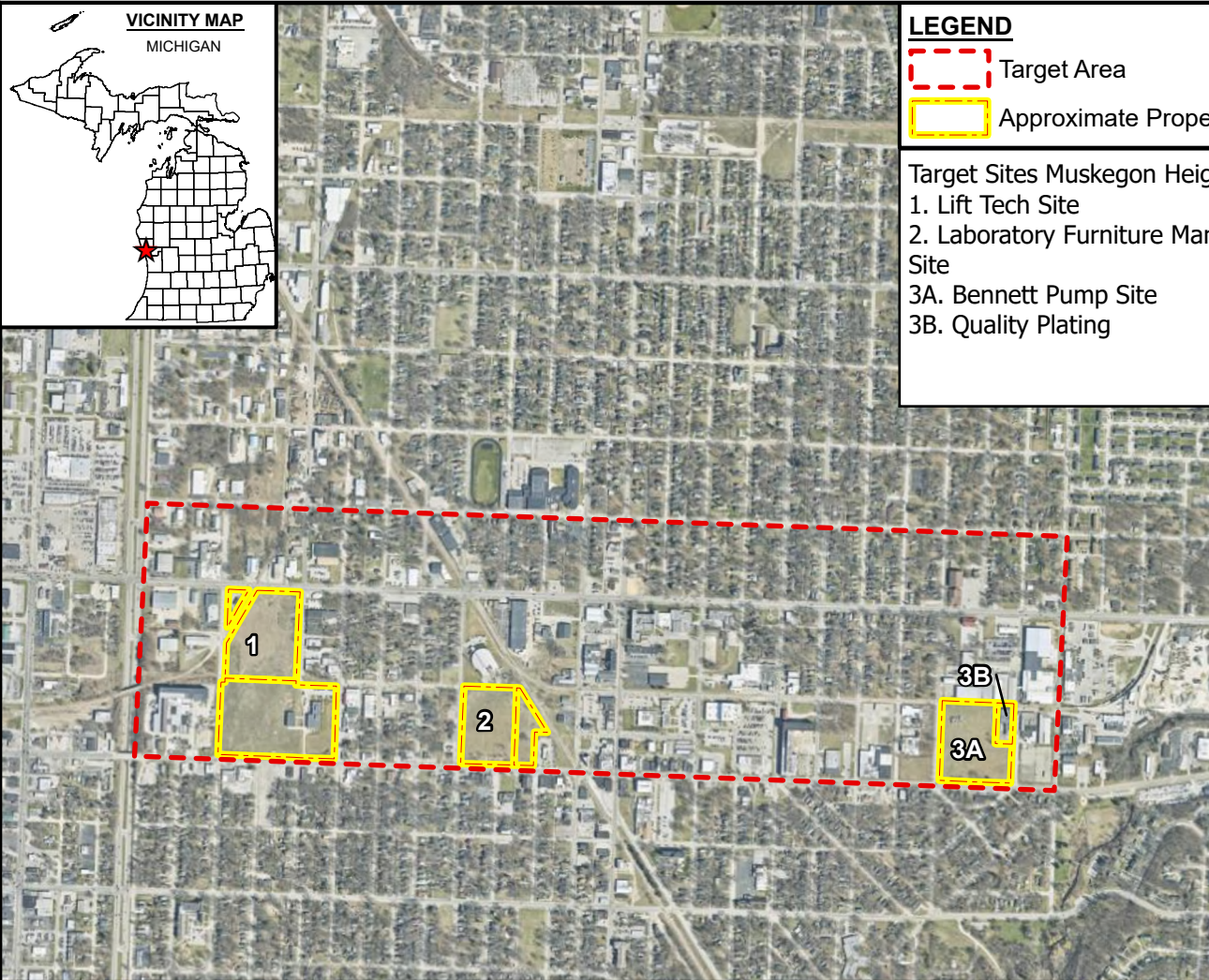
Other Factors	Page Nos.
Community population is 15,000 or less.	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water.	1
The priority site(s) 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.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	N/A
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	2, 3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities 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 (2015 or later) or is closing.	1

(9) Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

Attached.

(10) Releasing Copies of Applications

N/A.



LEGEND

- Target Area
- Approximate Property Boundary

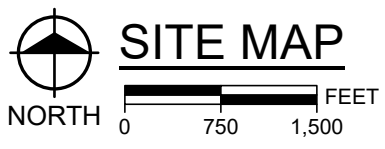
Target Sites Muskegon Heights:
 1. Lift Tech Site
 2. Laboratory Furniture Manufacturing Site
 3A. Bennett Pump Site
 3B. Quality Plating

Hard copy is intended to be 8.5"x11" when plotted. Scale(s) indicated and graphic quality may not be accurate for any other size.

Target Sites Muskegon:
 1. Former Sappi Pulp Paper Mill
 2. Former Amoco Terminal



Community Foundation for Muskegon County
 Cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights, Muskegon County
FY26 EPA BROWNFIELD COMMUNITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT GRANT



DATA SOURCES: ESRI HYBRID REFERENCE LAYER & MISAIL IMAGERY.

PROJECT NO.
N/A

FIGURE NO.
1



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT DIVISION



PHILLIP D. ROOS
DIRECTOR

December 16, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Todd M. Jacobs
President and CEO
Community Foundation for Muskegon County
380 W. Western Avenue, Suite 200
Muskegon, Michigan 49440

Dear Todd Jacobs:

SUBJECT: Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
Acknowledgment of a United States Environmental Protection Agency
(U.S. EPA) Brownfield Grant Proposal for 2026

Thank you for your notice and request for a letter of acknowledgment for the Community Foundation for Muskegon County's (CFMC) proposal for a U.S. EPA Brownfield Grant. EGLE's Remediation and Redevelopment Division encourages and supports community-led environmental assessment and redevelopment efforts and recognizes CFMC's need for funding.

The CFMC is applying for a \$500,000 Community-wide Brownfield Assessment Grant. As an economic development organization, the CFMC is an eligible grant applicant.

Should the U.S. EPA award a brownfield grant to the CFMC, it would allow the foundation to conduct environmental investigations and promote economic development at brownfield sites in Muskegon County. If you need further information about potential eligible sites or assistance regarding EGLE's brownfield programs, please feel free to contact me at the number below or by email at SmedleyR@Michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Smedley
Federal Brownfield Coordinator
Brownfield Assessment and Redevelopment
Section
517-242-9048

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area

Muskegon County is located in western Michigan on the shores of Lake Michigan. The county has a long industrial history primarily concentrated in the adjoining Cities of Muskegon (population 37,203) and Muskegon Heights (population 9,902). The Community Foundation for Muskegon County (applicant/grantee) and community partners have determined that, while this Assessment Grant will be utilized countywide, the focus should be these core urban areas.

The first target area of this application is the **City of Muskegon Shoreline-Downtown** region, a 7-mile stretch of coastline in downtown Muskegon. The City of Muskegon rests on the southern shores of Muskegon Lake, a natural deep-water port connected to Lake Michigan. Access to water was key to the city's industrial history, and various industrial sites occupied nearly the entire shoreline throughout much of the 20th century. Industrial operations along the shoreline have since ceased, leaving behind many large, complicated brownfield sites. These properties have prevented the public from accessing lakefront property for recreational and developmental purposes, deterred investment in the downtown, and suppressed the local economy. Among these properties are a 123-acre former pulp paper mill, a former bulk oil terminal, a former manufactured gas plant site, a former combat tank manufacturer, a decommissioned coal-fired power plant (B.C. Cobb closed in 2016), and many smaller properties impacted by fill material and industrial uses. Local units of government and businesses have made strides to reclaim the waterfront for new development and recreational opportunities. There has been considerable investment in the target area, and this Assessment Grant will help continue those efforts.

A second target area is the **City of Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor**. The central part of the city is a 2-mile stretch of a main thoroughfare (Broadway Avenue) that passes through the core downtown of Muskegon Heights and large tracts of industrially zoned land. Muskegon Heights was once a thriving community with several industries; however, the city has since become the most impoverished area of Muskegon County with 47.0% of target area residents living in poverty (U.S. Census, 2023 ACS 5-year estimates). The movement of wealthier residents to the suburbs and closure of industries contributed to the city's current state of being environmentally overburdened and economically underserved. All along this main corridor, there are large tracts of vacant, fenced-off former industrial land; closed gas stations and dry cleaners; and vacant and boarded-up commercial buildings. According to state databases, there are 68 known sites of contamination in the City of Muskegon Heights. Further, a Muskegon Heights Tax Increment Financing Plan states that in 2011 there were 70 vacant properties within the target area, approximately half of which are sites of known contamination. Adjacent to these stretches of vacant and contaminated properties are two residential neighborhoods that are home to some of the county's most impoverished and underserved citizens. This Assessment Grant will lead to redevelopment and cleanup of these properties, restoring them to productive use for the community. The outcome of redevelopment will benefit the community by addressing contamination, removing blight, and providing new economic development that benefits these immediately adjacent neighborhoods.

1.b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)

Due to the City of Muskegon's long and extensive industrial history, state databases identify 393 known brownfield sites within city limits. This grant would focus on the two largest brownfield sites in the City of Muskegon Shoreline-Downtown target area. These sites are priorities not only due to their size, but also because their redevelopment would result in significant economic impacts. Further, these sites are both situated on Muskegon Lake, a federally designated flood plain, so their redevelopment would protect the water resource and enhance public access to the lake, making redevelopment of these properties consistent with community revitalization plans.

- The **Former Sappi Pulp Paper Mill** is a 123-acre parcel of land with over 1 mile of shoreline. In land size alone, the Sappi site is one of the largest brownfield sites in Michigan. The mill closed in 2009 and has since sat vacant. In 2016, a group of local business leaders acquired the company to ready the property for redevelopment. With assistance from the City of Muskegon, the State of Michigan, and former property owners, the land was cleared of its buildings in 2017. Community planning design charrettes were held in 2018 to create a plan for the property. However, those

development plans did not materialize. With assistance from a prior EPA Assessment Grant, a new purchaser was able to secure the property in 2022. The results of previous assessments show that significant environmental issues remain, requiring additional assessment and cleanup planning activities. Major issues include widespread methane in soil gas, heavy metals, and elevated soil and groundwater pH from using spent lime as backfill, which has also affected surface waters.

- The **Former Amoco Oil Terminal** is a former bulk oil terminal that used a deep-water port to convey oil from ship to rail to truck. At this time, the bulk oil tanks and piping have been removed; however, land use restrictions and residual contamination have made this property largely unmarketable. With additional assessment, cleanup, and engineering controls, the land will be a viable and valuable development site. Further assessment of this site and preparation of site reuse plans are needed to show how vapor intrusion risks, petroleum-saturated soils, and contaminated groundwater can be appropriately managed to support redevelopment.

Within the City of Muskegon Heights, there are 68 known sites of contamination. In the Broadway Avenue Corridor target area specifically, there are numerous sites where the scale of environmental investigation and cleanup planning represents a cost that far exceeds what prospective purchasers can afford; thus, these properties have languished in their existing state for years. The following three sites are priorities based on their proximity to the downtown and because there is a desire to ensure protection of the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- The former **Lift-Tech International Site** is approximately 23 acres of vacant industrial land. Lift-Tech operated at this location for nearly a century before closing in 2010. Environmental issues at the property include petroleum contamination from former underground storage tanks, contaminated soil, and potential vapor intrusion risks.
- The former **Laboratory Furniture Manufacturing Site** is a nearly 9-acre, vacant industrial site previously occupied by a laboratory furniture manufacturer. Environmental assessments have found heavy metals, methylphenols, and trichloroethylene contamination onsite. This site is starting redevelopment as the local hospital is in the process of designing a health care center on the site. Local developers are also considering construction of several new buildings to house the post office, a business incubator, an after-school training center, and other community-oriented organizations. Additional assessment and cleanup are required for this development.
- The former **Bennett Pump Site** is an 8-acre, vacant former industrial lot. State records indicate 47 underground storage tanks were formerly onsite, and four releases of petroleum or hazardous substances have been reported. Known environmental conditions include petroleum contamination in soil and groundwater, which has hindered development. An adjoining property, the former **Quality Plating site**, is a property where EPA is currently completing a Time Critical Removal Action; if timing allows, both parcels could become part of a related redevelopment project.

1.c. Identifying Additional Sites

In addition to addressing the priority sites, remaining grant funds will be utilized for projects throughout Muskegon County. The process of identifying additional sites will be completed by having the project sponsor prepare an application, which will be reviewed by the grantee. Prioritization criteria will include whether the project creates significant economic gains, is consistent with local revitalization plans, and will lead to meaningful environmental improvements.

1.d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

Redevelopment of the **Former Sappi Pulp Paper Mill** site is an ongoing project. The scale of the site has necessitated development of a site-specific Master Plan to show how redevelopment can occur. The Master Plan includes layouts for roads, neighborhoods, commercial properties, parks, recreational shoreline, utilities, and a marina within the development. Redevelopment of the **Former Amoco Oil Terminal** would likely be a mix of residential and recreational uses. Preliminary site plans show newly constructed single-family homes, a small marina, and removal of man-made shoreline features to “soften” the shoreline and create a marshland. This development would protect a deep-water port and strengthen overall resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events. Both projects in the City of Muskegon Shoreline-Downtown target area are consistent with zoning and land use plans, the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Muskegon Lake Coastal Resiliency Plan, the

Muskegon Area-wide Plan, and the Muskegon County Comprehensive Plan. All these plans embrace similar objectives: restoration and protection of shoreline property, enhanced public access to the waterfront, protection of existing deep-water ports, reuse and cleanup of brownfield sites, and economic benefits for the entire community.

“Reaching New Muskegon Heights” is a community-led effort to create a unified vision for Muskegon Heights that outlines reinvestment priorities, project designs, costs, and implementation strategies. Several plans, each with specific objectives, have been developed as part of this cohesive effort including a Tax Increment Financing Plan, the city’s Master Plan, a Housing Market Analysis, and two Industrial Park Development Plans. The Industrial Park Development Plans specifically describe desired development for continued industrial use at two priority sites: the former **Bennett Pump** and **Lift-Tech** sites. A local manufacturer is interested in building a new distribution facility at the Bennett Pump site. Together, these plans call out the need for a more diversified economy in Muskegon Heights to support a variety of businesses, from small homegrown commercial operations to large industrial employers. The focus on the specific priority sites would have immediate positive impact on the city’s economy, and these projects will serve as a model for others to follow. The plans also identify the need to address the area’s status as a food desert. Redevelopment of the **Laboratory Furniture Manufacturing Site** will involve constructing several new buildings for community-focused organizations—including a health clinic, the post office, and an after-school training center—as well as establishing a business incubator designed specifically for food-based businesses to help meet this need. Through this effort, it is envisioned that new small and local food-based businesses will emerge that can serve the local community in a variety of ways and provide the community with better access to healthier foods.

1.e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

Redevelopment of the **Former Sappi Pulp Paper Mill** and **Amoco Oil Terminal** priority sites in the City of Muskegon Shoreline-Downtown target area has a significant economic development potential due to their large size and location. The build-out of these sites is projected to require a \$400 million investment and several years of construction. Through the creation of new hotels, restaurants, storefronts, and other businesses, hundreds of new jobs will be created. The increase to the region’s tax base would be significant—about \$12 million per year upon completion. Redevelopment of the priority sites would include public greenspace, expansion of public bike paths, and amenities that promote the local priority of enhancing public access to the shoreline. Further, both projects would add a number of residential units, likely both owner-occupied and rental, which helps address the community’s housing shortage crisis. Michigan’s housing incentives are focused on incentivizing workforce housing (80–120% of Area Median Income), so these lakefront projects are likely to benefit a broader group than just affluent persons. Because these are waterfront projects, restoration of shorelines will add resiliency to extreme weather events and help protect project residents and the community investment.

In the Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor target area, the projected redevelopment of the **Bennett Pump** and **Lift-Tech** priority sites is for continued industrial use. It is projected that each site would have the capacity to support at least a \$10–20 million industrial development and create a minimum of 50 new jobs. Each development is projected to add \$200,000 to \$300,000 in tax revenues annually to the local economy. A local manufacturer has expressed interest in acquiring specifically the former **Bennett Pump** and **Quality Plating** sites for construction of a new warehousing and distribution operation, and the acquisition of these sites is anticipated within the timeframe of this grant.

The former **Laboratory Furniture Manufacturing Site** is in the construction planning stages, with plans for four new buildings constructed on the site. The anchor project is construction of the new 25,000-square-foot Hackley Community Care Health Clinic, which will provide health care services to the public. A local developer intends to construct a separate building that would be leased to the U.S. Post Office. The local library will also create a 10,000-square-foot hub. An after-school programs provider, a technology learning center, and a job skills training studio will each create new building space within the campus. Lakeshore Flavor, a nonprofit, will construct a 21,000-square-foot incubator shared kitchen that will integrate urban farming, access to healthy foods, culinary skills training, and economic growth; this space will allow Lakeshore Flavor to expand its presence in the community and

support a more varied base of small, food-related business startups. The benefits of the project include new jobs, a total investment expected to exceed \$22.5 million, and improvement to the environmental condition of the property. The project will meet the needs of a historically underserved community by providing better access to preventative and family health care, improved access to places to learn life skills that improve one's economic opportunities, and spaces and services to help launch new business opportunities. A previous EPA Assessment Grant was used to start cleanup planning activities, and additional funds are needed to complete the necessary assessment and cleanup planning activities.

1.f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

The applicant and project partners have a history of successfully acquiring resources for revitalization efforts in the target areas. The state has previously provided a \$1 million grant and \$199,295 in tax incentives for the **Sappi Paper Mill** redevelopment that helped with site demolition. In the Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor target area, the state has provided \$3.4 million over the past 25 years for seven different projects. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy is utilizing state funds to conduct preliminary environmental assessment at the **Former Laboratory Furniture Site**. That redevelopment project is also in the Department's queue as a candidate for a \$1 million brownfield cleanup grant that would leverage the first stages of development. Assessment activities at priority sites help stimulate this type of funding by providing data that is a necessary component in funding applications, providing environmental data to support environmental cleanup plans, demonstrating the community's interest and investment in the project, and helping inform what level of financial resources are needed.

The applicant and local units of government are eligible entities to receive various federal, state, and local funds to support the proposed projects. Key funding sources include the State of Michigan's brownfield grant and loan programs and tax increment capture programs to use property taxes generated from redevelopment to fund redevelopment activities. Direct assistance to brownfield projects is also available through Michigan's Community Revitalization Program, which provides funding for up to 25% of a project's investment. Michigan's Business Development program provides direct incentives to large job-creation projects with the amount of incentive based on the number and average wage of the newly created jobs. Muskegon and Muskegon Heights are also Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Communities and can use funding for eligible activities on priority sites.

1.g. Use of Existing Infrastructure

The target areas are heavily urbanized areas with existing infrastructure for transportation (roads, sidewalks, and public transportation) and utilities (sewer, water, natural gas, electric, and fiber optic). However, at several of the priority sites we foresee the improvement of existing infrastructure, such as sidewalks and bike paths, for public benefit. These infrastructure improvements can be paid for using Michigan's brownfield tax increment funding program.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a. The Community's Need for Funding

The Cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights are both Eligible Distressed Areas through the Michigan State Housing Authority, meaning they exhibit economic distress at higher than statewide average levels. This is especially true for Muskegon Heights, which in 2019 ranked in the top 10% of the U.S. for poverty and in the bottom 10% for median home value. In the Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor target area specifically, 47.0% of residents live below the poverty line, and the median household income is 62.0% lower than in Muskegon County as a whole (69.2% lower than nationwide) (U.S. Census, 2023 ACS 5-year estimates). There are dozens of vacant commercial buildings in the city, and the loss of businesses has eroded the tax base such that there are no available resources from the local community to help assess and clean up brownfields. In 2012, the Muskegon Heights School District declared a financial emergency and received more than \$12 million in low interest loans from the state to reduce their deficit. That loan must be paid back through local property taxes over the next two decades, further limiting the city's ability to use tax revenues for other purposes. Similarly, the City of Muskegon is also one of the poorer areas in Muskegon County, with 20.2% of the city's population living below the poverty line and a median household income 27.0% lower than the county

and 41.0% lower than the U.S. as a whole (U.S. Census, 2023 ACS 5-year estimates). These are both communities that lack significant tax revenues and resources to tackle brownfield redevelopment and need to spend their limited resources on the more urgent matters of public safety, poverty, schools, debt service, and housing.

2.b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

Sensitive populations in the target areas include families with children living in poverty. 73% of City of Muskegon Heights residents are either living below the poverty line or considered Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE), while 56% of City of Muskegon residents are living below the poverty line or considered ALICE. Median household incomes in both target areas are significantly lower than county, state, and national averages, and unemployment in the Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor target area (27.7%) is significantly higher than state (5.8%) and national rates (5.2%). (U.S. Census, 2023 ACS 5-year estimates)

Children also make up a large portion of both target areas. In Muskegon Heights, 29.9% of the population are children under the age of 18, while in Muskegon, 22.7% of the population are children under 18. Countywide, 20.7% of children aged 0–17 are living in households below the poverty line (Kids Count in Michigan, 2024). According to the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment, these numbers are more severe in both target areas, with 94.9% of students in Muskegon Heights and 89.0% of students in Muskegon identified as disadvantaged (i.e., are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch program, in households receiving food or cash assistance, homeless, migrant, in foster care, or certain Medicaid eligible children).

Data show that some of the poorest populations in both target areas live in close proximity to brownfield sites. A large percentage of target area housing units were built in 1939 or earlier (38.4% in the Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor, 34.3% citywide in Muskegon with 53.0% in census tract 8 within the target area) compared to elsewhere in the state (14.5%) and country (11.9%); furthermore, over 83% of housing in both target areas was built in 1979 or earlier (U.S. Census, 2023 ACS 5-year estimates). Thus, both populations are most likely also exposed to lead-based paint and asbestos. Implementation of environmental controls and cleanup during or prior to development of project sites under the Assessment Grant will minimize migration of contaminants to the nearby residential neighborhoods, directly improving the health of the surrounding residents. Redevelopment of these sites also provides jobs, income, and other benefits that can improve these statistics.

2.c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

The Michigan Department of Community Health reports that poverty directly corresponds to infant mortality rates and birth weights. Muskegon County exhibits a higher infant mortality rate and percentage of babies born at a low birth weight than either the state or nation (see table below). Brownfields with volatile organic compound contamination near these residential neighborhoods pose a risk to neonatal health and early childhood development. Additionally, state data show both target areas in the 98th state percentile (93rd for nation) for ozone exposure, which aggravates a population with a higher-than-average incidence of asthma (refer to the table below for target-area-level asthma data). Increased understanding of brownfields in the target areas will support better identification of those risks and allow for actions to be taken to protect vulnerable populations.

The presence of carcinogenic contaminants at brownfield sites adds an additional risk of cancer incidents to this already at-risk population. The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment indicates that cancer rates in the Cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights exceed both national and state rates. Further,

Health Issues	County		State	U.S.
Low Birth Weight ¹	10.3%		9.1%	8.6%
Infant Mortality Rate ¹	7.0		6.2	5.6
Cancer Mortality Rate ²	177.7		158.3	146.0
Adult Current Asthma Prevalence (by target area)	Muskegon Heights - 15.5% ³	Muskegon - Census Tracts 8 (12.5% ³), 9 (12.3% ³), 10 (10.8% ³)	11.0% ⁴	8.9% ⁵

¹ Kids Count Data Center (2023; mortality rates per 1,000); ² StateCancerProfiles.cancer.gov (2018–2022; per 100,000); ³ CDC PLACES: Local Data for Better Health (2023); ⁴ MDHHS Behavioral Risk Factor Survey Report (2023); ⁵ CDC National Center for Health Statistics (2023)

cancer is the second leading cause of death in Muskegon County, with the county's cancer death rate higher than the state and national rates.

In Muskegon County, 2,100 housing units are designated as high risk for lead due to their age and because there are children under six living in the unit. This includes a large portion of the target areas' housing stock (over 83% of housing in both target areas was built in 1979 or earlier). According to annual blood lead level testing conducted in 2022 by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Muskegon County was the sixth highest county in the state for percent of tested children under 6 years with an elevated blood lead level (EBLL) (6.0%), higher than the state rate of 3.7%. In 2018, Muskegon was selected for additional testing due to its history of a high number of children with an EBLL; of the communities selected, the city ranked in the top three for highest percentage of children with an EBLL (7.2%).

A large percentage of City of Muskegon Heights residents (50.3%) and City of Muskegon residents (25.7%) receive food stamps (U.S. Census, 2023 ACS 5-year estimates), many being both overweight and malnourished. According to the 2025 County Health Ranking & Roadmaps, 43% of adult residents in the county are obese, greater than the state and national averages (35% and 34%, respectively). The county's diabetes incidence rate also exceeds the state's rate. The USDA Food Access Research Atlas designates both target areas as "food deserts"; these are low-income communities with a significant number of residents who live more than 1 mile from the nearest supermarket and do not own a vehicle. The lack of access to nutritious and fresh food in the target areas also contributes to these health impacts.

This Assessment Grant will directly aid in improving the health and welfare of citizens in the target areas, particularly the Muskegon Heights Broadway Corridor. Redevelopment of the **Laboratory Furniture Manufacturing** priority site will place the area's major health care provider in the heart of the target area, making it highly accessible to the nearby population regardless of means of transportation. Services will include family care, preventative care, and urgent care. The redevelopment project includes elements that will support community efforts to improve literacy, job skills, and technology skills as well as provide space for new business startups. These new spaces and services create room for people to develop new skills that enhance their health, well-being, and economic future. This project will also include space for Lakeshore Flavor, which will create a shared kitchen/business incubator for food-based businesses to help address the local food desert. Further, redevelopment of priority sites will include improved pedestrian and bike paths, which will increase access to recreational land and provide healthy lifestyle benefits.

2.d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations

The Cities of Muskegon and Muskegon Heights are both Eligible Distressed Areas through the Michigan State Housing Authority, meaning they exhibit economic distress at higher than statewide average levels; this is highlighted through demographic factors including racial segregation, persistent poverty, high unemployment, and distressed neighborhoods.

The population within the Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor has been disproportionately affected by historical local policies affecting growth, transportation routes, and investment since at least the 1950s. At the time, Muskegon Heights was a city where industry was prevalent, and people—mostly African Americans—were relocated from the southern U.S. to work in the factories there. This is reflected in the target area's current 84.7% minority population. When these industries closed, it left a higher concentration of brownfield sites compared to elsewhere in the county. The sheer number of known and potential brownfield sites, vacated properties, and former gas station sites has resulted in a lack of market interest and investment in the target area. This lack of investment has manifested itself in higher rates of unemployment (27.7%), lower income levels, increased poverty (47.0%), and elevated health risks as cited above. In the City of Muskegon Downtown-Shoreline target area, the presence of brownfield sites has prevented the population from realizing the full benefits of a downtown built on a major shoreline, with views of and access to the lake hidden behind abandoned factories. The neighborhoods built to support these downtown industries are older, working-class neighborhoods, and their proximity to large brownfield sites has resulted in increased health risks for

residents, lower median household income levels (\$46,342), and higher poverty rates (20.2%). (U.S. Census, 2023 ACS 5-year estimates)

The projects proposed under this Assessment Grant benefit both the Muskegon and Muskegon Heights communities by removing blighted conditions that disincentivize investment in the communities. The projects that will benefit from the grant will provide new jobs that are accessible to the community, enhancing opportunities for the people most affected by these sites to benefit from their redevelopment. The **Former Laboratory Furniture** project fills a public need to enhance access to basic health care services for the Muskegon Heights community, which has historically been underserved in this area. That project is also anticipated to help launch a number of small businesses focused on food-related industries that support urban farming and access to healthy foods and through those efforts provide economic growth opportunities for local citizens. The priority site projects will also help improve revenues for the local units of government, enhance and leverage public infrastructure, and support the community’s overall development goals. Particularly for the Muskegon Heights target area, these projects are in close proximity to each other, and it is hoped that there will be a synergistic effect that spurs additional investment and development throughout the target area. The resulting diversified economy will help the City of Muskegon Heights with its financial resources, allowing it to emerge from long-term debt and reinvest into the community on an ongoing basis.

These projects collectively provide direct positive benefits toward combatting the threats to sensitive populations described above by enhancing economic outcomes for local citizens, improvements to child and family health, cleanup of contamination in close proximity to neighborhoods, better housing, and improved access to job skills development services.

This Assessment Grant will be implemented as part of a broad and coordinated community-led effort. The community-led revitalization plans indicate the types of developments, jobs, neighborhood improvements, businesses, and community attributes that are desired by local residents. There is a strong effort to link development of these sites with access to jobs for local citizens, to develop the capabilities of local entrepreneurs who can support and drive additional brownfield redevelopment projects, and to connect with young students to provide avenues for future success. The grant will support better assessment of priority sites, leverage additional support from the state for cleanup, leverage investment in properties from the private sector, and allow local residents access to the resulting jobs and economic benefits, as well as cleaner and safer neighborhoods.

2.e.–2.f. Project Involvement and Project Roles

Name of Organization & Point of Contact	Involvement in the Project
<p>Muskegon Lakeshore Area Chamber of Commerce Rachel Gorman, 231.724.3176 rgorman@muskegon.org <i>Mission:</i> To sustain an environment for inclusive business success through community leadership, promotion, business advocacy, and valued member services.</p>	<p>Will provide outreach to businesses interested in redevelopment efforts; can link developers to workforce development programs and job training services for new employees</p>
<p>Greater Muskegon Economic Development (GMED) Cathy Brubaker-Clarke, 231.722.3751 CBrubakerClarke@developmuskegon.org <i>Mission:</i> Leverage public and private investment to accelerate business growth and the creation of high-quality employment opportunities in Muskegon County.</p>	<p>Will develop program elements with grantee, such as project applications, access agreements, etc.; provides expertise in brownfield redevelopment and economic development incentives to businesses; regional economic development agency; main point of contact for prospective purchasers of the target sites; host for meetings</p>
<p>Muskegon Heights Downtown Development Authority Pearlette Merriweather 231.733.8820</p>	<p>The “local” decision makers and primary vehicle for community engagement for the Muskegon Heights Broadway Avenue Corridor target area; capacity to secure grants, loans, and tax increment</p>

pmerriweather@muskegonheights.us <i>Mission:</i> Promotion of the welfare of businesses and residents in the downtown Muskegon Heights Area.	capture for projects; organizer of local business and residential engagement efforts; host for local meetings; can connect local businesses and entrepreneurs to the grant funds
City of Muskegon Downtown Development Authority Jocelyn Hines, 231.724.6722 jocelyn.hines@shorelinecity.com <i>Mission:</i> To allocate our resources in support of development, promotions, and events toward creating a thriving downtown and its waterfront where all people can live, work, play and stay.	Staff for City of Muskegon’s brownfield program; has capacity to secure grants, loans, and tax increment capture for projects
Muskegon Health Department Kathy Moore, 231.724.1232 mooreka@co.muskegon.mi.us <i>Mission:</i> To protect and enhance the health of citizens in Muskegon County.	Community engagement; dissemination of informational materials

2.g. Incorporating Community Input

There is not a single entity that represents the residents of the target areas. Nonetheless, there is robust community engagement to secure input for desired redevelopment efforts in the community. The “Reaching New Muskegon Heights” project team meets monthly. The team consists of city staff, the Community Foundation, GMED, county and state agencies, nonprofits, and consultants. The process for developing the “Reaching New Muskegon Heights” plan included a walking tour in 2020, a public survey using both online and paper submissions, student input from a local high school class, several focus group meetings, and City Council meetings. These existing public efforts provide a vehicle for continued communications to secure input from local citizens about where grant funds should be spent, which projects should be supported, and what outcomes will be desired from their redevelopment and have already directed certain investments.

Ensuring community residents have access to the information and funding generated by this Assessment Grant is important to the success of the project. We envision quarterly meetings arranged by either the City of Muskegon Heights and/or the Downtown Development Authority and the City of Muskegon. These entities have the capacity to vary meeting times and locations to accommodate the schedules of various audiences. We envision an ongoing process for developing and maintaining a brownfield priority list in the target areas with ample opportunities for citizens to add properties to the list. Information can be made accessible in project status reports, websites, postings in public spaces, and public presentations. We will solicit input by providing an online input form, email addresses, and printed forms that can be mailed or dropped off at an accessible location (city hall, library). Comments from the community will be directed to the Grant Project Manager for response at future meetings or status reports. We hope the engagement will connect those businesses benefiting from the grant with support systems provided by the community focused on combatting unemployment, enhancing job skills, nonprofit organizations, and others that, together, help build a wholistic project success story. There are no significant language barriers in Muskegon County, and the above-described means of communicating with the affected community are effective.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Task 1: Grant Management
a. Project Implementation: <u>Grantee:</u> Hire Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), complete financial draws, grant compliance. <u>QEP:</u> Draft quarterly progress reports; financial reports; Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES).
b. Anticipated Schedule: Solicit, evaluate, and retain QEP pre-grant or within first quarter of grant term. Progress reporting, ACRES, etc. completed no less than quarterly throughout grant.
c. Task Lead: Grantee with assistance from QEP.

d. Outputs: Quarterly reports, financial reports, solicitation and evaluation of QEP, ACRES updates.
Task 2: Community Engagement
a. Project Implementation: <u>Grantee</u> : Develop press release, website, applications for funding; schedule initial and ongoing meetings with local community and business groups; solicit and respond to community input; meet with prospective developers. <u>QEP</u> : Prepare/update brownfield inventory map.
b. Anticipated Schedule: In first quarter, complete press release, establish website, develop application forms, begin holding initial community engagement meetings. By end of second quarter, update existing brownfield inventory map, schedule annual community engagement meetings, and regularly respond to input and queries and update brownfield inventory map.
c. Task Lead: Grantee, QEP.
d. Outputs: Press releases, website screenshot, copies of application form, maps, copies of communications, meeting agendas and minutes, etc.
Task 3: Site Assessments
a. Project Implementation: <u>QEP</u> : Site eligibility determinations, Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), and Technical Evaluations. <u>Grantee</u> : Access Agreements.
b. Anticipated Schedule: QAPP developed in first quarter, 2 projects completed in each year, ~50% of the grant used in 18 months.
c. Task Lead: QEP, with oversight from Grant Project Manager.
d. Outputs: Technical reports (Phase I and II ESAs), eligibility determinations, ACRES updates, All Appropriate Inquiry checklists, QAPP.
Task 4: Cleanup and Reuse Planning
a. Project Implementation: <u>QEP</u> : Work Plans, Cleanup Plans, Reuse Plans, Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs), Brownfield Redevelopment Plans as needed for specific projects.
b. Anticipated Schedule: 2 projects completed each year.
c. Task Lead: QEP, with oversight from Grant Project Manager.
d. Outputs: Technical work plans, Cleanup and Reuse Plans, ABCAs, conceptual site reuse plans, conceptual cost estimates, etc.

3.e. Cost Estimates

Budget Categories	Task 1: Grant Management	Task 2: Community Engagement	Task 3: Site Assessments	Task 4: Cleanup and Reuse Planning	Total
Travel	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,500
Contractual	\$3,000	\$20,000	\$320,000	\$155,000	\$498,000
Other (Conference Registration)	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500
Total Direct Costs	\$5,000	\$20,000	\$320,000	\$155,000	\$500,000
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Budget	\$5,000	\$20,000	\$320,000	\$155,000	\$500,000

- Task 1, Other and Travel costs: “Other” assumes one person attending two National Brownfield Conferences (2 x \$250 in registration fees = \$500); “Travel” is airfare (2 x \$250 = \$500), hotel and accommodations (up to 8 days total at \$125/day = \$1,000). Procure Qualified Environmental Professional (\$0). Contractual costs: 16 quarterly progress reports, financial reports, closeout report; 30 hours professional services at average \$100/hour; \$3,000 total.
- Task 2, Contractual costs: community events, applications, inventory map, ongoing communications, website development; 200 hours at average rate of \$100/hr.; \$20,000 total.
- Task 3, Contractual costs: 8 Phase I and II site assessments at average cost of \$5,000 and \$35,000, respectively; \$320,000 total.
- Task 4, Contractual costs: 8 project Cleanup Plans, etc. at average cost of \$19,375; \$155,000 total.
- Personnel costs will be provided in-kind and will not be charged to the grant.

3.f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results

We will utilize the ACRES database and quarterly report format to track and report progress to EPA and project partners. From developers, we will solicit outcomes for completed projects such as jobs created, acres cleaned up, investment leveraged, new construction square footage, etc. The Grant Project Manager will track the number of projects and funds drawn against the grant proposal schedule and budget to track and evaluate progress on a quarterly basis. If progress is slower than expected, the Grant Project Manager will evaluate appropriate responses (e.g., increasing communications and community outreach).

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a.–4.c. Organizational Capacity, Organizational Structure, and Description of Key Staff

The Community Foundation for Muskegon County is the grantee for this project. The Community Foundation is a well-staffed organization fully capable and experienced in the management of a variety of grants and philanthropic projects. The team is led by an executive and marketing team and supported by a community investment/grants/scholarship management team, a finance team, and a development/donor services team. Key staff will be Todd Jacobs, CEO, and Israel Velez, Jr., Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Jacobs holds a master's degree in business administration from Western Michigan University and 35 years of experience in fund development, community philanthropy, and strategic leadership. Mr. Velez holds a master's degree in business administration from Grand Valley State University with 38 years of experience in accounting, human resources, and management. The Community Foundation will contract with Greater Muskegon Economic Development (GMED) to help manage the grant. Cathy Brubaker-Clarke, Grants and Program Manager with GMED, is an experienced Project Manager of three previous EPA Assessment Grants (two in the City of Muskegon and one for the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce Foundation). Ms. Brubaker-Clarke has a master's degree in urban planning from the University of Michigan, with a concentration in economic development. She served in the City of Muskegon's Planning Department from 1994 to 2017. Since then, she has been part of GMED and been responsible for securing grants and technical assistance countywide. This team of professionals has decades of experience managing grants including financial management, marketing, and engagement aimed at driving lasting positive change in the community.

4.d. Acquiring Additional Resources

The Community Foundation intends to competitively secure contracts for a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), in compliance with federal requirements. The Grant Project Manager is experienced in soliciting and evaluating environmental professionals. Efforts will be undertaken to ensure the selected QEP accesses local employment agencies when seeking to fill positions.

4.f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but Has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements

4.f.(1) Purpose and Accomplishments

The grantee has not previously received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has managed funds from the Small Business Administration including a 2021 payroll protection loan (\$434,800) and 2021 and 2022 grants for a combined \$350,655. These funds were used to maintain the operations of the Community Foundation during the pandemic and meet the needs of the community at that time. It should be noted that the contractual Grant Project Manager has experience with EPA grants and has effectively and fully used a recent Assessment Grant (BF-00E03215), spurring development activities at 15 different sites, leveraging nearly \$300 million in private investment. Assessment activities at one site helped the City of Muskegon secure a \$1 million state cleanup grant. The projects supported by the EPA Assessment Grant leveraged \$178 million in State tax credits.

4.f.(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

The Community Foundation met its obligations for annual reports detailing accomplishments with projected goals, finances, and other appropriate information.

**THRESHOLD CRITERIA RESPONSES
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR MUSKEGON COUNTY
MUSKEGON COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

(1) Applicant Eligibility

a. The Community Foundation for Muskegon County is a nonprofit organization serving all of Muskegon County, Michigan. Documentation is attached demonstrating the tax-exempt status of the organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

b. The Community Foundation for Muskegon County is not exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

(2) Community Involvement

Ensuring community residents have access to the information and funding generated by this Assessment Grant is important to the success of the project. We envision quarterly meetings arranged by either the City of Muskegon Heights and/or the Downtown Development Authority and the City of Muskegon. These entities have the capacity to vary meeting times and locations to accommodate the schedules of various audiences. We envision an ongoing process for developing and maintaining a brownfield priority list in the target areas with ample opportunities for citizens to add properties to the list. Information can be made accessible in project status reports, websites, postings in public spaces, and public presentations. We will solicit input by providing an online input form, email addresses, and printed forms that can be mailed or dropped off at an accessible location (city hall, library). Comments from the community will be directed to the Grant Project Manager for response at future meetings or status reports. We hope the engagement will connect those businesses benefiting from the grant with support systems provided by the community focused on combatting unemployment, enhancing job skills, nonprofit organizations, and others that, together, help build a wholistic project success story. There are no significant language barriers in Muskegon County, and the above-described means of communicating with the affected community are effective.

(3) Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The Community Foundation for Muskegon County does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

(4) Contractors and Named Subrecipients

N/A, a contractor/subrecipient has not been procured or named.