

**Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut
Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development**

**BROWNFIELD AREA-WIDE REVITALIZATION (BAR)
PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM – ROUND 4**

**Request for Applications (RFA): Applications Due – March 1, 2024
Date of Announcement: January 5, 2024**

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is soliciting proposals for funding under Round 4 of the Brownfield Area-Wide Revitalization (BAR) Planning Grant Program. The DECD in partnership with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and other agencies will review applications and select grantees in accordance with the provisions and the established scoring criteria of this RFA.

Section I. Goals of the BAR Planning Grant Program

The goal of this program is to help eligible applicants develop a comprehensive implementation plan for the remediation and redevelopment of neighborhoods, districts, corridors, downtowns, waterfront zones or other areas burdened with multiple brownfields. Through this program DECD hopes to work with municipalities to transform the brownfields in these areas from liabilities to community assets. The program provides an opportunity to move from the site-by-site approach in DECD's other brownfield programs to a more comprehensive area-wide approach to arriving at reuse and redevelopment strategies. The area-wide plan should include specific plan implementation strategies for assessing, cleaning up, and reusing the specific brownfields as well as for overall revitalization of the designated BAR Planning area.

To make this a successful strategy, applicants should establish an advisory/steering committee consisting of representatives from the community, the private sector, regional organizations and other entities and stakeholders from the initial stages of the planning process. At the end of the planning program, DECD expects applicants to submit a final report that includes the implementation plan and any individual deliverables such as market studies, infrastructure analyses etc.

The following are expected outcomes of the BAR Planning Process and Program:

- Comprehensive understanding of existing conditions and issues
- Community participation to develop a successful implementation strategy
- Effective implementation strategies (based on market studies and feasibility analyses)
- Prioritization of specific brownfield sites for cleanup and reuse
- Priorities for public and private investment
- Formation of an advisory/steering committee

Section II. Enabling Statutory Language (C.G.S. Section 32-763(g))

The commissioner may award grants to any municipality, Connecticut brownfield land bank, economic development agency or regional council of governments organized under sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive, for the eligible costs of developing a comprehensive plan for the remediation and redevelopment of multiple brownfields whenever such plan is consistent with the state plan of conservation and development, adopted pursuant to chapter 297, and the plan of conservation and development, adopted pursuant to section 8-23, for each municipality in which such brownfields are

located. For purposes of this subsection, “eligible costs” shall also include expenditures associated with the development of any such plan for remediation and redevelopment.

Section III. Definitions

“Brownfield” means any abandoned or underutilized site where redevelopment, reuse or expansion has not occurred due to the presence or potential presence of pollution in the buildings, soil or groundwater that requires investigation or remediation before or in conjunction with the redevelopment, reuse or expansion of the property.

“Multiple Brownfields” – Not statutorily defined but generally described as more than one brownfield site concentrated in the project area and that is negatively impacting an entire community and exacerbating blight and unhealthy conditions.

“BAR Project Area” – The BAR Project Area can either be an already designated area such as a neighborhood, district, corridor, downtown, waterfront zone etc. with multiple brownfields or an area newly defined by the applicant around multiple brownfield sites connected by blight, location, infrastructure, economic, social and/or environmental conditions. It may be noted that the BAR Project Area can span multiple jurisdictions. Although DECD is not specifying the maximum extent or area allowable for the BAR Project Area, it is advised that it be kept at a manageable level to arrive at more practical implementation strategies.

Section IV. BAR Planning Grant Program Outline

- 1. Competitive Round** – Grant awards will be based on the scope of work, merits of the proposal, consistency with the goals of the BAR Planning Grant Program and expected outcomes and scoring criteria listed in Section VI.
- 2. Funding Availability** – The funding available for Round 4 of the BAR Planning Grant Program is up to \$1 million.
- 3. Maximum Grant Award** – Applicants may apply for a grant amount up to \$200,000.
- 4. Minimum match requirements** – The applicant will be required to contribute a 10% cash match for the project. Match contributions from private or other project partners are acceptable. In-kind contributions will not count towards match requirement.
- 5. Eligible Entities** - Municipalities, Connecticut Brownfield Land Banks, Economic Development Agencies, and Regional COGs (see enabling statute [C.G.S. Section 32-763\(g\)](#)).
- 6. Project Completion** – Expected end date for completion of the proposed BAR planning activities is 2 years from the time of contract execution. DECD may approve project period extensions on a case-by-case basis.
- 7. Reimbursement Eligibility Date** – All payments will be made on a reimbursement basis. All eligible project expenses from the date of grant award will be approved for reimbursement. However, DECD will not make any reimbursements until a grant contract is in place and consultants/contractors are in place as per DECD approval and guidelines.

- 8. Eligible Activities** – The following is a general list of eligible activities under the BAR Planning Grant Program. All activities should help facilitate the goals and objectives of the BAR Planning Grant Program and cannot stand alone as a proposed project (example, an exercise to revise the local zoning code will have to further the goals of the BAR Planning Grant Program and be focused on the BAR Project Area):
- Community visioning/public participation exercises;
 - Analysis of existing environmental conditions and other issues/conditions in the area – building conditions survey, historic properties inventory, historic survey, hazardous building material survey etc.;
 - Limited Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (Please note: The Phase I and II ESAs will have to help achieve the goals of the BAR Plan. Also, the total cost spent on this project activity cannot exceed 25% of the grant amount);
 - Brownfields mapping;
 - Market/demand studies and feasibility analyses;
 - Infrastructure analyses;
 - Roadway and streetscape planning;
 - Site inventory;
 - Strategic site identification;
 - Cost-benefit analysis;
 - Coordination with existing community plans;
 - Site reuse/redevelopment plans;
 - Conceptual designs;
 - Implementation strategies;
 - Identifying funding sources for redevelopment and implementation of the BAR Plan;
 - Acquisition due-diligence;
 - Marketing to assess developer interest;
 - Local zoning revisions and other local law changes (including adaptive reuse code);
 - Legal analysis of environmental liabilities;
 - Completion of the EPA/DEEP’s PREPARED Workbook (only if used as a tool to help prepare the BAR plan);
 - Project management (limited, not more than 5% of grant); and
 - Other actions to spur investment in these sites.

<p>Section V. Application Format</p>

All application material is available on the [BAR Planning Program](#) webpage.

1. The Application must not exceed 12 pages excluding maps, tables, photos, figures, other attachments, Board Resolutions, etc. Applications shall be on letter-sized paper, with one-inch margins, typed, single-spaced, and using a font size no smaller than 12-point.
2. Please send submissions electronically by **noon on March 1, 2024**.

All application submittals (along with attachments) shall either be:

1. Uploaded to a DECD SharePoint folder **[PREFERRED METHOD]**
 - a. Applicants must request a SharePoint link by emailing brownfields@ct.gov
 - b. Include Applicant & Project Name and Program Code (BAR4) in subject line.
 - c. Recommended to make folder request by noon on Wed, February 28, 2024

OR

2. Emailed to brownfields@ct.gov
 - a. Include Applicant & Project Name and Program Code (BAR4) in subject line.
3. The Application shall include the following:
 - A. Transmittal letter (not exceeding 2 pages) on organization’s official letterhead, and signed by authorized official, that includes the following information:
 - Grant amount requested (up to \$200,000)
 - Information concerning the applicant’s eligibility for the program
 - Justification of consistency with local and state plans of conservation and development
 - How the proposed project meets established goals of the BAR Planning Grant Program
 - How the proposed project satisfies the minimum match requirements
 - How the proposed BAR Project Area satisfies RFA definitions (see Section III)
 - Board/Council resolution (see Schedule A) authorizing:
 - submission of the application for the BAR Planning Grant
 - agreement to fulfill required match obligations in case application is successful
 - signatory authority to official representing applicant (e.g., town manager, selectman, CEO)

(Note: If application is from multiple entities or the Project Area spans multi-jurisdictions, the lead entity must submit the authorizing resolution on behalf of the other entity(ies). In addition, the submitted application must include resolutions from each participating entity, authorizing the lead entity to act on its behalf for the purposes of applying for and administering the grant.)

 - Certification by Applicant form signed by Applicant (see Schedule B)
 - Support letter from project partners including agreement to fulfill any match obligations
 - Project contacts (name, title, email, and phone)
 - B. Project narrative (not exceeding 10 pages) that includes the following:
 - a. Section 1 – Project Need and Purpose
 - i. *Economic and social concerns*- Discuss the economic and social challenges within the project area by providing census-based (<https://www.census.gov/>) demographic data as requested in the table below. Additional information can also be provided to highlight the reason for selecting the BAR project area. Include information (including dates) of events within the project area that triggered significant local job loss or other economic disruption. Also describe how these events and other factors limit the ability to draw on other sources of funding for conducting the BAR Planning project.

	Municipality/Region	State	National
Population ¹		3,617,176	334,914,895
Unemployment ¹		3.6%	3.7%
Poverty Rate ¹		9.8%	12.4%
Median ¹ Household Income (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019 ¹		\$90,213	\$75,149
<i>Include other relevant census</i>			

<i>data as needed in additional rows</i>			
¹ U.S. Census Bureau - www.census.gov ; Quick Facts; Population estimates, July 1, 2023			

- ii. *Environmental concerns and brownfield challenges*- Discuss environmental concerns and brownfield challenges in the BAR Project Area that provide a compelling reason for selection of the project area and application for BAR funds.
- b. Section 2 – Project Description and Vision
 - i. Broad description of project and BAR Project Area (include demographic information, whether located within a 100-year or 500-year flood plain, presence of historic resources, presence of an existing or planned commuter rail or bus rapid station and other important information)
 - ii. Approach and vision, long term goals and objectives
 - iii. Expected outcomes and impacts to project area
 - iv. Ongoing brownfield planning efforts including progress with EPA/DEEP’s PREPARED workbook
 - v. Identification and description (owner, current use, whether Superfund site, whether enrolled in a liability relief program, level/progress of assessment and clean up etc.) of known brownfield sites in the area
 - vi. Legible map with a delineated boundary of the proposed BAR Project Area with names of streets, important landmarks, brownfield properties, etc.
- c. Section 2 – Project Work Plan
 - i. Project Budget (including sources and uses of funds) – see Schedule C for DECD Budget Form. A separate budget form may also be submitted that details projected costs for specific project tasks or activities.
 - ii. Description of proposed activities and tasks (and estimated costs for each activity). The proposed Work Plan should include the applicant’s full vision (i.e., 1. all project activities and tasks accomplished to–date (if any); 2. the current proposed activities to be accomplished utilizing the BAR Planning Grant and corresponding matching funds; and 3. project implementation activities and tasks proposed to be accomplished post-project period) for the BAR Plan program
 - iii. Project timeline, schedule and description of deliverables
- d. Section 3 – Applicant Capacity and Capability
 - i. Organizational capability
 - ii. Committed staff
 - iii. Experience and past performance
- e. Section 4 – Partnerships, Collaboration, and Leverage
 - i. Establishment of advisory/steering committee
 - ii. Potential public-private partnerships
 - iii. Leveraging of resources
- f. Section 5 – Relation to State Policies, Programs, Initiatives and Projects
 - i. Description of how the proposed project is supportive of State policies:
 - Transit-oriented development
 - Job creation
 - Environmental justice and resilience

- Affordable housing
 - Historic preservation
 - Development of distressed municipalities
 - Other public investments (infrastructure, etc.)
- ii. If BAR Project Area includes an existing or planned commuter rail or bus rapid transit station
 - iii. Existing plans and programs or designations for the project area (MDP, NRZ, TOD Plan etc.)
 - iv. Past and ongoing state/DECD funding in project area

Section VI. Evaluation of Proposals – Rating and Ranking Criteria

Only the proposals that meet the minimum threshold requirements, as demonstrated in the transmittal letter, will be further evaluated and considered for the BAR Planning Grant. Each eligible proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below. Applicants must explicitly address these criteria as part of the project narrative. Each proposal will be rated under a points system against a possible total of 100 points.

1. Project Need and Purpose (25 points)
2. Project Description and Vision (25 points)
3. Work Plan (10 points)
4. Applicant Capacity and Capability (10 points)
5. Leverage and Collaborations (15 points)
6. Relation to State Policies, Programs, Initiatives and Projects (15 points)

Section VII. Important Dates and DECD Contact

- January 5, 2024: Release of RFA
- January 31, 2024: Due date for any questions regarding the RFA*
- February 2, 2024: Posting of updated FAQ on DECD/OBRD’s website** (if any questions received from potential applicants)
- February 28, 2024: SharePoint Link requests by noon
- **March 1, 2024: Applications Due @ Noon**
- May-June 2024: Award Results (tentative)

*Please send email to brownfields@ct.gov (preferred) or contact the dedicated OBRD hotline number at 860.500.2395.

**Any revisions to this RFA, FAQ and other announcements will be posted on the DECD/OBRD website <http://www.ctbrownfields.gov> (and on the [BAR Planning Program webpage](#)).

***Disclaimer:** DECD reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFA, to modify or waive any requirement, condition or other term set forth in this RFA or the program application, to request additional information at any time from one or more applicants, to select any number of applications submitted in response to this RFA, or to reject any or all such applications, in each case at DECD’s sole discretion. DECD may exercise the foregoing rights at any time without notice and without liability to any applicant or any other party. Applications to this RFA shall be prepared at the sole expense of the applicant and shall not obligate DECD to procure any of the services described therein or herein from any applicant. DECD shall not be obligated to any applicant until a final written agreement has been executed by all necessary parties thereto and all applicable approvals have been obtained. As such, any funds expended by the applicant prior to these approvals will be done so entirely at the risk of the applicant.*