

## **Iron Range Brownfields Assessment Coalition**

### **1. | Eligibility of Lead and Non-Lead Coalition Members**

Lead Member: Arrowhead Regional Development Commission: Regional Council established under governmental authority or group of General Purpose Units of Local Government established under Federal, State, or local law (e.g., councils of governments) to function as a single

Non-Lead Members: Cities of Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, Virginia: General Purpose Units of Local Government.

### **2. | Target Areas**

Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Cities of Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, and Virginia in the State of Minnesota

### **3. | Non-Lead Members that Never Received an EPA MARC Grant**

City of Eveleth

#### **B.1. | Applicant Identification**

Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)

221<sup>st</sup> St, Duluth, Minnesota, 55802

#### **B.2. | Website URL**

[www.ardc.org](http://www.ardc.org), [www.ely.mn.us](http://www.ely.mn.us), [www.eveleth.gov](http://www.eveleth.gov), [www.hibbingmn.gov](http://www.hibbingmn.gov), [www.virginiamn.us](http://www.virginiamn.us)

#### **B.3.a. | Assessment Grant Type**

Assessment Grant Type: "Coalition"

#### **B.3.b. | Federal Funds Requested**

Federal Funds Requested: \$1,500,000

#### **B.4. | Location**

The Cities of Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, and Virginia in the County of St. Louis in the State of Minnesota and the service area of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission which is a seven-county area including Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis Counties and includes Reservation lands of the Bois Forte, Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe.

#### **B.5. | Coalition Members' Target Areas and Priority Site Information**

Former Gas Station | ARDC Target Area | 1515 Cloquet Avenue, Cloquet, MN 55720

Former Industrial Lubricant and Boat Dealership Site | ARDC Target Area | 1018 NW 4th Street, Grand Rapids, MN

Sibley Mine Maintenance Facility | Ely Target Area | Magie Drive East, Ely, MN 55731

Former West Public Works Facility | Ely Target Area | 50 W. White Street, Ely, MN 55731

Alice Location | Eveleth Target Area | 404 Fayal Road, Eveleth, MN 55734

Northern Foundry Site | Hibbing Target Area | 555 W. 25th St., Hibbing, MN 55746

Irongate Mall | Hibbing Target Area | 12036 Highway 129, Hibbing, MN 55746

Industrial Addition | Virginia Target Area | North 14½ St. W., Virginia, MN 55792

**B.6.a. | Project Director**

Project Director: Beth Ann Teskey, (218) 529-7512, [Bateskey@ardc.org](mailto:Bateskey@ardc.org), 221 W 1<sup>st</sup> St, Duluth, MN 55802

**B.6.b. | Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official**

Kristi Kane, Executive, Executive Director, (218) 529-7524, 221 W 1<sup>st</sup> St, Duluth, MN 55802

**B.7. | Population**

Arrowhead Regional Development Commission: 325,715

City of Ely: 3,268 | City of Eveleth: 3,415 | City of Hibbing: 16,214 | City of Virginia: 8,421

**B.8. | Other Factors**

Sample Format for Providing Information on the Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	2,3,4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	2
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	2
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	

The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	2
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).	
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	

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

Please find attached a letter dated January 2026 from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency acknowledging our intent to apply for FY26 grant funds and conduct assessment activities.

**B.10. | Releasing Copies of Applications**

CBI: not applicable

January 14, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Kristi Kane  
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission  
221 W 1<sup>st</sup> St  
Duluth, MN 55802

RE: Arrowhead Regional Development Commission EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Application  
Letter of Support from the MPCA Brownfield Program

Dear Kristi Kane:

On behalf of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), we are writing to acknowledge and support the proposed assessment activities for the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) in fulfillment of the criteria of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Fiscal Year 2026 Brownfield Assessment Grant guidelines.

ARDC has informed the MPCA that they intend to perform petroleum and hazardous substances assessment activities through a Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant in ARDC's seven-county region in northeastern Minnesota. Assessment activities would include assessments and remedial planning at brownfields, including former manufacturing areas.

The MPCA is supportive of ARDC's application for the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. Should this grant be awarded, the MPCA will partner with ADRC to help them improve the environment and build a better future for residents in the region.

If you have any questions, please contact Shanna Schmitt at 651-757-2697 or by email at [shanna.schmitt@state.mn.us](mailto:shanna.schmitt@state.mn.us), or Stacey Hendry-Van Patten at 651-757-2425 or by email at [stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us](mailto:stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,

*Shanna Schmitt*

*This document has been electronically signed.*

Shanna Schmitt, PG, CPG  
Brownfield Program Coordinator  
Remediation Division

*Stacey Hendry-Van Patten*

*This document has been electronically signed.*

Stacey Hendry-Van Patten  
Supervisor  
Remediation Division

SS/SVP:ss

cc: Joshua Bergstad, ARDC (electronic)  
Torre Ippolito, EPA Region 5 Brownfields (electronic)

### **C.1.a. | Coalition Members**

The non-lead members of the Iron Range Brownfields Coalition—the cities of Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing and Virginia—lack the capacity to independently apply for and manage EPA Brownfields Grants due to limited staffing, small populations, and constrained tax bases. These cities do not have dedicated environmental or grant administration personnel and rely on coalition support for fiscal and administrative tasks. Participation in the coalition provides access to professional environmental services, grant management expertise, and shared resources that would otherwise be unavailable, enabling them to address brownfield sites that they could not feasibly tackle alone.

### **C.1.b. | Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas**

The proposed grant activities will occur within Northeast Minnesota (ARDC service area), primarily in the Target Areas of the Cities of Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, and Virginia on the Mesabi Iron Range, starting approximately 60 miles north of Duluth. These four cities are historically tied to underground and open-pit mining operations. Cloquet and Gand Rapids, priority sites for ARDC located in Carlton and Itasca County, have a long history with paper and pulp mills and face similar brownfield challenges.

Brownfield challenges in this region are severe and rooted in its economic history. Communities are landlocked by mineral formations—iron and non-ferrous critical minerals—essential for future mining and national economic security, as the Iron Range produces 70% of U.S. iron ore. Development is further constrained by extensive public land ownership, with 63% of the region held in national, state, and county forests. Most communities are located adjacent to or within former mining sites and the industrial facilities, creating layers of environmental, legal, and economic complexity. These conditions perpetuate blight, limit investment, and exacerbate social challenges such as aging housing stock, low income, high unemployment, and health risks. Strategic reuse of existing sites is a necessary path to economic revitalization.

This grant will provide the financial resources and coordination necessary to ready for the reuse of mine-scarred lands and abandoned industrial, commercial, and residential sites. By addressing contamination and redevelopment barriers, the grant will enable communities to unlock economic potential, attract investment, and improve public health and safety, while preserving critical mineral resources for future national needs.

Approximately 75% of funding will focus on four Iron Range cities—Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, and Virginia in St. Louis County—targeting downtown corridors, former industrial sites, and sites adjacent to historic mining lands. The remaining 20% will support other communities in the Arrowhead Region (ARDC service area), including Cloquet in Carlton County, which faces similar challenges. 5% is administrative costs.

### **C.1.c. | Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites**

14 priority sites have already been identified. 8 are presented here:

**Sibley Mine Maintenance Facility | Ely Target Area | Magie Drive East, Ely, MN 55731 | PIN# 030-0240-00130 | 11 acres |** No prior environmental assessment has been conducted. The site previously housed a maintenance facility for the former Sibley Mine and may contain a range of contaminants. The City of Ely has identified housing as a critical priority,

and this residentially zoned parcel—located on an isthmus between Shagawa Lake and Miners Lake with minimal utility extensions—offers a strong opportunity to meet that need. Redevelopment would support housing and environmental protection through remediation. Reuse/area-wide planning and renewable energy and energy efficiency measures are expected.

**Former West Public Works Facility | Ely Target Area | 50 W. White Street, Ely, MN 55731 | PIN# 030-0500-00370 | 25 acres** | No prior environmental assessment has been conducted. The property historically supported vehicle and equipment maintenance, fabrication, and material storage, with potential contamination from fuels, PAHs, PCBs, solvents, and metals. The City of Ely has prioritized housing redevelopment, and this residentially zoned site—adjacent to neighborhoods, with minimal utility extensions and sufficient acreage for mixed-income housing—presents a strong opportunity for redevelopment and remediation. Reuse/area-wide planning and renewable energy and energy efficiency measures are expected.

**Alice Location | Eveleth Target Area | 404 Fayal Road, Eveleth, MN | PIN# 040-0200-00113 | 12 acres** | The site has supported numerous historic uses, including rail, freight handling, housing, coal and fuel operations, a gas station, and laundry facilities. Investigations have identified petroleum, PAHs, PCBs, VOCs, cyanide, and metals. The location is a long-standing city priority due to its position at the intersection of Grant Avenue and Fayal Road, the community's primary corridors. City staff have completed environmental work, title clearance, and developer negotiations, positioning the site for near-term redevelopment pending final investigation and a Response Action Plan/Construction Contingency Plan. Redevelopment will remove blight and support new and expanding businesses. Reuse/area-wide planning and renewable energy and energy efficiency measures are expected.

**Northern Foundry Site | Hibbing Target Area | 555 W. 25th St., Hibbing, MN 55746 | 10 acres** | The site was historically used for industrial foundry operations and is now vacant. Due to its industrial history, soil and groundwater contamination and hazardous building materials, including asbestos and lead-based paint, are likely. Its size and location make it a significant redevelopment opportunity, but environmental uncertainty currently limits reuse and private investment. Assessment and cleanup planning will enable productive reuse and support local economic growth.

**Irongate Mall | Hibbing Target Area | 12036 Highway 129, Hibbing, MN 55746 | 26 acres** A former regional shopping center built in the late 1970s, the site has been underutilized for years and contains aging structures. Potential concerns include petroleum contamination and hazardous building materials typical of large commercial properties of this era. While the site offers strong redevelopment potential, environmental uncertainty currently constrains investment. Brownfields assessment will clarify conditions, reduce risk, and support planning for adaptive reuse or redevelopment.

**Industrial Addition | Virginia Target Area | North 14½ St. W., Virginia, MN | PIN# 090-0180-00401 | 2.6 acres** | This vacant parcel is located in an I-2 industrial zone near the Highway 53 corridor. A Phase I and II investigation in 2019 identified extensive demolition debris and a barrel with hazardous lead levels, and redevelopment was canceled due to cleanup costs and timing. The MPCA now requests additional investigation, but the City lacks funding absent redevelopment. The site is a priority due to high demand and limited

developable land. Its location near Highway 53 and existing infrastructure makes it well suited for commercial, industrial, or manufacturing use, and multiple parties have expressed interest pending resolution of environmental barriers.

**Former Gas Station | ARDC Target Area | 1515 Cloquet Avenue, Cloquet, MN 55720 | ¼ acre** | Former gas station site in a prime downtown location with strong redevelopment potential.

**Former Industrial Lubricant and Boat Dealership Site | 1018 NW 4th Street, Grand Rapids, MN | 28,000 sf** | Located in the Highway 2 West commercial corridor, an area with multiple blighted properties and contamination histories that limit reinvestment. The site lies within the 10th Avenue Node, identified as a catalytic redevelopment area for a multi-phase commercial project at the Hwy. 2 and 10th Ave. W. intersection. Redevelopment would create a new western gateway to Grand Rapids and improve pedestrian connections to Blandin Beach Park.

#### **C.1.d. | Identifying Additional Sites**

If grant funds remain after addressing priority sites in the target areas, the coalition will implement a structured, transparent process to identify additional eligible sites within the geographic boundaries of the Arrowhead Region, focusing on coalition communities:

Each coalition member will provide an online nomination form for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to submit potential sites. The program will be promoted through coalition member websites and social media.

We will hold annual informational meetings in each of the Target Areas to solicit input and learn about potential sites. We will conduct outreach to local realtors, lenders, including those associated with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Iron Range Resources, and other revolving loan funds, as well as local governments to identify properties.

Engage through project partners: Range Area Municipalities and Schools, Department or Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, and Iron Range Economic Alliance

Nominated sites will be reviewed at quarterly Brownfield Assessment Committee meetings. Each coalition member will have an equal opportunity to propose sites within their community, subject to coalition approval. The committee will include one representative from each lead and non-lead coalition member and two additional members from the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation and Range Association of Municipalities and Schools. For non-priority sites, Phase I ESAs may be approved by the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission and the Brownfield Assessment Committee chair to ensure timely use of remaining funds. Sites nominated by non-coalition members will be reviewed at quarterly meetings only after coalition member priority sites have been addressed.

If multiple sites compete for remaining funds, the coalition will apply a ranking and selection matrix based on environmental and community development goals. Criteria include Economic development impact, public health and safety, Housing development opportunities and more. Specific scoring details will be developed by the Brownfield Assessment Committee.

### **C.1.e. | Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans**

It is the intent that priority sites be redeveloped for residential housing of all types, mixed-use developments, and new commercial and light industrial facilities to reduce blight, diversify the economy, and meet the region's critical housing needs. These areas have been underinvested in, and redevelopment will maximize existing infrastructure while conserving green space in landlocked legacy cities where many properties are complicated by brownfields.

This reuse strategy aligns with local comprehensive plans and the Northeast Minnesota Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), which calls for regional collaboration to "promote redevelopment of underutilized properties" and tracks investment in brownfields as a key performance measure.

The grant workplan is designed to move priority sites through a structured assessment process—beginning with Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, advancing to Phase II and other necessary investigations to define contamination and cleanup options—then using community engagement to develop site-specific or area-wide reuse plans that are achievable, align with local and regional plans, and leverage available funding sources, including opportunities for private developer participation.

Regional Community priorities were established through 24 public engagement sessions during the CEDs process. Local plans were also developed with community input priorities are reflected in local comprehensive plans and ongoing updates.

Coalition members have committed local resources and partnerships to advance redevelopment post-assessment, ensuring that reuse is both feasible and aligned with community vision and funding opportunities. ARDC in its role as the Economic Development District and Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, a state economic development agency, and Range Association of Municipalities and Schools will assist with state and federal funding for redevelopment and loans to businesses and developers to redevelop sites.

### **C.1.f. | Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy**

Cleanup of priority sites will remove environmental barriers and regulatory uncertainty. This will enable coalition members to secure infrastructure funding making properties shovel-ready for redevelopment and reducing upfront costs for developers thus attracting private investment, signaling strong public-private partnership and improving investor confidence. Infrastructure improvements will support redevelopment on these sites and adjacent properties, amplifying economic impact.

The target area brownfields projects have incredible potential to stimulate economic development. Funding will create an avenue for predevelopment site work, enabling significant private redevelopment that would otherwise remain stalled. These areas are slated for major infrastructure investments supporting single-family housing, retail, medical/office space, parks and greenspace, and new or expanded manufacturing. These projects will create jobs, expand the tax base, grow population, and improve quality of life.

In addition, redevelopment addresses critical regional challenges: aging population, outdated housing stock, low-income levels, high unemployment, and poor health indicators.

By providing better-paying jobs, modern housing, access to rural healthcare, and mitigating flood risk in high-risk areas, these projects will make communities more resilient and attractive for future generations.

#### **C.1.g. | Resources Needed for Site Reuse**

The coalition members have a strong track record and clear pathways to leverage additional funding for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. A major source is expected to be the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), which has awarded nearly \$24 million (with \$12 million in additional matching funds) in public works construction grants to Northeast Minnesota since 2019, including \$12 million for three brownfield-related projects. ARDC also administers two revolving loan funds totaling over \$5 million, providing flexible financing for redevelopment. The Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR) offers multiple programs that directly complement EPA-funded assessments, including the Site Ready Grant Program (assessment and predevelopment), Public Works Grants (infrastructure and cleanup), and Commercial Redevelopment Grants (reuse and private investment). IRRR funding can serve as a local match and has historically leveraged EPA, DEED, MPCA, and private dollars, reducing financial barriers for small and rural communities. Additional resources include Minnesota DEED programs for business recruitment, expansion, and workforce development. HUD programs accessed by St. Louis County, including HOME, ESG, and CDBG for housing and community development. Local economic development authorities (e.g., Virginia EDA, VEEDA) offering low-interest loans and business renovation grants. Each member can offer Tax Increment Financing or Tax Abatement Financing.

#### **C.1.h. | Use of Existing Infrastructure**

All coalition communities emphasize reusing existing infrastructure to reduce costs, preserve historic character, and support sustainable redevelopment. In the target areas, strategies will maximize the use of infrastructure.

Eveleth sites require no utility or road extensions, making them prime for development near the Highway 53 corridor. Cloquet and Grand Rapids will reuse sites near existing utilities and facilitate extensions to infill areas. Hibbing priority sites are fully served by existing roads, utilities, and public services, minimizing costly extensions. Ely sites vary: Site 1 has utilities nearby for single housing lots; Site 2 has utilities and roadway access but needs extensions; Site 3, part of a larger tract, could be developed in phases with adjoining utilities. Ely plans to fund infrastructure through lot sales, grants, and special assessments, leveraging past success in cost-effective development.

Where upgrades are needed, communities will seek public or private funding to support improvements such as energy-efficient construction, updated sewer systems, and enhanced pedestrian safety features.

#### **C.2.a. | The Community's Need for Funding**

The local economy has not fully recovered from the devastation caused when the steel market collapsed in the 1980s, leaving iron ore-dependent communities with high unemployment, low income, and low property values. When a depressed economy faces new industry and facility development, the result is tremendous financial pressure on communities with limited resources. All four of the coalition cities' median household

incomes are 53%–63% of Minnesota and 59%–71% of the U.S. Per capita income is roughly 66% -74% of MN and 73% to 80% of U.S. Local Government Aid (LGA) from the State, intended to help fund essential services and provide property tax relief, is inadequate on its own, forcing residents to bear higher property taxes to supplement city revenue. Communities face a low tax base and high tax rate, leaving little capacity for local governments and struggling residents to advance brownfield projects without external assistance. Brownfields further compound these challenges by reducing property valuations, eroding property tax revenue, and deterring desirable projects due to contamination liabilities and costs. Blight has also diminished neighboring property values, creating additional tax base loss. This grant represents an opportunity to combine local efforts with regional resources and expertise to overcome these barriers, enhance capacity, and accelerate redevelopment. Redevelopment will address blight, support better-paying jobs, improve access to rural healthcare, and mitigate flood risk in areas with higher-than-average vulnerability.

**C.2.b. | Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations**

Pollution and environmental hazards pose a disproportionate risk to sensitive populations in the ARDC region, particularly older adults and low-income residents. The region has a substantially higher share of adults age 65+ than Minnesota overall (~17.8% statewide), including Aitkin (33.9%), Cook (32.6%), Lake (29.5%), Itasca (24.6%), Koochiching (25.9%), Carlton (18.7%), and St. Louis (20.8%). Older adults are more likely to experience chronic disease, mobility limitations, and heightened sensitivity to environmental exposures.

Poverty further compounds vulnerability. Several ARDC counties exceed the state poverty rate (~9.6%), including Koochiching (14.9%), St. Louis (14.7%), Itasca (11.8%), Aitkin (12.3%), Carlton (10.1%), and Cook (10.7%).

Because many of these sensitive populations reside in or near brownfield areas, they face increased likelihood of exposure to contaminants through direct contact or ingestion, amplifying existing health and socioeconomic risks in the target communities.

<b>Primary Contaminants</b>	<b>Primary Types of Brownfields</b>	<b>Potential Human Health Effects from Exposure to Contaminants</b>
VOCs	Manufacturing, drycleaners and gasoline stations	Cancer; damage to liver, kidney and central nervous systems; visual disorders and memory impairment.
PAHs	Manufacturing, gasoline stations, flood sediments	Kidney and liver damage; cancer; low birth weight, premature delivery, and natal heart malformations.
Chlorinated Solvents	Manufacturing, drycleaners and gasoline stations	Damage to central nervous system, liver, heart, kidney and digestive system; dermatitis; cancer; aplastic anemia; rapid and irregular heartbeat.
Heavy Metals including Lead	Manufacturing, flood sediments	Cancer; gastrointestinal and nervous system effects; anemia; and neurological, kidney or liver damage.
Asbestos	Underutilized and vacant buildings (pre-1980)	Lung tissue scarring; lung, larynx and ovarian cancer; and mesothelioma.

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

The ARDC region exhibits conditions consistent with a greater-than-normal incidence of adverse health outcomes due to the interaction of demographic vulnerability, limited health-care access, and legacy industrial exposure. The region has a substantially older population than the state and nation, with several counties exceeding 25–30% age 65+, a group with higher prevalence of cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness, diabetes, and cancer, and increased sensitivity to environmental contaminants.

These vulnerabilities are compounded by federally designated shortages of primary care, dental, and mental health providers across all ARDC counties, which limit access to preventive care, delay diagnosis and treatment, and reduce the capacity to manage chronic disease or respond effectively to environmentally triggered illness. As a result, existing health conditions are more likely to worsen and persist once exposure occurs.

In addition, much of the region—including Hibbing, Eveleth, Virginia, and Ely—is shaped by a long history of iron mining, processing, rail transport, and heavy industry. These activities have left a legacy of mine tailings, waste rock, petroleum contamination, and contaminated fill, as well as ongoing exposure pathways related to wind-blown dust and fine particulate matter from disturbed soils, tailings basins, and former industrial properties. Particulate and metal-laden dust is a known aggravator of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiovascular disease, and other respiratory conditions—diseases already more prevalent in older and low-income populations.

Together, an aging population, elevated poverty, limited access to medical services, and proximity to mining-related brownfields create a setting in which residents experience higher baseline disease burden and reduced ability to mitigate or recover from environmental exposures, meeting EPA’s criteria for greater-than-normal incidence of disease and adverse health conditions in the target communities.

#### **C.2.d. | Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations**

Populations in the target communities are both economically vulnerable and disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards due to decades of mining, industrial, rail, and commercial activity. The region has elevated poverty rates, an aging population with higher chronic disease prevalence, and federally designated shortages of primary and mental health care providers, which together increase sensitivity to pollution and reduce capacity to prevent or manage environmentally related illness. Many low-income and elderly residents live near former mining properties, rail corridors, and industrial sites where contaminated soil, petroleum residues, and wind-blown dust remain ongoing exposure pathways.

This grant will directly address these cumulative impacts by identifying contamination through Phase I and Phase II assessments, prioritizing sites that can be advanced to cleanup and reuse strategies that eliminate exposure pathways. Planned reuses will replace unsafe properties with uses that reduce dust, improve environmental conditions, and support access to services and employment. In doing so, the project will reduce disproportionate pollution burdens while improving long-term health, safety, and economic stability in the target areas.

#### **C.2.e. | Project Involvement & C.2.f. | Project Roles**

Name of entity, organization, or group	Point of Contact (name, email, phone number)	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
City of Ely	Harold Langowski, <a href="mailto:elyod@ely.mn.us">elyod@ely.mn.us</a> , 218-365-3224	Serve on the BAC and assist with site nomination and prioritization. Provide any documentation needed for site eligibility and working with the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to obtain site access/ Disseminate project information to enhance the community's support, knowledge, and involvement with the project and hosting public meetings./Offer meeting space for BAC meetings.
City of Eveleth	Pat Oman, <a href="mailto:poman@eveleth.gov">poman@eveleth.gov</a> , 218-744-7563	
City of Hibbing	Betsy Olivanti, <a href="mailto:betsyolivanti@hibbingmn.com">betsyolivanti@hibbingmn.com</a> , 218-312-1579	
City of Virginia	Britt See-Benes, <a href="mailto:britts@virginiamn.us">britts@virginiamn.us</a> , 218-748-7500	
Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources	KeKe Stephenson, <a href="mailto:keke.stephenson@state.mn.us">keke.stephenson@state.mn.us</a> , 218-735-3066	
Range Area Municipalities and Schools	Paul Peltier, <a href="mailto:paul@ramsmn.org">paul@ramsmn.org</a> , 218-431-1317	

### C.2.g. | Incorporating Community Input

The Coalition will implement a multi-channel engagement strategy to keep residents, stakeholders, and partners informed and involved throughout the project. Kickoff meetings will be held in each Target Area within the first six months and integrated with city council or planning commission meetings to explain eligible activities, inventory plans, and to gather input on site priorities. Tabling and broadcast meetings will expand access.

Ongoing engagement will include annual public meetings in each Target Area, quarterly hybrid Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) meetings, regular updates to the ARDC Commission, and outreach through partner organizations. A project website will provide site nomination tools, progress updates, and options to request in-person or virtual meetings.

To ensure inclusive participation, information will be available in Ojibwe and Spanish upon request, meetings will be ADA accessible, and teleconference options will be provided. Input will be documented and incorporated into site prioritization and reuse planning, with results shared publicly. If health risks are identified, ARDC will coordinate with county and state health agencies to inform residents. Additional engagement will occur during reuse planning to support development of site-specific community visions

### C.3.a. | Project Implementation & C.3.b. | Anticipated Project Schedule & | C.3.c. Task/Activity Lead & C.3.d. | Outputs

Task/Activity 1: Site Inventory and Prioritization (\$20,000)
Project Implementation: <i>EPA-funded activities</i> Detailed review and assessment of identified sites to ensure they meet the EPA and MPCA eligibility criteria to assist in prioritization of sites by the ARDC

and BAC. These properties will be incorporated into the regional brownfield inventory. Creation of consolidated regional brownfield inventory (GIS) EPA Grant Resources: \$20,000 contracted to Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP).
Anticipated Project Schedule: Task 1 activities will be completed during the first nine months of implementation.
Task/Activity Lead: Task 1 activities will be managed by the ARDC Project Manager with work completed by ARDC staff and the QEP.
Outputs: Inventory GIS file, inventory report (narrative, tables, maps), prioritization memo
Task/Activity 2: Phase I ESAs (\$165,000)
Project Implementation: Includes completion of Phase I ESAs at 30 brownfield sites at an average of \$5,500 each. Prior to performing Phase I ESAs, eligibility determination requests will be prepared and submitted to EPA (for hazardous substance brownfields) or MPCA (for petroleum brownfields) for approval. EPA Grant Resources: \$165,000
Anticipated Project Schedule: Most of the Task 2 activities will be completed following completion of Task 1 through year three, to allow Task 3 work to be completed. However, since some of this work will be driven by development of specific sites, work may be initiated prior to completion of the inventory all the way through year four.
Task/Activity Lead: Task 2 activities will be managed by the ARDC Project Manager with work completed by the QEP.
Outputs: 30 Eligibility Determinations and 30 Phase 1 ESA reports.
Task/Activity 3: Phase II ESAs, Site Investigations (\$974,000)
Project Implementation: The QEP will perform Phase II ESAs, supplemental assessment activities, and site investigations that meet the site-specific eligibility requirements. A quality assurance project plan (QAPP) will be prepared by the consultant in accordance with EPA requirements, submitted to EPA for review, and revised as necessary until approved by EPA, prior to conducting any Phase II ESAs, supplemental assessments, or site investigations. Site-specific sampling and analysis plans (SAP), as well as health and safety plans (HASPs), will be prepared for each site and submitted to EPA prior to initiating field work. WEP to help with ACRES reporting.
Anticipated Project Schedule: Most of the Task 3 activities will be completed during years one through four following completions of Tasks 1 and 2 work.
Task/Activity Lead: Task 3 activities will be managed by the ARDC Project Manager with work completed by the QEP.
Outputs: Approved QAPP, completion of five (5) asbestos/hazardous building material surveys, completion of 20 Phase II ESAs (including SAPs and HASPs for each site), preparation of 15 Response Action Plans, assistance from the QEP completing updates to Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) and preparing quarterly and annual reports.
Task/Activity 4: Reuse Planning (\$250,000)
Project Implementation: Remedial and/or reuse planning on priority sites that meet the site-specific eligibility requirements.
Anticipated Project Schedule: Most Task 4 activities will be completed during years two through four following completions of Task 3 in years 3 and 4.
Task/Activity Lead: Task 4 activities will be managed by the ARDC Project Manager with work completed by the QEP

Outputs: 10 Reuse plans including the development of area-wide plans, market feasibility studies, evaluating infrastructure needs, etc,

**Task/Activity 5: Community Engagement (\$16,000)**

**Project Implementation:** Comprehensive community outreach will be performed including public meetings and forums, development/distribution of marketing and informational materials, joint outreach and education efforts with community partner organizations. This task also includes working with the BAC to advise the ARDC of all aspects of the brownfield program. Under this task, ARDC and Coaliton Member staff will attend one EPA National Brownfields Conference and participate in environmental assessment or redevelopment workshops or training sessions. Local and conference travel and associated costs for two staff members is included in the budget.

**EDA Grant Resources:** Budget includes \$10,000 of work by the QEP, \$3,000 for Brownfields Conference, \$1,500 for regional travel, and \$500 for public notices, \$500 for printing, and \$1,000 for display boards and similar graphic displays for use at public meetings.

**Anticipated Project Schedule:** Activities under Task 3 will be completed throughout the duration of the three-year grant.

**Task/Activity Lead:** Activities will be led by ARDC’s Project Manager with work assistance from the QEP, and in cooperation with the BAC.

**Outputs:** Engagement plan, 16 BAC meetings, 16 public outreach meetings, updates on web sites, project fact sheets, and press releases. Meetings include agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes, presentation materials. Attendance by staff at brownfields convention.

**Task/Activity 6: Grant Administration (\$75,000)**

**Project Implementation: Administration**

**EDA Grant Resources:** \$75,000 (5%) is requested to perform Grant management and oversight by recipient staff, financial management and internal accounting, contract administration, General administrative support tied to managing the cooperative agreement, ensuring proper and timely reporting and grant compliance, and indirect costs

**Anticipated Project Schedule:** Activities under Task 6 will be completed throughout the duration of the grant period.

**Task/Activity Lead:** Activities will be led by ARDC’s Project Manager with work assistance from the Accounting Manager in coordination with the QEP, and in cooperation with the BAC.

**Outputs:** Timely, accurate, complete, and transparent administration and cataloguing and tracking of all grant activities, performance measures, outputs, and reporting and ASAP draw downs.

**Non-EPA Grant Resources:** ARDC will contribute its own resources to Tasks 1-5.

**C.3.e. | Cost Estimates**

Task	Cost	Details
Task 1	\$20,000	QEP to conduct inventory due diligence and assist with prioritization (160 hours at \$125/hour)
Task 2	\$165,000	QEP to complete 30 Phase I ESAs at an average of \$5,500 each

Task 3	\$974,000	1 QAPP (\$10,000); 5 asbestos/hazardous material surveys (\$7,700 each); 20 Phase II ESAs (\$37,000 each, includes SAPs & HASPs); 15 Response Action Plans (\$11,500 each); QEP assistance for ACRES/reporting (\$13,000 for 104 hours at \$125/hour)
Task 4	\$250,000	10 reuse plans including area-wide plans, market feasibility studies, and infrastructure evaluations (\$25,000 each)
Task 5	\$16,000	\$10,000 for WEP engagement (80 hours at \$125/hour); \$500 display boards; \$3,000 conference attendance; \$500 printing; \$500 additional display materials; \$4,500 regional travel for 16 public and 16 BAC meetings
Task 6	\$75,000	ARDC administrative costs (5% allowed): Project Manager (\$51,500 for 500 hours at \$103/hour); Accounting Manager (\$23,500 for 300 hours at \$78/hour)
Total	\$1,500,000	Includes all tasks

Category	Task1	Task 2:	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6: Admin Costs	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$52,541	\$52,541
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$14,940	\$14,940
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,500	\$0	\$4,500
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Contractual	\$20,000	\$165,000	\$974,000	\$250,000	\$10,500	\$0	\$1,419,500
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs	\$20,000	\$165,000	\$974,000	\$250,000	\$16,000	\$67,481	\$1,492,481
Indirect Costs						\$7,519	\$7,519
Total Total	\$20,000	\$165,000	\$974,000	\$250,000	\$16,000	\$75,000	\$1,500,000

### C.3.f. | Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results

ARDC and the QEP will track and evaluate project outputs quarterly, including Phase I and II ESAs completed, site investigations, remedial planning activities, sites assessed, title transfers facilitated, sites and acres prepared for reuse, acres of greenspace created, private and public funding leveraged, and jobs created or retained. Progress will be reported to EPA through ACRES and quarterly reports. All assessed sites will be tracked using parcel identification numbers and GIS.

### C.4.a. | Organizational Capacity & C.4.b. | Organizational Structure & C.4.c. | Description of Key Staff & C.4.c. | Acquiring Additional Resources

ARDC operates with an annual budget of \$9 million, primarily funded through state and federal grants. Staff include a management team of three division directors and a finance director, 12 planning staff, 24 human services staff, and three administrative staff. ARDC has extensive experience managing federal programs (see Section 4.b.). ARDC has recently added a Division Director (Planning) and finance, and administrative staff to support its operations. Project management will be led by the ARDC Planning Division Director, with fiscal tracking and reporting shared with the Accounting Manager. A Principal Planner will assist under the supervision of both.

Project Manager – Beth Ann Teskey became ARDC Planning’s Division Director in February 2025, brings strategic leadership and operational expertise to the Division. Teskey has an

M.B.A. in Leadership and Change and a B.A. in Communication from The College of Saint Scholastica, in Duluth, Minnesota. She will oversee project operations, ensuring alignment with organizational goals, and provide guidance on technical and administrative matters to support effective implementation.

Dee Binstock, Accounting Manager, has been with ARDC for 6 years and brings decades of experience in financial operations to the agency. She displays meticulous attention to detail, strong financial reporting abilities, and a high capacity for learning compliance regulations. She adapts compliance regulations in reporting, updating policies and risk assessments. Along with experience and persistent drive, Dee has an Associate of Science in Business/Financial Services.

Josh Bergstad, AICP – Principal Planner over 20 years of experience in planning and zoning. Leads ARDC’s Economic Development Partnership Planning Program, manages the region’s CEDS, assists communities with EDA funding, and administers the Arrowhead Brownfield Assessment Coalition’s EPA Grant. Holds an M.S. in Economic Development and a B.S. in Geography.

ARDC’s \$9 million annual budget supports procurement of consultants and contracted services. Its procurement process complies with 2 CFR 200.317–326 and uses an RFP and selection system originally developed with the Federal Transit Administration to ensure fair and efficient contracting.

The Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) will support timely fund expenditure and project success. BAC members represent coalition partners and regional stakeholders committed to brownfield cleanup and redevelopment. Decisions will be consensus-based, prioritizing projects with the greatest regional impact considering community need, environmental and health concerns, and reuse potential.

#### **C.4.e.1. | Accomplishments**

The Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant started in 2020 has completed more than 20 environmental site assessments, unlocking redevelopment opportunities across the region. Notable successes include the Brenny Dahl Block Co. site in Cloquet, where Phase I and Phase II assessments and a redevelopment plan have attracted developer interest and positioned the property for future investment. In Cloquet’s downtown, assessment activities were instrumental in enabling the renovation of the historic Solem Hotel into 18 market-rate apartments, anchoring a broader revitalization effort. Similarly, Phase I and Phase II assessments at the former wastewater treatment plant in Grand Rapids guided site planning by identifying areas to avoid, paving the way for a workforce housing development now in being pursued.

#### **C.4.e.2. | Compliance with Grant Requirements**

ARDC is in the final stages of closing out its current Assessment Coalition grant, which concluded in September 2025. Due to the departure of our finance director late last year, we experienced delays in transferring ASAP access to new finance staff. We are actively working with EPA, EDA, and the ASAP help desk to resolve this issue, which we anticipate will be completed within 1–3 business days. Once access is restored, we will immediately complete the final drawdown, submit the SF-425 financial report, and coordinate with our Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to finalize and submit the last progress report.

## **Threshold Criteria**

### **Eligibility Statements**

Lead Member: Arrowhead Regional Development Commission: Regional Council established under governmental authority or group of General Purpose Units of Local Government established under Federal, State, or local law (e.g., councils of governments) to function as a single

Non-Lead Members: Cities of Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, Virginia: General Purpose Units of Local Government.

See Coalition Letters

### **Eligibility Documentation**

See Regional Development Act and ARDC Bylaws

### **Target Areas**

Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Cities of Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, and Virginia in the State of Minnesota

### **Non-Lead Members that Never Received an EPA MARC Grant**

City of Eveleth

### **Legal Authority to Expend Grant Funds on Behalf of Non-Lead Coalition Members**

ARDC has the legal authority to expend grant funds on behalf of non-lead coalition members per its organizational status. See Coalition Letters

### **Coalition Agreement**

See letters from each non-lead coalition member

### **Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

ARDC has an existing Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant. More than 70% of funds have been drawn down.

### **Contractors and Named Subrecipients**

No contracts or sub awards have be awarded or solicited.