

Tips for Completing EPA Grant Applications

The following are suggestions given by Larry D'Andrea, EPA Region 2 Brownfields Office, at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's EPA grant writing workshop on October 17, 2005 (courtesy of NJDEP).

ARC Guidelines: How to gain and lose points

Budget:

- Be sure to provide separate budgets for hazardous and petroleum funding.
- Name AND describe each task. Grantees will lose points if the tasks are not clear and labeled.
- Helpful details describe the number and type of assessments that are anticipated.

Community Need # 1: Description of the community:

- The more statistics and details provided the better. Reviewers need statistics to justify high scores.
- Applicants lose points if they do not provide references for the statistics.
- If you are targeting a certain area, provide statistics on that area.
- Use this section to provide a background on community. Describe plant closures, current trends, etc.

Community Need # 2: How will the target community benefit?

- This section should make a clear case explaining how activities conducted under this grant will benefit the targeted community.
- Describe specific benefits to the community in terms of health, environment, economic benefits, access to services, quality of life, etc.
- Applicants lose points if they describe the need of a certain community but then describe projects in a different community.

Community Need # 3: Impact of brownfields on target community

- Applicants tend to lose points in this section because they are too vague.
- Describe the extent of brownfields (e.g., size, number, location). Avoid saying this information is unknown. (Question: [R1 PPT suggests contacting the state for spill records as a starting point. Might be a good idea.](#))
- Describe the known or perceived economic, health, and/or environmental impacts of these brownfields.
- Talking about the brownfields issue in general will not win as many points as describing the specific impacts of brownfields on your community.

Site Selection Process

- Describe the specific site selection criteria you will use (developer interest, community need, location, etc.).
- Applicants lose points if they do not specify how they will gain access to the site.

Reduction of Threats

- Do not talk about the general threat of contaminated properties. Discuss any known or perceived threats from targeted sites (or potentially targeted sites) in your community.
- Applicants lose points if they do not discuss involvement of local/state health/environmental officials. The more the better.

Leveraging of Additional Resources

- Try to include as much information as you know on anticipated costs for specific projects. Reviewers give low scores if this information is not included.
- Applicants do not gain points by talking generally about potential resources. Be clear that you have secured funding or that you plan to apply to XYZ program for targeted sites. Be specific.
- Include information about assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment costs.
- Use positive verbs like we are working, we will commit.