



**Virginia Brownfields Restoration and
Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund**

Site Assessment and Planning Grant Guidelines

Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Fiscal Year 2027

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Purpose:

The Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund (VBAF) was established pursuant to § 10.1-1237 of the *Code of Virginia* of 1950, as amended (the Code), to provide either grants or loans to local governments to promote the restoration and redevelopment of brownfield properties and to address environmental problems or obstacles to reuse so that these properties can be effectively marketed to new economic development prospects.

Administration:

The VBAF is administered by the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA).

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) directs the distribution of grants or loans from the VBAF to grant or loan recipients (VBAF Program), in consultation with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) based upon the priorities and procedures set forth in these Guidelines.

These Guidelines address the Site Assessment and Planning Grants available through the VBAF Program. Site Remediation Grants are also available through the VBAF Program and managed pursuant to separate guidelines.

All awards issued through the VBAF Program will be in the form of grants.

VBAF Program Priorities:

The VBAF Program is targeted toward projects or phases of work associated with the restoration and redevelopment of brownfield properties that by their completion **will generate additional private investment and job creation in the immediate future.**

Applications for such projects or phases of work will be evaluated, and grants will be awarded based upon the following priorities:

- **Potential for redevelopment and reuse of the property** – properties with significant potential for redevelopment and reuse, including demonstrable interest in the property for economic development purposes and inclusion in the comprehensive plan of the community in which the property is located.
- **Economic benefits** – projects or phases of work with a specific relationship to a local or regional economic development strategy and where redevelopment could be a catalyst to larger revitalization projects and economic benefits to the surrounding community.

- **Environmental benefits** – environmental issues can be resolved through the VBAF Program and other available funding sources, enabling the property to be remediated and redeveloped within a relatively brief period.
- **Use or reuse of existing infrastructure** – projects or phases of work that facilitate the repurposing or redevelopment of properties served by existing infrastructure rather than properties that lack such infrastructure.
- **Limited ability to draw on other funding sources** – projects located in small communities or in communities with unemployment or poverty rates that exceed the statewide average and that have limited access to other funding sources.

VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grants:

Pursuant to § 10.1-1237 of the *Code*, the VBAF may be used to pay the reasonable and necessary costs associated with the restoration and redevelopment of a brownfield property.

VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grants are to be used to help fill a financing gap for projects or phases of work for such restoration and redevelopment that have not already commenced. The VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant is not available to reimburse costs already incurred for a project or phase of work that has begun or is already completed.

VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grants, in amounts of up to \$50,000, are available to assist with the costs of:

- (i) environmental and cultural resource site assessments;
- (ii) development of remediation and reuse plans;
- (iii) remediation of a contaminated property to remove hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, or solid wastes;
- (iv) the necessary removal of human remains, the appropriate treatment of grave sites, and the appropriate and necessary treatment of significant archaeological resources, or the stabilization or restoration of structures listed on or eligible for the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register; or
- (v) demolition and removal of existing structures, when necessary, to abate the hazardous material or other site work required to make a site or certain real property usable for new economic development.

VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant proceeds are to be used only for the necessary and reasonable costs incurred in accordance with the scope of work set forth in an applicant's VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant Application and the performance agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of the VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant.

VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant proceeds may not be used as a substitute for other funding already committed to the project or phase of work or for regularly recurring local fiscal obligations, such

as personnel, project management, administrative, and related costs. Up to 5% of VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant proceeds may be used to cover administrative costs specifically associated with a project or phase of work. VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grants may not exceed \$50,000 inclusive of administrative costs.

The award of a VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant is subject to the availability of funds in the VBAF and an appropriation by the Virginia General Assembly.

A committee of VEDP and DEQ staff (VBAF Review Committee) has the sole discretion to award grants from the VBAF Program.

Eligible Applicants:

Only political subdivisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia, including counties, cities, towns, industrial/economic development authorities, planning district commissions, and redevelopment and housing authorities, may apply for grants from the VBAF Program.

Applications:

The VBAF Review Committee will evaluate VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant Applications on a rolling basis as funds allow and will award VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grants based on the VBAF Program priorities identified in these Guidelines.

A separate application is required for each project or phase or phase of work. The proceeds of a VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant may be used for multiple properties so long as such properties are identified in the application and connected to a single local redevelopment project plan.

When a Phase I or Phase II Environmental Site Assessment or further characterization as part of an All-Appropriate Inquiry (to meet the ASTM E1527) is being completed, the property may be publicly or privately owned if the property has public or private redevelopment potential.

A VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant Application may include a scope of work to be performed that includes remediation, removal, and demolition, as described above, so long as the total VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant amount sought is no more than \$50,000. Priority for the above activities will be given to projects for remediation of contaminated property to remove hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, or solid wastes. An applicant with a project or phase of work seeking a grant in a higher amount for such activities should file a VBAF Site Remediation Grant Application.

An applicant will be limited to no more than two VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant Applications and one VBAF Site Remediation Grant Application per fiscal year.

Local Financial Responsibility:

An applicant must demonstrate a commitment to a project or phase of work and evidence of adequate funding to complete the project for which a grant is made.

A local match of at least 100% is required (Local Match).

A Local Match may be funded by public and/or private sources and must either be:

- (i) cash in the form of actual cash contributions from the applicant or other cash or grants from federal (including EPA Brownfields Grant), other state, local, or private sources of funding; or
- (ii) documented reasonable and necessary costs incurred and in-kind contributions for the property where the VBAF Grant proceeds are to be expended that (a) are associated with the project or phase of work; (b) promote the restoration and redevelopment; or (c) address environmental problems or obstacles to reuse.

Previously awarded grants from the VBAF Program may not count towards such Local Match.

The Local Match must be specifically identified in an application and may include:

- (i) environmental and cultural resource site assessments;
- (ii) environmental testing;
- (iii) development of a remediation and reuse plan;
- (iv) purchase of a property;
- (v) remediation of a contaminated property to remove hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, or solid wastes; the necessary removal of human remains, the appropriate treatment of grave sites, and the appropriate and necessary treatment of significant archaeological resources; or the stabilization or restoration of structures listed on or eligible for the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register;
- (vi) engineering; design, or architectural activities, as well as other costs such as public notices, permit fees and inspections costs (or waivers of such) related to physical activities; or
- (vii) other costs associated with implementation of a remediation and reuse plan.

In-kind contributions must be directly related to the project or phase of work and may include land, equipment, and other property or goods.

Up to 5% of the total administrative costs for a project or phase of work may be applied toward the Local Match, provided this is described in the VBAF Site Assessment & Planning Grant Application.

A higher Local Match will cause the application to be considered more favorably.

The Local Match shall not have been paid or incurred any more than five years prior to the date of an application.

Performance Agreement:

The recipient of an FY 2027 VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant will immediately be required to enter into a performance agreement with VEDP, as acknowledged by VRA and DEQ. The recipient must also participate in a mid-point check-in call to provide an update on grant progress and confirm that the timeline remains on schedule.

The performance agreement must be executed immediately upon approval of the grant. Should the performance agreement not be executed within six months, the award may be rescinded. The recipient will be entitled to reapply for a VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant thereafter, based upon the terms, conditions, and availability of funds at that time.

The performance agreement will be subject to negotiation. It is expected that the performance agreement will contain provisions for, among other things, the disbursement of the grant, the use of the grant proceeds, the Local Match, potential repayment obligations, and the form of reporting, as well as an exhibit outlining the expected scope of work and associated costs.

VRA disburses the VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant to the recipient. VRA expects that a recipient will provide an Automated Clearing House (ACH) Authorization so that the grant proceeds may be deposited directly into the account designated by the recipient. The performance agreement must be executed before any VBAF grant proceeds will be disbursed to the recipient.

Site Assessment and Planning Grants will be paid following the performance date upon the submittal and approval of the Final Report. Applicants facing significant fiscal stress should communicate with the team prior to development of the performance agreement to determine if an alternate payout schedule can be established.

The performance agreement will be subject to amendment for any necessary revisions to the expected scope of work and associated costs.

Requests for extensions of VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grants will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted using Exhibit F prior to the performance date. Extension requests may not exceed 12 months beyond the original performance date and must include the rationale for the extension and the additional time needed to complete the project.

Data and Report Requirements:

The investigation methodology, collection, sampling, laboratory analysis, evaluation, and report development and compilation are expected to be of the quality as would be required for submission to the Virginia Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP) or any environmental regulatory programs which may apply. Phase I work should follow ASTM International's E1527-21 (or most current published version) "Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process." The recipient and its contractor are responsible for quality assurance for the report(s) developed as part of this process.

Enrollment in the DEQ VRP is strongly encouraged for recipients of a VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant to obtain statutory liability protections and ensure agency oversight throughout the site cleanup process. If a recipient elects not to enroll the property in the VRP (for properties not under a regulatory program), the recipient is expected to meet appropriate standards of care for reuse of the property in accordance with the VRP. The recipient is expected to maintain all records for facilitating potential future brownfields revitalization of the property, to demonstrate appropriate care, and to facilitate potential future VRP enrollment if necessary.

All tests, analyses, measurements, or monitoring required pursuant to the Commonwealth's air, waste, and water laws and regulations must be certified or accredited by the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS) Virginia Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (VELAP).

Upon conclusion of the performance period set forth in the performance agreement, the recipient of a VBAF Site Assessment and Planning Grant will be required to file a grant report. The grant report should include the actual report template, Exhibit B (Final Budget), and Exhibit D (Invoice Summary). Additional attachments to the report should be submitted as separate files and labeled accordingly. The report and attachments should include, among other things:

- (i) a brief summary of the outcome of the project or phase of work;
- (ii) any adjustments to the scope of work and associated costs;
- (iii) documentation of the Local Match, including invoices and other substantiating materials;
- (iv) copies of studies performed as a part of the project or phase of work, which will be subject to review and request for further supporting documentation;
- (v) unless previously provided, a statement that data collected reflects certification by the VELAP;
- (vi) if the property was not enrolled in the VRP, certification that the project or phase of work has met appropriate standards of care for reuse of the property in accordance with state and federal Brownfields statutes, and that the recipient will maintain all records for facilitating potential future brownfields revitalization of the property, to demonstrate appropriate care, and to facilitate potential future VRP enrollment if necessary;
- (vii) pre- and post-grant assessed property value;
- (viii) any before and after photographs;
- (ix) projects involving the removal of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) or lead paint abatement may require specific permits and licenses, and all applicable requirements must be met. Additional guidance regarding notification and licensing requirements is available in the grant report. A Daily Asbestos Log (Exhibit E) will also be required. The review of this documentation will be subject to third-party review by appropriate experts. All work must be completed by a licensed contractor.

- (x) To avoid potential conflicts of interest, it is strongly recommended that separate firms be retained to perform the asbestos inspection/survey and clearance sampling and to conduct the remediation activities.

Upon request of the VBAF Review Committee at any time after the grant report has been filed, recipients of a VBAF Site Planning and Assessment Grant must submit a status report providing an update on the property. The report should include recent economic development activity at the property and surrounding area since the grant was awarded, any additional investment and job creation, and whether the property has been successfully marketed to an economic development prospect.

Questions:

Please direct any questions regarding the environmental or technical aspects of a project or an application to:

Karen Weber, CPG
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Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
1111 East Main Street, Suite 1400
Richmond, VA 23219
804-432-7790 (phone)
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Please direct general questions regarding the administration of the VBAF Program to:

Michelle Mende
Research Specialist
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