



# STATE OF LOUISIANA

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

### OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

#### NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

#### COMMUNITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT GRANTS FOR STATES AND TRIBES

#### Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-I-OLEM-OBLR-25-06

#### 1. Applicant Identification

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality  
PO Box 4314  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

#### 2. Website URL: <https://deg.louisiana.gov/brownfields>

#### 3. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$2,000,000

#### 4. Location

- City of Lafayette, Lafayette Parish (county), LA
- Town of Washington, St. Landry Parish, LA
- Town of Homer, Claiborne, LA
- Other communities throughout Louisiana

#### 5. Target Area and Priority Site Information

<b>Historic Downtown Lafayette Target Area (in Lafayette MSA)</b>
Orleans Oil Property, 1509 Cameron Street, Lafayette, LA 70501
Curtis Rodemacher Power Plant, 200 W. Pinhook Rd, Lafayette, LA 70501
<b>Washington Target Area (in St. Landry Parish, a non-MSA)</b>
Vacant Lot at Church Street & Hinckley Street, Washington, LA 70589 (no designated address)
Multiple Gas Station/ Auto Repair Sites along Main Street, Washington, LA 70589
<b>Town of Homer Target Area (in Claiborne Parish, a non-MSA)</b>
Former Homer Trading Post, 513 S. Main Street, Homer, LA 71040
Old Power Plant, 308 E. 3rd Street, Homer, LA 71040
American Legion Hut, 627 East College Street, Homer, LA 71040

## 6. Contacts

### a. Project Director

Name: Rebecca Otte, Brownfield Coordinator

Phone Number: (504) 736-7069

Email Address: [Rebecca.Otte@LA.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Otte@LA.gov)

Mailing Address: Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 4314,  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4314

### b. Chief Executive

Name: Courtney J. Burdette, LDEQ Secretary

Phone Number: (225) 219-3950

Email Address: [Courtney.Burdette@LA.GOV](mailto:Courtney.Burdette@LA.GOV)

Mailing Address: Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 4314,  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4314

## 7. Population

- Historic Downtown Lafayette Target Area
  - City: 122,280
  - TA: 27,784
- Town of Washington (Target Area and Town Boundaries are the same): 864
- Town of Homer (Target Area and Town Boundaries are the same): 2,694

## 8. Other Factors

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 15,000 or less.	2
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.	
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).	
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.	3-4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3-4
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	5
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in <a href="#">Section 3.A.(2)</a> , for priority sites within the target areas.	
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	

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

Applicant is the state environmental authority; therefore no letter is required.

**10. Releasing of Copies of Applications**

Sensitive and confidential business information included in the application includes the email addresses and phone numbers of Project Partners included in Section 2.e (pages 8 and 9). LDEQ requests this information be redacted prior to releasing the document to the public.

## 1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

### Target Areas & Brownfields

*a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges & Description of Target Areas:* Louisiana is a rich & unique blend of cultures formed over millennia as various ethnic groups settled the fertile soil of our river system & melded together. Native tribes, European explorers & early settlers, Africans brought over for slavery & Free People of Color, Acadians (Cajuns), & others mixed together to create vibrant communities with delicious foods, wonderful hospitality, lively music, & unique creativity. While our vivacious culture draws in people from around the world, our industrial history and repeated extreme weather events create constant struggles limiting Louisiana's ability to achieve its full potential. In addition, the State's predominantly small, rural communities & small cities lack the capacity to access Federal resources & do not have the resources to adequately address community needs. Most Louisiana communities lie in close proximity to water, used for transport, food & commercial enterprises. That proximity supports our livelihood but, with increasing frequency, puts us at risk. Heavy rainfall in 2015, 2016 & 2019 as well as 8 major hurricanes since 2005 caused catastrophic damage in every parish (county) in the state, taxing State & local resources & creating widespread Brownfield sites, including historic buildings (with lead & asbestos) & neighborhood retail establishments where owners lacked resources to rebuild. Added to this, the 2014 oil crash (documented by the US Energy Information Administration) significantly deflated the State's heavily oil & gas dependent economy as well as local tax bases. Operations halted, blighting communities with contaminated abandoned properties. Energy sector layoffs & out-migration diminished the customer base for local support businesses, causing the closure of gas stations, dry cleaners & manufacturing facilities. Local governments were left with Brownfield sites & diminished tax revenues to address them. COVID's significant impact on our hospitality industry only exasperated these issues, making Louisiana one of the hardest hit States by the pandemic, losing an estimated \$900 million in State revenue & \$787.5 million in local government revenues from June 2019 – April 2020 according to data collected by the Urban Institute's State & Local Finance Initiative. While tourism has somewhat rebounded, the effects of the economic loss linger. In addition, Louisiana faces an affordable housing crises fueled by rising homeowners'/renters' insurance costs (among the highest nationwide according to BankRate) as a result of frequent extreme weather events. Despite being #50 in overall State rankings by US News & World Report (Economy: #50, Crime & Corrections: #50, Health Care: #44), Louisianans love our State & constantly strive to preserve our unique cultures & communities, addressing today's problems & planning for the future. This grant will allow the **Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ; applicant)** to continue to support our local communities throughout the State of Louisiana who endeavor to revitalize but lack the capacity to apply for & manage Brownfield funding on their own. Activities conducted under this statewide grant will facilitate the resilient reuse of Brownfields created by flooding & economic conditions, remove environmental hazards, diversify local economies, & provide opportunities to address economic disparities throughout our State in alignment with local visions & plans at some of the **over 2000 Brownfield sites in our State.**

This grant will focus on three Target Areas (TAs) along the Interstate 49 (I-49) Corridor that connects Cajun Country in the south to North Louisiana & provides a transportation conduit for the myriad of smaller communities throughout our rural state: **Historic Downtown Lafayette (Lafayette TA), the Town of Homer (Homer TA), & the Town of Washington (Washington TA).** In addition, this grant will allow LDEQ to continue our partnerships with small municipalities, local Main Street Programs, & community groups to address Brownfield sites throughout the state to revitalize local economies, clean up environmental contamination, & create opportunities for local residents to improve their quality of life. All three TAs have **experienced persistent poverty where 20% or more of their population has lived in poverty over the past 30 years**, as measured by the 1990 & 2000 decennial censuses & the most recent Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates. Focusing on our economically vulnerable communities, our TAs were chosen based on economic & social needs, local revitalization & community outreach momentum, impacts of repeat extreme weather events, & sites prime for assessment when the grant starts.

**Historic Downtown Lafayette (Lafayette TA; 9 mi<sup>2</sup>; pop. 27,784<sup>1</sup>; within the Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA));** Census Tracts 1, 2, 5, 6.02, 7, 9, 11, & 22): At the start of I-49 is our first TA: Lafayette's historic downtown area. Originally settled by the Atakapa tribe, the population of the Lafayette area greatly expanded in the mid- to late 1700s with the migration of Acadians who had been forcibly removed from Nova Scotia by the British. Over time, Lafayette became a hub of trade, agriculture, the oil industry, & tourism. While it has a vibrant Cajun culture centered around mouthwatering food & lively music, the dramatic decline of the oil & gas industry in 2014 devastated Lafayette's economy, even worse than the oil bust in the 1980s. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the 2014 downturn resulted in 14.8% loss in per capita income by 2016, a loss that remained for successive years (-6.7% in 2019). Just as the area was recovering from the oil bust, the COVID pandemic hit, severely impacting the tourism economy & furthering Lafayette's economic struggles. Over 21 extreme weather events have slammed into the TA since 2001, including hurricanes and massive flooding. Economic and weather impacts created Brownfield sites as businesses

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<sup>1</sup> All demographic data is from the most recent U.S. Census unless otherwise indicated

shutdown leaving abandoned gas stations, historic properties, motels, and industrial sites in their wake. With over 1,200 blighted properties, Lafayette's need for Brownfield funding is substantial. Lafayette also faces an affordable housing crisis: **40% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing**. People in lower coastal communities moved to Lafayette due to rising insurance rates & increased severe weather events, putting significant strain on housing availability, especially for low-income working class residents. **Median Income** in the CTs range from **\$18,031 to \$64,375**, all below the US (\$78,538) and most below Louisiana (\$60,023), demonstrating the need for higher-wage jobs & additional job opportunities. The Lafayette TA's **extremely high poverty rate of 33%** is almost triple the US rate (12%) & notably higher than Louisiana (19%). This especially impacts the **39% of under 5 year-olds** living in poverty, higher than Louisiana (28%) & more than double the US (18%). **Poverty rates for seniors are also high at 28%** compared to 14% in Louisiana & significantly higher than 10% in the US. Small businesses are ideal candidates for Brownfield sites in the Lafayette TA & can provide critical, local living wage jobs while allowing people to work close to where they live, especially those taking care of children & aging loved ones. This grant will focus on the many derelict commercial properties in Lafayette's historic downtown urban core **bounded by Interstate 10 to the north, West University Ave. to the west & south, & Northeast Evangeline Thruway to the east** with a 1-mile buffer around the area, including former gas stations & auto repair shops, a vacant rail operations yard, abandoned motels & industrial complexes, & empty lots. Developers are hesitant to take on these sites due to unknown environmental risks & blight in the general community. In partnership with City of Lafayette, Acadiana Planning Commission (APC; the metropolitan planning organization for the Lafayette area), & local community groups, **this grant will support the assessment of these sites to facilitate their resilient reuse for local small business development & much-needed affordable housing**. This work will build on the momentum of APC's University Avenue Corridor Initiative, including the reuse of the former Coca-Cola Bottling plant Brownfield site on University Ave., which has been turned into the Bottle Arts Loft, an affordable housing complex for local artist.

**Town of Washington** (pop. 864; 0.85 mi<sup>2</sup>; located in St. Landry Parish (county), a non-MSA; CT 9602): Travelling north on I-49, we reach our second TA: the Town of Washington. The geographic boundaries of this TA are **the boundaries of the Town of Washington with a focus on Main Street**. Founded in 1720 as a French trading post & incorporated in 1835, Washington is the 3rd oldest settlement in Louisiana and was the largest steamboat port between New Orleans & St. Louis, shipping cotton, cattle, sugar, & molasses, until the arrival of the railroad in 1883 which devastated Washington's importance as a trade center. The last steamboat departed in 1900, leaving the town economically devastated. Residents struggle with low incomes (**Median Household Income: \$36,944**, 60% of the Median Income in Louisiana at \$60,986 & **less than half the US Median Household Income** of \$80,610). **30% of the population lives in poverty** compared to 19% of people in Louisiana & 11% in the US. This especially affects those under 5 years old, over half of which live in poverty (**55%; compared to 18% in the US & 28% in Louisiana**) & 65 years old & older (**20% compared to 10% in the US & 14% in Louisiana**). As with the rest of the state, increases in homeowners'/renters' insurance rates from repetitive extreme weather events put additional financial pressure on already tight budgets. According to the Louisiana Tumor Registry, St. Landry Parish has a significantly higher cancer rate (538 cases/ 100k persons) compared to the State (489 cases/100k persons). The Louisiana Dept. of Health (LDH) notes **37% of residents in Washington suffer from obesity**, higher than Louisiana (35%), which has the 4th highest obesity rate in the US according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). This grant will build upon the Town's 2024 Master Plan to revitalize their economy by building their recreational tourism industry, especially focusing on their ample walking trails & outdoor opportunities on the river. This grant will also assess key sites along Main Street to facilitate their reuse. Like many of Louisiana's small, rural communities, the Town is passionate about redeveloping their historic Main Street's blighted properties. Working with community residents & elected leaders & using funding from our first CWAGST, LDEQ partnered with APC to develop an inventory of 23 Brownfield sites including former gas stations, historic buildings with suspected lead & asbestos, vacant dry cleaners & a former cotton gin. This grant will address sites identified in the inventory to support the Town's revitalization efforts, restoring properties in their National Historic District & State Cultural District to support local businesses, build their recreational & tourism economies, increase opportunities for healthy exercise to reduce obesity, provide job opportunities for local residents, & reduce the risk of exposure to contamination.

**Town of Homer** (pop. 2,694; 4.5 mi<sup>2</sup>; located in Claiborne Parish, a non-MSA; CT 9504): Located at the north end of I-49 in Louisiana is the Town of Homer (TA boundaries: **Town of Homer limits with a focus on historic downtown**). Founded in 1849, Homer once bustled with timber & oil industries centered on the courthouse square, which included a myriad of stores, bakeries, barbershops, & other neighborhood businesses. A fire in December 1876 followed by a snowstorm a week later devastated the town but residents were determined to rebuild. With the discovery of oil in 1918, the economy flourished until the 1980s oil bust, exasperated by the 2014 oil crises. The town's population decreased as residents moved away to find jobs (15% decrease since 2014; 46% decrease since its height in 1950 based on US Census data). Those that remain have a **43% poverty rate** (compared to 19% in Louisiana & 11% in the US) & a **median income of \$21,396**, (compared to \$60,986 in Louisiana & \$80,610 in the US). Per the LDH, Homer suffers from an elevated cancer rate of 531 incidences/ 100k people compared to Louisiana (489), and the highest rate of elevated childhood blood lead levels (BLL) in the State with 8.2% of children<5 having a BLL of 5 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dL) or higher. The economic downturn & resulting population decline left Brownfield sites in their wake as businesses



were shuttered. LDEQ collaborated with Main Street Homer to conduct community outreach, develop an inventory of Brownfields around the courthouse square area, & provide a market analysis for key properties. The community identified **25 potential Brownfields** including an old power plant, underutilized historic commercial structures with suspected lead & asbestos, a former gas station, & vacant lots. The market analysis prioritized the sites based on community input & feasibility for redevelopment. This grant will support Homer’s efforts to revitalize the downtown square & the surrounding area, bringing back opportunities for living wage jobs, supporting the growth of local businesses, & providing real estate opportunities for local developers to put blighted properties back into commerce. In addition, it will support the town efforts to make the downtown more walkable & accessible, creating a more vibrant community, supporting healthy living goals, & addressing the town’s **38% obesity rate** (LDH data).

**b. Description of Priority Brownfield Sites:** Only a fraction of statewide need, **over 100 Brownfields** identified in the 3 TAs include historic buildings (lead & asbestos), dry cleaners (volatile organic compounds), vacant lots with unknown contamination, & gas stations & industrial sites (hydrocarbons, metals, PCBs). In 2018, APC & the City of Lafayette conducted 3 community workshops as part of the University Avenue Corridor Study, which identified **over 20 potential Brownfields**. A corridor survey of Evangeline Thruway identified **an additional 25 sites**, only a fraction of Lafayette’s need with 238 adjudicated properties & over 1,200 blighted sites (per the Lafayette City Council), mostly clustered in the TA. Potential Lafayette TA Brownfields include vacant lots, historic structures, a former rail yard, former dry cleaners, abandoned motels, former industrial complexes, & vacant auto repair & gas station sites. Using a CWAGST Planning Grant from LDEQ & community input, APC identified **over 20 potential Brownfields in the Washington TA** with a concentration of abandoned gas stations & historic structures (approx. ½ acre each) along Main Street. LDEQ, Main Street Homer & local partners conducted a series of outreach meetings with community, business & city leaders which identified **over 25 Brownfields in the Homer TA**, created by the economic downturn & population decline, including closed gas stations, historic buildings, & former dry cleaners (¼ to 1-acre sites) & an Old Power Plant complex (1.75 acres) which create a sense of blight & neglect in the downtown courthouse square. In addition, LDEQ & our local Brownfield Programs inventoried **over 700 Brownfields statewide**, including sites inherited by family members fearful of selling/redeveloping due to unknown environmental risks & liability concerns, which also prevent access to reuse funding. Selected based on local partner & community input; readiness for assessment; reuse potential; potential positive community impact, ability to spur further revitalization; & secured site access, our priority sites include:

<b>Historic Downtown Lafayette Target Area (in Lafayette MSA)</b>	
<b>Orleans Oil Property, 1509 Cameron Street, Lafayette, LA</b>	1 acre
<b>Description:</b> Former gas station & auto repair at a key University Ave. intersection targeted for revitalization. Vacant site, adjudicated by the City, with a 1-story structure & parking lot. Reuse plans: <b>energy-efficient mixed-use affordable housing with space for small businesses/ grocery store, rooftop solar panels &amp; bioswales</b> for stormwater retention.	
<b>Designations:</b> Louisiana Cultural District; Eligible for State Historic Tax Credits & New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs); Opportunity Zone (OZ); Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) Deep Distress Rural County; US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Food Desert; FHWA funding to improve pedestrian access.	
<b>Recognized Envir. Concerns (RECs):</b> Hydrocarbons, PCBs & heavy metals from auto repair; mold, asbestos & lead-based paint.	
<b>Curtis Rodemacher Power Plant, 200 W. Pinhook Rd, Lafayette, LA</b>	4.4 acres
<b>Description:</b> 3-story former electric steam power plant built in 1951; retired in 1993 & currently used for storage. Part of this grant will be used to develop a site reuse plan; options include <b>energy-efficient affordable housing, commercial space for small businesses &amp; a fresh food grocery store</b> in the USDA Food Desert while incorporating rooftop solar panels.	
<b>Designations:</b> Louisiana Cultural District; Eligible for State Historic Tax Credits & NMTC; OZ; CDFI Severe Distress Community; USDA Food Desert.	
<b>RECs:</b> Hydrocarbons, PCBs & heavy metals from former power plant operations; lead-based paint due to age of building; asbestos due to age of building & steam operations.	
<b>Washington Target Area (in St. Landry Parish, a non-MSA)</b>	
<b>Vacant Lot at Church Street &amp; Hinckley Street, Washington, LA</b>	0.85 acres
<b>Description:</b> Vacant lot owned by Town. Lead & asbestos from previous historic structures likely. Town would like to redevelop as a <b>trailhead/park with event shelters</b> per the <u>Washington Master Plan</u> , incorporating <b>stormwater retention &amp; solar panels</b> on shelters, but is concerned about unknown contamination. Reuse would encourage use of the <b>nearby walking trails</b> for recreational tourism & provide access to free exercise to mitigate local health concerns.	
<b>Designations:</b> Louisiana Main Street; Louisiana Cultural District; National Historic District; USDA Food Desert; CDFI Severe Distress/ Non-Metropolitan; eligible for NMTC.	
<b>RECs:</b> Likely lead & asbestos in soil from past structures; other unknown contamination needs assessment.	



<b>Multiple Gas Station/ Auto Repair Sites along Main Street</b>	Approx. 0.5 acre each
<b>Description:</b> Multiple derelict gas station/ auto repair sites blight Main Street. Town is working to transform these sites into neighborhood commercial to support small businesses & local entrepreneurs, & spur further revitalization in the corridor to attract people to Main Street & create a sense of place.	
<b>Designations:</b> Louisiana Cultural District; Louisiana Main Street District; CDFI Severe Distress Community;	
<b>RECs:</b> Lead-based paint & asbestos in buildings; Petroleum contamination from USTs; lead in soil from leaded gasoline emissions & LBP; PCBs & metals from auto repair operations.	
<b>Town of Homer Target Area (in Claiborne Parish, a non-MSA)</b>	
<b>Former Homer Trading Post, 513 S. Main Street, Homer, LA</b>	0.1 acre
<b>Description:</b> Built in 1800s on the courthouse square, the underutilized one-story structure with a loft used is for storage by current owners who recently retired & are trying to sell the property to facilitate its reuse. Concerns over lead-based paint & asbestos inhibit reuse. Based on the Market Analysis conducted by Main Street Homer with a Brownfield Technical Assistant grant, reuse plans include small business commercial such as a restaurant, bakery, or pet supply store.	
<b>Designations:</b> In Louisiana Main Street District, Local & Nat'l Historic District, Louisiana Cultural District, CDFI Deep Distress/ High Migration Rural County; NMTC Eligible.	
<b>RECs:</b> Lead-based paint & asbestos	
<b>Old Power Plant, 308 E. 3rd Street, Homer</b>	1.75 acres
<b>Description:</b> Former Power Plant near downtown Homer, surrounded by residential. Shuttered for <b>over 20 years</b> . Developers interested but wary of unknown environmental risks. Town rezoned site for <b>mixed use</b> & prioritizes reuse plans that incorporate <b>affordable housing, solar panels, energy-efficiency, &amp; bioswales</b> to mitigate effects of major storms.	
<b>Designations:</b> CDFI Deep Distress or High Migration Rural County; NMTC eligible	
<b>RECs:</b> Hydrocarbons, PCBs & heavy metals from former power plant; lead-based paint & asbestos	
<b>American Legion Hut, 627 East College Street, Homer, LA</b>	7.55 acres
<b>Description:</b> Built in mid-1930s by Works Progress Administration as “the” community gathering space. Hosted countless events including “Homer Hayride” where musicians performed to large crowds in the 1950s/60s. In use until 1980s when upkeep was too costly. Currently owned by the Town & used for storage due to concerns with mold, asbestos & lead. Reuse plans include restoring historic structure as <b>event/ meeting center with energy-efficient upgrades &amp; solar panels</b> to generate income for the town from rental fees & create jobs for local businesses (e.g. caterers & event planners).	
<b>Designations:</b> National Historic Register nominated; Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation’s Most Endangered List; CDFI Deep Distress/ High Migration Rural County; NMTC Eligible	
<b>RECs:</b> Lead-based paint, mold, & asbestos; potential heating oil UST	

**c. Identifying Additional Sites:** If grant funds remain after addressing priority sites, LDEQ will utilize the Brownfield inventories developed with APC (Lafayette & Washington TAs), & Main Street Homer (Homer TA) to identify additional sites for eligible activities. **Sites will be selected based on local partner & community input; readiness for assessment; reuse potential; potential positive community impact; ability to spur further revitalization; & secured site access.** In addition, LDEQ partnered with New Orleans, Ville Platte, & Mamou to develop Brownfield inventories in their jurisdictions, which include over 50 potential Brownfield sites. We will continue to collaborate with our extensive network of local partners including local Main Street Programs, the Louisiana Gov.’s Office of Rural Development, & the Louisiana Municipal Association to identify & connect with new communities that have not previously benefited from Brownfields Grant Resources. **Communities with a strong local advocate, local plans that support Brownfield reuse, community involvement, & an initial inventory of Brownfield sites with owners who are willing to participate will be prioritized.** Through LDEQ’s network of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs; for MSAs) & the Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA; for MSA & non-MSA areas), we will ensure a balanced approach to include both MSA & non-MSA areas for additional assistance through this grant.

**Revitalization of the Target Areas**

**d. Reuse Strategy & Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** Collaborating with local partners, LDEQ will ensure reuses align with each community’s vision. Reuse of the **two Lafayette Priority Sites** as well as other sites assessed in the Lafayette TA will align with Lafayette’s Master Plan: Plan Lafayette (Dec. 2021), including Appendix B: Downtown Lafayette Action Plan which focuses specifically on the TA and noted vacant & blighted properties as a challenge for the future, inhibiting reinvestment. Identified as a priority site in APC’s & the City’s 2025 Brownfield Inventory, **Orleans Oil Property** reuse plans include **mixed-use affordable housing with commercial space** such as a grocery store, in line with APC’s 2022–2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) & the City’s 2018 University Avenue Corridor Plan. Part of this grant will be used to develop a reuse plan for the

**Curtis Rodemacher Power Plant** located on a key corridor on Pinhook Ave. Based on previous community input & APC's CEDS, options include **energy-efficient affordable housing** to alleviate Lafayette's critical housing shortage, commercial space for small businesses to **create local jobs**, & a **fresh food grocery store** in the USDA Food Desert. Reuse of the **Vacant Lot at Church Street & Hinckley Street** (Washington TA) as a trail head/park aligns with the Town of Washington's Master Plan (Mar. 2024) & supports the Plan's goals to connect existing walking tours & trails with the Town's rich history & architecture, activate available land, add community event spaces, & promote recreational opportunities for local residents and tourism. In the Homer TA, reuse of the **Former Homer Trading Post** as neighborhood commercial, the **Old Power Plant** as affordable housing mixed-use, & the **American Legion Hut** as an event space supports the goals established in the Town's 2024 Transformation Strategy, developed with considerable community input by Main Street Homer: revitalize vacant/ underutilized properties with uses that serve the community (all sites); develop & activate local businesses (e.g. reuse of Trading Post; local caterers & event planners for events at the American Legion Hut); & promote & increase the tourism market by providing a historic event venue (American Legion Hut) & restoring Homer's Main Street Historic District.

*e. Outcomes & Benefits of Reuse Strategy:* With this grant, LDEQ will support revitalization efforts by our limited-capacity **mid-sized cities** (Lafayette) & **rural towns** (Homer & Washington) where small- & medium-sized projects make a big impact. This grant will remove environmental unknowns to facilitate site reuse, which reduces blight & contamination & **attracts reuse funding, employers, residents & development** while generating local jobs & local tax revenue. Louisiana is on the forefront of the extreme weather crisis, which especially impacts low-income populations & small communities with limited resources. Reuses for projects assessed under this funding will improve local resilience by including bioswales & stormwater retention in open areas to mitigate flooding; hardening buildings to resist wind & hurricanes; & using flood resistant materials when appropriate. In addition, buildings upgrades will include energy-efficient measures & solar panels when appropriate.

**Lafayette:** Reuse of the 3-story **Curtis Rodemacher Power Plant** & the **Orleans Oil Property** will generate substantial economic development, **creating local jobs, affordable housing, & space for local businesses** such as a **fresh food grocery store** in a USDA Food Desert, while restoring two historic properties with **energy-efficiency upgrades, solar panels, building hardening** to resist storms, **permeable pavement** in parking areas to help alleviate flooding, & **community greenspace with bioswales**. Based on similar projects, the **Power Plant** restoration is anticipated to generate **at least 50 local jobs**, provide space for 10 local businesses, & create vital affordable housing, with an **estimated \$10 million investment**. The Orleans Oil Property reuse is expected to result in a **\$4 million investment & 10 jobs created** based on similar projects. Redevelopment of both sites will **alleviate blight** in key corridors, spark revitalization of surrounding properties, provide space for local businesses to **diversify the economy**, and generate ongoing local tax revenue.

**Washington:** The **Vacant Lot at Church Street & Hinckley Street** will be transformed into a **trailhead/ park** & encourage use of the nearby walking trails to promote healthy living & **increase recreational tourism to support local businesses**. The planned reuse includes **stormwater retention & bioswales** to increase local resiliency & **solar panels** on the shelters.

**Homer:** All 3 projects will reduce blight, create revitalization momentum, & provide critical local jobs. Bringing back the **Former Homer Trading Post** as a restaurant or retail store increases foot traffic for surrounding businesses & contributes to the overall revitalization of downtown Homer, **creating jobs** both at the Post & in neighboring vacant buildings. Based on the Main Street Homer Market Analysis & Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy, restoration of this historic structure will result in a **\$630,000 investment** with ongoing revenues from rent & sales/income taxes. Restoration plans also include **solar panels, energy-efficient upgrades, & storm proofing** to increase building resilience. Vacant for over two decades, redevelopment of the **Old Power Plant site as a mixed-used development** will bring **quality affordable housing** to Homer as well as space for local businesses & nonprofits. Based on similar projects, the adaptive reuse project is expected to generate a **\$5 million investment**, with **ongoing rental income** from residential & commercial spaces (**approximately \$216,000/ year** for 20 apartments at \$650/month & 5 commercial spaces at \$1000/month based on Main Street Homer's market analysis), & local sales/property/income taxes. The Town prioritizes **energy-efficient** reuse plans with **solar panels, bioswales** to increase resiliency, & **community greenspace**. The Town identified restoring the historic **American Legion Hut** as a community meeting/ event space as a high priority. Based on 24 events/ year at \$1000/ event in rental fees plus \$2000 in event costs for local caterers/ event planners/ decorators, the restored venue would **generate at least \$72,000/ year**. The venue would also provide dynamic **meeting space** for nonprofits, community groups, & seniors, & incorporate **greenspace & stormwater retention** in the surrounding acreage, **energy-efficient** measures into the restoration, & rooftop **solar panels**.

### Strategy for Leveraging Resources

*f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse:* If needed to support the completion of site assessments & cleanups, LDEQ will request Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBAs) from EPA Region 6's Brownfield Program &/or use our limited 128(a) Brownfield State Response Program funding. Cleanup funding available for sites assessed under this grant includes LDEQ's **Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund** (BCRLF; \$800,000 – LDEQ is eligible for loans); the **South Louisiana BCRLF**; and LDEQ's **Brownfield**

**State Response Program Funding.** As most reuse funding, private or public, requires environmental site clearance, this grant will stimulate the availability of additional cleanup & reuse funds by addressing environmental unknowns at priority sites. The **Former Homer Trading Post & all sites in Washington** are eligible for **Louisiana Main Street Restoration Grants** to support redevelopment (\$2,500 to \$10,000). **Main Street Homer** is part of a **\$1.9 million FHWA Thriving Communities Regional Pilot Capacity Builder Program (TCP-R)** grant awarded to Louisiana Main Street & the Louisiana Division of Administration to drive infrastructure development in underserved Main Street communities, which can be used for project implementation. The initiative also connects the Main Street Programs with State agencies that can provide additional funding such as the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA), Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries, & Louisiana Economic Development. The **Vacant Lot in Washington** is eligible for **Atchafalaya Wild Grant Program funding up to \$20,000** to support projects that promote the conservation &/or appreciation of the natural resources of the ANHA including outdoor recreation projects. The former **Homer Trading Post, both sites in Lafayette, & the Vacant Lot & Main Street Gas Stations in Washington** are all in **Louisiana Cultural Districts** making them eligible for State Historic Tax Credits (25% of eligible rehab costs for Lafayette; 35% of rehab costs for rural communities including Homer & Washington). In addition, the **Vacant Lot & Main Street Gas Stations** in Washington & the former **Homer Trading Post** are eligible for **Federal Historic Tax Credits** (20% of rehab costs). LDEQ routinely collaborates with the State Historic Preservation Office to ensure environmental activities align with tax credit eligibility requirements while being protective of human health & the environment. The **Orleans Oil Property** is in an **Opportunity Zone (OZ)** & the **Rodemacher site** is adjacent to an OZ, making them more attractive to private investors. Both sites are eligible for assistance through the **Lafayette Public Trust Financing Authority (LPTFA)** for affordable housing & to incorporate art into the reuse. Similar projects have benefitted from LPTFA grants of \$700,000 toward redevelopment costs. Most areas in Louisiana are rural & eligible for funding from the **USDA Rural Development Program**. **USDA's Healthy Food Financing Initiative** would support fresh food groceries at the sites in Lafayette, the Old Power Plant in Homer, & the Main Street Gas Stations sites in Washington. Homer & Washington Priority Sites are eligible for **USDA's Business & Industry Guaranteed Loans**. LDEQ's **State Clean Water RLF (\$17 million)** provides low-interest loans for green infrastructure projects (e.g. permeable pavement, bioswales, rain gardens, etc.). All TAs/ Priority Sites are eligible for **New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs)**; **Louisiana Economic Development's (LED's) Small Business Loan & Guaranty Program**, which facilitates small business capital with loan guarantees up to \$1.5 million; the **State Small Business Credit Initiative**; and **Community Development Block Grant** funding. LDEQ also facilitates partnerships with **Community Reinvestment Act** sections of local banks for local financing & regularly partners with Louisiana Economic Development & Louisiana Main Street to identify additional resources for Brownfield projects based on planned reuse.

*g. Use of Existing Infrastructure:* All priority sites utilize existing infrastructure such as water, electric, & communication/ broadband lines; sewer/ drainage systems; & roads. In addition, buildings to be repurposed include the American Legion Hut, the Former Homer Trading Post, the Rodemacher Power Plant, & the Orleans Oil Property. If enhanced infrastructure is needed for other sites, LDEQ maintains relationships with local municipalities, Louisiana Economic Development Districts (for EDA funding), USDA (rural infrastructure) & Metropolitan Planning Organizations (for transportation funding) to find local funding. Louisiana's GUMBO (Granting Unserved Municipalities Broadband Opportunities) fund supports broadband improvements as needed. Sites with a clear path for improving infrastructure to support reuse will be prioritized. If needed, grant funds may be used to conduct infrastructure assessments to facilitate site reuse.

## **2. COMMUNITY NEED & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Community Need**

*a. The Community's Need for Funding:* Economic & extreme weather strains, including COVID's devastating impacts on Louisiana's hospitality industry & almost annual hurricanes & flooding, drain State & municipal coffers leaving limited resources to address Brownfields. While recovering from Hurricanes Laura & Delta in 2020 which slammed Lafayette and Washington and impacted Homer, Hurricane Ida hit in 2021, causing over \$65.25 billion in damage (Nat'l Centers for Environmental Information), diverting State funds for recovery & shuttering businesses for weeks. Louisiana's oil industry-dependent communities struggle to recover from the drastic price decline, which affects local businesses dependent on industry workers as well as tax revenues. The state regularly ranks low for economic indicators with a **19% poverty rate (2nd highest in nation)**. We are the **3<sup>rd</sup> poorest state in the nation**, resulting in lower sales, property & income taxes & less State operating revenue. Our TAs paint a more dire picture with an inability to draw on other funding sources for environmental assessments/ remediation & subsequent reuse **because of their small populations & low-income**. The TAs have a **combined poverty rate of 34%** (compared to 12% in US) with many census tracts over 40%, & **median household incomes of \$18,031 to \$64,375**, all well below the US (\$78,538). All TAs have experienced **persistent poverty for the past 30 years**, are **CDFI Severe/ Deep Distress/ High Migration Rural County/ Non-Metropolitan communities, & have small populations (less than 28,000)** with a limited tax base, restricting their ability to draw on other sources of funding for Brownfield redevelopment. The drastic downturns in the oil industry in the 1980s & in 2014 heavily impacted all three TAs, which now struggle to diversify their economies to create more stability & prosperity for all residents. The **Lafayette**

TA's poverty rate of 33% is well above the US (12%) & Louisiana (19%), especially impacting **children under 5 (39% in poverty; US: 18%; Louisiana: 28%)** & the **elderly (28% in poverty; US: 10%; Louisiana: 14%)**. With limited resources, persistent poverty, & **small TA population (27,784)**, Lafayette lacks sufficient funding & staff to address environmental concerns that prevent reuse of Brownfields in the Lafayette TA. With populations of **only 2,747 & 820** respectively, **Homer & Washington** are both **micro rural towns** struggling to recover from the economic impacts of migration to larger cities, changes in transportation, & major weather events, leaving scant resources to address Brownfields. The Homer & Washington TAs also have **shockingly high poverty rates of 43% & 30%**, respectively, well above the US & Louisiana. **This grant** will allow LDEQ to support the assessment, remediation & reuse of Brownfield sites in communities that lack the capacity to do so on their own, including our three TAs, reducing the community's risk of exposure to harmful contamination & facilitating the reuse of sites to support small businesses that create local jobs; build quality affordable housing, & provide access to free recreation opportunities for impoverished residents.

***b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations:*** Our TAs exemplify environmentally vulnerable communities throughout our state. Lack of jobs & affordable housing, exposure to contamination, & increased crime attracted to vacant buildings especially impact **our TA sensitive populations including low-income residents, pregnant women, seniors, children, & serious disease burden**. The **poverty rate for Homer is 43% (US: 12%;)**, including **62% of families with children <18 (US: 14%) & 30% of seniors over 65 (US: 10%)**. In **Washington, 30% of residents live in poverty including 21% of families with children<18 & 39% of seniors**. The Median Incomes of **Homer (\$35,898) & Washington (\$36,944)** are less than half the US (\$78,538) & well below Louisiana (\$60,023). In the **Lafayette TA, 33% of residents live in poverty including 28% of seniors & 40% of families with children<18**, & the Median Income in all CTs is below the US. Lack of economic opportunity & support for local businesses & the prevalence of blighted properties that depress property values all worsen economic conditions for our most vulnerable populations. According to LDH, all TAs face negative health effects from severe housing problems including **exposure to lead based paint & asbestos**, as well as high rates of **adult obesity (33%–38%)** & lack of physical inactivity (26%–31%). **Children under 16** in Homer (27% of residents), Washington (29%), & Lafayette (18%) are especially at risk for exposure to harmful contamination from Brownfield sites, as are **women of childbearing age** (Homer: 50%; Washington: 52%; Lafayette: 62%), **seniors** (Homer: 18%; Washington: 13%; Lafayette: 15%), & our **low-income residents**. Blighted Brownfield sites in the TAs attract crime, a major deterrent to revitalization efforts, especially affecting sensitive populations, putting low income, pregnant women, seniors & children at elevated risk. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, **Homer experiences higher-than-average crime rates** compared to national & state figures, with significant property crimes (over 2,300 per 100k) & violent crime (around 283 per 100k). **Lafayette's resident face an even higher crime rate (4,829 per 100k people)**, including significant violent & property crimes like aggravated assault & robbery. **Washington received a "C" grade** from CrimeGrade.org, which pulls data from sheriff's reports, FBI records, & insurance records, & is located in St. Landry Parish (county) which has one of the highest crime rates in the State. **This grant** will assess contamination to support the cleanup & reuse of priority & other sites to elevate the quality of life for sensitive TA populations including low-income & minority residents, children, seniors & pregnant women by reducing exposure to harmful contamination; providing jobs for economically challenged communities; providing access to fresh food; encouraging walkability for healthier lifestyles; redeveloping blighted properties that attract criminal activity; & increasing the availability of safe, affordable housing.

***c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease & Adverse Health Conditions:*** Assessments funded by this grant will identify & facilitate removal of environmental threats to people who live & work in proximity to Brownfield sites in the TAs, especially our vulnerable populations such as pregnant women, seniors, children, & low-income residents. Contaminants at Priority Sites are known to cause cancer, birth defects & respiratory issues, including: **Hydrocarbons & Benzene, Toluene, Ethyl benzene & Xylenes (BTEX)** from auto repair, gas station & oil industry operations; **Asbestos** found in insulation, floor tile, & other building materials; **Lead** from paint & gasoline emissions; & **Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)** used in adhesives & hydraulic lifts. Lead is especially prevalent in Louisiana with **elevated blood lead levels (BLL)** in 12% of those over 16 according to LDH. Per LDH data, Claiborne Parish (county), where Homer is located, has the **highest rate of childhood BLL** in the State (8.2% of children< 5 years old have >5 ug/dL). According to US Census data, 90% of the housing stock in Homer, 83% in Washington, & 56 - 90% in the Lafayette TA CTs was **built before 1979**, exposing residents to lead & asbestos on a daily basis. According to the CDC & LDH, Louisiana falls within the top 25% of states for asthma-related deaths, with the **highest rate of severed uncontrolled asthma** in the US. One in 10 Louisianans suffer from asthma, making it one of the biggest health burdens in the state, with **elevated rates ranging from 10-12% in our TA parishes** (counties; per LDH). According to the Louisiana Tumor Registry, St. Landry Parish (Washington) & Claiborne Parish (Homer) face **higher rates of cancer (538 & 531 per 100k, respectively) than in Louisiana (489 per 100k), with Lafayette just below at 485; all higher than the US (444)**. Per the Louisiana Tumor Registry, **All TAs also rank higher than the US for lung & bronchus cancer (St. Landry: 68; Claiborne: 63; Lafayette: 57; Louisiana: 61; US: 53 per 100k)**. According to the EPA, friable asbestos found in older, dilapidated buildings in all TAs, including our priority sites & the over 75% of housing stock constructed prior to 1979, can contribute to both lung cancer & asthma. **Sensitive populations in our TAs including pregnant women, children & low-income residents commonly have other health conditions & are especially vulnerable to asbestos**



**exposure.** According to LDH data, the **Infant Mortality Rate** for Washington (9.1 deaths <1 year old/ 1,000 live births) is significantly higher than Louisiana's (7.7); Washington & Lafayette are both above the Healthy People Target of 6.0 deaths/ 1,000 live births. Lafayette's **Low Birth Weight** rate (11%) also exceeds the Healthy People Target (8%) & Louisiana rate (7%). This grant will address contaminants prevalent at TA Brownfield sites, including our Priority Sites, known to cause infant mortality & low birth weight according to the Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry's ToxFQA's including hydrocarbons, BTEX, PCBs, & lead. Addressing contamination at the **Orleans Oil Property** & the **Rodemacher Plant** site will reduce the community's exposure to lead, asbestos, hydrocarbons, PCBs & heavy metals while providing affordable housing; space for a potential fresh food grocery store to help residents eat healthier, shown to help decrease cancer risk & improve birth outcomes; opportunities for small businesses to grow & thrive, creating better job opportunities; & meeting space in a central location for health fairs, low-barrier early cancer detection & pre-natal health screenings. Reuse of the **Vacant Lot site** in Washington will reduce the community's potential exposure to lead & asbestos in soil as well as unknown contamination; its reuse as a trailhead will facilitate access to recreational opportunities & encourage residents to spend more time outdoors, reducing obesity rates & increasing positive health outcomes. Addressing contamination at the **multiple gas station sites** along Washington's Main Street will decrease exposure to lead, asbestos, hydrocarbons, PCBs & heavy metals & create spaces for small businesses to create living wage jobs to support low-income families & improve the walkability of the historic downtown area. Assessing the **Former Homer Trading Post** will reduce exposure to lead paint & asbestos & build on Main Street Homer's momentum to bring back local businesses to the historic courthouse square, providing living wage jobs & increasing the downtown walkability. Addressing hydrocarbons, PCBs, heavy metals, lead & asbestos at the **Old Power Plant** in Homer will reduce exposure to contamination while providing affordable housing free from lead-based paint & asbestos. At Homer's **American Legion Hut**, addressing lead & asbestos & a potential UST will facilitate reuse as an event center, creating living wage jobs as well as community space for supportive services for the elderly & people with disabilities as well as health fairs & clinics. Reuse of priority sites will generate healthy affordable housing & local jobs with access to health insurance, & support healthy life options for residents to improve immune systems, reduce cancer rates, enhance lung function & improve birth outcomes. All projects will encourage walkable corridors & greenspace to encourage exercise, improving health including respiratory systems, birth outcomes, obesity rates & cancer rates.

**d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations:** This grant will address threats to our economically impoverished communities that disproportionately share negative environmental consequences resulting from governmental, industrial, & commercial operations & policies. With a **19% poverty rate** Statewide, the vast majority of LDEQ Brownfield projects are in economically impoverished communities. This grant will address historic environmental disparities throughout Louisiana, especially in our TAs which have **extremely high poverty rates** (Lafayette TA: 33%, Homer TA: 43%; Washington: 30%) compared to the US (12%). Reuse of priority sites will **invest in local small businesses/ entrepreneurs** who historically lacked support & resources (including access to local capital), **provide affordable housing** to low-income & senior populations, **address extreme weather** impacts which especially overburden low-income residents, & **provide public assets** (greenspace, community meeting space, fresh food groceries, & community centers) to municipalities with limited capacity due to economic struggles & size. Assessments under this grant & cleanups that follow will address historic environmental issues that expose our vulnerable TA populations (including people in poverty, children, seniors & pregnant women) to contamination including blighted properties & industry encroachment. Through our comprehensive outreach & local partnerships, impacted communities, especially low-income & traditionally overlooked residents, will be actively involved in the decision-making process to promote a healthy live, learn & work environment & benefit from decisions that affect their neighborhoods & regions. Our TAs disproportionately share in environmental risks from past industrial & commercial operations. According to EPA's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), Louisiana ranks **4<sup>th</sup> for total toxic releases per sq. mile**. EPA's EnviroFacts shows a significant number of RCRA facilities in the TAs (1595 in proximity to the Lafayette TA; 51 in proximity to Homer TA; & 7 in tiny Washington). In addition, a high number of facilities are permitted to discharge into our waterways (1714 in the Lafayette vicinity, 164 in the Homer vicinity, & 13 in tiny Washington). With this grant, LDEQ will assist our communities to assess & subsequently cleanup sites in close proximity to vulnerable populations & expand their economic base into more sustainable & stable sectors, facilitating reuses that provide affordable housing & create living wage jobs.

**Community Engagement**

**2e. Project Involvement & 2f. Project Roles:** LDEQ regularly connects with local partners throughout the State (in person, via Zoom, & over the phone) & hosts community meetings on potential/current projects & Brownfield needs overall. LDEQ's Partners for the TAs in this proposal include:

Name of Entity	Entity's mission	Point of contact (name & email)
<b>Local Gov't Contacts - Specific Role:</b> Assist w/ community outreach; Identify sites; Provide reuse input & ensure alignment w/ local plans & regulations.		
City of Lafayette	Municipal gov't; provides public services to City of Lafayette.	Yancy LeGrande. Advisor to President [REDACTED]
Town of Washington	Municipal gov't; provides public services to Town of Washington; also contact for local community groups given size of town.	Dwight Landreneau. Mayor. [REDACTED]



Name of Entity	Entity's mission	Point of contact (name & email)
Town of Homer	Municipal gov't; provides public services to the Town of Homer.	Patricia Walker, Public Works. [REDACTED]
<b>Community Partners - Specific Role:</b> Identify sites; Participate in site selection; Provide reuse input & outreach support including providing space for workshops/visioning sessions; Ensure reuse plans align with community priorities		
Downtown Lafayette Unlimited	Brings people together to celebrate culture, connection, & shared experiences.	Kevin Blanchard, CEO [REDACTED]
Acadiana Planning Commission	Economic development organization for Lafayette area.	Kade Jones, Regional Planner/ Brownfield Coordinator [REDACTED]
Main Street Homer	Nonprofit, part of the National Main Street Network; working to revitalize Homer through economic development, cultural & historic preservation, & advancement of the arts.	Jimmy Hand, President [REDACTED]
Homer Community Coordinating Council	Non-profit dedicated to providing support & resources to the local Homer community, addressing social issues, & improving the overall well-being of residents in the area.	Fred Young, President [REDACTED]
<b>Outreach Partners - Specific Role:</b> Assist with outreach events & disseminating information about the funding opportunity to relevant entities throughout the State; Help create connections with rural & small communities; Suggest sites for funding.		
Louisiana Brownfields Association	Statewide nonprofit assists communities to utilize Brownfield resources to redevelop vacant/ underutilized properties.	Jessica Rury, President [REDACTED]
Louisiana Municipal Assoc., Municipal Advisory & Technical Services Bureau	Provides financial, technical, & administrative support to Louisiana's cities & towns, helping them operate more efficiently & offer better services through shared resources & expert programs.	Cliff Palmer, Executive Director [REDACTED]
Louisiana Main Street	A Main Street America™ Coordinating Program building stronger communities through preservation-based econ. dev.	Rav Scriber, Director [REDACTED]
Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation	Nonprofit providing a voice for state's historic preservation community & support for preservation through technical assistance, education, outreach, & strategic alliances.	Brian Davis, Executive Director [REDACTED]
<b>Redevelopment Partners - Specific Role:</b> Assist will reuse planning & finding funding for redevelopment		
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (ANHA) Foundation	Enhance the ANHA by preserving & promoting its unique heritage & fostering progress for local champions that create authentic connections between people, culture, & the environment	Caroline Byrne Cassagne, Exec. Director [REDACTED]
Lafayette Public Trust Finance Authority	Nonprofit providing finance-related programs & community involvement efforts to support development in Lafayette.	Alex Lazard, Executive Director [REDACTED]

LDEQ will utilize our network of over 270 statewide community contacts including community & economic development groups, local Brownfield Programs, & real estate partners as well as our connection to the Louisiana Municipal Association (305 member municipalities incl. 127 villages, 112 towns & 54 small cities) to reach urban & rural communities to identify additional TAs & priority sites, & identify & engage other local entities, organizations, & groups to be involved in the project.

g. Incorporating Community Input: LDEQ collaborates with local Brownfield Programs, community groups, local governments, & the Louisiana Municipal Association to communicate project progress, understand local challenges, & gather, consider & respond to feedback on cleanup & reuse plans. For TAs noted in this application & identified in the future, LDEQ will utilize the communities' existing engagement plans to ensure communication methods match up with local demographics & needs & present Brownfields information & project updates at local partner events. For this grant, to reach both residents & the business community, we will coordinate with **Downtown Lafayette United, the Town of Washington, & Main Street Homer** to piggyback on their events (including local festivals & regular community meetings) to attract a diverse range of residents with the goal of 2 events each year in each TA, as well as site-specific outreach for each project. LDEQ will present project updates for our TAs & for other sites assessed on our **bi-monthly Louisiana Brownfield Partner Virtual Calls** to provide opportunities for communities to suggest sites, assist with site selection, & provide input on the proposed cleanup & site reuse, & for LDEQ to consider & respond to their input in an open, cooperative dialogue. As local partners indicated that **social media** is the best way to reach their communities, especially low-income residents, LDEQ will continue our current social media efforts (at least 2 posts/month) to solicit community input on site reuse including posting project updates on LDEQ's Facebook & LinkedIn pages with links to info on proposed reuses & community meetings, a feedback survey (including an opportunity to receive a response), & contacts for additional information. Posts will be shared with community partners to post on their pages. LDEQ partners with KSU TAB on community reuse visioning workshops & utilizes Groundworks USA resources to effectively engage communities. LDEQ distributes an **electronic newsletter** to over 270 Brownfield stakeholders statewide. We evaluate the language needs of each community & provide translation services as needed (no additional language needs have been identified in the TAs). LDEQ's Voluntary Cleanup Program requires a 30-day



public comment period for all cleanup plans with notice posted in the local newspaper & sent to all adjacent landowners. Comments are sent directly to LDEQ; we then address & respond to each comment, & incorporate relevant comments into the cleanup plan.

**3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, & MEASURING PROGRESS**

**Description of Tasks/Activities & Outputs:** All personnel, travel & supply costs to be covered by LDEQ’s 128(a) Brownfield State Response Program, which will also be used if additional resources are needed to successfully implement this grant. Tasks below are the EPA-funded tasks & activities.

<p><b>Task 1: Planning, Community Outreach &amp; Engagement</b></p> <p>i. <b>Project Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In conjunction with local partners, conduct Brownfield Planning Activities (first for priority sites/TAs as needed, then non-priority sites/other TAs) such as Brownfield inventories, infrastructure assessments, site prioritization, &amp; site reuse planning especially in communities without access to Brownfield resources (estimated at 2 Brownfield Planning Activity Initiatives per year).</li> <li>▪ Utilize local partners/organizations, community groups, &amp; social media to disseminate project updates, gather community input on cleanup &amp; reuse, &amp; respond to that input (first for priority sites/TAs then other sites/TAs which will also include soliciting additional sites for assessment). Maintain &amp; add to LDEQ Brownfield stakeholder contact list.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate with local partners &amp; the Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA) to reach municipalities in both MSAs &amp; non-MSAs throughout Louisiana lacking capacity to manage Brownfield grants or access to Brownfield resources to identify additional TAs &amp; Brownfield sites. Connect with local community groups &amp; residents to solicit &amp; prioritize additional sites. Site selection criteria includes local partner &amp; community support; readiness for assessment; reuse potential; secured site access; potential positive impact on the community; ability for the project to spur further revitalization; &amp; other priorities expressed by the impacted community.</li> </ul> <p>ii. <b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Connect with TA partners, LMA &amp; local communities throughout the state on an ongoing basis throughout life of grant; Conduct Planning Activities in 2 communities annually; Create &amp; distribute social media posts; Present at community meetings/ webinars at project milestones (e.g. start of project, before sampling activities begin, assessment completion, etc.) &amp; as requested by local partners/ the community throughout grant period (projected to be quarterly)</p> <p>iii. <b>Task/ Activity Lead:</b> LDEQ (Applicant): Brownfield Coordinator</p> <p>iv. <b>Outputs:</b> Number of meetings with local partners (quarterly meetings * 3 TAs = at least 12 mtgs/year / 60 mtgs total; additional meetings as additional TAs are identified); Sign in sheets; Meeting summaries; Summary report of Planning Activities (1 report for each community/ 2 communities per year/ 10 total reports); other Planning Activity deliverables (inventories, plans, etc.) based on local community needs; monthly update of LDEQ Brownfield stakeholder list.</p>
<p><b>Task 2: Environmental Site Assessments</b></p> <p>i. <b>Project Implementation:</b> <i>Activities to be conducted under LDEQ’s Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program by our competitively selected environmental consultant already in place through 2028; LDEQ will be issuing a new Request for Proposals in 2026/27 following our competitive selection process for projects in 2028 &amp; after.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct Phase I &amp; II environmental site assessments (ESAs) &amp; Lead &amp; Asbestos Surveys (first for TA priority sites, then non-priority TA sites, then sites outside TAs); Submit Property Eligibility Determination requests to EPA; Develop Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) for data collection activities; Develop Cleanup Plans including Community Relation Plans (CRPs) &amp; Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs).</li> </ul> <p>ii. <b>Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Start work in Quarter 1 of Year 1; Conduct 10 Phase I ESAs, 6 Phase II ESAs, 4 Lead/ Asbestos Surveys, &amp; 5 Cleanup Plans annually for a total of 50 Phase I ESAs, 30 Phase II ESAs, 20 Lead/Asbestos Surveys, &amp; 25 Cleanup Plans. Submit QAPPs to EPA prior to data collection activities.</p> <p>iii. <b>Task/Activity Lead:</b> LDEQ: Brownfield Coordinator &amp; Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP; LDEQ staff member)</p> <p>iv. <b>Outputs:</b> Reports for 50 Phase I ESAs, 30 Phase II ESAs, 20 Lead &amp; Asbestos Surveys, &amp; 25 Cleanup Plans/ CRPs/ ABCAs; LDEQ regulatory approval letters; 50 QAPPs for Phase II ESAs &amp; Lead/Asbestos Surveys.</p>
<p><b>Task 3: Program Management / Cooperative Agreement Oversight</b></p> <p>i. <b>Project Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submit work plan &amp; quarterly reports to EPA; Update ACRES with project information; Submit Annual Reports including Federal Financial Reports (FFRs) to EPA; Ensure LDEQ Quality Management Plan (QMP) is updated annually.</li> <li>▪ Participate in EPA Region 6 Grantee calls; Attend Nat’l Brownfields Conferences &amp; EPA Reg. 6 Brownfield Workshops.</li> <li>▪ Hold weekly internal check in meetings.</li> </ul> <p>ii. <b>Anticipated Schedule:</b> Work Plan to EPA before grant begins; Quarterly Progress Reports; Annual Reports as required by grant; ACRES updated as projects progress (min. monthly); calls &amp; conferences as scheduled; weekly internal meetings; annual QMP update</p> <p>iii. <b>Task/ Activity Lead:</b> LDEQ: Brownfield Coordinator &amp; QEP</p> <p>iv. <b>Outputs:</b> Work Plan approved by EPA; Reports submitted on time (20 quarterly progress reports, 5 Annual Reports); ACRES updated at least monthly; current QMP; EPA call &amp; conference participation as scheduled; weekly internal meeting notes</p>



e. *Cost Estimates:* All personnel, fringe, indirect, travel, & supply costs covered by LDEQ’s 128(a) Brownfield State Response Prog.

- Task 1: Contractual & Other:** Brownfield Planning activities (inventories, reuse planning, etc.): 2 communities/year \* 5 years @ \$40k/community based on LDEQ’s experience with similar projects/ EPA Small Technical Assistance Grants = \$400k total (split between Contractual & Other Budget depending on if work is contracted out or awarded to a gov’t/ nonprofit as a subrecipient)
- Task 2: Contractual:** Cost estimates based on LDEQ’s past experience for sites in Louisiana similar to priority sites:
- 50 Phase I ESAs @ an avg. of \$3,000 each (including title search) = \$150,000
  - 30 Phase II ESAs incl. QAPP @ an avg. of \$35k = \$1,050,000
  - 20 Lead & Asbestos Surveys including QAPP @ an avg. of \$7,500 each = \$150,000
  - 25 Cleanup Plans (including ABCA, QAPP & CRP) @ an avg. of \$10,000 each = \$250,000
- Task 3:** All costs to be covered by LDEQ’s 128(a) Brownfield State Response Program (SRP).

Budget Categories	Task 1: Planning & Outreach	Task 2: Assessments	Task 3: Program Management	Total
Personnel, Fringe, Travel & Supplies	Under LDEQ’s 128a Funding			
Equipment - None	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$200,000	\$1,600,000	\$0	\$1,800,000
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$1,600,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>
Indirect	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Federal Funding</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$1,600,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>

f. *Plan to Measure & Evaluate Environmental Progress & Results:* LDEQ Brownfield staff tracks, measures & evaluates progress on project outputs & outcomes from initial interest, to site selection, through assessment, cleanup & reuse. LDEQ’s QEP ensures assessments & cleanup plans meet regulatory requirements & are protective of human health & the environment. We use Excel to track & measure deliverables/outputs, project milestones, & outcomes such as leveraged funding, jobs created & acres ready for reuse, & enter data into ACRES regularly. We report to EPA on outreach (type of events, number of attendees, outcomes) & project status. Our LaGov software system tracks expenses & grant drawdowns. We hold weekly LDEQ Brownfield Team meetings with key staff to coordinate activities, ensure projects are moving forward, & evaluate progress in achieving project outputs. We also hold biweekly virtual meetings with project partners to coordinate activities & ensure project progress. All project deliverables are posted in LDEQ’s publicly available online Electronic Database Management System (EDMS).

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE**

**Programmatic Capability**

*4a. Organizational Capacity / 4b. Organizational Structure / 4c. Description of Key Staff:* LDEQ is structured to ensure timely & successful expenditure of funds & complete all grant requirements. LDEQ’s Remediation Division houses our Brownfield Program, which holds weekly coordination meetings to facilitate the regulatory process for Brownfield sites & the execution of Brownfield activities. With 22 years of experience (7 at LDEQ) managing over \$10 million in EPA Brownfield grants, our **Brownfield Coordinator, Rebecca Otte** (BS Civil Engineering & Master’s in Urban Planning), is well-versed in EPA grant requirements including developing work plans, updating ACRES with project data & submitting quarterly, annual & closeout reports to EPA as stipulated in cooperative agreement terms & conditions. Rebecca will oversee this grant including outreach, community engagement, site selection, & EPA reporting. Proficient in LDEQ regulations & utilizing 24 years of experience in environmental consulting conducting EPA-funded Brownfield ESAs & cleanups, including developing QAPPs & ABCAs, our **Brownfields Technical Liaison & Qualified Environmental Professional, Jennifer Schatzle**, (BS Toxicology; 8 years at LDEQ) will oversee our environmental consultant to ensure all assessments & cleanup plans meet regulatory standards & to provide timely regulatory review of work plans & reports. (Rebecca & Jennifer are able to fill in for each other if needed.) **Quality Assurance Manager, Sandy Coon**, updates our Quality Management Plan (currently expires 11/14/2026) & will ensure QAPPs meet EPA standards. Our accounting staff efficiently reviews & processes consultant invoices for timely grant drawdowns & tracks financial process in using LaGov financial software. **LDEQ’s Fiscal Team** is led by **Fran Falke, Accountant Administrator** (20 years managing grants & contracts incl. Brownfield grants) who will provide financial oversight. She is backed up by LDEQ’s extensive Fiscal Team. **LDEQ’s Communication Division** assists with outreach, including social media. We will also utilize our existing community networks, the Louisiana Municipal Association, & outreach to new target area stakeholders to ensure a pipeline of projects to be assessed under this funding.



**4d. Acquiring Additional Resources:** Assessments & cleanup planning will be conducted under LDEQ’s existing Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) Program by our competitively selected environmental contractor, **allowing LDEQ to start work as soon as the grant begins**. Considerations in contractor selection included qualifications & relevant experience, merit of proposer’s scope of services, & price competitiveness. The current contract ends in 2028. We will follow our State competitive procurement process & grant terms & conditions when we issue a Request for Proposals in 2026/27 to select additional environmental consultant(s) to continue the work throughout the 5-year project period. We will also utilize EPA TAB partners & Groundworks USA resources to support community outreach. Brownfield Planning subawards to government/ nonprofit entities will be selected in accordance with EPA’s Subaward Policy, 2 CFR 200.332 & LDEQ’s procurement process.

**Past Performance & Accomplishments: e. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant**

LDEQ has consistently met Brownfield reporting requirements & funding goals for over 25 years. Accomplishments include:

<b>Grant: 128(a) State Brownfield Funding CA# RP 02F76201</b>		
<b>Amount Allocated:</b> \$896,145	<b>Funds Remaining:</b> \$453,350.86 (\$500k added 10/1/2025; all of FY25 funds expended)	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/2024- 9/30/2029
<p><b>Accomplishments:</b> Maintained Brownfield State Response Program (SRP); Provided technical oversight/ assistance to over 15 local Brownfield Programs to ensure assessments meet regulatory requirements &amp; support their outreach efforts; executed Brownfield funding webinar series; Enrolled 5 sites into LDEQ’s VRP &amp; provided 1 COC; Maintained &amp; updated LDEQ public record; Mapped all Brownfield sites in LDEQ’s online EDMS for to increase the public’s access to records; Assisted the Louisiana Brownfields Assoc. with the execution of the Louisiana Brownfields Conference; Organized &amp; participated in community outreach throughout the State to promote the Brownfield Program; Created a Brownfield StoryMap to promote the program; Working extensively with Louisiana Municipal Assoc. &amp; Louisiana Main Street to reach small &amp; rural communities. On track to meet work plan goals. (FY25 Funding not sufficient to conduct assessment/ cleanup activities.) <i>Will provide project &amp; grant oversight, &amp; outreach to support activities outlined in this grant proposal.</i></p>		
<p><b>Compliance:</b> Current on all progress &amp; annual reports. ACRES updated on an ongoing basis.</p>		
<p><b>Plan to Expend Funds:</b> Per EPA CA work plan, \$239k in Personnel to maintain SRP, update Brownfield &amp; VRP inventories, oversee Brownfield &amp; VRP ESAs &amp; cleanups, &amp; conduct outreach. Travel to conf. &amp; workshops: \$58k. Supplies for outreach events: \$24k; TBA Contract: \$60k &amp; \$72k for planning activities for 2 communities - not sufficient for current need.</p>		
<b>Grant: 128(a) State Brownfield Funding – IJA Funding CA# 4W-02F24701</b>		
<b>Amount:</b> \$3,753,749	<b>Funds Remaining:</b> \$2,808,951.90 (\$830,794.00 added 10/1/2025; see below for expending funding)	<b>Project Period:</b> 1/1/2023 - 9/30/2026
<p>Maintained Brownfield/VRP site inventories; Conducted assessments at 6 sites &amp; cleanup planning at 3 sites; Completed 4 cleanups <b>resulting in over 30 cleanup jobs, 10 permanent jobs &amp; over \$9 million in leveraged funding to date</b>. Provided technical assistance to Shreveport Common for outreach to solicit ideas from the community on the reuse of 959 Texas Ave, &amp; to Main Street Homer for Reuse Planning &amp; Resource Roadmap for downtown Homer (basis of this grant application).</p>		
<p><b>Compliance:</b> Current on all progress/annual reports. ACRES updated on an ongoing basis.</p>		
<p><b>Plan to Expend Funds: Obligations:</b> <u>Cleanups:</u> Livingston Courthouse (\$200,000); Municipal Auditorium (\$249,999); 959 Texas Ave. (\$200,000); <u>Technical Assistance:</u> Central Louisiana State Hospital Site (\$110,000); Olde Towne Slidell (\$60,000); <u>Outreach:</u> Small Scale Developer Workshop (\$50,000) <b>In pipeline:</b> <u>Cleanups:</u> Antioch Baptist Church (\$100,000); St. Mary Metalforms (\$100,000); HGM Food Pantry Site – Mansfield (\$50,000); Marler Ford Site – Colfax (\$200,000); Old Garment Factory – Winnsboro (\$200,000); 420 East Main Street, Homer (\$100,000); 420 West Main Street, Homer (\$100,000)</p>		
<b>Grant: CWAGST Grant CA# 4B - 02F16301</b>		
<b>Amount:</b> \$2,000,000	<b>Funds Remaining:</b> \$710,366.70 (allocated – see below)	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/2022 - 9/30/2027
<p>Completed 18 Phase I ESAs, 28 Phase IIs, 7 Supplemental Investigations &amp; 1 Cleanup Plan to date; 23 acres ready for reuse; 150 jobs created; over \$4.3 million in leveraged funding; Provided Brownfield planning activity grants to Acadiana Panning Commission (APC) to conduct Brownfield outreach &amp; planning for the towns of Mamou, Ville Platte &amp; Washington &amp; to the City of New Orleans to develop a Brownfield inventory &amp; conduct outreach.</p>		
<p><b>Compliance:</b> Current on all progress/annual reports. ACRES updated on an ongoing basis.</p>		
<p><b>Plan to Expend Funds:</b> On track to expend funding by 9/30/27; currently conducting assessment/ cleanup planning at 12 sites including Abbeville City Hall, Algiers Incinerator Site, Antioch Baptist Church site, Cactus Pipe, Central Louisiana State Hospital Site, New Orleans Convention Center Sites (5 sites), Red Star Yeast &amp; St. Mary Metalforms; an additional 5 sites in pipeline; Providing Brownfield Planning Activity subgrant to Jefferson Parish to explore setting up a land bank with the Center for Community Progress.</p>		

## THRESHOLD CRITERIA

### 1. Applicant Eligibility

The State of Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) is an eligible applicant as a state government.

### 2. Community Involvement

LDEQ collaborates with local Brownfield Programs, community groups, local governments, & the Louisiana Municipal Association to communicate project progress, understand local challenges, & gather, consider & respond to feedback on cleanup & reuse plans. For TAs noted in this application & identified in the future, LDEQ will utilize the communities' existing engagement plans to ensure communication methods match up with local demographics & needs & present Brownfields information & project updates at local partner events. For this grant, to reach both residents & the business community, we will coordinate with Downtown Lafayette United, the Town of Washington, & Main Street Homer to piggyback on their events (including local festivals & regular community meetings) to attract a diverse range of residents with the goal of 2 events each year in each community, as well as site-specific outreach for each project. LDEQ will present project updates for our TAs & for other sites assessed on our bi-monthly Louisiana Brownfield Partner Virtual Calls to provide opportunities for communities to suggest sites, assist with site selection, & provide input on the proposed cleanup & site reuse, & for LDEQ to consider & respond to their input in an open, cooperative dialogue. As local partners indicated that social media is the best way to reach their communities, especially low-income residents, LDEQ will continue our current social media efforts (at least 2 posts per month) to solicit community input on site reuse including posting project updates on LDEQ's Facebook & LinkedIn pages with links to information on proposed reuses & community meetings, a survey to provide feedback (including an opportunity to receive a response), & contacts for additional information. LDEQ partners with KSU TAB on community reuse visioning sessions & workshops & utilizes Groundworks USA resources to effectively engage communities. LDEQ distributes a quarterly electronic newsletter to over 270 Brownfield stakeholders statewide. We evaluate the language needs of each community & provide translation services as needed (no additional language needs have been identified in the TAs). LDEQ's Voluntary Cleanup Program requires a 30-day public comment period for all cleanup plans with notice posted in the local newspaper & sent to all adjacent landowners. Comments are sent directly to LDEQ; we then address & respond to each comment, & incorporate relevant comments into the cleanup plan. LDEQ's Voluntary Cleanup Program requires a 30-day public comment period on proposed cleanup plans, with notice posted in the local newspaper & sent to all adjacent landowners. Comments are sent directly to LDEQ who is responsible for addressing & responding to each comment, & incorporating any relevant comments into the cleanup plan.

**3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

LDEQ has an open EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes (CWAGST; EPA Cooperative Agreement No. 4B - 02F16301). As demonstrated on the attached ASAP report, LDEQ received payments from EPA (also known as “drawn downs”) under this grant. Drawn down funds have been disbursed for at least 60.00% of the funding for LDEQ’s current CWAGST cooperative agreement by October 1, 2025: As of October 1, 2025, LDEQ had drawn down \$1,287,585.81, representing 64.4% of the total grant award of \$2,000,000.

**4. Target Areas and Priority Sites**

This application includes three target areas and 7 priority sites as noted below:

<b>Historic Downtown Lafayette Target Area (in Lafayette MSA)</b>
Orleans Oil Property, 1509 Cameron Street, Lafayette, LA
Curtis Rodemacher Power Plant, 200 W. Pinhook Rd, Lafayette, LA
<b>Washington Target Area (in St. Landry Parish, a non-MSA)</b>
Vacant Lot at Church Street & Hinckley Street, Washington, LA
Multiple Gas Station/ Auto Repair Sites along Main Street
<b>Town of Homer Target Area (in Claiborne Parish, a non-MSA)</b>
Former Homer Trading Post, 513 S. Main Street, Homer, LA
Old Power Plant, 308 E. 3rd Street, Homer
American Legion Hut, 627 East College Street, Homer, LA

This information is also listed on the Application Information Sheet as requested in the RFA.

**5. Contractors and Named Subrecipients**

**Contractors:**

LDEQ has already selected contractors to conduct activities under this grant. LDEQ will use our existing environmental contractors selected under our Targeted Brownfields Assessment Program using LDEQ’s standard complete procurement process consistent with 2 CFR 200.317. These contracts extend through January 2028. LDEQ will be issuing a new Request for Qualifications in 2026/ 2027 to select new contractors starting on or before February 1, 2028, which will comply with all EPA procurement requirements and follow the same policies and procedures we use for procurements with non-federal funds.

**Subrecipients:**

Not applicable – not named in Application