



Call for Ideas

Submission Guide

Conference Topic Areas (Tracks)

The conference planning committee is looking for educational programming session ideas in the following topic areas/tracks:

Track 1: Brownfields Financing

Many communities and other stakeholders attend the National Brownfields Training Conference to gain insight into how to obtain and leverage financing to spur brownfields cleanup and redevelopment and how to initiate community economic development. These stakeholders want to hear from financing experts and from other experienced stakeholders. Please propose session ideas that will provide information, advice, and successful case studies of how to find funding opportunities and how to leverage funding from different sources. We also want to hear from stakeholders who can share their success stories with finding funds to pay for brownfields revitalization projects. Give us your insights about how to move brownfields projects forward by overcoming funding challenges with creative money solutions (e.g., finding investors, leveraging public/private financing, tax incentives, TIFs, insurance options, loans, grants, etc.). Talk to stakeholders about the role of public-private partnerships and the role of partnerships in meeting funding needs. Instruct your audience on how to manage risk in the course of real estate transactions. Share your insights on the best financial and investment tools available to communities for spurring economic development.

As we are evaluating responses to this Call for Ideas, we will look most favorably on sessions that offer insight and training in the following areas:

- Finance planning
- How to find sources of funding and how to apply for grants and loans
- The role of public-private partnerships
- Small and rural community financing options
- How to leverage public funding with private dollars
- How to identify and make use of available tax credits and other financial incentives
- Overview of state funding programs
- Creatively financing brownfields redevelopment
- Real estate basics for brownfields practitioners
- Lessons learned and case studies demonstrating benefits of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding
- Federal Programs offering funding that can lead to development on Brownfields (e.g. funding to support renewable energy development on brownfields sites, support offered to coal communities for reuse, etc.)

Track 2: Housing, Equity, and Minimizing Displacement

The displacement of long-term neighborhood residents and businesses can be a negative result of brownfields revitalization. The loss of resident housing due to property value increases can be devastating to citizens and small businesses with a long history of residing in and cultivating a neighborhood or community. Economic development may result in the loss of a neighborhood's or community's culture and historical identity. The loss of affordable housing alternatives may force residents from their neighborhoods and result in the loss of community spirit. Many communities struggle with the challenge of spurring brownfields redevelopment and economic revitalization without enabling gentrification. Brownfield revitalization provides an opportunity for equitable development and affordable housing. Our stakeholders want training and technical assistance in meeting these challenges. How can brownfields redevelopment aid in inclusive economic revitalization? Please submit session ideas that will provide insights and training on proven methods and approaches to addressing brownfields revitalization without enabling gentrification. Please submit session ideas that will engage attendees in meaningful discussion on the challenges of and potential solutions to displacement and gentrification.

As we are evaluating responses to this Call for Ideas, we will look most favorably on sessions that offer insight and training in the following areas:

- Incorporating affordable housing in plans for brownfields redevelopment
- Community Benefits Agreement – how to negotiate, including successful examples or case studies
- How to preserve and celebrate neighborhood culture/social inclusion
- How to ensure small business inclusions
- Low-income tax credits – how to manage to the advantage of the long-time community members
- Creative site ownership solutions (including community land trusts, cooperatives, shared equity agreements, etc.)
- New market tax credits – how to manage to the advantage of long-time community members
- Comprehensive community strategies to predict, track, and counter displacement
- Lessons and case studies from abroad (We love to hear from our International Partners.)

Track 3: Climate Change and Resiliency:

Understanding and addressing climate change is critical to EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment. The impacts of climate change affect people in every region of the country, threatening lives and livelihoods and damaging infrastructure, ecosystems, and social systems. Climate change also exacerbates existing pollution problems and environmental stressors impacting the nation's land, air, and water and the people who depend on them. Overburdened and underserved communities and individuals are particularly vulnerable to these impacts, including low-income communities and communities of color, children, the elderly, Tribes, and Indigenous people. Brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment offers communities opportunities to address climate change by incorporating mitigation and adaptation strategies. Please submit session ideas that will educate brownfields communities and other stakeholders in how to incorporate climate adaptation options and sustainability measures into brownfields redevelopment plans. We also are looking for experts and experienced practitioners who can help brownfields stakeholders understand how to mitigate climate change as they develop solutions to brownfields challenges and plan for future economic revitalization. Submit session ideas for engaging

attendees in discussions of how climate change is impacting their communities and how they can plan for adapting to affects of climate change and for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions for a healthier future.

Climate change adaptation means taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current and projected impacts of climate change. *Climate change mitigation* refers to actions limiting the magnitude and rate of future climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and/or adding carbon sinks to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide (including advancing nature-based solutions). *Climate resilience* generally is defined as the capacity of a system to maintain function in the face of stresses imposed by climate change and to adapt the system to be better prepared for future climate impacts.

As we are evaluating responses to this Call for Ideas, we will look most favorably on sessions that offer insight and training in the following areas:

- The role of renewable energy and how to place renewable energy alternatives on brownfields
- Incorporating climate mitigation actions into brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment
- Incorporating climate adaptation solutions into brownfields revitalization alternatives
- Implementing greener cleanup options
- Planning for resiliency
- Are there legal implications associated with future plans for addressing climate change?
- Issues and challenges unique to small and rural communities
- Incorporating green infrastructure into future land use designs
- Incorporating plans for the future use of electronic vehicles
- Lessons and case studies from abroad (We love to hear form our International Partners.)
- Insurance, climate financing, and the cost of inaction
- Use of mapping tools to identify future climate impacts and strategies to mitigate these impacts
- Placemaking, Smart Growth, incorporating walkability/bikeability

Track 4: Future Economic Trends and Transformation

The commercial real estate market is changing. Demand for commercial office space in some urban areas is diminishing, while the demand for housing and warehousing is increasing significantly. Is this a permanent change? How will the commercial and residential real estate markets look in the near future? How should communities plan for short-term and long-term land use decisions?

What is Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing? What qualifies as ESG investing? How will future development decisions be affected by ESG investing? What role will brownfields play in contributing to and benefiting from ESG investing?

ICMA and EPA want to engage community leaders, commercial real estate developers, and architects in a “Marketplace of Ideas” event during the 2025 National Brownfields Training Conference. Please propose discussion of topics for our event. What challenges are communities facing? Who is successfully meeting the challenge of finding alternative uses for underused commercial real estate in our urban cores? Who can present success stories? Who wants to contribute to our discussion of the challenges and potential solutions?

Attendees at the National Brownfields Training Conference will want to learn about potential future trends in the commercial and residential real estate markets and how to make successful land use decisions when planning for brownfields redevelopment and for the revitalization of our urban cores. Our audience also will want to learn about ESG investing and how investors may view brownfields investment opportunities within the context of ESG investing. Also, engage our audience in discussions on the best methods for evaluating potential reuses for underused commercial real estate, as well as brownfields. Share your success stories in reusing brownfields and vacant commercial space for housing, manufacturing, mixed use, retail, urban agriculture, green space, and other alternatives. Discuss temporary and interim uses for brownfields and tell us what advantages interim and adaptive reuses provide for community revitalization, urban renewal, and neighborhood engagement.

As we evaluate responses to this Call for Ideas, we will look most favorably on sessions that offer insight and training in the following areas:

- Planning for potential future changes in commercial real estate markets and the effect on brownfields redevelopment
- To what extent is vacant and unused commercial real estate presenting an economic and social challenge to communities?
- What innovative and adaptive reuse strategies are available to communities to address challenges associated with underused commercial properties?
- How can we challenge developers and architects to contribute to viable solutions?
- Where can community leaders look for urban success stories?
- Planning for future land use demands
- What are the legal implications and concerns with purchasing brownfields and planning for future reuse options
- The advances of interim uses for brownfields and examples of successful interim uses
- Planning for workforce changes and the associate effects on land use demands
- Planning for future public transportation needs
- Planning to attract ESG investments
- Lessons and case studies from abroad (We love to hear form our International Partners.)
- Decarbonization of the energy and transportation sectors

Track 5: Environmental Justice, Public Participation, and Outreach

EPA defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental Justice and public participation are essential and necessary components of successful brownfields revitalization projects. Equitable development includes planning for meeting the needs of underserved communities through policies and programs that reduce disparities while fostering places that are healthy and vibrant. It is increasingly considered an effective component of brownfields redevelopment to ensure placed-based participation for creating strong and livable communities.

We are looking for sessions that will lead our audience in discussions about engaging and involving the local community in redevelopment and land use decisions. Brownfields stakeholders want to discuss how to engage with their affected community members to find solutions that incorporate workforce development and job training, how to reuse and renovate historic structures, how to preserve cultural heritage, how to promote the arts community, engage faith-based organizations, incorporate community

gardens and plan for the preservation of neighborhood historical and cultural identity. We want to offer our audience sessions that will engage participants in meaningful conversations about equitable development and public health. Give us your best advice, based on direct experience, on how to make brownfields revitalization a success for all residents and businesses.

As we evaluate responses to this Call for Ideas, we will look most favorably on sessions that offer insight and training in the following areas:

- Proactively planning for the attainment of Justice40 environmental justice goals
- Effective public involvement approaches to ensure inclusion
- Local community capacity building – how to build capacity to address brownfields challenges at the local level
- How to plan for and proactively advocate for inclusion of affected populations in future land use planning and giving indigenous residents a voice
- Case studies and examples of overcoming historical injustices
- Communications and risk management – how to conduct meaningful and effective public meetings.

Track 6: Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Approaches

If brownfields redevelopment is going to be successful, we need to identify and implement successful engineering and technological solutions to assessing and cleaning up environmental contamination. Our stakeholders want to learn about effective and efficient environmental assessment and cleanup solutions. What are the most cost-effective and most successful solutions? What approaches work best for addressing different types of contamination? Stakeholders need to know how to compare and evaluate alternative technologies. Brownfields communities are looking for advice on how to interpret site assessment results and how to plan for effective brownfields cleanups. Please submit session ideas that will assist communities, non-profits, and other stakeholders in understanding brownfields assessment and cleanup options and how to evaluate available alternatives to identify the best solution for their situations.

As we evaluate responses to this Call for Ideas, we will look most favorably on sessions that offer insight and training in the following areas:

- What is risk-based remediation?
- Is CERCLA liability still a roadblock for brownfields revitalization?
- Beyond CERCLA – how do other environmental statutes and regulations affect Brownfields Cleanups? RCRA? TSCA? CWA? CAA? -- What do brownfields property owners and prospective purchasers need to consider?
- What is an environmental site assessment and how should one interpret the results?
- How can communities evaluate available cleanup alternatives?
- What are the best cleanup alternatives for common contaminants of concern?
- What are the best cleanup approaches for addressing specific types of contamination?
- What are emerging contaminants and how do communities plan to address the risks associated with them? What are the legal issues around liability protections and emerging contaminants?
- What is the current status of court cases concerning new and emerging contaminants? What are the implications for brownfields cleanups?
- New technologies for emerging contaminants
- State regulations - how are state programs regulating PFAS?

- What are the legal implications associated with brownfields assessment and cleanup?
- How does a community find and employ an experienced contractor team?

Track 7: Forging Effective Partnerships with Tribal Governments

Brownfields redevelopment and community revitalization are most successful when built around partnerships. How can EPA and other government agencies at the local, state, and federal level develop successful partnerships with Tribal Nations? What unique brownfields challenges are faced by Tribal Nations? How can we form partnerships to ensure successful solutions to Tribal needs?

We want to hear from our Tribal partners about their brownfields challenges and needs. We also want to hear from agencies, developers, non-profits, and other stakeholders who have forged successful partnerships with Tribal Nations to address brownfields cleanup and redevelopment challenges. Please also submit your stories of successful brownfields partnerships that are structured to ensure sustainable revitalization. Please also submit session ideas that will lead us in a discussion of how to form and leverage partnerships to ensure livable and vibrant Tribal communities through effective and sustainable brownfields revitalization.

As we evaluate responses to this Call for Ideas, we will look most favorably on sessions that offer insight and training in the following areas:

- What are some of the unique brownfields challenges faced by Tribal Nations?
- Please share case studies of successful approaches to addressing brownfields challenges on Tribal lands.
- How can brownfields redevelopment solutions be respectful of Tribal culture and history?
- Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge

Session Formats

The National Brownfields Training Conference features a variety of session formats. Session formats should be reviewed carefully before idea submission. Preferred formats include Town Hall Meetings, Round Table Discussions, and Topic Talks.

In addition to the primary educational program, we also are seeking ideas for “training workshops” known as Brownfields University—an opportunity to help our attendees with real-world practical skill-building sessions.

Session format descriptions are as follows:

Town Hall Meeting (60 minutes) – Lively discussion led by a moderator and a panel of two leaders or experts in a specific topic or area of interest. Speakers *briefly* present a topic for discussion, which is followed by conversation between the panelists and the audience through a moderated Q&A, sharing of experiences, and a forum for voicing challenges and solutions.

Microphones and audiovisual technology available.

Proposed Town Hall Meeting sessions must include:

- Session title
- Summary of the proposed topic
- Provide 1-2 learning objectives that are clear, measurable, and achievable
- Explanation of why the topic will be of interest to the proposed audience
- Credentials of one moderator and two session leaders or panelists

Roundtable Discussions (60 minutes) – A rapid fire, discussion-oriented session format that is led by one or two topic experts. Session leaders quickly present a topic that translates within minutes to a facilitated conversation between and among the audience participants. The room is set with round tables and a podium. No audiovisual technology or formal presentations. The room will be configured to allow for actively engaging the entire audience and/or small group discussions on questions or topics put forth by the session leader(s).

Microphones available.

Proposed discussion sessions must include:

- Session title
- Summary of the proposed topic
- Provide 1-2 learning objectives that are clear, measurable, and achievable
- Description of the target audience
- Credentials of the one or two topic experts who will lead the session.

Topic Talks (25 minutes) –A popular format first introduced at Brownfields 2015, topic talk sessions are short talks on big issues. For each timeslot, there will be thematically similar sessions running concurrently and an “expert bar” where attendees can ask questions on the topics being discussed. Adapted for adult learning, each session is a single 15-minute presentation by one presenter followed by 10 minutes of Q&A at the experts bar.

Microphones and audiovisual technology available.

Proposed topic talks sessions must include:

- Session title
- Summary of the proposed topic
- Provide 1-2 learning objectives that are clear, measurable, and achievable
- Description of the target audience
- Credentials of the proposed speaker

Panel Discussions (60 minutes) – Panel discussions will consist of one moderator and no more than three speakers who are recognized experts in a specific topic, and who generally have different viewpoints or experiences within the specific topic. The moderator will lead the panel discussion and follow-on question and answers. Sessions must be tailored to encourage and allow for audience interaction. At least 15 minutes of the hour-long session must be devoted to questions and answers.

Microphones and audiovisual technology available.

Proposed panel sessions must include:

- Summary of the proposed topic
- Explanation of why the topic is important to the audience
- Provide 1-2 learning objectives that are clear, measurable, and achievable
- Description of the target audience
- Credentials of the moderator and (no more than) three speakers

Training Workshops (Brownfields University) (1–4 hours) – We are soliciting proposals for a limited number of training workshops that are designed to help participants elevate and enrich their skills and knowledge in practitioner-oriented adult learning workshops. Presenters must be experts in the topic presented and have demonstrated experience as a trainer or educator. Our audience is demanding training at levels beyond beginners. Although some basic level training sessions will be considered, brownfields stakeholders need practical information on how to implement solutions. Basic information on what alternatives are available for financing, addressing legal issues, and engaging in successful public participation is not enough. It is essential that our stakeholders are offered advanced training opportunities, as well as brownfields basics. When evaluating session proposals for training, we will favor training sessions that offer more advanced training opportunities and that engage participants in discussions of practical and proven solutions to brownfields challenges.

Microphones and audiovisual technology available.

All training workshops will be held on Tuesday, August 5, 2025 between 8:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. Proposals for training workshops must include:

- Summary of the topic
- Relevance to the expected audience
- Provide 1-2 learning objectives that are clear, measurable, and achievable
- Curriculum outline
- Resumes or CVs of all proposed speakers