



**Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
Program Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2021**

Program Name: Brownfield Site Assessment Grants (SAG)
Program Inception: 1999 Wisconsin Act 9
Lead Division: Business and Community Development
 New **Revised** [Click here to enter a date.](#)
 Aid **Pass-thru Aid** **Technical Assistance**

Program Goal:

The goal of the Brownfield Site Assessment Grant (SAG) Program is to support community redevelopment in the state of Wisconsin.

This program primarily supports the following WEDC Strategic Pillar and Focus Area:

Community and Economic Opportunity: Community Development

Program Description:

The program under § 238.133 Wis. Stats. provides grants of up to \$150,000 to local governments seeking to redevelop sites with economic or community development potential that are or may be adversely impacted by environmental contamination. Grant funds are to be utilized to define the degree and extent of groundwater and soil contamination along with identifying and assessing vapor intrusion issues.

Eligibility Requirements:

Definitions:

Definitions:

“Designated Rural County” means a county with a population density of less than 155 residents per square mile as of the 2010 Census.

“Eligible site or facility” means one or more contiguous industrial or commercial facilities or sites with common or multiple ownership that are abandoned, idle, or underused, the expansion or redevelopment of which is adversely affected by actual or perceived environmental contamination.¹

“Local governmental unit” means a city, village, town, county, redevelopment authority created under § 66.1333, community development authority created under § 66.1333, or housing authority.²

“Opportunity Zone” means a designated qualified opportunity zone in the State of Wisconsin under Internal Revenue Code § 1400Z-1.

¹ Wis. Stat. § 238.133 (1)(a)

² Wis. Stat. § 238.133 (1)(b)



“Petroleum product” has the meaning given in § 292.63(1).³

“Underground hazardous substance storage tank system” means an underground storage tank used for storing a hazardous substance other than a petroleum product together with any on-site integral piping or dispensing system with at least 10% of its total volume below the surface of the ground.⁴

“Underground petroleum product storage tank” has the meaning given in § 292.63(1)(i).⁵

Grant Conditions:

The primary purpose of the Brownfield Site Assessment Grant is to identify and quantify the degree and extent of soil, vapor and groundwater contamination. Actual award amounts are dependent on documented eligible and matching costs. Projects seeking funding for demolition activities should demonstrate that clearing the site will facilitate and provide greater access for environmental site investigation.

SAG applications may be awarded for projects meeting the following criteria:

- The property or properties being redeveloped must be one or more contiguous industrial or commercial facilities or sites that are abandoned, idle or underused.
- Potential expansion or redevelopment of the property is adversely impacted by actual or perceived contamination.
- The local governmental unit cannot have caused the environmental contamination that is the basis for the grant request.⁶
- The person that caused the contamination must be unknown, cannot be located or is financially unable to pay the cost of the eligible activities.⁷
- The community has provided documentation it has access to the project site to conduct SAG activities.
- A financial commitment has been provided to cover the eligible matching project investment.

WEDC may award grants to local governmental units to cover the costs of the following activities:

- The investigation of environmental contamination on an eligible site or facility for the purposes of reducing or eliminating environmental contamination,⁸ such as Phase I and II Environmental Assessments.
- The demolition of any structures, buildings or other improvements located on an eligible site or facility.⁹
- The removal of abandoned containers, as defined in § 292.41(1), from an eligible site or facility.¹⁰

³ Wis. Stat. § 238.133 (1)(c)

⁴ Wis. Stat. § 238.133 (1)(d)

⁵ Wis. Stat. § 238.133 (1)(e)

⁶ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(2)(b).

⁷ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(2)(c).

⁸ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(3)(a).

⁹ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(3)(b).

¹⁰ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(3)(c).



- Asbestos abatement activities, as defined in § 254.11(2), conducted as part of eligible activities listed above on an eligible site or facility.¹¹
- Removal of underground hazardous substance storage tank systems.¹²
- Removal of underground petroleum product storage tank systems.¹³

Activities ineligible for grant assistance or match include, but are not limited to:

- Past costs
- Costs of new construction
- Indirect construction costs (a.k.a. “soft” costs)

WEDC shall consider the following criteria when determining whether to award a grant:

- The local governmental unit's demonstrated commitment to performing and completing necessary environmental activities on the eligible site including the local governmental unit's financial commitment¹⁴
- The degree to which the project will have a positive impact on public health and the environment¹⁵
- The relative size of a property and its relationship to the downtown or other economic centers of the community (e.g. industrial parks)
- The economic distress of the community (e.g. recent lay-offs) and the degree to which the property has contributed to the economic distress
- The extent to which the site demonstrates potential for redevelopment and includes considerations such as the interest demonstrated by private investors, location of the property, and access to existing utility and transportation infrastructure
- Project readiness and viability demonstrated through financing commitments, established access to the property and documentation of property acquisition, if applicable
- The degree to which the applicant can delineate the anticipated costs of the proposed project as demonstrated by third party cost estimates
- Other criteria that WEDC finds necessary to calculate the amount of a grant¹⁶

The applicant is required to contribute matching funds of at least 20 percent of the grant.¹⁷ Due to program demand, generally WEDC requires that the local government's eligible matching investment is at least 50 percent of the awarded grant, unless the project is located in a Designated Rural County or an Opportunity Zone, in which case the match may be reduced to 20%. Match investment may include TIF funds, private party contributions or other grant sources. The matching investment should include eligible costs and, at WEDC's discretion, may also include acquisition costs.

¹¹ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(3)(d).

¹² Wis. Stat. § 238.133(3)(e).

¹³ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(3)(f).

¹⁴ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(5)(a).

¹⁵ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(5)(b).

¹⁶ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(5)(c).

¹⁷ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(7).



Incentives and Available Funding (FY21): \$1,160,000

The incentives in this program are grants up to \$150,000 per recipient per fiscal year (may be more than one grant but not exceeding the \$150,000 threshold), or 15% of the available funds appropriated for the fiscal year,¹⁸ whichever is less.

Activities and Expected Outcomes:

Assist eight communities and achieve a 6:1 leverage of other investment.

Performance Reporting:

Recipients will be required to annually submit a performance report documenting site work as well as any other contract deliverable.

WEDC annually selects awards on a sample basis for an audit. All backup to the performance report is required to be maintained for the life of the award.

WEDC may impose additional reporting requirements to evaluate project performance and to ensure compliance with contract deliverables.

Application and Awards Process:

The SAG program has a continuous application process. Applicants for a SAG should complete an application through an Account Manager. The completed application will be assigned to an underwriter and go through the award review process.

For more information on application review, internal process, and award distribution, please refer to WEDC's award administration policies and procedures.

Revision History:

Effective Date	Description of Change
7/1/2017	Corrected inaccurate statutory reference for abandoned containers
7/1/2018	Reduced match requirement for projects in a Designated Rural County
7/1/2019	Added statutory citations; reduced match requirement for projects in an Opportunity Zone; clarified performance reporting requirements

¹⁸ Wis. Stat. § 238.133(6).



PROGRAM REVIEW:

This document has been reviewed by the following parties (Check all that apply):

- Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Legal Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Other _____

Senior Director of Public Policy: _____ Date _____

Division Vice President: _____ Date _____

AUTHORIZED APPROVAL:

CEO or Designee: _____ Date _____