

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT FUND

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OVERVIEW

The Brownfields Redevelopment Fund is a direct loan and grant program to conduct environmental actions on brownfields. Created by the Oregon Legislative Assembly in 1997, the program's primary purpose is to assist private persons and local governments to evaluate, cleanup and therefore redevelop brownfields. A brownfield is real property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by actual or perceived environmental contamination.

The marketplace drives demand for job-producing sites, whether they are greenfields or brownfields. The challenge is to make formerly used industrial and commercial lands economically viable for reuse and equally or more attractive than greenfields to stimulate new economic activity in Oregon's communities. The benefits of redeveloping brownfields include: promoting economic development; enabling efficient land use; minimizing the construction of new service infrastructure; facilitating the resolution of environmental justice issues; and protecting environmental and human health. This program is capitalized by proceeds from the sale of state revenue bonds.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any individual, business, non-profit organization, prospective purchaser, municipality, special district, port or tribe may make application to the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund. For program purposes there are two types of applicants: 1) Municipal and 2) Non-municipal. Cities, counties, tribes, ports and special districts are municipal applicants. All other applicants are non-municipal.

Note: Any applicant under an active enforcement order relating to the contamination at the site receiving the environmental action is not eligible to apply for funding assistance from the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund.

FUNDING

The Brownfields Redevelopment Fund provides both grant and loan funding, but is primarily a loan program. Grants can be awarded, up to program limits, on a case-by-case basis depending on a financial analysis of the applicant's debt capacity and the public benefits of the redevelopment project. Financial analysis of an applicant's ability to repay a loan is the primary method the department uses to manage and allocate limited grant resources. Examples of public benefits that factor into the funding decision include family wage job creation, assistance to rural or economically distressed communities or addressing an urgent need of a local population.

REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

All environmental actions funded by the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund must receive review oversight by the Department of Environmental Quality. ORS 285A.188 requires the department to consult with the Department of Environmental Quality prior to making a funding decision. Indication of how oversight will be performed must be included in the funding application. Oregon's voluntary cleanup program, independent cleanup pathway and underground storage tanks program are examples of acceptable oversight.

References:

ORS 285A.185-188
[www.leg.state.or.us/ors/home.htm]

OAR 123 Division 135
[arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_100/OAR_123/123.135.html]

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