

Buckeye Hills Regional Council USEPA Community-Wide Assessment FY26 Application

Initial Configuration

Funding Amount Requested:

\$500,000.00

What type of contamination will be addressed with the grant funding?

Both, Hazardous Substance and Petroleum

Please select one of the eligible entities that describes your organization:

Township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments, other regional or interstate government entity, agency or instrumentality of a local government, land clearance authority, a quasi-governmental entity operating under the supervision and control of, or as an agent of, a General Purpose Unit of Local Government, government entity created by State Legislature, regional council or group of General Purpose Units of Local Government, Redevelopment Ag

Assessment or Multipurpose Grant Recipient Status (Select One):

I have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant cooperative agreement and have drawn down at least 70% of grant funds.

Application Information Sheet

B.1. | Applicant Identification

Buckeye Hills Regional Council
2585 Glendale Road
Marietta, Ohio 45750

B.2 | Website URL

<https://buckeyehills.org/>

B.3.a. | Assessment Grant Type

Assessment Grant Type: Community-Wide

B.3.b. | Federal Funds Requested

Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000.00

B.4. | Location

Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties in Ohio.

B.5. | Target Area and Priority Site Information

City of Logan in Hocking County: 550 Zanesville Avenue Logan, Ohio 43138

Village of Crooksville and Village of Roseville in Perry County

Noble County: 314 West Street Caldwell, Ohio 43724 and 301 Main Street Belle Valley, Ohio 43717

Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties in Ohio

B.6.a. | Project Director

Contact and Title	Phone Number	Email	Address
Melissa Zoller, Planning Director	740-376-1027	mzoller@buckeyehills.org	2585 Glendale Road Marietta, Ohio 45750
Kate Dunn, Senior Planner	740-516-0370	kdunn@buckeyehills.org	2585 Glendale Road Marietta, Ohio 45750

B.6.b. | Chief Executive-Highest Ranking Elected Official

Contact and Title	Phone Number	Email	Address
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director Buckeye Hills Regional Council	740-376-1034	cschmelzenbach@buckeyehills.org	2585 Glendale Road Marietta, Ohio 45750

B.7. | Population

Buckeye Hills Regional Council Population	
Buckeye Hills Region	249,172
Athens County	62,431
Hocking County	28,050
Meigs County	22,210
Monroe County	13,385
Morgan County	13,802
Noble County	14,115
Perry County	35,408
Washington County	59,771
Source: US Census Bureau	

Target Area Populations	
City of Logan, Hocking County	7,296
Village of Crooksville, Perry County	2,418
Village of Roseville, Perry County	1,746
Noble County	14,115
Source: US Census Bureau	

B.8. | Other Factors

Sample Format for Providing Information on the Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	Page 2 Application Info Sheet
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	n/a
The proposed site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	Page 1 Project Narrative
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).	Page 1 Project Narrative
The proposed site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	Page 3 Project Narrative
The reuse of the proposed site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	Page 4 Project Narrative
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	Page 4 Project Narrative
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	Page 4 Project Narrative
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section 3.A.(2), for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	n/a
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	n/a

B.9. | Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

Please find attached a letter dated December 30, 2025, from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization acknowledging our intent to apply and support for FY26 grant funds and conduct assessment activities.

B.10. | Releasing Copies of Applications

Not applicable.



December 30, 2025

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
ATTN: Torre Ippolito
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Mail Code SB-5J
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

RE: Ohio EPA's Letter of Support for Buckeye Hills Regional Council's (BHRC) Community Wide Assessment Grant Proposal

Dear Torre Ippolito:

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency acknowledges that Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) plans to conduct assessment activities and is applying for a FY26 U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000. We have worked with BHRC in the past and hope to provide support under the Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, and Cleanup Grant program.

If awarded, BHRC will use these funds to:

- Conduct environmental site assessments throughout its region, which includes Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.
- Continue development of a regional Brownfield Inventory.
- Prepare sites for cleanup and redevelopment, building on its demonstrated success in leveraging additional resources for remediation and revitalization projects.

The proposed target areas include priority sites such as:

- Former Logan Clay Factory in Logan, Hocking County (publicly owned).
- Just Ask Rentals in Caldwell, Noble County (privately owned).
- Former Belle Valley Gas Station in Belle Valley, Noble County (privately owned).

Ohio EPA supports BHRC's efforts to address brownfields in this post-coal and industrial region, where abandoned properties and underground storage tanks may pose potential risks to soil and groundwater. These assessment activities are critical first steps toward remediation and redevelopment, improving environmental quality and community health.

BHRC has a strong track record of leveraging U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment funding to secure additional resources for cleanup and redevelopment. To date, BHRC has leveraged more than \$3.5 million in additional funding from sources such as the Ohio Department of Development's (ODOD) Brownfield Remediation and Building Demolition programs, as well as Historic Preservation Tax Credits. This proven ability to maximize federal investment ensures that the awarded funds will have a significant and lasting impact across the region.

We look forward to working with BHRC and U.S. EPA on this project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 614-728-5441 or via e-mail at emily.johnson@epa.ohio.gov.

Sincerely,

Emily Johnson

Emily Johnson, Manager
Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

cc: Kate Dunn, Senior Planner, Buckeye Hills Regional Council
Melissa Zoller, Planning Director, Buckeye Hills Regional Council
Martin Smith, Ohio EPA, DERR



Buckeye Hills Regional Council USEPA Community-Wide Assessment FY26 Application

C. Narrative Criteria: Project Narrative

(1) Project Area Description and Plans for Revitalization: Target Area and Brownfields C.1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC), established in 1968, serves eight Appalachian Southeast Ohio counties—Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington—with 249,172 residents, according to the US Census Bureau. Predominantly rural, the region’s economy was shaped by coal, oil and gas, and industrial ceramics; facility closures, mine-scarred lands, older underground storage tanks (including some not regulated by Ohio BUSTR), and petroleum/dry-cleaner sites have left a legacy of brownfields affecting public health, the Muskingum, Ohio, and Hocking Rivers, the Monday and Sunday Creek watersheds, and area lakes and ponds, and hampering reinvestment. Within the eight-county geographic boundary, the City of Logan (Hocking County), the Villages of Crooksville and Roseville (Perry County), and selected sites in Noble County constitute the primary target areas for focused grant activities. Demographic headwinds include out-migration and natural decline. As of September 2025, unemployment rates were: Athens 4.9%, Hocking 4.0%, Meigs 5.9%, Monroe 5.2%, Morgan 4.5%, Noble 5.5%, Perry 4.7%, and Washington 4.3% (Ohio 4.8%; U.S. 4.6%)¹. Poverty remains elevated (U.S. Census): Athens 22.1%, Hocking 17.1%, Meigs 22.0%, Monroe 15.1%, Morgan 14.3%, Noble 11.7%, Perry 14.7%, Washington 12.9% (Ohio 12.7%; U.S. 12.1%); 25.5% of households receive major safety-net benefits versus 23.2% statewide (2023 ACS). Numerous cleanups are documented in EPA’s Cleanups in My Community—Athens 29; Hocking 12; Meigs 8; Monroe 5; Morgan 7; Noble 6; Perry 39; Washington 26—yet many sites remain complicated by legacy USTs, probate issues, absentee ownership, and tax base erosion. Regional heritage efforts (e.g., Little Cities of the Black Diamonds) and destinations such as Hocking Hills State Park with an estimated 4 million annual visitors (2023 Travel Lens) highlight redevelopment potential where stigma and uncertainty are addressed². BHRC will use a U.S. EPA community-wide Assessment grant to inventory, prioritize, and assess petroleum and hazardous substance brownfields across all eight counties; focus resources on the City of Logan (Hocking) and the Villages of Crooksville and Roseville (Perry) impacted by the industrial ceramics sector, and on Noble County locations with older, non-BUSTR-regulated USTs; and provide regionwide eligibility, technical assistance, community engagement, and reuse planning aligned with local plans and the Buckeye Hills Forward CEDS³. Expected outcomes are to reduce environmental and health risks and water-resource threats; prepare market-ready sites that attract public and private investment, increase property values, and restore tax productivity; and support community revitalization in downtowns, advancing equitable redevelopment in coal-impacted areas. Building on prior EPA cooperative agreements (CA), new assessment resources will accelerate cleanup planning and redevelopment across Appalachian Southeast Ohio.

C.1.b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): BHRC will use a U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment grant to identify and assess petroleum and hazardous substance sites across its eight-county service area with services available regionwide. BHRC will refine targets beyond those listed here and prioritize

¹ [Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Office of Workforce Development Bureau of Labor Market Information.](https://www.ohio.gov/department-of-job-and-family-services-office-of-workforce-development-bureau-of-labor-market-information)

² <https://www.travellens.co/americas-most-beautiful-state-parks/>

³ <https://buckeyehills.org/community-development/buckeye-hills-forward/>

communities with legacy impacts from fossil fuels, manufacturing, auto repair, drycleaners, and older petroleum stations with limited oversight. Targeted outreach (e.g., Roseville, Crooksville, Logan) will validate priorities, address community concerns, and align reuse planning with local goals. Assessment results will reduce environmental and health risks, safeguard water and soil resources, and prepare market-ready properties that restore tax productivity and support equitable redevelopment. Building on prior EPA CAs, BHRC is positioned to efficiently identify legacy sites, complete assessments, and advance cleanup planning that supports community-driven reuse. **Target Areas and Priority Sites in this application include: City of Logan, Hocking County; Former Logan Clay Factory, 550 Zanesville Avenue** (former ceramic products facility; structures and grounds require environmental assessment: approx. 1.56 acres, 1 structure on site). The site is county-owned, non-tax-producing, and of interest to private developers due to proximity to Hocking Hills State Park, which receives approximately 4 million visitors annually (Travel Lens study). Typical contaminants for similar facilities in Crooksville and Roseville include asbestos, metals, fluorine, lead, and VOCs, as documented in a June 1996 Midwest Research Institute report for EPA OAQPS⁴. Nearby resources include the Hocking River, Lake Logan, Lake Logan State Park, and Wayne National Forest. **Perry County, conduct outreach in the Villages of Roseville and Crooksville to identify additional ceramic manufacturing legacy sites.** EPA's Cleanups in My Community notes numerous former potteries, including Hull, Burley, Winter, Watt, Alpine, Ungemach, Friendship, Cookson, C.V. Lowry, and Nelson McCoy, indicating both need and redevelopment potential (footnote 4). **Noble County, build on BHRC's prior EPA CA work to complete additional assessment at two former petroleum stations not regulated by Ohio BUSTR due to age: Former Belle Valley Gas Station, 301 Main Street, Belle Valley** (former USTs removed; auto-service history; additional soil/groundwater monitoring needed, under 1 acre, 1 structure) **and Just Ask Rentals/Former Caldwell Gas Station, 314 West Street, Caldwell (former USTs removed; equipment-rental/garage use; additional soil/groundwater monitoring needed, under 1 acre, 1 structure).** Both sites require further investigation and an Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). As EPA notes, former petroleum stations may involve VOCs (e.g., BTEX), fuel additives (e.g., MTBE), and heavy metals that can affect air and groundwater and pose health risks⁵.

C.1.c. Identifying Additional Sites: BHRC will identify additional candidate sites through regular meetings with local leaders across the BHRC service area and by procuring and onboarding a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 to perform Community-Wide Assessment tasks. Following onboarding, BHRC and the QEP will deploy a standardized presentation/toolkit that explains available assessment services and eligibility, outlines site pathways and regulatory coordination (e.g., VAP, RCRA, BUSTR), and details steps for project participation. BHRC staff will update the prior EPA intake form, host it on the BHRC website, and promote it via the agency newsletter and social media; staff will review submissions and triage sites for eligibility and next steps. To broaden the pipeline, BHRC will host informational meetings in target areas and regionwide (City of Logan; Perry County session; Noble County; Washington County at BHRC's main office) to brief stakeholders and gather candidate sites. Consistent with Buckeye Hills Forward (CEDS), BHRC will

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/air-emissions-factors-and-quantification/final-emissions-factors-ap-42-chapter-11-section-7-ceramic>

⁵ <https://www.epa.gov/ust/contaminants-concern-underground-storage-tank-sites>

prioritize: 1) redevelopment-ready sites with defined reuse plans and committed partners (e.g., job centers or housing), addressing documented regional housing needs (including Noble County) and leveraging the region's manufacturing strengths and support networks (e.g., Appalachian Ohio Manufacturers' Coalition; Building Bridges to Careers); and 2) sites posing health and safety risks, such as suspected releases from underground/aboveground storage tanks that threaten soil, groundwater, and surface waters. Building on prior EPA CAs, BHRC will maintain and expand the regional brownfields inventory in KSU TAB's BiT, EPA's ACRES, and BHRC's ESRI ArcGIS; apply spatial analysis (e.g., ceramics industry clusters in Crooksville and Roseville documented in EPA's Cleanups in My Community) to locate co-located legacy sites with similar contaminants; and integrate partner inventories to refine targets and advance sites from discovery through assessment and into reuse planning. This approach ensures transparent identification, consistent prioritization, and efficient advancement of sites under the CA.

Revitalization of the Target Area C.1.d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: In Logan (Hocking County), strong private-sector interest driven by Hocking Hills State Park's approximately 4 million annual visitors (Footnote 2) underscore the need for developable sites. The priority site at 550 Zanesville Avenue, owned by the Hocking County Commissioners, is blighted, does not generate tax revenue, and has potential contamination that has stalled developer proposals. Consistent with the City of Logan Downtown Strategic Plan, BHRC will use EPA Assessment services to evaluate the site, develop cleanup planning to the level needed for reuse, and support post-cleanup redevelopment planning⁶. The property is near the Hocking River and, per the FEMA Flood Map Service Center, lies just outside the floodplain and floodway. This site could be used as new industrial for the community and be a driver of the local economy if the site were to be cleaned up. Clean up plans such as a ABCA or RAP will de-risk private investment decisions. Additional target properties include former gas stations at 314 West Street (Village of Caldwell) and 301 Main Street (Village of Belle Valley), both on main travel routes with identified soil and groundwater contamination and located just outside FEMA flood zones; the reuse strategy is to remediate contamination to remove hazards and plan redevelopment that fits each community. These sites are located in the historic downtowns of Caldwell and Belle Valley with the potential to be used for business development or residential. In Crooksville (Perry County), initial discussions indicate interest in converting former pottery property to a park/greenspace; BHRC will assist with assessment and redevelopment planning using EPA resources. These activities align with Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan (CEDs), developed with county-level outreach, which prioritizes supporting natural outdoor recreation assets, energy development, and housing; protecting agricultural land; increasing the building and site inventory; and redeveloping downtowns to support small business growth. The CEDs finds the region's current building and site inventory is noncompetitive, limiting success in statewide lead distribution and site searches; EPA-funded assessments directly address this gap by identifying, de-risking, and readying sites so BHRC counties can better compete for development opportunities.

C.1.e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: In 2025, BHRC released the CEDs to guide regional development as the U.S. Economic Development Administration–designated Economic Development District. The CEDs prioritizes increasing publicly owned, shovel-ready sites through collaboration with

⁶ <https://economicdevelopment.ohio.edu/rise-ohio-county-report/#single/0>

county economic development offices; reintroducing speculative site and building development with JobsOhio and OhioSE via the Rural Industrial Park Loan Program (RIPL)⁷; and identifying two potential Ohio River locations for transloading and intermodal cargo transfer. EPA Assessment funding will advance these goals by identifying, evaluating, and de-risking former industrial properties—including the prioritized former Logan Clay site in the City of Logan, Hocking County—and other potentially contaminated sites across the region to position them for redevelopment. The CEDS also emphasizes growth in nature-based recreation tied to the region’s extensive local, state, and federal parks and forests. Legacy coal and fossil fuel impacts, such as acid mine drainage documented by Ohio EPA in the Hocking River, Monday Creek, and Sunday Creek watersheds, threaten these natural assets⁸. EPA-supported assessments will help communities like the Village of Crooksville in Perry County evaluate former ceramic manufacturing sites for park and greenspace reuse, while BHRC coordinates with local officials to align site reuse planning with community needs. To improve quality of life, address the housing shortage, and support small business growth, BHRC will target brownfields for housing and downtown mixed-use reuse. The Noble County Planning Assistance Housing Demand Analysis identifies current deficits of approximately 3,576 multi-family units and 985 owners-occupied single-family units⁹. A recent example is the Former Sarahsville School (Sarahsville, Noble County), assessed with EPA resources under a prior CA; Phase I and ABCA work supported a successful 2025 Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) Building Demolition and Site Revitalization award for cleanup. According to the CEDS, regionwide, small businesses comprise 99% of firms; of 10,340 private establishments (2018), 81% are Stage 0 or Stage 1 (nine or fewer employees). Assessing downtown buildings, many with legacy asbestos and lead, will clear the way for cleanup applications and reuse that supports entrepreneurship. Finally, the CEDS calls for locally owned and controlled energy development and greater resilience. Many regional brownfields are identified in EPA’s Repowering tool as suitable for renewable energy on contaminated lands, landfills, and mine sites¹⁰. BHRC also partners with county emergency management offices to enhance energy resilience and plans to submit a regional application to FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. Through assessments and cleanup planning provided by USEPA, BHRC communities will be enabled to reuse their brownfields in support of economic, environmental, and resilience outcomes.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources C.1.f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: BHRC will leverage established state and federal tools to plan cleanup and reuse of brownfield sites. ODOD offers Brownfield Assessment, Remediation, and Building Demolition and Site Revitalization programs to assess, remediate, and revitalize sites statewide—these programs are often obtained by BHRC; ODOD and the U.S. National Park Service offer Historic Preservation Tax Credits that can support redevelopment after cleanup; and ODOD’s Community Development Block Grants can fund remediation, demolition, or reuse activities. USEPA’s Multipurpose, Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup (MARC) grant resources are also available to support assessment, remediation, and reuse planning. Ohio EPA’s

⁷ <https://development.ohio.gov/business/state-incentives/rural-industrial-park-loan-program>

⁸ <https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/surface-water/reports-data/hocking-river-watershed>

⁹ chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://noble.osu.edu/sites/noble/files/imce/Program_Pages/ComDev/Noble%20County_Housing%20Analysis_final.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.epa.gov/re-powering/re-powering-mapper>

Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) program provides assistance for the early stages of brownfield redevelopment. In addition, JobsOhio and its regional partner OhioSE offer the Revitalization Loan Program and Vibrant Communities Program to fund assessment and cleanup, prioritizing projects with near-term job creation potential.

C.1.g. Use of Existing Infrastructure: BHRC will leverage the region's existing multimodal network, maritime, highway, rail, and aviation, to support assessment and reuse. The area is served by I-77 (which directly serves priority sites 314 West Street in Caldwell and 301 Main Street in Belle Valley, Noble County) U.S. Routes 33 (which directly serves Logan Clay 550 Zanesville Rd in Logan) and 50, and Ohio Route 7; U.S. 50 follows the Appalachian Highway Corridor, linking the region to Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and the nation beyond. The Ohio River forms the region's eastern boundary, providing maritime access. Target Areas and Priority Sites have convenient access to I-70 (east–west), I-77 (north–south), and U.S. Routes 33 and 62. The Mid-Ohio Valley sits within the shale crescent. BHRC staff also use the JobsOhio Site Selector Tool, which provides utility and transportation details, site size and descriptions, pricing, and photographs to support reuse evaluation and marketing.

(2) Community Need and Community Engagement: Community Need C.2.a. The Community's Need for Funding: BHRC's eight-county region faces persistent poverty rooted in the legacy of coal and industrial closures. Regional poverty rose from 15.3% in 2001 to 19% in 2017, peaking near 21% in 2009; in 2017, nearly 25% of minors lived in poverty. Across Ohio's 32-county Appalachian region, poverty is approximately 17%, about three percentage points higher than the rest of the state (US Census Bureau). High unemployment and limited job opportunities persist; as of 2025, an Ohio Department of Job and Family Services report shows a daily deficit of nearly 25,000 commuters who leave the region for work, taking with them tax revenue and other benefits¹¹. Brownfields worsen these conditions by creating blight, depressing property values, and disproportionately impacting low-income residents. Buckeye Hills also documented 40 unfunded infrastructure projects totaling \$61,214,058 across drinking water, wastewater, surface transportation, stormwater, and broadband. EPA Brownfields Assessment funding will help address environmental stigma, enable assessment and planning, and catalyze cleanup and redevelopment in Target Areas and across the region, supporting new investment, jobs, and improved home values. BHRC communities are small and have limited general fund capacity and low property valuations which restrict local bonding and discretionary redevelopment funds. Federal and State funds also require local match, front-end costs, or staff capacity which the communities often do not have but BHRC is able to supply on their behalf. USEPA assessment dollars will fill the gap by funding Phase I/II and cleanup planning which are needed to unlock other funds.

C.2.b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Residents throughout the Target Areas have been disproportionately impacted by pollution (air, soil, and groundwater) emanating from potential brownfields and leaking USTs located in neighborhoods such as the ones at 314 West Street Caldwell and 301 Main St Belle Valley in Noble County (USTs next door to residents) as well as 550 Zanesville Rd in Logan (Ceramic Manufacturing Plant in a residential community) and the former potteries located in residential communities in Perry County. Many BHRC communities are aging with the median ages being

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program. oh_od_main_JT00_2023.csv.gz. R2023Q4. Accessed 23 December 2025. Available at: <https://lehd.ces.census.gov/data/lodes/>

well over the averages in Ohio and the US. Additionally, many BHRC communities rely on private wells for drinking water. The use of Phase I and IIs as well as cleanup planning will assist BHRC in improving the health and safety of our communities. USEPA funds will help identify brownfields contributing to improving the environment for communities, fund assessments, and ignite redevelopment opportunities for increased job opportunities for the County’s and regions poorest residents. The table in section C.2.c will cover the health conditions as compared to Ohio and the US, these health outcomes are a direct result of brownfields and harmful industry in the region.

C.2.c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions¹²

Selected Health Indicators (County Range) Compared to Ohio/U.S.”

Indicator	Buckeye Hills (8 counties)	Ohio	U.S.
% Low Birth Weight	6.9% - 9.9%	8.5%	8.3%
% Preterm Births	9.3% - 10.7%	10.4%	9.9%
Infant Mortality Rate	3.3 – 8.7	7.2	6
% Child Food Insecurity Rate	22.5% - 24.9%	18.9%	15.2%
Cancer Mortality Rate	118.7 – 204.3	176.8	161
Lung Cancer Mortality Rate	39-65.5	50.3	41.9
% Obesity	30.5% - 39.7%	31.8%	29%
% Smokers	17.9% - 22.7%	22.5%	17%
% Inactive	23.4% - 33.5%	29.2%	22%
% Children with asthma	10.1% - 23.3%	14.2%	7.9%

The BHRC region experiences high rates of children with asthma, cancer mortality, and lung cancer mortality, which are directly related to exposure to contaminants from brownfields such as petroleum VOCs, PAHs, metals, asbestos/RBMs. BHRC being equipped with USEPA funded assessment services will allow our organization to provide much needed Phase I/II and cleanup planning to identify and interrupt these exposure pathways.

C.2.d Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: As discussed in the CEDS, BHRC’s regional employment is concentrated in Health Care and Social Assistance, Educational Services, Retail Trade, and Accommodation and Food Services. Between 2003 and 2018, production/industrial jobs declined by 31%. The most common occupations are Office and Administrative Support, Food Preparation and Serving, Educational Instruction and Library, and Management. An estimated 25,000 residents commute outside the region for work, underscoring that the region is not a job center and lacks manufacturing and other living-wage industries. Although unemployment has fallen since 2014, available jobs pay less, contributing to persistently high poverty as documented in the CEDS. Abandoned sites and brownfields exacerbate blight, depress property values, and disproportionately burden low-income residents who cannot afford to move. EPA Brownfields Assessment resources will enable

¹² As defined by Ohio Public Health Data Warehouse, per 1,000 live births; B FeedingAmerica.org, 2018; C cases per 100,000 population (ODH Cancer Profile for Buckeye Hills); D ODH Diabetes Prevalence Report (CDC, 2017); E ODH Asthma in Athens and Washington Counties and Ohio leaflets

site assessments that can catalyze cleanup and redevelopment in the Target Areas and across the region, supporting job growth, improving home values, and advancing economic recovery.

Community Engagement C.2.e. Project Involvement & C.2.f. Project Roles: BHRC will coordinate outreach and collaborate with regional partners throughout the CA. A few of these include:

Noble County Community Improvement Corporation	Gwynn Stewart	Stewart.1818@osu.edu	Worked with Noble CIC on multiple ODOD Brownfields and Demolition applications within the last two years.
Athens County Port Authority	Mollie Fitzgerald	mollie@athenscountyohedc.com	Worked with ACPA on US EDA applications, USEPA projects, and ARC projects.
Hocking County Commissioners	Jason D’Onofrio	commissioners@hocking.oh.gov	Worked with Hocking Co. Commissioners on multiple ODOD Brownfields and Demolition applications as well as USEPA projects.

The above representative (not exhaustive) list outlines entities that will engage in eligible grant activities and their anticipated roles: County Commissioners and local government officials will recommend priority sites for assessment, Local nonprofits, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development Organizations will participate in site screening and reuse visioning discussions, and County Health departments will review findings related to exposure pathways and community risk. Local real estate developers and agents: assist in marketing sites for redevelopment. BHRC will manage stakeholder coordination for the duration of the performance period.

C.2.g. Incorporating Community Input: BHRC will build on its regional engagement experience, including the CEDS and a prior EPA Community-Wide Assessment grant, to meet quarterly with county commissioners, local officials, and other stakeholders across the eight-county region to discuss brownfield needs, strategies, and plans. Once properties are onboarded, BHRC will provide owner-preferred (email, phone, or text), monthly updates to keep them involved in assessment and redevelopment planning. Main stakeholders include residents/property owners, community and citizens’ groups, businesses, and lenders/developers. Engagement will proceed through three primary efforts: announcing the award via press releases to local newspapers and placements on local radio and public access television, as well as through BHRC newsletters, the website, and social media with key partners sharing information; hosting initial outreach and kick-off meetings with community, environmental, and educational organizations and the media to introduce the project and solicit additional brownfield nominations to add to the potential site list, with meeting outcomes shared via websites, social media, and a newsletter; and maintaining ongoing communication, coordinating additional public meetings upon request, and holding a final public meeting to share outcomes, with presentation materials and minutes archived on BHRC websites. All outreach will offer virtual participation (Microsoft Teams links), and, upon request, news releases and other materials will be available in languages other than English.

(3) Task Descriptions, Cost Estimates, and Measuring Progress

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs C.3.a. Project Implementation, C.3.b. Anticipated Project Schedule, C.3.c. Task/Activity Lead, and C.3.d. Outputs

Task 1 – Programmatic and Outreach
<i>Project Implementation:</i> The Work Plan will be prepared and CA will be executed. A QEP will be retained in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200. Quarterly reports will be submitted to U.S. EPA ACRES; annual MBE/WBE reports will be submitted and final project closeout documentation will be submitted. Staff will attend brownfields training programs. A project “kick-off” meeting will be hosted by Buckeye Hills. Monthly community outreach activities and roundtable meetings will be planned. Assistance will be requested from local health departments throughout the performance period to understand and prioritize health risks at brownfield sites identified for assessment.
<i>Anticipated Schedule:</i> The Work Plan will be prepared within 1 month of receiving notification of the grant award. The CA will be executed and a QEP will be retained within 3 months of award. Quarterly Reports (QR) will be submitted within 30 days of the end of the QR period and ACRES will be updated as priority and non-priority sites are assessed and as cleanup and/or redevelopment occurs, during/after the performance period. MBE/WBE reports will be submitted annually. Final project closeout documentation will be submitted as required. Staff will attend brownfields training programs as available during the grant period. “Kick-off” meeting will be held within 1 month of receiving notification of the grant award and Community outreach activities will continue throughout the performance period.
<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> BHRC will be responsible for day-to-day programmatic oversight and outreach activities throughout the performance period.
<i>Outputs:</i> Work Plan, CA, quarterly reports (12); ACRES updates; final project closeout documentation; staff training; public meetings and development of outreach materials.
Task 2 – Site Inventory
<i>Project Implementation:</i> BHRC will complete programmatic and public outreach activities throughout the grant period to gather brownfield sites to participate in the program and to add to BHRC’s ongoing inventorying efforts.
<i>Anticipated Schedule:</i> The prioritization system will be developed within 3 months of grant award. At least 2 non-priority sites will be added to the inventory throughout the 3-year performance period.
<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> BHRC will update/maintain an inventory of brownfields sites with assistance from the QEP.
<i>Outputs:</i> Updated brownfields inventory and prioritization. At least 2 non-priority sites added to BHRC inventory and additional information added to the 3 priority sites. Total of at least 5 projects added to inventory.
Task 3 – Site Assessment
<i>Project Implementation:</i> BHRC will provide oversight on the task working with the selected QEP. Priority sites (& identified non-priority sites) will be evaluated through performance of Phase I and/or Phase II assessments, conducted in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiry (ASTM Standard E1527-13) and other ASTM standards. Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) and Site Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs) will be prepared for each site. The QEP will prepare and submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for EPA for approval. Assessments on both priority and other sites following securing site access will continue. BHRC and QEP will ensure required site access has been secured, individual assessments are progressing, and the overall project schedule is met. In-kind BHRC staff time will be contributed for site access and assessment scheduling coordination.

<p><i>Anticipated Schedule:</i> Phase I and/or Phase II assessments will continue throughout the performance period. Assessments will begin once the selected QEP receives QAPP approval from U.S. EPA (anticipated within 3 months of QEP selection). Assessments on both priority and other sites following securing site access will continue throughout the performance period. BHRC & QEP will meet monthly to ensure required site access has been secured, individual projects are progressing, and the overall project schedule is met.</p>
<p><i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The QEP will lead this task.</p>
<p><i>Outputs:</i> 1 QAPP and an anticipated 8 Phase I, 3 HMA and 12 Phase II ESA reports.</p>
<p>Task 4 – Cleanup Planning</p>
<p><i>Project Implementation:</i> BHRC is responsible for supervising the QEP throughout this task. Cleanup or redevelopment planning as required by State of Ohio programs for sites (both priority/additional sites that are assessed using the grant) where redevelopment is imminent. Assessment of brownfields cleanup/redevelopment alternatives, evaluation of needed institutional and engineering controls, and cleanup and reuse plans.</p>
<p><i>Anticipated Schedule:</i> Cleanup planning will be conducted at priority/other sites upon completion of the assessment activities and will continue throughout the performance period.</p>
<p><i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The QEP will lead this task.</p>
<p><i>Outputs:</i> Outputs include anticipated 3 ABCA Cleanup Plans and 2 eligible area-wide plans for the TAs.</p>

C.3.e. Cost Estimates: 79% of the \$500K budget will go directly to site assessment activities. *Task 1 – Programmatic and Outreach* includes 413 personnel hours at an average salary of \$33.47/hour (\$13,827), fringe of \$7.27/hour (\$3,004), and indirect of \$16.15/hour (\$6,669) allocated to direct salary hours, plus \$1,500 for travel at the Federal Standard Mileage rate and \$10,000 in contractual support for technical summaries for quarterly reports, ACRES updates, monthly progress meetings, and community engagement, for a total of \$35,000. *Task 2 – Site Inventory and Prioritization* includes 413 personnel hours at the same average rates (salary \$13,827, fringe \$3,004, indirect \$6,669) and \$6,500 in contractual support for eligibility, selection, and prioritization, for a total of \$30,000. *Task 3 – Site Assessment*, with a QEP, will assess a minimum of five sites and includes \$399,000 in contractual costs: eight Phase I ESAs (hazardous substances) at \$5,500 each (\$44,000), seven Phase I ESAs (petroleum) at \$5,000 each (\$35,000), six Phase II ESAs (hazardous substances) at \$30,000 each (\$180,000), six Phase II ESAs (petroleum) at \$20,000 each (\$120,000), three HMAs at \$4,500 each (\$13,500), and one QAPP (\$6,500); estimates are based on prior ACPA USEPA grant/Ohio EPA averages and are subject to site complexity and size. *Task 4 – Cleanup Planning* includes three cleanup (ABCA) and reuse plans (hazardous substances and petroleum) at \$7,000 each (\$21,000) and two USEPA-eligible area-wide cleanup/reuse plans (TAs/Priority Sites) at \$19,250 each (\$38,500), totaling \$59,500.

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)					
		Task 1- Programmatic and Outreach	Task 2-Site Inventory and Prioritization	Task 3-Site Assessment	Task 4-Cleanup Planning	Administ rative Costs	Total
1	Personnel	\$6,915.50	\$6,915.50			\$0.00	\$13,827.00
2	Fringe Benefits	\$1,502.00	\$1,502.00			\$0.00	\$3,004.00
3	Travel	\$1,500.00				\$0.00	\$1,500.00
6	Contractual	\$10,000.00	\$6,500.00	\$399,000.00	\$59,500.00	\$0.00	\$475,000.00

9	Total Direct Costs	\$493,331.00				\$0.00	\$493,331.00
10	Indirect Costs	\$6,669.00				\$0.00	\$6,669.00
11	Total Budget	\$500,000.00				\$0.00	\$500,000.00

C.3.f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: BHRC will use ACRES to track and report outputs such as the number of assessment and cleanup reports completed compared to the estimates in Section C.3.d. In ACRES, BHRC will also track outcomes including acres assessed; land remediated or redeveloped; acres of parks and greenspace preserved or created; jobs created or retained; tax revenue generated; redevelopment investment value; and other funding leveraged. Outputs and outcomes not captured in ACRES (e.g., website updates, staff training, and community outreach/meetings) will be reported in quarterly reports. BHRC will evaluate the extent to which site assessments, cleanup planning, and subsequent redevelopment protect human health and the environment; review progress semi-annually against goals in Sections C.3.a–d; and, if goals are not being met or schedules slip, confer with stakeholders and the QEP to adjust the approach and timeline as needed.

(4) Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Programmatic Capability C.4.a. Organizational Capacity: BHRC will serve as the grantee and administrator with primary responsibility for all grant tasks, including those discussed in Tasks 1 through 4 in sections C.3.a-d. BHRC has the capacity to manage the grant as demonstrated in section C.4.c. Following award, a QEP will be properly procured and onboarded, and BHRC will conduct bi-weekly check-in meetings with the QEP to ensure the Work Plan is carried out and program activities remain on schedule. Community partners and stakeholders across the region will provide input on site prioritization, land assembly, and related regional economic impacts throughout the 3-year performance period.

C.4.b. Organizational Structure: BHRC will serve as the grantee and administrator with primary responsibility for all tasks under the grant. A QEP will be properly procured and onboarded following the award of a CA. Regular check in meetings will be held between BHRC and the chosen QEP to ensure that the CA's Work Plan is being carried out and program activities are moving forward. BHRC will execute the CA and ensure compliance, as will be responsible for financial tracking, outreach to stakeholders and liability management. Community partners and stakeholders throughout the region will provide input on site prioritization, land assembly and other regional economic impacts throughout the 3-year performance of the grant.

C.4.c. Description of Key Staff: BHRC will administer the grant with an experienced in-house team. Planning Director Melissa Zoller brings 20 years of grants management and community development experience at Buckeye Hills, including prior EPA grant work for Perry County and BHRC; she will oversee day-to-day implementation, draws, payments, and EPA reporting. Senior Planner Kate Dunn has 8 years of grants management and community development experience (4 with Buckeye Hills) and prior EPA grant experience at BHRC; she will share tasks with Melissa Zoller. Executive Director Chasity Schmelzenbach will work closely with Ms. Zoller and the team to ensure grant compliance. Fiscal Director Denise Keys has over 25 years with Buckeye Hills and manages all budgeting and financial grant management, including extensive state and federal funds experience. Senior Planner and GIS

Coordinator Eric Wade (2 years in the Buckeye Hills region) manages data and mapping services and will assist with the EPA inventory by presenting it in a geo-spatial way and better informing assessment projects by having a better understanding of potential contaminants and risks to the overall environment. Ms. Zoller and Ms. Dunn have four years of collaboration at Buckeye Hills assisting local communities in addressing development challenges that inform viable site reuse planning.

C.4.d. Acquiring Additional Resources: Using a Qualifications-Based Selection Process that complies with federal procurement regulations (2 CFR Part 200), BHRC will retain a highly competent QEP to conduct the assessments, cleanup planning, and assist with grant compliance and reporting as needed.

Past Performance and Accomplishments C.4.e.1 Accomplishments: BHRC's current EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment FY 2022 CA (00E03221) (\$500,000) is 98% drawn per the attached ASAP report; ACRES quarterly reporting is current; and the amended end date is 09/30/2026. To date, the grant has supported environmental assessment work for 14 projects across seven of the eight BHRC counties, including: 12 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments; 3 Sampling and Analysis Plans; 2 Limited Phase II letters; 2 Phase II Environmental Site Assessments; 6 asbestos reports; 2 lead reports; 4 hazardous materials reports; 5 Remedial Action Plans or Analyses of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives; 1 document review and recommendation; and 3 sites entered Ohio EPA VAP after BUSTR closure. Several sites have advanced to further assessment, cleanup, or demolition, improving public health and safety, and BHRC continues proactive outreach to identify additional sites regionwide. The grant has leveraged \$3,567,458 toward redevelopment, including Russell's Auto Garage, Athens County (\$225,183 ODOD Brownfield Remediation); Riley Shoe Company Building, Hocking County (\$1,850,000 Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits); Murray City School, Hocking County (\$324,060 ODOD Building Demolition and Site Revitalization); Dexter City School, Noble County (\$668,215.00 ODOD Brownfield Remediation); and Sarahsville School, Noble County (\$500,000 ODOD Building Demolition and Site Revitalization). In addition, cleanup applications for three more projects are being prepared for submission to ODOD's Brownfield Remediation and Building Demolition and Site Revitalization programs.

C.4.e.2. Compliance with Grant Requirements: BHRC is in compliance with CA 00E03221 for its open EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment grant: 98% of funds have been drawn per the attached ASAP report, quarterly ACRES reporting is current, and the agreement amendment end date is 09/30/2026. In accordance with the CA and work plan, all goals have been met, including convening community stakeholders for feedback on local brownfields, obtaining a QEP, submitting timely quarterly reports and ACRES updates, and submitting the Quality Assurance Project Plan and annual MBE/WBE reports. 14 sites were assessed to prepare for cleanup or redevelopment; to date, 2 of these sites have received additional State of Ohio redevelopment funding (Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits and ODOD Brownfield Remediation), and three have received ODOD Building Demolition and Site Revitalization funding. The remaining 2% of the budget will be expended by the first quarter of calendar year 2026, prior to the 09/30/2026 CA end date.