



Brownfield Green Space and Public Facilities Grants

PUB-RR-755

August 2007

Brownfield Green Space and Public Facilities Grants from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are a unique opportunity for local governments to get help cleaning up contaminated properties that will be used for public spaces. These grants help turn brownfields into green spaces, recreation areas or sites for new public buildings. Grant recipients have developed new parks and athletic fields, libraries, town halls and municipal garages.

What Is A Brownfield?

Brownfields are abandoned, idle or underused commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. Brownfields can be anything from an abandoned gas station to a vacant manufacturing plant.

Studies show that housing close to green space has higher value.

Who Can Apply?

Any local government entity may apply, including cities, villages, towns, counties, tribes, redevelopment authorities, community development authorities and housing authorities.

Where Can These Funds Be Used?

The applicant can use the grant for environmental clean up at properties where the applicant did not cause the contamination. The person or company that caused contamination must be unknown, unable to be located or unable to pay for cleanup. The local government does not need to own the property, but must obtain legal access to perform grant activities.

Communities may use Green Space and Public Facilities Grants to go beyond minimum cleanup requirements, such as making a previously cleaned-up industrial site acceptable for a public park. The end use must create “a long-term public benefit, including preservation of green space, development of recreational areas or use by a local government” (s. 292.79(2), Wis. Stats.). This requires a deed restriction that keeps the land in public use for 20 years.

What Are The Eligible Expenses?

The following activities are eligible and must be completed within 24 months of signing the grant contract.

- Preparing a remedial action (clean up) plan, including professional consulting
- Installing a “cap” over contaminated soil
- Labor
- Laboratory analysis of environmental samples
- Treatment, storage or disposal of contaminated materials



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program
P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707
dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/



How Much Money Is Available?

Previously the State Legislature has designated \$1 million per biennium. No grant may exceed \$200,000, and at least 20 percent of funding is for grants of \$50,000 or less.

What About Matching Funds?

The grantee or non-profit partner must contribute to the cost of cleanup or to other eligible brownfield redevelopment costs.

Match requirements depend on grant size:

- At least 20 percent match for grants up to \$50,000
- At least 35 percent match for grants of \$50,000 up to \$100,000
- At least 50 percent match for grants of \$100,000 to \$200,000

When Can I Apply And What Are My Chances?

- Please see our Green Space and Public Facilities web page at dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/rbrownfields/greenspace_grant for current information, the application form and the application instructions. The instructions include scoring criteria.
- DNR prefers projects that are “ready to go”, i.e. are ready to start the cleanup.
- If you have questions, please contact Michael Prager, DNR, at 608-261-4927 or at michael.prager@dnr.state.wi.us.
- We strongly encourage applicants to contact us to discuss whether potential projects are ready for this grant.

Applicant Checklist



Start preparing for your Brownfield Green Space and Public Facilities Grant with this checklist. Many communities get help from private environmental consultants.

- Locate eligible brownfields in your community, especially those in areas already planned for redevelopment.
- Decide if any of your brownfield sites are good candidates for public green space, recreation areas or public facilities.
- Check records to determine if there is someone that is responsible for the contamination that is able to pay for the cleanup.
- Get a completed Phase I and II environmental site assessment for the property.
- You must complete an investigation of the contaminated areas before requesting reimbursement of your cleanup expenses (and don't forget, site investigations are not grant eligible).
- Estimate the amount of money you need to complete the cleanup.
- Obtain legal access to the property, or take steps to take possession (these steps increase your score).
- Apply for your Brownfield Green Space and Public Facilities Grant!

This document contains information about certain state statutes and administrative rules but does not include all of the details found in the statutes and rules. Readers should consult the actual language of the statutes and rules to answer specific questions. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. This publication is available in alternative format upon request. Please call 608-267-3543 for more information.

For More Information

To order this and any other publications, or to find out more information about the Remediation and Redevelopment Program, please check out our web site at dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/.



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