In 2019 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a Brownfields Assessment Grant to a Coalition led by the City of Colorado Springs and supported by the City of Fountain, Colorado Springs Utilities, and School District 11. The figure below outlines and describes the key steps in the assessment and cleanup planning process.

**Brownfield Assessment Process Guide**

Colorado Springs-Fountain Coalition Brownfield Initiative

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Site Nomination

A Site Nomination Form is completed by the property owner, prospective purchaser or developer, or other representative.

Property Access Agreement

Signed by the property owner to authorize grant-funded activities.

Eligibility Approval

Coalition submits criteria to EPA for approval of grant-funded activities.

Cleanup Planning/Reuse Planning

Develop a plan for cleanup and/or site reuse if needed.

Assessment Activities

Environmental assessment is conducted by the Coalition’s contractor.

Upon EPA

approval of site for grant assistance

Coalition reviews site for grant assistance eligibility

# Process **Steps**

## Site Nomination

**1**

A Site Nomination Form is filled out by the property owner, prospective purchaser, or other representative and submitted to the Coalition. The Coalition will review the information to confirm the property meets eligibility and project criteria. Typically, to be considered eligible for grant-funded assistance, the following criteria must be met:

1. The property is vacant, underutilized, or undergoing transition;
2. The property has potential impacts or suspected impacts from petroleum or hazardous substances;
3. The property exhibits high potential for redevelopment and/or other opportunities to benefit the community; and
4. The property is not an EPA “Superfund” site, under a Consent Order with the state, or targeted for any federal or state environmental enforcement action.

Properties that are nominated and meet the baseline eligibility criteria will be prioritized based on several factors, including greatest need and potential for community benefit.

## EPA Eligibility Approval

**2**

The Nomination Form will be used to request approval of the site and proposed grant-funded activities by the EPA.

Note: Please let us know if your request is related to due diligence for a property transaction as there may be options for an expedited EPA review.

*Estimated Timeline: 3-4 weeks*

## Property Access Agreement

**3**

Prior to initiating on-site assessment activities, we must receive approval from the property owner (in the form of a Property Access Agreement that will be provided for your review and signature), authorizing the Coalition’s environmental contractor to perform the requested activities on your property.

*Estimated Timeline: 1 week*

## Assessment Activities & Cleanup/Reuse Planning

**4**

**Phase I Environmental Site Assessment**

A Phase I ESA is a study to assess past and current uses and environmental records for a property to evaluate whether contaminants may have been released.

Purpose of a Phase I ESA:

* Assess potential impacts from petroleum or hazardous substances that may impede redevelopment.
* Establish baseline conditions for liability protection.
* Support property sale/purchase due diligence activities.
* Provide documentation typically required by lenders to secure loans.

The Phase I ESA is comprised of the following:

1. **Site Visit**: The Coalition’s contractor will schedule a site visit and interview(s) with the property owner, current occupant(s), and/or others who are knowledgeable about the site. Site visits and interviews typically take less than two hours.
2. **Desktop Study**: The contractor will study the property history including reviewing current and historical documents and regulatory databases to evaluate whether potential environmental concerns exist that may impact property reuse.
3. **Report**: A Phase I ESA Report will summarize the findings of the site visit, interviews, and desktop study. A digital copy of the report will be provided to you.

Note: Phase I ESAs must be updated if more than six months old and must be re-done if more than one year old.

*Estimated Timeline: 4-8 weeks*

**Phase II Environmental Site Assessment**

A Phase II ESA involves collecting environmental or building material samples to characterize the type and extent of contaminants in the environment (if any).

Purpose of a Phase II ESA:

* Further assess the findings of the Phase I ESA.
* Evaluate if a release has occurred.
* Support efforts to obtain regulatory closure from the state environmental agency.

The Phase II ESA is comprised of the following:

1. Work Plan: The contractor will prepare a Work Plan for submittal to the EPA for approval prior to initiating sampling activities.
2. Fieldwork: After the Work Plan is approved, the contractor will collect environmental samples (soil, groundwater, soil vapor, building materials, etc.).
3. Report: A Phase II ESA Report will summarize the work performed, analytical results, and conclusions. A digital copy of the report will be provided to you.

Note: Phase II ESAs do not have a shelf-life as Phase I ESAs do. A Phase II ESA may need to be updated if site conditions, sampling methods, or environmental regulations have changed.

*Estimated Timeline: 10-16 weeks*

**Cleanup Plan/Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA)**

An ABCA is an analysis of remedial options potentially capable of achieving the required level of cleanup.

Purpose of an ABCA:

* Evaluate technical and economic feasibility of cleanup alternatives with reuse plans and redevelopment strategies.
* Evaluate and select preferred alternative.
* Support efforts to apply for an EPA Cleanup Grant.

*Estimated Timeline: 6-8 weeks*

**Remedial Action Plan (RAP)**

A RAP is a detailed plan to implement the preferred remedial option to achieve the required level of cleanup.

Purpose of a RAP:

* Detailed implementation plan for selected cleanup alternative.
* Detailed cost estimate for selected cleanup alternative.
* Support efforts to apply for an EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant.

*Estimated Timeline: 6-8 weeks*

**Reuse Planning**

Grant funds can be used for a variety of plans and studies to help address constraints to brownfield redevelopment. Examples include:

* Market feasibility studies.
* Infrastructure needs assessment.
* Conceptual designs.
* Community engagement activities such as reuse visioning and charettes.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

## What type of site is eligible for grant-funded assistance?

In general, the property must be potentially impacted by petroleum or hazardous substances, underutilized or undergoing transition, and meet the following criteria:

* Exhibits high potential for redevelopment and/or other opportunities to benefit the community.
* Is not included on the EPA National Priority “Superfund” List, under a Consent Order with the State, or targeted for federal or State enforcement action.

## How long is grant-funded assistance available?

Grant funding is available until the fall of 2022, or until the funds are exhausted.

**Will the grant pay for cleanup activities?**

**No**. Under this program, grants funds can be used to conduct assessments and develop cleanup plans but cannot be used to conduct cleanup.

## Can I be reimbursed for previous assessment activities?

**No**. Grant funds are not retroactive and cannot reimburse you for past assessment or related activities.

## Are grant funds given to me?

**No**. The grant is administered by the City of Colorado Springs who will pay the project contractor directly for approved assessment and/or related activities on your property.

## Do I enter a contract with the environmental contractor?

**No**. If your property is approved for grant funding, you will be required to sign a Property Access Agreement that permits the project contractor to access the site to perform the requested activities

## Will an assessment affect my property value?

An assessment itself does not directly affect property value. Property values are often negatively affected by uncertainty regarding site history and the financial and legal risks of potential environmental impacts. ESAs allow property owners to inspect and quantify the amount of contamination, which may increase marketability.

For sites with significant contamination, having an assessment completed using EPA funding removes this as a cost to the property owner or an interested buyer as part of their due diligence process.

Having assessments completed using grant funds can also help to position properties for subsequent grants or tax incentives that can be used to pay for cleanup and support redevelopment.

## How will decisions be made on whether work at a specific site will be funded?

In general, all sites that are nominated will be given consideration for funding. Upon receipt of a nomination form, The Coalition will complete an initial review to determine whether the site is a good fit for the program (based on its potential to support economic, environmental, or community goals), as well as whether it is likely to meet the EPA site eligibility requirements. Sites/projects will also be evaluated on the likelihood that they will be deemed eligible for use of funding, the certainty of securing site access to perform assessment activities, and other factors.

**For more information, contact:**

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## Is the project limited to a specific area?

The project will prioritize properties in the Shooks Run Corridor and downstream communities including the City of Fountain. The Coalition may consider other publicly- and privately-owned sites outside these areas to further community goals.