



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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EPA Announces \$2 Million for Brownfield Sites in Arkansas

EPA announces the largest investment ever in brownfields communities made by President Biden's Investing in America Agenda

DALLAS, TEXAS (June 7, 2023) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced \$2 million in funding from President Biden's Investing in America Agenda to expedite the assessment and cleanup of brownfield sites in Arkansas while advancing environmental justice. EPA selected the Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, and Westminster Village of the Mid-South for grants that will fund a range of activities to assess and clean up abandoned and potentially contaminated sites, known as brownfields.

"Arkansas's brownfields grant recipients have an impressive record of leveraging their funding into lasting improvements for communities," **said Regional Administrator Dr. Earthea Nance.** "Their projects, including renewable energy and affordable housing, show the variety of benefits that can start with a brownfields grant."

EPA selected Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc., (CAPDD) for a \$500,000 Community Wide Assessment grant, targeted toward the city of Brinkley in Monroe County. CAPDD will encourage redevelopment to use energy efficient sources and renewable energy. One of the main redevelopments is a 1.5-acre city park with a community gathering area and greenspace for exercise and leisure. The site will include a playground, walking trail, pavilion, and natural landscaped area.

"The Brownfields grant from EPA will ignite a revitalization for the City of Brinkley, Arkansas. Over the past many years, Brinkley and Prairie County have experienced an out migration and have struggled to revive their communities' economy," **said Executive Director Rodney Larsen.** "This Brownfields grant will serve as that special project of renewal for the City and as the spark for an optimistic future of positive redevelopment and renewal for the community."

West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. (WCAPDD) received a \$500,000 Community Wide Assessment grant. WCAPDD will target two priority sites in Hot Springs: the Old St. Joseph Hospital and the former Velda Rose Hotel. The city will work with the current property owner and local developers to pursue reusing the sites

as residential condominiums/affordable housing, and/or multi-use residential property. This will fill a desperate need for new affordable housing in the area.

Westminster Village of the Mid-South received a \$1,000,000 cleanup grant for Westminster Village Retirement Community, which provides affordable housing for elderly residents in Blytheville. The community is comprised of housing and storage structures associated with the former Eaker Air Force Base. The grant will be used to clean up and renovate additional spaces to get them ready for new resident housing.

“The cleanup at Westminster Village will not only tear down many buildings that have been an eyesore for our residents but will allow us to save buildings that might otherwise fall to complete disrepair. It will serve all in the community, especially our retired community that have chosen Westminster Village as their final home for the final chapters of their lives,” **said Executive Director Tammy Swanson.** “We express tremendous gratitude for those who have made this grant possible. It is a prayer answered.

These investments are part of President Biden’s Investing in America Agenda to grow the American economy from the bottom up and middle-out – from rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure, to driving over \$470 billion in private sector manufacturing and clean energy investments in the United States, to creating a manufacturing and innovation boom powered by good paying jobs that don’t require a four-year degree, to building a clean-energy economy that will combat climate change and make our communities more resilient.

Thanks to the historic \$1.5 billion boost from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA’s Brownfields Program is helping more communities than ever before begin to address the economic, social, and environmental challenges caused by brownfields and stimulate economic opportunity, and environmental revitalization in historically overburdened communities.

EPA’s Brownfields Program also advances President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative to direct 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments to disadvantaged communities. The Brownfields Program strives to meet this commitment and advance environmental justice and equity considerations into all aspects of its work. Approximately 84 percent of the MARC program applications selected to receive funding proposed to work in areas that include historically underserved communities.

For more information about Brownfields Technical Assistance and Research, please visit our [webpage](#).

Additional Background

EPA selected these organizations to receive funding to address and support the reuse of brownfield sites. EPA anticipates making all the awards announced today once all legal and administrative requirements are satisfied.

EPA's Brownfields Program began in 1995 and has provided nearly \$2.37 billion in Brownfield Grants to assess and clean up contaminated properties and return blighted properties to productive reuse. EPA's investments in addressing brownfield sites have leveraged more than \$36 billion in cleanup and redevelopment. Over the years, the relatively small investment of federal funding has leveraged, from both public and private sources, nearly 260,000 jobs. Communities that previously received Brownfields Grants used these resources to fund assessments and cleanups of brownfields, and successfully leverage an average of 10.6 jobs per \$100,000 of EPA Brownfield Grant funds spent and \$19.78 for every dollar.

The next National Brownfields Training Conference will be held on August 8-11, 2023 in Detroit, Michigan. This conference is the largest gathering of stakeholders focused on cleaning up and reusing former commercial and industrial properties. EPA co-sponsors this event with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). For more on Brownfields Grants, please see [here](#) and for more on the Brownfields Program please visit our [webpage](#).

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